

2010

Town of Northport Annual Town Meeting Minutes 2010

Northport, Me.

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**TOWN OF NORTHPORT
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
June 7, 2010**

Deputy Clerk Robin Coombs called the meeting to order on June 5, 2010 at 8:00AM for Municipal Elections.

Ballot Clerks were appointed. Robin Coombs was nominated as Moderator, second received, nominations ceased. Robin Coombs was elected Moderator with three votes.

Art. 2 To elect by secret ballot:

One Selectman, Assessor and Overseer of the Poor for a three (3) year term.

Paul Rooney	85
Gerry Reid	3
Kathy Parrish	1
Jim Nealey	1
John Fleming	1
Blank	2

Paul Rooney was elected Selectman with 85 votes.

One School Board Director for a one (1) year term.

Gerry Reid	56
Jay Stager	4
Judith Ham	1
Duffy Woods	1
Kathy Parrish	1
Denise Lindahl	1
Charlie Hunter	1
John Burgess	1
Mary Alpher	1
Larry Doucette	1
Blank	24

Gerry Reid was elected School Board Director with 56 votes.

Attendance: 93

The Deputy Clerk resigned as Moderator and declared the polls closed at 8:00pm. The meeting adjourned to re-open at the Blue Goose Center on Monday, June 7th 2010 at 7:00pm to act on the remaining articles.

Town Clerk Barbara O’Leary called the reconvened meeting to order on Monday, June 7th, 2010 at 7:00pm to act on the remaining articles.

Ballot Clerks were Robin Coombs, Alismarie Parsloe, Dee Reid and Toupie Rooney.

Attendance: 80

Art. 1 To Choose a Moderator.

Nominations for Moderator: Joseph Moser was nominated, second, nominations ceased. Three votes were cast for Joseph Moser. Moser was elected Moderator and sworn in by Town Clerk Barbara O’Leary.

The Clerk read the results of the Municipal Election held on Saturday, June 5th, 2010. Erin Herbig and Michael Thibodeau were introduced as candidates running in the Primary Election.

Moderator Moser introduced Select Board Chairman Paul Rooney who gave the following report:

Selectman’s Report:

Chairman Paul Rooney reported the Town was coming to the end of its fiscal year change. He thanked the residents for their patience during this change. This change puts the town on the same fiscal year as the school and the county and implemented a twice a year payment. This has helped with the Town’s cash flow and the first time in several years we did not need a Tax Anticipation Loan.

The municipal budget was a challenge due to declining State revenues. The Board worked hard to keep it low and it is less than the budget of 2008. Surplus and undesignated funds were used to keep the budget low. However, this will reduce funds to be used for this purpose next year.

The Board interviewed and has hired a new Town Administrator. Thirty-nine applications were received and Town Clerk Barbara O’Leary was offered, and has accepted the position. She will start July 1, 2010.

The Town will begin Zero Sort Recycling this week at the Transfer Station. Jim Dunning from Pine Tree Waste is present to discuss the system if the residents agree to let him speak.

Motion made to allow Jim Dunning of Pine Tree Waste to speak. Second and discussion followed.

Jim Dunning explained Zero Sort Recycling is also known as single sort recycling. The Zero Sort replaces separating recyclables. In this system, all recyclables can be kept

together. This also accepts all plastics #1-7; all glass; newspaper; cardboard; junk mail; tin cans etc. It does not accept Styrofoam; dishes; soft plastics like grocery bags; food waste, etc. Mr. Dunning stated as far as magazines and paper goes, if you can rip it, you can recycle it. Semi rigid plastic can be recycled. This also includes colored glass, but no Pyrex.

A resident asked if this would reduce the sale of stickers and therefore the income to the Town. Mr. Dunning felt the sale of stickers may go down, but the amount of trash to be hauled away as waste will be reduced also, which may off set each other.

As background for the Company, Mr. Dunning stated they are part of Casella Waste and encouraged residents to visit their website where there is also a short video on Zero Sort Recycling. Denise Lindahl stated Bayside resident Ned Lightner has an interview with Jim Dunning on Zero Sort. When ready, the interview will be available through the Town's website.

Mr. Dunning concluded by saying there are informational sheets available explaining the dos and don'ts of recycling.

Paul Rooney concluded his report by stating the Office has E911 house number signs if residents would like to order them. The Fire Department and First Responders are requesting house numbers be clear, visible and reflective. This will help them when trying to find homes on an emergency call.

