

Buckfield Select Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting Information

Date & Time: November 19, 2024 - 6:34 PM

Location: Buckfield Municipal Center

Attendees: Robert Hand, Sandra Fickett, Azalea Cormier, Heather Henley, Peter Fickett, Cameron Hinkley, Brittany Parrott, Judy Berg, Erin Petrocelli, Vivian Wadas, Jeremy Petrocelli, John Petrocelli Jr., Elizabeth Petrocelli, Wendy Turner, Michelle Casey

1. New Business

Consent Agenda Approval

Azalea Cormier made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Sandra Fickett seconded. The motion passed (5-0) for a total of \$388,951.34.

Payroll Warrant 44	\$17,272.36
Payroll Warrant 45	\$19,068.12
Payroll Warrant 46	\$286.62
Accounts Payable Warrant 47	\$11,254.83
Payroll Warrant 48	\$22,552.41
Payroll Warrant 49	\$79.98
Accounts Payable Warrant 50	\$318,437.02

Town Manager Report

Cameron Hinkley provided updates on various issues including the solar facility moratorium, tax due date extension, election preparations, paving project delays, and maintenance issues. The report also covered FEMA-funded culvert replacements and upcoming tasks.

Library Update

Azalea Cormier provided an update on library activities, including visitor numbers, new patrons, and successful events. The Friends of the Library raised funds through book sales and plan another sale on December 7th.

Approval of Minutes

Sandra Fickett made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 29, 2024, Buckfield Select Board meeting. Peter Fickett seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0).

Code Enforcement and Permit Issues

Discussion on the confusion surrounding the issuance of a building permit for a commercial solar facility. Concerns were raised about the process,

Building Permit Process

The meeting discussed the process of issuing building permits, highlighting the role of the code enforcement officer and the need for local ordinance compliance. Concerns were raised about the lack of planning board involvement and the absence of an appeals board. If an error is identified in the permit process, the select board will address it with town input.

Role of Planning Board

The planning board's responsibilities were debated, with emphasis on the need for proactive ordinance development to handle non-standard projects. Following the Comprehensive Plan and clear guidelines were noted. Future ordinances should include planning board review for non-standard projects.

Code Enforcement Officer's Authority

The authority of the code enforcement officer, Kingston Brown, was discussed, particularly in relation to issuing permits and avoiding legal issues. The need for clear ordinances to guide decisions was emphasized. The code enforcement officer must follow existing ordinances, and any changes require ordinance updates.

Need for Ordinance Updates

The meeting highlighted the need for updating local ordinances to address gaps, such as requiring planning board review for certain projects and establishing an appeals process. Ordinance updates are necessary to prevent future issues and ensure proper project review.

Tax Exemption and Valuation of Solar Facilities

Discussion on the tax exemption status of solar facilities, recent legislative changes affecting their tax status, and how these facilities will be assessed for property taxes.

Permit and Ordinance Development

Discussion on whether to continue focusing on a specific permit or shift focus to developing an ordinance. The permit has been issued, and the discussion suggests prioritizing ordinance development. Focus should shift to developing the ordinance rather than the specific permit.

Impact of Solar Project on Landowners

A landowner expressed concerns about the impact of a solar project on their property, highlighting the need for better communication and consideration of landowner interests.

Fire Safety and Training Costs

Questions raised about fire safety requirements and who bears the

cost of training related to the solar project, suggesting the need for clear communication with relevant authorities.

Emergency Management

Discussion on updating the mass gathering list for Oxford County Emergency Management and completing the National Incident Management System Implementation Survey. Buckfield has submitted the required data and completed the survey.

Grants

Updates on various grants including congressional spending, MMA grants, and FEMA public assistance. Discussion on whether to apply for the upcoming CRP funding. Judy Berg asked about the possibility of applying for the CRP grant to install geothermal heating at the Town Office or Fire Rescue Station.

Hathaway Cemetery Sign

The Hathaway Cemetery sign is severely rotted. Options include removing it for the winter and replacing it in the spring or getting a metal sign.

