

Town of Ashland
Regular Town Council Meeting

December 17, 2024

Present: Chairman Tyler Michaud, Sherri Calhoun Christopher Bessey, Gerard Raymond, Gayle Burby and Interim Town Manager Kevin Bushey.

Absent: None

- I. **Call meeting to order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chairman Michaud.

- II. **Public comments:** Fire Chief Don Bouley said the rescue truck is giving the Fire Department issues. It stalled 4 times one night going to a call. It also has a lot of rust on it. Chair Michaud said they need to get it looked at.
Tracy Long was concerned wondering if the cameras at the rec and Library record. She was told that the cameras don't, and she is wondering why they don't record for what the town paid for them. Town Treasurer Tammy Gagnon told her they do record, and it's kept for 30 days.
Jim Risner, Citizen of Ashland, is wondering why the Town of Ashland needs a Police Department Civilian Advisory Group. The group is being proposed by the new Police Chief Chris Cyr. Some points Jim Risner made were that there is not a Citizen planned on the board. The council should be the ones selecting the people who will be in the group. He thinks asking citizens who are not trained to be in the group isn't right. And he also said any Policies and Bylaws should have the town's lawyer look at them.
Ellie Michaud daughter of Chair Tyler Michaud, would like to do some fundraising to update the Towns Christmas Lights. Currently the town has 14 lights, but they are old and in need of updating. She plans on talking to local businesses to donate and doing a bottle drive.
Rec Director Lendell Tarr said when the town lost power the generator at the rec worked great and a lot of people and families came in. The store and café brought in food. He said the vent to the stove needs to be hooked up so the new stove can be used.

- III. **Consent items:**
 1. Review, approve and sign minutes from the November 12,2024 Regular Town Council Meeting. A motion was made by Sherri Calhoun to sign the minutes for the November 12,2024 Regular Town Council Meeting, seconded by Chris Bessey, No discussion. Motion carried.

 2. Review, approve and sign treasurer warrants #45V, 45P, #46V, #46P, #47V, 47P, #48V, #48P, 49V and 49P A motion was made by Sherri Calhoun to approve the noted warrants, seconded by Chris Bessey. No discussion. Motion carried.

- IV. **New Business:**
 1. Review, discuss and sign off on yearly assessors notice and compliance orders for 2025.

 2. Planning Board Report-Station St Subdivision Review Phase 1(Arpa Grant) update. The Planning Board met on Tuesday December 10. The Board recommended no further action. No vote because of Encumbered Deed. Any developer would not consider taking on the Phase 2 project with an Encumbered Deed. It's tabled until Encumbered is taking off the

deed. Planning Board Report- Wind Turbine Energy Facility Ordinance Moratorium recommendation – By July a draft of a Wind Turbine Energy Facility Ordinance having a Moratorium document now in place. An ordinance needs to be drafted and bring the draft forward for a vote. Have 6 months to bring up a draft but that can be extended. Sherri Calhoun motioned to draft an Ordinance of Wind Energy Facility Moratorium provided by the Planning Board. Chris Bessey seconded. No discussion. Motion Passed.

