

Annual Town Meeting Minutes
Friday March 26, 2021 at 6:30 pm
Portage Lake Town Hall, 20 School Street

AROOSTOOK, s.s.

STATE OF MAINE

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 by Town Clerk Corrine Routhier.
Salute of the Flag was recited.

ART. 1 It was moved and seconded to nominate and elect Geraldine Condon as Moderator.
Geraldine was sworn in and presided over the secret ballot elections held on March 25, 2021.

ART. 2 Elected by Secret Ballot on March 25, 2021:
Barry Kenney to Select Board for a three (3) year term
Michelle Eastman to Select Board for a one (1) year term
Melissa Boutot to Portage Lake School Board for a three (3) year term

Geraldine Condon was unable to continue her duties as Moderator for the Open Town Meeting portion and named Joel Hall as Deputy Moderator to continue those duties for the remainder of the Articles.

There were 14 resident voters and 6 non-residents

ART. 3 Moved and seconded to authorize the Selectboard to appoint all necessary officers not elected by ballot for the ensuing year.
No discussion. Motion carried.

ART. 4 Moved and seconded to authorize the Selectboard to spend an amount not to exceed 3/12 of the budgeted amount in each department of the Town's annual budget during the period from January 1, 2022 to the annual March Town Meeting.
No Discussion. Motion carried.

ART. 5 Moved and seconded to authorize the Selectboard to accept any gifts, donations, grants and State funding or reimbursements on behalf of the Town, and exercise such authority as needed to implement grants.
No discussion. Motion carried.

ART 6. Moved and seconded to approve applications for the 2021 Community Development Block Grant project development, and to submit same to the Department of Economic and Community Development and if said program is approved, to authorize the Municipal Officers to accept said grant funds, to make such assurances, assume such responsibilities and to exercise such authority as are necessary and reasonable to implement such programs. Furthermore, the Town of Portage Lake is cognizant of the requirement that should the intended National Objective of the CDBG program not be met, all CDBG funds must be repaid to the State of Maine CDBG program

Discussion:

Herb McPherson: Are there any grants being applied for this summer?

Larry Duchette: Not at this time, no.

Motion carried.

ART. 7 Moved and seconded to allow a 2% discount on taxes paid within 30 days of the mailing date and set an interest rate of 6%, per 36 MRSA sec 505.4, on unpaid taxes 60 days after the date of tax commitment.
No discussion. Motion carried.

ART. 8 Moved and seconded to authorize the Tax Collector or Treasurer to accept prepayments of taxes not yet committed, pursuant to 36 M.R.S.A. Sec. 506.
No discussion. Motion carried.

- ART. 9 Moved and seconded to authorize the Board of Selectpersons to allow the Treasurer to waive automatic lien foreclosure when a request has been made by the owner before the notice of foreclosure has been executed and it is in the best interest of the Town.
No discussion Motion carried.
- ART. 10 Moved and seconded to authorize the Municipal Officers to sell or dispose of tax-acquired property for all taxes, fees and interest owed in any manner which they deem to be in the best interests of the Town, after first offering the property to the previous owners, and to bring writs of entry for recovery of any parcels of land that have been acquired by the Town by reason of non-payment of taxes, the time of redemption having expired, *excepting* that the special sale process required by 36 MRS § 943-C for qualifying homestead property be used if they choose to sell it to anyone other than the former owners.
No discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 11 Moved and seconded to authorize the Selectboard and Treasurer, on behalf of the Town, to advertise the proposed sale of any Town acquired property and Town owned personal property valued over \$500 under such terms and conditions as they deem advisable.
No discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 12 Moved and seconded to authorize the Selectpersons to appropriate \$25,000 from surplus to meet emergencies that occur during the calendar year, as they deem advisable.
No discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 13 Moved and seconded to accept all monies received from the Maine Department of Transportation Local Road Assistance Program for the coming year and deposit it into the Public Works Road Reserve account for future use.
No discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 14 Moved and seconded to appropriate \$70,000 from anticipated motor vehicle excise revenue for the Road Reserve account.
(Note: Excise tax was enacted into Maine law in 1925, 36 MRS § 1482. It is based on the manufacturer suggested retail price to make the tax fair for everyone. It is levied yearly and the money is typically spent on local road maintenance, construction and repair.)
No discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 15 Moved and seconded to raise and appropriate \$5,000 for the Revaluation Account in the Town's General Ledger for the next total town property revaluation.
No discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 16 Moved and seconded to appropriate \$50,000 from anticipated revenue sources for the purpose of reducing the 2020 tax commitment.
No discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 17 Moved and seconded to raise and appropriate \$20,000 for the following reserve accounts:
- | | |
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| Portage Lake Fire Department Reserve Account | \$10,000 |
| Public Works Equipment Reserve Account | \$10,000 |
- No discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 18 Moved and seconded to raise and appropriate \$5,000 for Scholarships to be given to students graduating in June of 2021 who apply and qualify.
No discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 19 Moved and seconded to raise and appropriate \$25,174 in addition to \$8,026 carried forward for a total budget of \$33,200 for the General Administration operating account, and to allow any reimbursements and fees to be used for the same.
No discussion. Motion carried.