Art. 3 To see what amount of money the Town will vote to raise and appropriate to pay the Selectmen/Assessors for the ensuing year. (Current salary – Selectmen \$3,500.00 – Selectman Chair \$4,000.00.) Selectmen recommend no change.
Moved to accept the article as read. Second, no discussion. **Article approved.**

Art. 4 To choose Assessors for the ensuing year.
Moved to accept the article as read. Second. Moved to have the Selectmen act as Assessors with no additional compensation. Second, no discussion. **Article approved.**

Art. 5 To choose one or more Overseers of the Poor and establish pay for the same.
Moved to accept the article as read. Second. Moved to have the Selectmen act as Overseers of the Poor with no additional compensation. Second, no discussion. **Article approved.**

Art. 6 To see what amount of money the Town will vote to pay the Road Commissioner, Road Workers, Trucks and Equipment for the ensuing year. (Selectmen recommend State Rates plus 10% for routine road maintenance. Major road reconstruction to follow the competitive bid process.)
Moved to accept the article as read. Second, discussion followed. A resident asked if this is the usual rate. Paul Rooney stated this has been the rate for the last several years. Discussion ceased. **Article approved.**

Art. 7 To see what amount of money the Town will vote to pay members of the Planning Board. (Current pay \$27.50 for each member per meeting attended; and \$32.50 for the Chairman for each meeting attended.) Selectmen recommend no change.

Moved to accept the article as read. Second, no discussion. **Article approved**

Art. 8 To see if the Town will vote to release funds from the Marine Reserve Fund to be used for the Northport Village Harbor project. (Selectmen recommend \$40,000.00)

Moved to accept the article as read. Second, discussion followed. A resident asked why the request was being made. Selectman Drexell White stated the causeway and pier need significant repair work. The Town's Harbor Ordinance looks at the waterfront of Northport as open to all residents. The project is estimated to cost about \$180,000.00. Another resident asked how much money was in the Marine Reserve Fund. Clerk Barbara O'Leary stated there is \$71, 085 as of May 31, 2010. Moved and second to vote the article. Discussion ceased. **Article approved.**

Art. 9 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$19,000.00 for cemetery stone repairs.

Moved to accept the article as read. Second, discussion followed. One resident stated \$19,000.00 was a lot of repairs and asked what it covered. Paul Rooney stated residents have been complaining about the condition of the cemeteries and this is a way for residents to decide if the Town should maintain all the graves or leave this to families. The Selectmen are looking for guidance on this issue. These funds would fix head stones that have toppled over or are in need of repair.

Denise Lindahl stated at the annual meeting last year concern was expressed about the condition of the gravesites and this article is in response to those concerns. A resident asked if the inmates would be fixing the stones. Mrs. Lindahl replied that program is no longer in effect through the jail. Another resident felt it was the responsibility of families to maintain their own graves and felt the money was better spent on the living. Others disagreed and felt the Town maintains the cemeteries for mowing and maintenance and should take care of the stones. Moved and second to vote the article. Discussion ceased. **Article approved.**

Art. 10 Shall an ordinance entitled, "Town of Northport Building Permit Ordinance" be enacted, superseding the Northport Building Code of 1967.

Moved to accept the article as read. Second, discussion followed. Drexell White moved to amend the article. He stated after reviewing the ordinance of 1967 and the proposed ordinance, the Board feels the setbacks are in conflict with the Northport Village zoning and should be removed. These setbacks are in Section 7, B 1-4.

The motion was made to strike the section regarding setbacks. Second. Discussion followed.

A resident asked why the ordinance was brought forward at Town Meeting and not a hearing. She stated she was at the hearing when this ordinance was tabled for review.

She did not feel it should be at town meeting where residents do not have time to review it. Paul Rooney stated this is the same ordinance that was presented at that hearing; the only difference would be to strike the setbacks. He stated the ordinance from 1967 had just come to the attention of the Board at that hearing. A prior Clerk stated there was a building ordinance recorded in a book. The ordinance was found hand written into a Town book, which no one was aware of. The newer ordinance was tabled so that the Board could review the two building ordinances. Drexell White stated tabling the ordinance at the hearing allowed the Board to review both ordinances and see how they would effect the Northport Village Building Code. Paul Rooney also pointed out the ordinance from 1967 is more restrictive than the proposed one. It spells out the kinds of materials allowed when building, which was a sticking point at an earlier hearing when residents did not want to be told what materials to use.