3. Review, discuss and vote on Equipment for Sale by sealed bid items. – The 1975 Cat D-4 Dozer and the 1995 Ford Model L9000 Double Axle Dump Truck are going back out for rebids and a 2012 Chevy Tahoe and a 1995 Trackless MT Sweeper has been added to the bid. The town will publicize the Equipment sale in The Star Herald. The Cat Dozer has a minimum bid of \$5000.00 and the 2012 Chevy Tahoe has a minimum bid of \$4000.00. Sealed Bids will be taken until January 16,2025. Sherri Calhoun motioned to put up the 4 pieces of equipment for sale in a sealed bid. Gerard Raymond seconded. No discussion. Motion Passed.
4. Review, discuss and vote on Highway Department Equipment Purchase request. Stacy Sturgeon Highway Dept Forman is asking for approval to purchase a used Backhoe. The Backhoe is a 2005 Volvo. It's been used for 963 hours, and you can easily find parts for it because it is on the newer side. The price for the backhoe is \$35,500.00. Stacy Additionally wants to purchase a bush hog not to exceed \$4500.00 for the unit. May be able to find a straight Blade for it to take over what the Bulldozer did. Down the road the Town could purchase a sweeper for it. After the purchase from the reserve account the reserve account will still have \$33,000.00. Sherri Calhoun made a motion to approve the highway foreman to purchase the backhoe & Bush Hog but not to exceed \$40,000.00. Chris Bessey seconded. Motion passed.
5. Review, discuss and vote on new police cruiser equipment installation. Originally, Chief Cyr thought they could utilize the old equipment in the new Police Truck. But it cannot be used. Mobil Data and Camara is \$6,000.00 per year. Installation of equipment, cage Studded Tires and graphics is \$23,781.00. Money will come out of the reserve. Leaving \$66,000.00 in the reserve. Once the truck is up and running the white police cruiser will go up for bid. Sherri Calhoun motioned to approve up to \$24,000.00 for installation and \$6,000.00 for Mobile Data and Camera rental. Chris Bessey seconded. Not comments. Motion passed.
6. Review, Discuss and vote on establishing a civilian Advisory Group for Ashland Police Department. Ashland Police Chief Chris Cyr would like to create a Civilian Advisory Group for his department. The group is formed to advise and give non-binding recommendations to police leadership and elected officials. Members will work on a voluntary basis with no compensation. To improve communications with the school, business and citizens of Ashland. Chair Michaud thinks the group is a good idea, but he thinks they need to get more information and to find other communities utilizing this. Sherri Calhoun made a motion to table the issue until the January Town Council Meeting. Chris Bessey Seconded. Motion carried.
7. Discussion of Nominations of local citizens for inclusion in the 2025 Town Report dedication page. Chair Michaud votes for Candidate # 1 Sherri Calhoun votes for Candidate #1 & #6. Gerard Raymond votes for #1. Chris Bessey votes for candidate #1 & #6. Gayle Burby likes the two candidates #1and #6 but also thinks #5 should also be in the book. Sherri Calhoun

Recommend approval to hire Tompkins Plumbing to install the backflow preventor as requested by Ashland Water District and include it in the 2025 budget.

Sherri Calhoun motioned to approve \$10,352.00 from the 2025 fire dept budget. Chris Bessey Seconded. No discussion. Motion passed.

4. With the new Family and Medical Leave legislation starting January 1, employers with over 15 employees can either pay the full 1% or split 50/50 with employees for quarterly payments to State of Maine. Estimated 1%: \$12,000 or split with employee: \$6K | \$6K

What is the council's pleasure?

Sherri Calhoun made a motion to split 50/50 with employees. Chris Seconded. No discussion. Motion passed.

5. For the 2024-2025 winter season, quotes have been received for an independent contractor to do sidewalk snow removal since our machine is inoperable. Quotes to be discussed at the December 17th meeting.

Sherri Calhoun made a motion to accept the bid from Robbie Burby for 5000.00 for the season. Chris Bessey Seconded. No discussion. Motion passed.

6. North Maine Woods- renovations update

- NMW is in discussions to purchase Sutherland property-plan is to demolish it.

- Asked about Town assistance- we likely will have dirt from street/ditch work that can be dumped into the hole once the bldg. is demolished. We can fill and smooth it out with highway crew if the council has no objections.

Town of Ashland will provide free dirt.

7. Library Update

- Hilary submitted a grant request and was successful in receiving a \$5K grant from the John Henry Eldred jr. Foundation. Funds will be used to purchase circulation materials for children and children's programming along with improving the children's area décor.

