

TOWN OF BELGRADE

# Meeting Minutes

BOARD OF SELECTPERSONS

**JANUARY 23, 2024 / REGULAR MEETING 6:30 P.M.**

BELGRADE TOWN OFFICE

***This meeting was conducted in person. The public may view the meeting***

***and online at <https://youtu.be/HOkHaZ0q6Ys>***

**Present:** Vice Chair Carol Johnson, Selectperson Daniel Newman, Selectperson Melanie Jewell, Selectperson Peter Rushton, Town Manager Lorna Dee Nichols, Dianne Dowd, Tom Dowd, Tracy Malloy, Jeff Worthing, Phil Sprague.

**Remote participants:** Chair Barbara Allen, Chris Raleigh, Dell, Sharon, Nicholas, Mary Vogel, Bruce Galouch.

**Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance at 6:31 p.m. by Vice Chair Carol Johnson.**

**Quorum established.**

***Open Meeting***

**Public Comment**

None

**Review and approve minutes of January 2, 2024**

**Motion by Vice Chair Carol Johnson to approve the minutes of January 2, 2024 as presented, seconded by Selectperson Daniel Newman, vote 5-0.**

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

*Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles, set Public Hearing date*

**Motion by Vice Chair Carol Johnson to approve secret ballot warrant articles and to put them to public hearing February 6, 2024, seconded by Selectperson Peter Rushton, vote 5-0.**

Article 10, camping ordinance: The Board discussed samples provided by the town's attorney and asked the Town Manager to have an ordinance ready for review and approval from legal counsel at the February 6 regularly scheduled board meeting.

Article 13, interest rate:

### **ARTICLE 13**

To see if the town will set Friday, September 6, 2024, as the date 2024 property taxes are due. For taxes paid after September 6, 2024, interest will be charged at a rate of \_\_\_\_% per annum. Interest will continue until the tax and tax lien are paid in full. Additionally, to see if the Town will set the interest rate to be paid by the Town on taxes paid and later abated at 2% per annum. Interest will accrue from the date of the tax payment to the date the abated amount is refunded to the taxpayer.

*Selectboard recommendation: YES NO ABSENT*

*The maximum rate allowed by the State of Maine for interest charged is 8.5%. The Board set the rate at 3.9% in 2023.*

The Town Manager will get estimated TAN numbers for the February 6 board meeting for discussion and setting of the rate for annual town meeting.

Article 35, Dalton properties:

### **ARTICLE 35**

To see if the Town will authorize the Board of Selectpersons or their designee to demolish the buildings and remove all debris on Town owned property located at 8 and 10 Dalton Road and to conduct any other necessary business required for this purpose.

The Board agreed that doing some more research and gathering information and costs associated with the properties to make an informed decision on a future warrant article is the best course of action at this time.

Article 38, Maine Employees Public Retirement System:

Discussion on both Article 37 and Article 38, which outline offering state retirement to all eligible employees; setting parameters for buyback of years of service for employees; setting up a special fund for the town's portion of buy-back.

The Board agreed to set the following parameters and have a revised set of articles to vote upon at the next regularly scheduled board meeting: the town will pay interest for the first 60 days, afterward – it will be the responsibility of the employee; employees will have two years to complete any portion of the buy-back with Maine State Retirement. After two years, the remaining balance of the special fund will fall back to the undesignated fund and the account will close. Employees are not required to buy back years of service in order to participate in Maine State Retirement.

In addition, the Board agreed that all new eligible employees will be offered participation in Maine State Retirement; the 457 plan currently in place will not take any new participants. The town will only fund one plan for each employee.

Article 40, perpetuity article:

**ARTICLE 40**

To see if the Town will vote to repeal Article 52, adopted as a perpetuity article in 2020;

**2020, Article 52:** *To see if the Town will vote to refund excess motor vehicle excise tax credits to the extent authorized by 36 MRSA 1482 (5)(D) and to authorize the Board of Selectpersons to pay those refunds from the undesignated fund. This authority shall remain in effect until repealed or replaced.*

And vote to approve the following:

*To see if the Town will vote to refund excess motor vehicle excise tax credits paid to the Town of Belgrade to the extent authorized by 36 MRSA 1482 (5)(D) and to authorize the Board of Selectpersons to pay those refunds from the undesignated fund. This authority shall remain in effect until repealed or replaced.*

**Motion by Selectperson Peter Rushton to approve the article as written, seconded by Selectperson Melanie Jewell, vote 5-0.**

**NEW BUSINESS**

*Appointments/Resignations*

**Motion to accept the resignation of Gail Barejka from the Senior Resource Committee, with regret, and to send a certificate of appreciation by Vice Chair Carol Johnson, seconded by Selectperson Melanie Jewell, vote 5-0.**

*John Hummell property tax payment plan for consideration*

Property owner has paid back taxes and is no longer under foreclosure.

