

AGENDA
TOWN OF PORTAGE LAKE
Regular Select Board Meeting
June 21, 2023
6:00 P.M.

1. Call Meeting to Order & Attendance
2. Oak Point Fire on May 28
3. Approval of Minutes
 - May 17, 2023 regular meeting
 - June 14, 2023 emergency meeting
4. Old Business:
 - a. Letter to Ashland Board about Subsidies
 - b. Sale of old Public Works equipment Update
 - c. Abandoned Vehicles on Station Rd. update
 - d. Town Hall Electrical Panel
5. New Business:
 - a. Dean's Special Amusement Permit
 - b. Ashland Transfer Station Fee Increase: \$6,000 more for rest of year
 - c. Financial Misc & Account Changes Requests
 - a. Upgrade Cemetery savings at Acadia FCU
 - b. Upgrade Road Reserve savings at NorState
 - c. Approval of Manager's reimbursements
 - d. Payables Warrants
6. Town Manager's Report
 - a. Deputy Clerk Position Open again, ads are posted
 - b. Code Enforcement Officer Update
 - c. Request to have Monday July 3 as a holiday for this year
7. Other Select Board Business
8. Public Comments (as time allows)
9. Executive Session per 1 MRSA §405(6)(A) Personnel Matters
10. Adjourn

Next Regular Select Board Meeting: Wednesday, July 19, 2023

Upcoming Meetings & Events:

Community Yard Sale, Saturday June 24 from 8 am to 5 pm

PORTAGE LAKE BOARD OF SELECTPERSONS
Record of Regular Meeting
June 21, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.
Portage Lake Municipal Building Conference Room

Members Present: Michelle Eastman, Chairperson; Barry "Beech" Kenney, Bruce Laveway.

Members Absent: None.

Others Present: Corrine Routhier, Jodi Page, Sarah Bauzenberger, Tammy Kenney, Gary Nelson, Glenn Cusack, Herb McPherson, Otis Nelson, Leslie Rafford, Linda Lunney, Tammy Lunney, Lee Doody, Mike Doody, Pamela Hallett, Frank Hallett, Hollie Umphrey, Mike Umphrey, Lynn Umphrey, Ken Hayes, Judy Yates, Tim Yates, Jim Kelly, Ray Wakefield, Amy Collins.

Meeting called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Michelle Eastman.

Oak Point Fire on May 28: Citizens spoke to the Board regarding their concerns surrounding the May 28th fire on Oak Point. Property owners on Oak Point would like to gain road access to their property in order to allow first responders quicker access in case of future emergencies, and to allow easier transportation of supplies to their property. Property owners on Oak Point would like the Town's permission, for the portion of the road the Town of Portage owns, to clean up and maintain an already existing road at their own expense. As far as fire protection, the quickest access to Oak Point is still by boat.

Approval of Minutes: Selectboard reviews the minutes from the May 17, 2023, regular meeting and the June 14, 2023, emergency meeting. **Motion made and seconded to approve the minutes for the May 17, 2023, regular meeting and the June 14, 2023, emergency meeting as written. Motion carries.**

OLD BUSINESS

Letter to Ashland Board about Subsidies: The Board reviewed the letter prepared by Corrine and any edits that needed to be made. The Board signs it for approval. The letter will be sent Certified Mail. **Motion made and seconded to mail the letter as soon as possible and to be sent Certified to all Ashland Board members and the Town Manager. Motion carries.**

Sale of old Public Works equipment update: The sander has been sold. There have been no offers on the V-plow.

Abandoned Vehicles on Station Road update: The abandoned vehicles are still there. Beech has spoken with the leasee of the property the vehicles are sitting on and he said to go ahead and remove them. **Motion made and seconded to have Bruce contact Scott Ferland to have the vehicles removed. Motion carries.**

Town Hall Electrical Panel: The Board discussed the electrical panel in the hallway without a cover that is in violation and reviewed the quotes received from Underwood Electric and Carlisle Electric. As Underwood has the cheaper of the 2 quotes, the Board opted to go with Underwood Electric. The Board then discussed how to pay for the work and decided to use ARPA funds. We need to hold a special town meeting to appropriate the funds. **Motion made and seconded to use ARPA funds to pay for the work. Motion carries.**

NEW BUSINESS

Dean's Special Amusement Permit: After hearing no public comments, the Board signed the permit for approval. **Motion made and seconded to accept the permit as written. Motion carries.**

Ashland Transfer Station Fee Increase: \$6,000 more for rest of year: Because of additional seasonal residents, the Ashland Transfer Station had to bill the Town of Portage an additional \$6000. Motion made and seconded to pay the additional fee out of the Stumpage Account. Motion carries. The Board selects July 19, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. to hold a Special Town Meeting to approve the money.