- ART. 20 Moved and seconded to raise and appropriate \$89,594 in addition to \$3,406 carried forward for a total budget of \$93,000 for Office Staff payroll (Town Manager, Town Clerk/Treasurer, Deputy Town Clerk).
No discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 21 Moved and seconded to raise and appropriate \$3,000 Real & Personal Property Assessing and registry fees, and to designate the carry forward amount of \$4,481 to be used for future Real Estate assessing when the contract with the County Assessing is expired.
No discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 22 Moved and seconded to raise and appropriate \$19,715 in addition to \$3,285 carried forward for a total budget of \$23,000 for Municipal Building operating expenses and to allow the rental fees and any reimbursements to be used for the same, and to carry forward the balance of \$4,294 for Town Hall Improvements and repairs.
No discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 23 Moved and seconded to raise and appropriate \$126 in addition to \$1,374 carried forward for a total budget of \$1,500 for the Planning & Appeals Boards.
No discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 24 Moved and seconded to raise and appropriate \$5,681 in addition to \$5,319 carried forward for a total budget of \$11,000 for Code Enforcement activities, and to allow plumbing & building permit fees, fines, and any other reimbursements to be used for the same.
No discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 25 Moved and seconded to raise and appropriate \$10,986 in addition to \$3,014 carried forward for a total budget of \$14,000 for discounts on taxes paid within thirty (30) days of the mailing date of tax bills, and to raise and appropriate \$606 in addition to \$2,394 carried forward for tax abatements.
No discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 26 Moved and seconded to raise and appropriate \$2,400 for approximate annual membership dues for Maine Municipal Assn., Maine Tourism Assn., Maine Acadian Heritage Council, Central Aroostook Chamber of Commerce, Greater Fort Kent Chamber of Commerce and Central Aroostook Soil & Water.
No Discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 27 Moved and seconded to raise and appropriate \$1,280 for dues to Northern Maine Development Commission.
Select Board and Budget Committee recommend No
No discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 28 Moved and seconded to raise and appropriate \$55,418 in addition to \$3,582 carried forward for a total budget of \$59,000 for the Insurance & Social Security account, and to allow any reimbursements or dividends to be used for the same.
No discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 29 Moved and seconded to raise and appropriate \$2,534 in addition to \$3,466 carried forward for a total budget of \$6,000 for the General Assistance account and to allow any reimbursements to be used for the same.
No discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 30 Moved and seconded to raise and appropriate \$24,317 in addition to \$3,683 carried forward for a total budget of \$28,000 for the Portage Lake Fire Department operating account, and to allow any reimbursements to be used for the same.
No discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 31 Moved and seconded to carry forward \$2,068 for specific Police Patrol for the coming year.
No discussion. Motion carried.