Residents again stated there should have been another hearing for the proposed ordinance. They did not think it had been posted properly. The Clerk stated the notice was placed within the regulated time frame at several locations around Town, at the Town Office and on the Town's website.

Another question asked was if the 1967 ordinance used setbacks. Deputy Code Officer Toupie Rooney stated the State minimum code would have been used. If this article is passed as amended, she stated those same State codes would be followed. Moved and second to vote the article. Discussion ceased. Moderator Joe Moser stated the residents would be voting to either approve or not approve the amended version of Art 10. **Article approved.**

Art. 11 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$2,500.00 for the Northport Food Pantry.

Moved to accept the article as read. Second. No discussion. **Article approved.**

Art. 12 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$5,000.00 for the Northport Scholarship Fund for second semester Northport college freshmen.

Moved to accept the article as read. Second, discussion followed. It was noted the article read 'freshman' and should be 'freshmen'. Clarification was asked on how the scholarship is awarded. The Clerk noted it is only for Northport students going on to college. It is awarded in the second semester of their freshman year when the tuition bill is submitted to the town office. Another resident asked if the full amount is awarded to one person. The funds are divided among the students who apply for the scholarship and are given up to \$500. Moved and second to vote the article. Discussion ceased. **Article approved.**

Art. 13 To see what amount of money the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for the following accounts. Selectmen recommend:

	Account	Appropriation
A.	Ambulance	\$ 10,132.00
B.	Animal Control	\$ 7,000.00
C.	Belfast Free Library	\$ 4,000.00

D.	Cemeteries	\$ 7,000.00
E.	Code Enforcement Officer	\$ 18,500.00
F.	Contingency Fund	\$ 10,000.00
G.	Emergency Management	\$ 2,000.00
H.	Employee Benefits	\$ 18,000.00
I.	First Responders	\$ 12,400.00
J.	General Assistance	\$ 4,000.00
K.	Insurance	\$ 20,000.00
L.	Legal	\$ 5,000.00
M.	Northport Vol. Fire Dept.	\$ 35,000.00
N.	NVFD Fire Chief Stipend	\$ 20,800.00
O.	NVFD Truck Replacement	\$ 20,000.00
P.	Office Salaries	\$131,500.00
Q.	Payroll Taxes	\$ 20,000.00
R.	Planning Board	\$ 500.00
S.	Roads & Bridges	\$100,000.00
T.	Snow Removal	\$180,000.00
U.	Social Services	\$ 5,000.00
V.	Town Charges	\$ 50,000.00
W.	Town Hall Maint.	\$ 20,000.00
X.	Transfer Station	\$ 52,000.00
	Total:	\$753,832.00

Moved to accept the article as read. Second. Discussion followed. A resident asked if there are any new changes from last year in the budget. Paul Rooney stated the Fire Chief Stipend is new. This is to cover the time the Fire Chief must put in with mandatory paperwork, equipment checks etc. This will allow for 2 work days per week

A resident asked what agencies were funded through Social Services. Denise Lindahl stated there was over \$31,000.00 in requests this year, more than any other year. She read some of the agencies that requested funds. The \$5,000 is made up of the following:

WCAP	\$4,000.00
Spectrum Generations	500.00
YMCA	500.00

Another resident wanted to know how much the YMCA requested. Mrs. Lindahl stated the "Y" did not submit a request, but the Board felt it was a worthy organization to support and they have funded this in the past. Moved and second to vote the article. Discussion ceased. **Article approved.**

Art. 14 To see if the Town will vote to carry forward the balances of the following accounts:

- A. Animal Control
- B. Cemeteries
- C. Code Enforcement Officer
- D. First Response Medical Team-Operating & Equipment

- E. General Assistance
- F. Harbor Fund
- G. Insurance
- H. Legal
- I. Northport Needy Families
- J. Office Salaries
- K. Payroll Tax Expense
- L. Planning Board
- M. Roads & Bridges
- N. Snow Removal
- O. Town Hall Maint/Repairs
- P. Transfer Station
- Q. Wyman Needy Fund

Moved to accept the article as read. Second, no discussion. **Article approved.**

Art. 15 To see if the Town will vote to use \$100,000.00 from the Undesignated Fund balance to reduce the tax commitment.