*Lynn Matson, Historical Plaque*

Moved to February 20, 2024 meeting.

*Cemetery Ordinance Updates*

The Board would like to add wording to the ordinance that allows the Selectboard to update cemetery pricing (in consultation with the Cemeteries Committee) and to correct some language to include sexton and assistant sexton where missing. A revised copy will be reviewed and voted upon at the February 6, 2024 regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Selectpersons.

*KVCOG letter of support request*

**Motion by Vice Chair Carol Johnson to have the Town Manager send a letter of support, seconded by Peter Rushton, vote 5-0.**

The Board would like to invite KVCOG to a future meeting to explain their emergency management work.

#### *Animal Control Officer*

Discussion on the need to update pay for the animal control officer position(s). A stipend covers on-call, report writing and phone calls; an hourly wage of \$15.00 would cover calls out of the home, along with paid mileage at the prevailing state rate.

**Motion by Selectperson Melanie Jewell to re-work the animal control officer contract and bring back to the Board for review at the February 6 meeting, seconded by Peter Rushton, vote 5-0.**

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

##### *Audit*

Vice Chair Carol Johnson provided information on her meeting with the auditors.

##### *Community Resilience Partnership with KVCOG*

**Motion by Selectperson Peter Rushton to partner with KVCOG under their Community Resilience partnership program as presented, seconded by Vice Chair Carol Johnson, vote 5-0.**

##### *Delta collaborative letter*

The Board will meet with a Delta representative at their February 6 meeting and wait until then to discuss or make any decision about signing on with other municipalities to pay \$20/per capita instead of the \$25/per capita rate.

#### **WARRANTS**

BMV Warrant 3           \$8,481.95

**Motion to approve warrant 3 in the amount of \$8,481.95 by Vice Chair Carol Johnson, seconded by Selectperson Melanie Jewell, vote 5-0.**

Payroll Warrant 4       \$21,174.13

**Motion to approve warrant 4 in the amount of \$21,174.13 by Vice Chair Carol Johnson, seconded by Selectperson Melanie Jewell, vote 5-0.**

AP Warrant 5           \$24,857.00

**Motion to approve warrant 5 in the amount of \$24,857.00 by Vice Chair Carol Johnson, seconded by Selectperson Daniel Newman, vote 5-0.**

BMV Warrant 6           \$13,317.02

**Motion to approve warrant 6 in the amount of \$13,317.02 by Vice Chair Carol Johnson, seconded by Selectperson Melanie Jewell, vote 5-0.**

Payroll Warrant 7       \$20,723.80

**Motion to approve warrant 7 in the amount of \$20,723.80 by Vice Chair Carol Johnson, seconded by Selectperson Melanie Jewell, vote 5-0.**

Payroll Warrant 8       \$34,063.16

**Motion to approve warrant 8 in the amount of \$34,063.16 by Vice Chair Carol Johnson, seconded by Selectperson Peter Rushton, vote 5-0.**

BMV Warrant 9           \$7,798.45

**Motion to approve warrant 9 in the amount of \$7,798.45 by Vice Chair Carol Johnson, seconded by Selectperson Peter Rushton, vote 5-0.**

Payroll Warrant 10      \$20,009.60

**Motion to approve warrant 10 in the amount of \$20,009.60 by Vice Chair Carol Johnson, seconded by Selectperson Melanie Jewell, vote 5-0.**

2023 Warrant

AP Warrant 155        \$84,129.49

**Motion to approve warrant 155 in the amount of \$84,129.49 by Vice Chair Carol Johnson, seconded by Selectperson Peter Rushton, vote 5-0.**

## **TOWN MANAGER REPORT**

Delta will attend the February 6 meeting to answer questions regarding the rate increase to municipalities.

The Comprehensive Plan Committee will attend the February 6 meeting to give a presentation to the Board.

The Roads Committee will be meeting this month to begin work on paving recommendations to the Board.

The annual audit is scheduled to begin the week of January 22.

Office staff have been busy preparing for the audit, launch of TRIO web, the spring newsletter and budget/town meeting.

CSX will be doing some road work in late spring/early summer with roads closed 1-5 days on the Bartlett Road, Depot Road and Augusta Road Rte. 27.

Updated tax maps should be completed soon as we continue work with CAI on map digitization.