- ART. 32 Moved and seconded to raise and appropriate \$1,622 in addition to \$878 carried forward for a total budget of \$2,500 for the Animal Control operating account, and to allow any dog license fees and fines to be used for the same.
No discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 33 Moved and seconded to raise and appropriate \$64,999 in addition to \$12,510 carried forward for a total budget of \$77,500 for the Public Works operating account, and to allow any reimbursements to be used for the same.
No discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 34 Moved and seconded to raise and appropriate \$42,593 for Aroostook Valley Solid Waste Disposal District (Ashland Transfer Station).
Discussion
Brian Cote: Are we saving any money on this? Between this amount right here and what we paid Eagle Lake?
Larry Duchette: We would have had to enter a contract for a new building they were putting up and we felt that this was a safer way; we wouldn't be held with our feet to the fire.
David Pierce: So, it's less at this point than what they requested.
Motion carried.
- ART. 35 Moved and seconded to raise and appropriate \$678 in addition to \$322 carried forward for a total budget of \$1,000 for expenses related to the Portage Lake Transfer Station, including the annual licensing fee and maintenance of the old dump site.
No discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 36 Moved and seconded to carry forward \$4,000 for Contracted Services for grader work and miscellaneous expenses related to this account.
No discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 37 Moved and seconded to raise and appropriate \$1,495 in addition \$1,255 carried forward for a total budget of \$2,750 for the maintenance of the Portage Lake Municipal Cemetery, and to allow lot sale revenue to be used for the same.
No discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 38 Moved and seconded to raise and appropriate \$241 in addition to \$1,559 carried forward for a total budget of \$2,000 for the Beautification department.
No discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 39 Moved and seconded to carry forward \$1,993 for the Portage Lake Recreation Department.
No discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 40 Moved and seconded to raise and appropriate \$8,674 in addition to \$8,826 carried forward for a total budget of \$17,500 maintenance of the Campground, Public Beach, Boat Landing, Seaplane Base, Pavilion and Parks, and allow revenues from camping permits, donations and other reimbursements to be used for the same.
Discussion.
Brian Cote: Is there anything on the docket for any of this this spring or summer?
Larry Duchette: As far as what?
Brian Cote: Is there any improvements going on at Public Works Campground, Boat Landing, Seaplane Base
Larry Duchette: Boat Landing there is, we are going to put in some more ramps. And the beach always needs gravel about every year.
Motion carried.
- ART. 41 Moved and seconded to carry forward \$5,000 for continued restorations and improvements to the Seaplane Base.
Discussion:
Herb McPherson: What are the improvements that they are doing this year?

Larry Duchette: Well, I've been trying to get a contractor the past two years, it's been pretty tough to find anybody that wants to work on it.

Beech Kenney: We never spent last year's budget.

David Pierce: Yeah, the same money; it's still there.

Motion carried.

ART. 42 Moved and seconded to raise and appropriate \$7,540 in addition to \$760 carried forward for a total budget of \$8,300 for street lights.

Discussion:

Herb McPherson: Do they give us a discount when we have a half a dozen or so on one road that's burned out?

Larry Duchette: No.

Herb McPherson: Then why don't they fix them?

Larry Duchette: Well, because someone has to alert me to it, then I call them up to have them fix it.

Brian Cote: Is there any way to convert to LED.

Larry Duchette: We've talked about that in the past. We would have to hire a contractor to take everything down, a contractor to put everything up, and a contractor to service them other than the power company. Right now, what they pay for taxes and what we pay them is a wash. Literally doesn't cost us a penny out of our pocket.

David Pierce : It would be a lot more money if we did it that way.

Brian Cote: There would be no savings down the road in LED?

David Pierce: Many years.

Brian Cote: These high-energy...

Larry Duchette: They are converting to LED as they are replacing them now.

Brian Cote: Oh, they are? Well we'll just let them do their thing.

Motion carried.

ART. 43 Moved and seconded to raise and appropriate \$54,885 Ashland User Fees:

Ambulance Service	\$31,975.98
Library	\$8,785.77
Recreation	\$14,122.91

Discussion:

Steve Dempster: Do we get any offset user fees for using the boat landing and the public beach?

Larry Duchette: No we don't

Steve Dempster: but yet it's costing us \$17,000 a year? Have we looked into that?

Larry Duchette: we would have to hire someone to tend the beach and...

Steve Dempster: No, I'm thinking like we pay Ashland for user fees without a.... someone being there designating who's coming and who's going, so why couldn't we do the same thing?

Danny Higgins: We would have to have someone at the beach to sit there.

Steve Dempster: You don't have to sit there, it's a user fee. The same offset like Ashland does to us.

David Pierce: He's talking about just some number that would be an annual thing, not someone to sit at the beach.

Beech Kenney: You would have to change the name, it wouldn't be a public beach, it would be private.

David Pierce: It's been talked about and discussed.

Steve Dempster: It's no different than a public library. You know I don't see anything any different. And we could use the same allocation they are using here, based on population. Something to consider for the next budget.

Corrine Routhier: I would just say, with that, Steve, you would have to do the same thing with Limestone, and Washburn, and Eagle Lake, and...there's a lot of other towns that use our beach, not just people from Ashland. So, where does it end? Where are we going to stop? I know the user fees is a big thing, it always has been for us here.

