

Submitted by:

TOWN OF PHIPPSBURG
SELECTMEN'S MEETING

Approved by Selectmen:

John M. Young
Administrator

MINUTES
November 14, 2007

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

I. Review and Sign:

1. Accounts payable and payroll warrants.
All items reviewed and signed.

II. Meetings and Hearings:

1. Conduct General Assistance ordinance public hearing and approve amendments.
Selectmen opened the public hearing at 6:02.
Selectmen closed the public hearing at 6:05.
There were no public comments. Selectmen voted (3-0) to adopt the MMA Model GA Ordinance dated 2006 and the 2007-2008 assistance maximum appendices which were recommended by DHS.
2. Meet with Alex Wong and Steve Levy (Director – Maine Rural Water) concerning grants for water issues.

Selectman Pye opened the discussion explaining that one of the Comprehensive Plan inconsistencies surrounded the issue of providing municipal water/sewer services. Mr. Wong had met with the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee to discuss this. The Community Block Grant Program is available to assist communities with a low to moderate income base – but Phippsburg's base is too high.

Mr. Levy stated that he is familiar with the Bath-Brunswick area and knows Phippsburg well. Throughout the State there are 150 public water systems. To qualify as a public water system it must have 15 services or supply water to 25 people for 60 days and comply with the Safe Water Drinking Act. He explained that the Town may be eligible to apply for a \$10,000 planning grant in April 2008 if it could qualify under the Community Grant Program by proving that the planning would serve citizens in the low to moderate income level. He has done some research and determined that Phippsburg is a very affluent community. The Town could conduct its own income survey to prove eligibility; however a waiver from income survey rules would be required. Disparity in income is a common problem along the coast – so Phippsburg would need to target a specific area to conduct the survey in and not waste time doing a survey in an area that would not qualify. The income survey is confidential and the people conducting the survey would need to go door to door, which is why a third party is usually hired. His organization can be hired to start a survey and then it could be turned over to Town to finish. He does not recommend

putting in a public water system unless it is really needed because it is very expensive – in one town it cost \$200.00 a foot to pipe. It is very costly to look for an adequate water supply, pipe it, and provide protection for the well head area. Also, along the coast there are usually water quality problems which would cause the same problems for a large system as for a private well. There are four types of organizational structures for a Public Water System. They are municipal, water districts (quasi municipal organization established by the legislature), non-profit, and private utilities.

Selectman Pye stated that we need a plan for future water and sewer to have a consistent Comprehensive Plan. Selectman Douglass replied that a Public Water System really goes against the Comprehensive Plan which implies that citizens want to keep Phippsburg rural and he is baffled why the State wants a Public Water System considered in the Comprehensive Plan. Also, if the Town had a Public Water System it would look like Boothbay Harbor in no time.

Mr. Levy stated that you only construct a community water system because you need it. If you don't need it - don't build it. Boothbay Harbor has one because they are so densely populated. Only one out of four towns has a Public Water System and of those 100 are operated by water districts and 30 by municipalities.

Les Smith, Land Use Ordinance Rewrite Committee, stated that the Town thought there was a problem in West Point but in reality technology has changed and individual systems are feasible.

Selectmen Perkins asked if there were any areas of Phippsburg where people are not affluent enough and therefore eligible for a community block grant. Paul Schiebler, Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee, replied that we would have to conduct a weighted average survey to find an area that would qualify. Steve Levy added that this type of survey would be a random sample with the upper and lower incomes removed from the formula, leaving just the middle incomes. Qualification for a USDA or State Revolving Fund would be based on family income and the number of family members. 51% of the households would have to be in the low to moderate income bracket. Also, rate payers would have to have enough income to pay for the services. One of his jobs is to look for grant funding sources.

Selectman Douglass asked if Mr. Levy had been approached before by any other towns for assistance with their Comprehensive Plans. Mr. Levy replied that Phippsburg was the first.