Financial Misc. & Account Changes Requests: For better interest rates, Corrine is requesting the following changes:

- a) **Upgrade Cemetery savings at Acadia FCU:** Motion made and seconded to upgrade the Cemetery savings account at Acadia FCU. Motion carries.
- b) **Upgrade Road Reserve savings at NorState:** Motion made and seconded to upgrade the Road Reserve savings at NorState FCU to a Flex Savings Account. Motion carries.
- c) **Approval of Manager's reimbursements:** The Board reviews the list of Manager's reimbursements. Motion made and seconded to accept the Manager's reimbursements request. Motion carries.

Payables Warrants: The Board reviews the Treasurer's warrants and signs them for approval.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- A. Deputy Clerk Position Open again, ads are posted
- B. Code Enforcement Officer Update: The CEO that handles Eagle Lake and Winterville is willing to take us on.
- C. Request to have Monday, July 3rd as a holiday for this year: The Board decided to allow the additional day off unpaid. Employees may use a vacation day. Motion made and seconded to allow the additional unpaid holiday. Motion carries.

OTHER SELECTBOARD BUSINESS

Michelle proposed holding a special meeting to conduct the Executive Session. July 12, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. was chosen for the date.

Comments from the Public (as time allows): Herb asked for an update on the electrical vehicle charging station. Corrine said she would reach out to the guy who had purchased it for the Town and see if there was any word.

Next regular Selectboard meeting is Wednesday, July 19, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

Regular Selectboard Meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Upcoming Meetings & Events: Community Yard Sale, Saturday, June 24th from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

We, the undersigned, being Officers of the Portage Lake Board of Selectpersons, do hereby certify that the foregoing meeting is a true and correct record. We hereby consent to confirm, ratify and approve all actions taken at said meeting, all and singular, and the foregoing records thereof, and acknowledge and certify that the same are true and correct records of all the proceedings of said meeting and hereby approve the same.

Approved: 7/19/23

Date

Barry Kenney

June 21, 2023

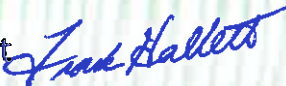

Signed:

Bruce Llewellyn

Michelle Eastman, Chairperson

June 20, 2023

To: Town Manager, Corrine Routhier & Board Officials

From: Frank & Pamela Hallett  

Sunday, May 28th, we stood in shock as we watched Mike & Lee Doody's home on Oak Point go up in flames. It was a very sad day for them. Thankfully, they were able to escape the building unharmed. But they lost everything in the fire. The town and more importantly the residents of Oak Point must be very appreciative of the efforts of Mike Doody and a small number of others who helped to control the spread of the fire. That particular afternoon unfortunately, we had very strong winds, and the fire was spreading into the adjacent woods. Thankfully, Mike was able to control the fire with a backhoe as he watched his property go up in flames.

We learned in the days following that there was minimal assistance from the town volunteer fire department. Thankfully a few local people tried to assist Mike and Lee.

What have we learned from this?

1. The local volunteer fire department needs to be ready to provide services to taxpaying residents regardless of where they reside, which should include Oak Point.
2. We learned that in addition to lakeside access to Oak Point, there must be access to Oak Point by land as well. This means a restoration of the road that historically has been there for years, but not maintained. This has to change.

Our hope and recommendation is that the town officials will give authorization and assistance as needed to the Oak Point residents to reconstruct and maintain an access road to the area. Secondly, this should be posted as private property open to residents only. Thank you in advance for your willingness to work with the Oak Point residents to improve this situation.



Town of Portage Lake, Maine

Incorporated March 24, 1909

PO Box 255 / 20 School St.

Portage Lake, ME 04768

207-435-4361/FAX: 207-435-6229

www.townofportage.org

June 21, 2023

Ashland Town Council
Ashland Town Manager
PO Box 910
Ashland, ME 04732

RE: Ashland Annual Subsidy Requests for Portage Lake

Dear Members of the Ashland Town Council and Ashland Town Manager,

For decades the taxpayers of Portage Lake have paid subsidies to Ashland for ambulance service, the use of the public library and the use of the recreation center & programs. Each year there is always much debate, but our residents have approved raising and appropriating the funds for those subsidies on a "good faith" basis, as no contract or agreement between the two towns has ever been presented or signed. This neighborly relationship has been greatly tested in recent years due in part to the sharp increase in the subsidy requests, the recent course of action used to force our taxpayers to agree to funding them, and the lack of transparency of the finances of the departments listed above.

