Machias Town Board Meeting Minutes

July 18, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm, following the Public Hearing on the Felton Road Solar Projects. The pledge of allegiance was said by all in attendance prior to the opening of the Public Hearing. Attending were Supervisor Stephen Cornwall; Councilmen Robert Shenk, Frank Bork, and Tom Reese; Code Enforcement Officer Christopher Lexer; and Town Clerk Rebecca Grimmelt. Also in attendance were MDA representative Derek Rule; Youth Board member Cathy Snayczuk; Bernie Horschel, , Kevin Bliss from RIC, Jennifer and Joshua Dusterhus, Pat Tatar, Bill Arlow, Amber and Jim Bigelow, Katie and Christopher Cornwall, Tammy VanLoan, Jenna Hehl, and Jamie Cox. Councilman Robert Green was absent.

Frank Bork made a motion to accept the minutes of the June 20, 2022, meeting. Tom Reese seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried.

The supervisor asked Derek Rule to give an update on the water meter project. Derek Rule said that EJP was the winning bidder for Project #1, the supply of the meters. EJP has ordered the meters, but they are not expected to be delivered until October. 4Th Generation, the installer, is concerned about installing the meters during the winter. It was suggested that we can give them a contract extension until the spring. Frank Bork made a motion that we give 4th Generation a contract extension to the Spring of 2023 with a lock on the price that they bid. Robert Shenk seconded. All were in favor and the motion passed.

The representatives from RIC Energy, Kevin Bliss and Nicholas Formanowicz, were invited to address the Board. They are from the company that desires to put a solar farm on the property at Routes 242 & 16 – the site of the old greenhouse; it will be known as Machias Solar. They said that it will be a 2-megawatt facility, which is small for a commercial operation. The site is twenty-three acres and they will be developing nine of those acres. State funding does not begin until you reach a 5-megawatt project level. This development was delayed by one and a half years because of a nearby bald eagle nest. RIC was required to get permits from the DEC and US Fish and Wildlife Service to cover any possible disturbance to the eagles. They must get approval from the Cattaraugus County Planning Board because the project is adjacent to state and county roads. Their application is complete and the decommissioning plan has been delivered to MDA. The next step is the Town being made lead agency for the SEQR. This project is lagging behind the Felton Road solar projects by about a month.

RIC has a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan developed for the site that meets or exceeds the Solar Law requirements. They stated that the benefits of the solar farm are clean and renewable energy; help to meet the state goal of production of renewable energy; they will have a PILOT in addition to the property taxes for the site; residents of Machias can lower their electric bill by joining the Community Solar Program; and there is no financial burden to the Town.

Derek Rule wanted to update the Board on the Felton Hill Solar projects. The County got back to the Town after everything was referred to them and they gave it an “incomplete application” for two reasons. They didn’t believe that there was enough there to comply with Machias’ Solar Law for showing elevations and representative views. The company revised their application and now have elevation views and it shows their height in relation to the fences. The County wants a visual impact assessment done stating that the visual impact assessment is required by the Town’s Solar Law. The law does not specifically say that, so the Board needs to make a motion one way or another to determine whether the elevation views are acceptable and meet the Town Law. If yes, they would be resubmitted to the County stating such. If not, they would require the whole visual impact assessment from the company. This should be run by the Town attorney to determine whether it meets the requirements of the law. Tom Reese made a motion to forward this question to our attorney for review; Frank Bork seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Cathy Snayczuk gave the report for the Youth Commission. There are currently sixty-four children enrolled in the summer REC program; twenty are not residents of Machias. On Tuesday and Thursday, West Valley brings an additional twenty-seven kids for swim lessons. They have been very busy with activities. They go to the library weekly for story time. They will be celebrating Holiday Week, Carnival Week, and Color Week. There will be a 5K Color Run to benefit the Youth Commission held on August 13th. Children registered in REC will be able to run for free.

The Youth Commission has three new members. Jenna Hehl, one of the new members, has been researching new playground equipment and funding possibilities. The playground equipment that is there has been there for over 50 years. The new playground they are interested in would be 45 feet by 50 feet and made of northern white cedar. It will hold 129 kids from 2 to 12 years old and is splinter-free and safe. The cost is $54,300.00 plus an $8,000.00 installation fee. The Machias Methodist Church donated $2,500.00 from its remaining funds to the Youth Commission. The Boehmers have said that they will donate the gravel for the playground (safest and best footing). They feel that the playground would help bring the community together and has countless benefits for the youth in the community.

They asked some of the teens what they would like to see in the park and they said they would like a bike path; new basketball backboards and the court painted; and they would like snow plowed into the park in the winter for a sledding hill. To prevent vandalism and damage, a curfew was suggested, but that will be revisited at a later time.

