

Submitted by: TOWN OF PHIPPSBURG Approved by Selectmen:
SELECTMEN'S MEETING
John M. Young MINUTES
Administrator November 1, 2006

Meeting convened at 6:00 p.m. with Selectman Douglass, Chair, Selectman Perkins, and Selectman Pye in attendance.

I. Review and Sign:

1. Accounts payable and payroll warrants.
2. Minutes from October 5, October 11, October 16, October 18

All items reviewed and signed with the exception of the October 18th minutes.

II. Meetings and Hearings:

1. Meet with Christine Anderson for a presentation on "Kid Connections".
Ms. Anderson did not attend. No meeting held.
2. Meet with the Assessing Agent, Juanita Wilson, to review the State MVR and Audit.

The Selectmen reviewed and signed the Municipal Valuation Return, which is available at the Town Office for review. Selectman Douglass stated that these were the same figures provided at the Selectmen's meeting when the mil rate was set and citizens can contact the Selectmen or the Assessing Agent with questions.

Ms. Wilson stated that the audit was what she expected - not good news. Although the audit shows that Phippsburg is still within the range of tolerance by a slim margin it continues to support her conclusion that parity is slipping. She further explained that the determined sales ratio of 78% could also be a basis for an abatement if the appellants can demonstrate their case to Maine Revenue Services. She could find nothing in the audit to challenge the state on the ratio.

Selectman Douglass stated that the difference between assessment and market value is widening, and it is faster in some groups than others (i.e. waterfront vs. inland). Ms. Wilson replied that even within these groups the parity is widening and that a one time interim adjustment was OK and was defensible to the state, but it can't be done again.

Selectman Douglass stated that the Town needs a revaluation completed but it needs to happen without causing a major tax burden, perhaps after the Acre Lot bond is paid off and the County tax assessment stabilizes due to jail costs.

Selectman Perkins stated that a revaluation needs to be the #1 priority when it can be funded. He asked Ms. Wilson to explain to the public what the 78% means for them. She replied that all of the exemptions were reduced 78%. She added that some areas of town are slipping as much as

50% and it becomes unfair to the public.

Ms. Wilson stated that it would take the better part of a year to set up a revaluation and she has provided some information from the Department of Revenue Services to the Selectmen. One advantage the Selectmen have over prior boards is that Maine Revenue Services has more information and guidelines available now to help municipalities with setting up a revaluation. She also included a list of municipalities in Maine that have used the company Vision" over the last 5 years as well as an e-mail from Harpswell.

Ms. Wilson stated that Harpswell's mil rate was around 5 mil after their revaluation. Selectman Douglass mentioned that during a revaluation usually 1/3 of the taxes increase, 1/3 decrease and 1/3 stay the same. Ms. Wilson added that generally when the assessments increase the mil rate decreases as long as spending stays the same. Selectman Douglass stated that the only pitfall is with towns that have "big boxes" where the value of commercial properties drop - luckily we don't have the problem here. Also, a lot of commercial properties are on the waterfront and it is hard to claim that they are worth less then residential properties next door.

Selectman Douglass stated that the Board knows that a revaluation is needed and will fit it in. Ms. Wilson mentioned that the Woolwich revaluation cost \$160,000 plus software.

Administrator Young recommended that the process be started as soon as possible because it will take some time. Ms. Wilson agreed that a lot of revaluation companies have waiting lists and it could be up to two years before the revaluation could be completed.

Selectman Douglass replied that it would be OK to start the process now and Selectman Perkins added that if we started now there would be information available for the May 2007 Town Meeting.

Selectmen Douglass commended Ms. Wilson and the staff for doing their best to keep up with the parity. Ms. Wilson was organized and did a good job with the interim adjustments. He feel that's that it will not come as a shock to anyone that the Town will be conducting a revaluation – he thinks that most people know that their properties are not at market value.

The Selectmen also reviewed and signed three abatements. Two were due to homestead exemptions not being entered (Raymond and Jacqueline Durgan for \$110.52 and Laura Sewall for \$110.52) and a third was due to a land merge and software exponents (Peter Doran for \$316.10). Ms. Wilson also explained that sometimes property owners are not aware of the abatements until they receive a letter after corrections are made.

III. Unfinished Business

1. Brookings Institute Report – "Charting Maine's Future"

Selectman Douglass reported that he had read the Brookings Institute Report "Charting Maine's Future" which reviews issues such as the economy of Maine. He stated that one section compared "current accepted views" to "actual facts". He requested that the Administrator obtain a copy for each Selectman to keep and two for public review. He further explained

that the report has recommendations on how to help improve the economy and how to fund projects towards this goal. He explained that while manufacturing jobs are declining – it is at the same rate as other states and they are being replaced with technology jobs. He wanted to mention this report because a lot of the campaign facts being provided by the political candidates may be true – but the bigger picture is much different then what is portrayed.

IV. New Business

1. Schedule a public forum to discuss the possible use of the new Woolwich School for middle school students (choices: T-11/14, Th-11/16, Th-11/30, T-12/5, T- 12-12).

Selectmen scheduled the forum for December 12th. Selectman Douglass mentioned that his son was attending the Woolwich School and is very happy there.

2. Schedule a public hearing to accept the 2006-2007 General Assistance maximums.
Selectmen scheduled the hearing for November 15th.
3. Discuss the appointments of Jean Scott to the Historic Preservation Commission (3-0) and Ellen Winchester (3-0) to the Conservation Commission.

Selectmen voted (3-0) to approve appointments.

VII. Courses and seminars

1. Shoreland Zoning Workshop

Notifications will be sent to the Planning Board, Board of Appeals, and Code Enforcement Officer.

VIII. Selectmen/Administrator Comments and Announcements

1. Response during recent power outage.

Selectmen Pye thanked the Fire Department, Emergency Management Director, Police Chief and Road Commissioner for their response over the weekend during the lengthy power outage.

Selectmen Douglass mentioned that the Fire Department has a list of people that are checked on when the power goes out. He also commended those that responded to the search for Bobby Beals. He reminded citizens that the recent power outage is a wakeup call that winter is coming and everyone needs to be prepared and have a plan (flashlight batteries, wood for heat, food and water, etc). It was mentioned that the current power outage was longer then the ice storm.

Those with health issues and the elderly should contact Gary Morong, Sue Jones, or Jim Totman to be put on their emergency contact list.

VII. Adjournment - Selectmen voted (3-0) to adjourn at 6:38 p.m.