Secondly, Hilary has re-arranged the basement to accommodate the National Digital Equity Center, a Maine based organization that provides Digital Skills Classes in the form of interactive, live online classes, as well as in-person, onsite, classes throughout the state. They can accommodate up to 10 students per class. They'll be offering courses for home and education, work & business, and tech for seniors. They tailor their offerings based on each location's participants' needs. (smartphones, PCs, software, internet related, etc). They do their own advertising and Hilary has sign up forms for interested parties. All training is free for Maine citizens, \$50 per class for out-of-staters. First class is Jan 6. Four already signed up.

I sent letters to the surrounding towns announcing this new training capability and sent a press release to the Star Herald Dec 9th.

8. Town of Ashland Checking account: there was an attempted fraud caught by Katahdin bank involving 4 fraudulent checks that were attempted to be cashed by unknown assailant(s). (2x \$4750 and 2x \$4800) on 12/2 and 12/3. Our checking account was frozen, no funds were lost, and a new account was in place by Katahdin on Tues, 12/3. Check copies were given to Chief Cyr to notify the State AG's office. We found out from our check vendor that at least four other municipalities had this happen to them in the last 30 days.

Moving forward: We will participate free of charge in **Katahdin's Positive Pay** system, whereby a spreadsheet template is completed by our Treasurer when checks are issued and sent to Katahdin Trust as an extra layer of protection/security for all checks written and Katahdin operations center can contact us if there are anomalies.

9. Need Council approval to authorize Kevin Bushey to have third party authorization, "information only", access to town business accounts at Katahdin Trust Bank allows the bank to discuss any inquiries with me if Tammy is unavailable.
Sherri Calhoun motioned to put Kevin Bushey on to get 3rd party authorization. Chris Bessey Seconded. No discussion. Motion passed.
10. I'm requesting council approval to close the town office at 1 pm on Dec 24th and allow employees paid time off (administrative leave) for the PM hours. And secondly, we wish to close Dec 31st at 3 pm for yearend computer closeout (emp working normal hrs) to do close out. (No business transactions after 3 pm).
Sherri Calhoun motioned to close Town Office at 1 PM on Christmas Eve. And to close the Town Office at 3 PM on New Years Eve to get the end of the year reports done. Chris Bessey seconded. No discussion. Motion passed.

VII. Council items:

1. Gerard Raymond was asking if the Whole Tree Grant was done. He is wondering what the 22,000.00 payment was for. Treasurer Tammy Gagnon told Councilor Raymond that that was Whole Tree's last payment. The last of the grant money.
2. Sherri Calhoun mentioned that she will be in California on January 14 the date of the next council meeting.

Sherri Calhoun makes a motion for the council to go into Executive Session. Chris Bessey Seconded. Motion Carried. Executive session starts at 8:35

Sherri Calhoun Motioned to come out of Executive Session. Chris Bessey Seconded. Motion passed. Executive Session Ends at 8:50 PM.

1. Sherri Calhoun Motioned hiring Mike Montpetit for a 1-year contract at a Blue pin rate. Chris Bessey seconded. Motion Passed.
2. Sherri Calhoun motioned to hire Alexander Ring for a 1-year contract at a green pin rate. Chris Bessey seconded. Motion passed.

VIII. **Adjournment:** Sherri Calhoun motioned to adjourn the meeting; Chris Bessey Seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 8:54 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan Jimmo

Recording Secretary



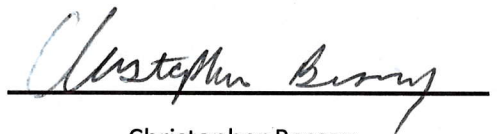
Tyler Michaud, Chairman



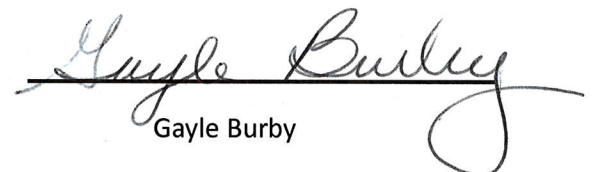
Gerard Raymond



Sherri Calhoun



Christopher Bessey



Gayle Burby