The Youth Commission is looking to get a new structure (large shed) at the park for use in inclement weather and for storage. It was suggested by the Board that they talk to the Amish. They would like the big slide removed from the playground as it is dangerous for the kids and gets extremely hot. The Youth Commission will order two new toddler swings, one regular swing, and get chain guards for all of the swings. They would like some new benches for the adults to sit on while the kids are playing. Steve Cornwall said that Lowe’s has a program that will help with the expenses of projects like that. Jenna said she would follow up with Lowe’s and Home Depot. Jenna has also had contact with Schwab and they said that they will make a significant donation once the project is underway.

Steve Cornwall said that he had an “End User Agreement” from Mueller Meters that they wanted him to sign and return. The agreement says that Mueller will provide the meters, the software, and training on how to operate the system. Robert Shenk made a motion to authorize the supervisor to sign the agreement. It was seconded by Tom Reese. All were in favor and the motion carried. Steve signed the agreement.

*Resolutions*

Resolution #37, “Resolution to authorize the replacement of fencing around the Town Pool” was read. Tom Reese made a motion to accept the resolution and Robert Shenk seconded the motion. All were in favor and the resolution passed.

Resolution #38, “Resolution to appoint new Youth Commission members” was read. Robert Shenk made a motion to accept the resolution and Frank Bork seconded the motion. All were in favor and the resolution passed.

Resolution #39, “Resolution relating to the State Environmental Quality Review Process and Site Evaluation” was read. Tom Reese made a motion to accept the resolution and Frank Bork seconded the motion. All were in favor and the resolution passed.

Resolution #40, “Resolution relating to the State Environmental Quality Review Process and SEQR Evaluation” was read. Frank Bork made a motion to accept the resolution and Tom Reese seconded the motion. All were in favor and the resolution passed.

Resolution #41, “Resolution relating to the State Environmental Quality Review Process and Site Evaluation” was read. Tom Reese made a motion to accept the resolution and Frank Bork seconded the motion. All were in favor and the resolution passed. A public hearing will be scheduled for August 15, 2022, at 6:45 pm.

Tom Reese gave the report for the Highway Department. The highway workers are asking about a raise because they are $2.50 per hour behind all of the surrounding towns. They were given a raise at the beginning of this year. Freedom is going to $24/hour for truck drivers and $28/hour for equipment operators. Do these towns give them full insurance benefits? Machias pays about $1,800.00 for each family health insurance premium per month; the employees do not have to contribute. Yorkshire’s employees pay 10% of their insurance premiums. Steve will find out about Freedom’s benefit plans. Machias pays over $11.00 per hour for health insurance for a family; $3.60/hour for a single plan.

Tom said that Tim Byroads reported that all of the trucks are in good shape. He started paving for Fox Road by Prescott Road and is almost done. They are scheduled to pave Martin Road starting July 25th, possibly a two-day project. They changed out a pipe that was rotten on Riceville Road near Krepps. The bottom was completely gone; they did not upsize the pipe or alter anything else. Next month, Riceville Road will be closed for up to two days to change a four-foot pipe that crosses along the Ashford Town line. The two highway departments will work together on this project.

A gentleman from Lakeview Blvd. wants “No Parking” signs put on the house side of the street. Tim informed him that on Lakeview the no parking zone is on the lake side of the road to provide fire truck access to the lake in case of fire. On Potter Road, the parking is on the opposite side due to storm drains and pipes along the outer road. Tim doesn’t want people parking on them and crushing the pipes.

Tim is looking at a Volvo truck instead of a Mack truck to replace the 10-wheel dump truck. It is $283,000. He would like to try it even though it is a little more expensive. He thinks it may be a better vehicle. Steve Cornwall asked where we would be able to get parts for a Volvo. Who services Volvo? Tom Reese will have Tim check on those questions.

Robert Shenk mentioned an issue with Gulf Hill Road that Tim had addressed for him. The Board all commented on how Tim Byroads has grown as a superintendent and really listens to everyone’s concerns. Tom also said that he had been down at the Highway Barn and that our workers said that they aren’t looking to leave over raises, etc., but just want the Board to remember them at budget time. Tom doesn’t know if they realize how much the Town pays for their insurance and will let them know. We need to make sure that everyone is comparing apples to apples. When the Town pays the premium, the insurance is tax-free to the employees.

Resolution #42, “Audit of claims for July 2022” was read. Robert Shenk made a motion to accept the resolution and Tom Reese seconded the motion. All were in favor and the resolution passed.

Financial reports for June 2022 were provided to the Board.

Tom Reese made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Frank Bork seconded, and all were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Grimmelt, Town Clerk

*July 2022 Vouchers*

GENERAL $ 14,270.17

YOUTH $ 4,614.38

HIGHWAY $ 36,777.03

STREET LIGHTING $ 1,402.61

WATER $ 4,786.74

LIME LAKE SEWER DISTRICT $ 9,382.94

LIME LAKE SEWER DISTRICT CAPITAL $ 0.00