About three years ago, the formula Ashland uses to determine the subsidy amounts was changed, causing a dramatic increase in the requested subsidies. It is understood that the formula is now based on town populations, however there is concern surrounding the budgeted amounts for the departments in that formula. The taxpayers of Portage Lake are being asked to fund a portion of the budgets for three of Ashland's departments without any ability for discussion. At the very least, Portage Lake should be presented with the budget proposals at a Select Board meeting prior to receiving the request letter each year. Portage Lake has received the budget documents for the ambulance, library, and recreation upon request, but those documents have not been voluntarily given. A representative from Portage Lake is not involved in the budget process for those three departments. Our taxpayers feel this is "taxation without representation," since they do not have a say in what gets budgeted but they pay taxes for it. We know that our Board could attend Ashland's Council meeting when the budgets are being discussed, but if Ashland is requesting funding from Portage Lake, it is only right that a representative comes to Portage Lake to discuss the request.

The latest "all or nothing" course of action by Ashland used to ensure that its entire requested subsidy is funded essentially bullies Portage Lake residents into approving all three subsidy amounts for fear of losing the one service that is an essential need to survive-- the ambulance service. By bundling all the departments into one payment request, Ashland is forcing our taxpayers to take the "wants" with the "needs." Portage Lake taxpayers are being *told* which subsidies to pay so we can retain ambulance

service. At Town Meeting, taxpayers should always have a choice of which budgets they wish to adopt or deny, and which they wish to amend. The Ashland subsidy situation is different in that our taxpayers do not really have the option to amend it or vote it down, because if it is changed in any way Ashland has said all services—including ambulance service—will end effective 30 days after that vote. Ashland is using the absolute need for the ambulance service against the residents of Portage Lake to force them to fund non-essential services. Many residents have expressed that this feels like Portage Lake is being held over a barrel. If our taxpayers are going to be asked to partially fund Ashland's ambulance, library and recreation departments, the taxpayers should get to vote on which departments they feel they want to fund and not be told which to subsidize. The current way this is handled is, in our opinion, unprofessional.

In Ashland's own town reports, it is extremely unclear where Portage Lake's subsidy payments really go. The revenues generated from subsidy payments is only listed under the heading of "subsidy other towns" as a lump sum in the revenue section, but the report doesn't break it down by town or by how much. Ashland's reporting should be more transparent to avoid speculation and mistrust. The taxpayers of ALL the towns, including Ashland, should see a detail of all revenue sources, especially revenue being paid by other municipalities. Portage Lake taxpayers expect to see that their tax money goes directly to the departments indicated in the subsidy request. That isn't clear in the most recent Ashland Town Report.

Portage Lake taxpayers are also concerned that their tax money is bolstering Ashland's undesignated fund, also known as surplus. Ashland claims to be in the red in the departments for which a subsidy is requested. However, by using the figures in Ashland's current town report it is apparent that the departments for library, recreation, and ambulance service—all departments that Portage Lake taxpayers are asked to subsidize—ended up with positive amounts in the books at the end of the year when expenses are subtracted from revenues. It appears those unexpended balances closed into Ashland's surplus account when the 2022 books were closed, which essentially means that a portion of the subsidy money paid by Portage Lake is now sitting in Ashland's surplus account. Portage Lake residents have questioned why those positive amounts were not carried forward into the 2023 budget instead of lapsing to surplus, at least for those departments that receive subsidy payments. If this were done, the overall amount needed to be raised and appropriated for these departments would be less which is good for Ashland taxpayers. In turn that would mean Portage Lake would potentially pay less for subsidies because less would be needed for those budgets if some of the money is already on hand.

Considering these concerns, Portage Lake's Select Board and Town Manager would like to be placed on the Ashland Town Council agenda for the July 11 meeting. Please advise if this is possible. We respectfully ask that we be given ample time to discuss the matter with the full Council and hopefully come to a solution on the matter concerning annual subsidies.

Respectfully,

Corrine Routhier, Town Manager

Michelle Eastman, Board Chair

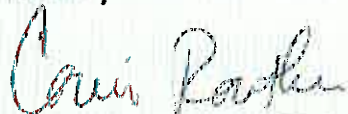
June 2023

RE: Proposal to move Cemetery Prime savings into Super savings at Acadia FCU

Currently the Cemetery Perpetual Care prime savings account has approximately \$12,965 in it and is at an interest rate of .10%. The interest rate for the super savings account is .40%.

I would like to move all but \$25 into the super savings, the \$25 will remain in the prime savings per bank policy. This account will remain at Acadia FCU and will not change institutions.

Thank you.



Corrine Routhier, CCM

Treasurer

June 2023

RE: Proposal to move Road Reserve savings into a FLEX savings account at NorState FCU

Currently the Road Reserve regular savings account has approximately \$229,640 in it and is at an interest rate of .10%. The interest rate for the FLEX savings account for the amount of money we have is 2.23%. The rate varies depending on how much money is in that account.

I would like to move all but \$25 into the FLEX savings, the \$25 will remain in the regular savings per bank policy. This account will remain at NorState FCU and will not change institutions.

Thank you.


Corrine Routhier, CCM

Treasurer