Steve Dempster: They did it when I lived in the Bangor area for Glenburn for Pushaw Lake, they did the same thing. They did a user fee based to the towns.

Corrine Routhier: But we have no idea how many towns use our beach or our boat landing. How would we figure that out?

Steve Dempster: The same way you're going to figure out in here...if you use the formula.

Corrine Routhier: Well, no. I mean, Ashland services these towns. This is their area, right? So, our public beach is open to anybody. Somebody from York County could come up and use our public beach. Are we going to charge York County for that usage? There's no way to figure that out. And it's been talked about year after year after year, but there isn't a way for us to do it that makes sense.

Tammy Curran: You'd have to have a lifeguard on duty charging like a beach tag like they do on the big beaches, and everybody would pay to use the beach. Except for the residents. But now you are putting somebody on payroll to be a lifeguard and sell beach tags. And nobody would ever use it. So, you're kind of doomed either way.

David Pierce: And we have discussed this many times. You can look at it like it's a service for drawing people to the town for the local businesses.

Steve Dempster: You can use the same argument either way, for any town.

David Pierce: The services provided by this town will draw recreation. We hear your concern

Carol Gagnon: I have a question. In developing the formula, did they use it by population?

Michelle Eastman: Correct.

Carol Gagnon: I guessed that.

Motion carried.

ART. 44 Moved and seconded to raise and appropriate \$3,110 for the following requested financial social services assistance:

American Red Cross	\$500
Aroostook Agency on Aging	\$300
Aroostook County Action Program	\$78.20
Ashland Food Pantry	\$350
Catholic Charities of Maine	\$100
Homeless Services of Aroostook	\$586.50
Life Flight Foundation	\$391
Maine Families Aroostook	\$200
Martha & Mary's Soup Kitchen	\$100
Maine Public Broadcasting Corp.	\$100
Northern Maine Veteran's Cemetery	\$200
VFW Post #9699 (Ashland)	\$100
Dahlgren/Skidgel Veterans' Farm of Hope	\$100

No discussion: Motion carried.

ART. 45 Moved and seconded to appropriate \$1,000 from Surplus to help the Ashland Area Food Pantry expand its building.
No Discussion. Motion carried.

ART. 46 Moved and seconded to appropriate \$5,000 from Tree Growth Reimbursement for financial assistance for Northwood Manor.
No discussion. Motion carried.

ART. 47 Moved and seconded to appropriate \$500 from anticipated boat excise tax revenue for the Town's share of matching funds for the Portage Lake Association's cost share grant to aid in the identification and education of invasive aquatic plants in, or on, Portage Lake, and to accept reimbursement from the PLA for the payment of Courtesy Boat Inspectors during the summer.
No discussion. Motion carried.

- ART. 48 Moved and seconded to raise and appropriate \$2,500 for the Portage Lake Historical Society.
No discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 49 Moved and seconded to raise and appropriate \$2,500 for the Portage Lake Snowmobile Club for the purpose of aiding in the maintenance of local snowmobile trails for public use, and to pay to the Portage Lake Snowmobile Club all snowmobile fees reimbursed to the Town from the State of Maine in the coming year.
No discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 50 Moved and seconded to raise and appropriate \$2,500 for the Portage Lakers ATV Club for aiding in the maintenance of the local ATV trail system for public use.
No discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 51 Moved and seconded to appropriate \$15,000 from Surplus in addition to \$5,000 carried forward for a new playground at the public beach.
No discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 52 Moved and seconded to appropriate \$3,375 from Surplus for an upgrade to a web-based format for the Town's accounting software (TRIO Web).
No discussion. Motion carried.
- ART. 53 Moved and seconded to allow the Portage Lakers Snowmobile Club build a new 40 X 70 groomer shed behind the existing groomer shed on Municipal Building property located at 20 School Street, and to allow the PLSC to keep and maintain the existing groomer shed as a storage shed.

Discussion:

Steve Dempster: Is that a lease or is it just an outright...?

Beech Kenney: It's a lease.

Motion carried.

- ART. 54 Moved and seconded to approve the purchase of a right-of-way near Overlook Drive on West Road from David J. Barry, located on tax map 11 lot 17 (see Appendix 1), for \$1 and additional closings costs paid for from Surplus. The purpose is to install a drainage ditch for that area of West Road. In addition, David J. Barry will receive any timber taken from the land to install said drainage ditch.
No discussion. Motion carried.

Adj. 7:03 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Corrine Routhier, Town Clerk