Azalea Cormier made a motion to pursue quotes for a replacement sign for the Hathaway Cemetery. Sandra Fickett seconded the motion. Public input suggested that the desire was to keep the sign on site for the winter by rehanging it. Jeremy Petrocelli offered to fix the sign so it could be rehung but didn't want to overstep any boundaries. *Azalea Cormier amended her motion to pursue quotes for a replacement sign and allow Jeremy Petrocelli to pursue restoration of the Hathaway Cemetery sign. Sandra Fickett seconded.* Sandra Fickett asked Jeremy for clarification. He stated that he would fix the sign so it structurally could be rehung. *The motion passed (5-0).*

Boston Cane

Discussion on developing procedures for awarding the Boston Cane to the town's oldest resident. The cane is a ceremonial item, and procedures need to be established for its presentation and maintenance. Procedures for the Boston Cane will be drafted by Azalea Cormier for Board review. Heather Henley suggested that the community events committee be involved in planning ceremonies.

2. Other Business

Will Bequests

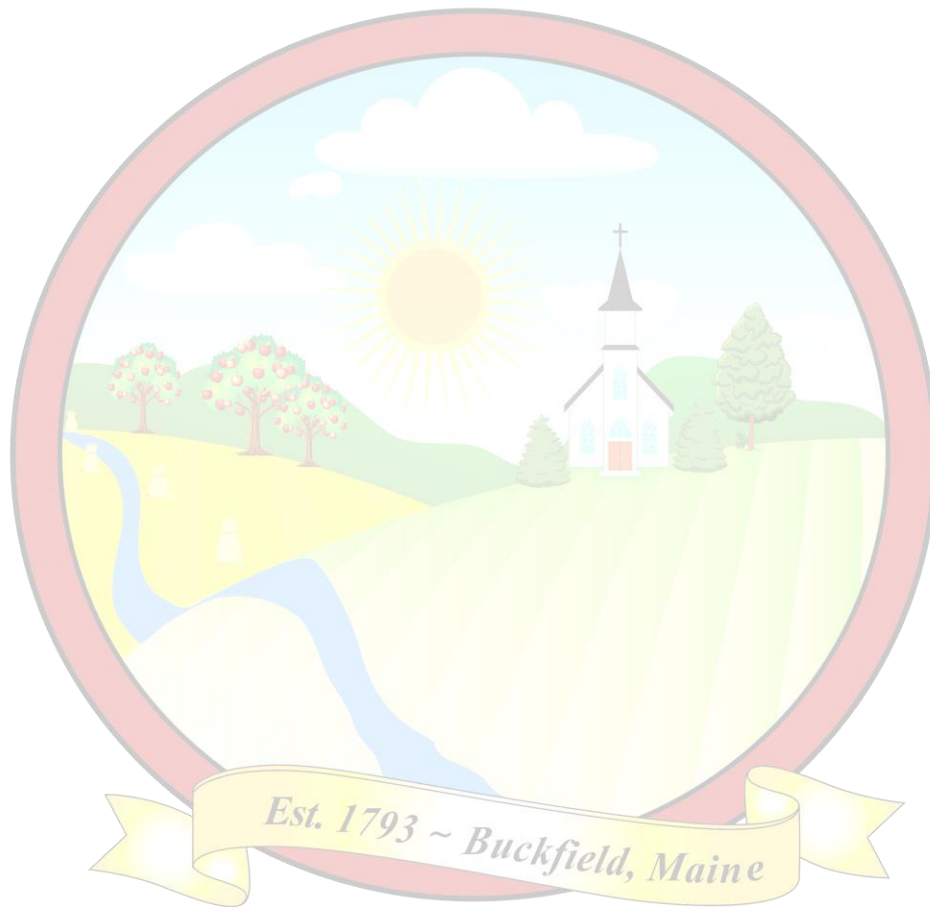
A longtime resident passed away recently and their will includes bequests to the town, including funds for scholarships and property.

Abandoned Boat

Discussion on handling a dumped boat on town property and potential solutions. Cameron Hinkley stated that he had spoke to the Oxford County Sheriff's Department as well as the Maine Warden's Service and neither had been successful in identifying who it belonged to. Public Works will most likely have to dispose of it.

Adjournment

Robert Hand made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 PM. Azalea Cormier seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0).



Minutes approved at the December 3, 2024, Select Board Meeting