Moved to accept the article as read. Second, discussion followed. A resident asked why this number was not higher. Paul Rooney stated more money has been used in the past but the Board did not want the balance to go too low. He stated the balance is about \$688,000.00. Discussion ceased. **Article approved.**

Art. 16 To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectmen, on behalf of the Town, to dispose of Real Estate acquired by the Town for non-payment of Taxes thereon, on such terms as they deem advisable and to execute Quit Claim Deeds on same.

Moved to accept the article as read. Second, discussion followed. A lengthy discussion followed on the ability of the elderly to pay their taxes and the Town taking their property for non-payment of taxes. Another resident stated this article meant no one owned their property if the Town could take it. The Clerk explained the process starting with the tax commitment. Eight months after commitment, the Town sends 30-day notices to every taxpayer who has a balance on their property taxes as a reminder the taxes are not paid in full. After that time period, a lien is placed on the property. Eighteen months from when the lien is placed it automatically matures and forecloses. The Clerk stated she has been working with residents to get these back taxes paid. Many have paid in full and others are on payment plans. To her knowledge the Town has not foreclosed on any property. She further stated if any resident is having problems paying their property tax, they need to speak with the Tax Collector and not ignore the problem. Moved and second to vote the article. Discussion ceased. **Article approved.**

Art. 17 To see if the Town will vote to fix a rate of interest on taxes delinquent after September 30, 2010 and March 1, 2011. (Selectmen recommend State authorized rate of 7%.)

Moved to accept the article as read. Second, discussion followed. The question was asked what the rate was last year. The Clerk replied it was 9%. Moved and second to vote the article. Discussion ceased. **Article approved 7%.**

Art. 18 To see if the Town will set a rate of interest for refunded taxes due to over assessments. (Selectmen recommend rate of 7%.)

Moved to accept the article as read. Second, no discussion. **Article approved 7%.**

Art. 19 To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectmen to expend overlay money to pay tax abatements and applicable interest granted during the fiscal year.

Moved to accept the article as read. Second, discussion followed. An explanation of the article was requested. Paul Rooney stated this allows the Selectmen to approve and reimburse property owners due to an over assessment of their property. Moved and second to vote the article. Discussion ceased. **Article approved.**

Art. 20 To see if the Town will vote to enter into an Alewife Harvesting Program, with or without the Town of Lincolnville.

Moved to accept the article as read. Second, discussion followed. A resident stated the article had been on every warrant they could remember and asked if there were any alewives in Northport. Denise Lindahl stated there were not, but should they return we would need this article to allow anyone to harvest them. Moved and second to vote the article. Discussion ceased. **Article approved.**

At this time Moderator Joe Moser introduced Bill Leavitt of the Katahdin Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America who presented the Northport Volunteer Fire Department with a plaque. Mr. Leavitt thanked the Fire Department for their unceasing support of both the Boy Scouts and the Cub Scouts in the area. Fire Chief Mike Alley accepted the plaque on behalf of the Northport Volunteer Fire Department.

Art. 21 To see if the Town will vote to accept the following grants and revenue from the State of Maine and allow the Selectmen to use them as they deem necessary.

Moved to accept the article as read. Second, no discussion. **Article approved.**

Art. 22 To see if the Town will vote to give the Northport Ridge Riders (a snowmobile club) funds that the State of Maine returns to the Town from snowmobile registrations, to be used to maintain snowmobile trails in Northport.

Moved to accept the article as read. Second, no discussion. **Article approved.**

Art. 23 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate funds for the Northport Village Corporation an amount of \$25,000.00.

Moved to accept the article as read. Second, no discussion. **Article approved.**

Art. 24 To see if the Town will authorize the Selectmen to transfer monies received from auto excise tax to the Roads & Bridges account at the close of the 2010-2011 fiscal year.

Moved to accept the article as read. Second, no discussion. **Article approved.**

Art. 25 To see if the Town will vote to allow the Selectmen to use educational and other grants and donations for the reason specified in the grant or donation.

Moved to accept the article as read. Second, no discussion. **Article approved.**

Art. 26 To see if the Town will vote to increase the property tax levy limit of \$994,549.91 established for the Town of Northport by State law, in the event that the municipal budget approved under the preceding articles will result in a tax commitment that is greater than the property tax levy limit. (Written ballot required by stature.)

Moved to table the article since the municipal budget does not exceed the property tax levy limit. Second, no discussion. **Article tabled.**

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,

**Barbara O'Leary
Town Clerk**