Parks and Recreation Director Dan MacGlashing, Jamie Dionne and myself will be meeting this month with RSU 18 Superintendent Carl Gartley to discuss the trees at the Kenneth Workman field and bring back information for the Board's consideration at a future meeting.

I attended a work session with the Planning Board and KVCOG on January 10 to continue work on the LD 2003 mandates for municipalities to update ordinances for increasing housing.

I attended the Comprehensive Plan Committee meeting January 10, reviewing the Transportation and Housing chapters of the Comprehensive Plan.

I will be attending Health Officer continuing education this spring. The class scheduled for January 10 was cancelled due to inclement weather.

Water District updates from Dwight Doughty, Jr. / Maine D.O.T.:

*We continue our work on the design aspects for the proposed water system in the Belgrade Triangle area. We should have some preliminary designs ready for review by the end of February. If all goes well, we hope to advertise in the spring with construction in the late summer or fall of 2024. We plan to reach out to the affected property owners in the near term to provide an update on our work and to have them review, and if acceptable, sign an agreement to tie into the water supply. We will ensure you remain in the loop as we move this forward.*

*With respect to the two well claims in Pinkham's Cove, we have concluded that drilling new wells on these properties are not viable options, additionally, installation of treatment systems will be difficult given the size/design of the homes. In light of this, we have contacted an abutting property owner for permission to evaluate the possibility of installing a shallow, dug well to service the two affected properties on the adjacent property.*

*Additionally, we have resolved well claim at 19 Depot Road. A new replacement well was installed and the old impacted well was properly abandoned. We are tallying the costs associated with his work and will send you an invoice for your half in the near term.*

Kennebec EMA is offering a G-402 NIMS compliance class on January 22 at 6 p.m. in Winthrop. This class is required by FEMA for local/county/appointed/elected officials to ensure municipalities are NIMS compliant.

What is NIMS?

The [National Incident Management System \(NIMS\)](#) guides all levels of government, nongovernmental organizations and the private sector to work together to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to and recover from incidents.

NIMS provides stakeholders across the whole community with the shared vocabulary, systems and processes to successfully deliver the capabilities described in the [National Preparedness System](#). NIMS defines operational systems that guide how personnel work together during incidents.

Regina Coppens has graciously offered to begin planning for the annual candidate forum which will be held sometime in February. Details TBA.

During the Selectboard/Budget meeting January 8, the question of what is LRAP (Local Roads Assistance Program) came up (this is included in the Public Works warrant article as an offset to the budget). Peter Coughlan, Director of Maine Local Roads Center (LTAP) graciously provided a quick summary simply put:

- It's 9% of the Highway Budget of DOT...last year about \$25M..... comes from gas tax money
- Apportioned to every ME town, city, Indian reservation (486) and is based solely on each town's inventory of local road mileage and State Aid/minor collector roads..... \$53,920 for Belgrade last year.
- It's for capital improvements to local roads and is NOT maintenance or plowing money.

I spoke with David Allen of the Maine Department of Transportation about permanent signs at the Center for All Seasons and sent a sample for his review. I am awaiting word back from him on their decision of this request.

The Comprehensive Plan Committee will meet again this month on January 31 at 5:30 p.m.

We will be setting a date to meet with the property owner for the potential new fire station, I have included another copy of the purchase and sale agreement for your review. If there are any changes, please contact myself, Fire Chief Dan MacKenzie or Building Committee Chair Bruce Galouch.

With the presidential primary coming up on March 5, we would like the Board to consider expanding voting hours from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. to 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. We feel this would help even out large crowds and provide an opportunity for folks to vote before they make it to work for the day.

**Motion by Vice Chair Carol Johnson to expand March 5 voting hours to 7a.m.-8 p.m., seconded by Selectperson Peter Rushton, vote 5-0.**

**Motion to exit regular session at 9:54 p.m. by Vice Chair Carol Johnson, seconded by Selectperson Peter Rushton, vote 5-0.**

**Motion to enter executive session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. §405(6)A – personnel matter at 10 p.m. by Selectperson Melanie Jewell, seconded by Selectperson Daniel Newman, vote 5-0.**

**Motion to exit executive session at 10:38 p.m. by Vice Chair Carol Johnson, seconded by Selectperson Peter Rushton, vote 5-0.**

**Motion to enter regular session at 10:38 p.m. by Vice Chair Carol Johnson, seconded by Selectperson Peter Rushton, vote 5-0.**

No action taken.

**Motion to adjourn at 10:39 p.m. by Vice Chair Carol Johnson, seconded by Selectperson Peter Rushton, vote 5-0.**