Mr. Levy stated that coastal towns in Maine are located on bedrock which allows for salt infiltration. Also, hydrogen sulfide, manganese, and iron are prevalent. He has put in water systems due to water contamination but for no other reasons (20 to 25 systems of those systems were because of hydrocarbon contamination). His biggest project was in Port Clyde where the system services 150 to 180 households and cost millions of dollars to construct. He asked if the Selectmen wanted him to follow up with the State on the Comprehensive Plan to see exactly what they want in order to find it consistent. The Selectmen replied "yes".

Selectman Pye mentioned that the Comprehensive Plan had noted that the Basin was one area which should be listed as a "protected area". Paul Schiebler stated that we were siphoning off ¼ of our water reserves and needed to designate growth areas.

Selectman Perkins asked if we thought that a survey would be of value. Mr. Schiebler replied that we could identify water sources and protect them through zoning or ordinances. Selectman Perkins recommended that Stacy Benjamin, State Planning Office, be updated on our progress.

Les Smith stated that the potential of growth in the Basin has been removed because it has been donated to the Nature Conservancy. He asked if Stacy Benjamin knows that 1,900 acres can no longer be developed to which Selectmen Pye replied "yes".

Steve Levy stated that in rural Maine many Planning Boards get applications for development and don't know what available water resources can provide. He added that he would have Mr. Wong contact Stacy Benjamin and find out exactly what the Comprehensive Plan inconsistencies are and make recommendations back to the Town on how to address them. His gut feeling is that Phippsburg probably does not want to put in a water system. Selectman Douglass added that he also does not want to spend money on an income survey. He also recommended that someone from the Implementation Committee accompany Mr. Wong to the Planning Office to meet with Ms. Benjamin.

Selectman Pye recommended that Ms. Benjamin attend an Implementation Committee meeting and that Mr. Wong also be in attendance.

Les Smith added that we could always remedy the inconsistency by adding a statement that we would pipe water from the Kennebec River or New Meadows River if we needed to.

Selectman Douglass reemphasized that he is uncertain of what Ms. Benjamin wants besides a full fledged plan.

Paul Shiebler asked what liability the Town has if someone develops a piece of land and the neighbors lose their water. Administrator Young replied that this question came up during the Comprehensive plan process and the Town has no legal liability if this occurs because no one owns the water resource. Selectman Douglass added that although there is not a legal liability there is a moral liability on behalf of the Town. He added that in the case of the Popham Beach Club and the Popham Woods Subdivision the property owner had to prove to the Planning Board that there was sufficient water for his developments and that it would not overtax the available water.

Steve Levy recommended doing another hydrological survey in the future. Liz Smith recommended that the Town require that a developer drill a well before building.

Les Smith stated that the Sebasco Resort drilled a deep well and found 150 gallons of water per minute. The State minimum for an average family well is 1 ½ gallons a minute and most wells have an average of 4 or 5 gallons per minute. Phippsburg has not experienced any real water shortages

unless there was a draught and most of the problems were with dug wells. He added that wells drilled now have to be recorded with the State and during the next Comprehensive Plan cycle our knowledge of water resources will be improved from these statistics.

Alex Wong will set up a meeting with Stacy Benjamin from the State Planning Office to discuss the Comprehensive Plan inconsistencies and how to resolve them.

III. Correspondence

1. MMA grant approval of \$529.68 for the Fire Department to purchase chainsaw protective gear.
Selectmen voted (3-0) to accept grant.
2. Grant information – “Fund for efficient delivery of local and regional services”.
Selectman Pye will take home to review.

IV. Selectmen/Administrator Comments and Announcements

1. Administrator Young
Reviewed upcoming meetings and mentioned that Property taxes are due tomorrow.
2. Selectman Douglass
Stated that flu shots are still available and citizens could contact Health Officer Sue Jones.

V. Public Forum

1. Les Oliver
Mr. Oliver stated that for 5 years he has been trying to get the PH right in his hot tub and finally discovered that his water was too soft and he had to buy a water hardener chemical.

VI. Adjournment - Selectmen voted (3-0) to adjourn at 6:52 p.m.