

Stockton Springs Select Board Minutes

February 24, 2025

Attendees:

Select Board Members Present	Elizabeth Lenharr (Liz Lenharr) Marsha Shute Betsy Bradley John Bellino – Interim Town Manager
Select Board Members Absent	
Recording Secretary	Sarah Hardy
Community members	Approximately 34 community members were in attendance for some or all of the meeting. Speaker names were captured in the notes as best as possible. No attendance list was captured.

Yellow Highlight indicates NEW or not-yet-completed action items.

Green Highlight indicates COMPLETED action items.

Blue Highlight indicates incomplete notes, based on in-person note taking where something was missed. May need to go to tape backup.

#	Agenda	Notes
1.	Roll Call: Call to Order	Marsha Shute called meeting to order 7:19pm roll call – see attendance above
3.	Approval of Minutes	12/23/24 and 2/10/25 meetings Marsha made a motion to accept minutes from both dates, Liz seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.
4.	ARPA funds update (discussion item)	Funds have to be spent by 12/31/26. John is going to a meeting on 2/25 with the treasury to understand what needs to happen to the funds.
5.	Tax Acquired Properties Policy (update)	John found a draft of the policy from the previous town manager and cross referenced it to a few other towns. He attempted to contact the tax assessor from Bangor but haven't heard back. Looking for approval from select board to proceed with a draft or should he wait to hear from Bangor? He shared an example from Newcastle with the board. Q: Margaret Laing – were any of the tax acquired properties suitable for the new emergency building? A: No, they are not suitable or are way too small

		<p>Betsy – The select board never got to dive in too deeply on the policy with the last town manager who provided the draft. The initial goal was not to reinvent the wheel which is why they looked to Bangor.</p> <p>Betsy asked Kissy if she’s done any of these transactions, Kissy indicated realtors are still learning but they have begun handling these sales. Jennifer Guay another realtor, knows about some in Swanville and her firm listed 6 properties and received bids.</p> <p>Betsy mentioned that there needs to be clarity about how it needs to be done.</p> <p>John will have a Stockton springs draft ready for the next meeting</p> <p>Q: Susan Henkel – how many properties are there? A: There are 5 now and potentially 5 others that will go soon due to unpaid taxes. Still need to determine how to deal with some land locked properties that might only be suitable to sell to abutting property owners.</p> <p>Q: Margaret mentioned Peterson Park was purchased by the town, is there other property on the water the town could buy and make another park? A: The town isn’t considering that.</p> <p>Another challenge that will need to be solved, is if a bid is significantly higher than the outstanding tax bill, how will the town get ahold of the original owners – which may not have been in contact in years - to give them some of the proceeds from the sale.</p>
6.	Presentation by the Community Resilience Committee	<p>Linda – update from the Resilience Grant Committee: Last October, the select board gave the committee a letter of support for the vulnerability study. The committee was awarded the grant and has already started working on it. They have met 3 times with the MCOG team assigned to us.</p> <p>The effort is primarily Community outreach to get a lot of feedback from the residents. The delivery will be a risk/impact matrix to focus on the most vulnerable places in the town then lastly will come up with an action plan. MCOG will be on the hook for writing a grant for our action plan.</p> <p>Timing: study and report should be done by July/August. Then MCOG will have about a year after that to write the grant.</p>
7.	Keep the Heat on Policy	<p>John provided the select board a written copy of the policy. He edited the first couple of sentences in the last paragraph.</p> <p>The changes include: an applicant may be eligible to get additional units at the discretion of the town manager or town clerk. It previously</p>

		<p>only allowed applicants to get help twice - 100 gallons in early winter and in again spring.</p> <p>The new version also added a provision to allow for repairs to heating systems.</p> <p>Suggestion to remove the timeframe because it currently mentions November and March.</p> <p>It was also noted that the balance on this account is still quite large and growing.</p> <p>Diane clarified that before anyone gets assistant from this account, the people go through state sponsored GA first. The reason we do that is because the town gets reimbursed at 70% by the state and only if there are additional needs do they suggest folks use this fund.</p> <p>Q Betsy – what does someone have to bring to prove their need? Do they need taxes? Is it a burdensome process to get the help? A Dianne – no, not taxes. It must be decided within 24 hours so it’s handled quickly and appropriately.</p> <p>Continuation to next meeting with the clean copy with changes made by John.</p>
8	Budget hearings schedule draft	<p>John provided the schedule to the select board as part of their packet .</p> <p>Betsy mentioned they’ve used a few different processes. The town manager usually brought the select board the budget after getting input from the dept heads.</p> <p>John mentioned he will have the budget wrapped up by March 1st. asked if select board wants to meet with department heads?</p> <p>Betsy indicated that she would prefer that the town manager bring forth with the best budget possible, which doesn’t require the dept leads to sit in front of them.</p> <p>Marsha agrees to have John do it.</p> <p>Then in several meetings the select board will review portions of the budget with the town manager who should be able to provide the rational from the dept heads.</p> <p>Recommend doing two reviews in each of the two regular select board meetings in March, then call two additional workshops to review. There are 5 Mondays in March so this is doable.</p>

		<p>Q: Dawn – do the departments have to say what the priority funding is, and what is less priority? That’s how they did that in the school system.</p> <p>A: John thinks that they are doing that in the discussions that led up to the budget development.</p> <p>Q: Tom Moore – what happened to the budget committee made up of town people?</p> <p>A: it was eliminated more than 8 years ago, per George it didn’t go well because people didn’t know enough about required expenditures (for example if 12k is requested for diesel but someone thinks that only 4k should be spent – that just wouldn’t work).</p> <p>The experience so far for Betsy is that the department heads are pinching pennies and not overspending.</p> <p>Betsy reiterated that in the search for the town manager, they intend to find someone who is very strong in the budgeting process.</p> <p>John to email the draft to the select board.</p> <p>First review will be 3/3/25. The budge will be publicly posted on the website. Estimating about 1 hour per meeting for discussion.</p>
9.	Update bid approval for dock project	<p>John – when he sent the materials for the SHIP grant to the state, he learned that state wouldn’t approve disbursing the funds because the selection because it wasn’t the lowest bid. Being close in proximity and the existing relationship did not factor in their decision.</p> <p>Betsy asked about the lower bidder didn’t include the check, didn’t that disqualify them?</p> <p>John mentioned that they did include a bond in the estimate and that was sufficient to the state.</p> <p>Skeet mentioned that the harbor committee was OK with Prock being selected instead of the previous selection.</p> <p>There was mention of timing being at risk because of the delay in funding and the new selection because the docks need to get into the water in time for boaters in spring.</p> <p>Marsha made a motion that due to state grant requirements, we now accept the bid from Prock Marine Company of \$99543. Seconded by Betsy, vote approved unanimously.</p>
10.	Personnel Policy review	<p>John wanted to follow up on two sections in the policy that seemed to be missing. Asked if the board had looked through and do they have any changes?</p>

		<p>Betsy mentioned a portion of the policy related to banking sick leave up to 30 days. George mentioned that it does include a way of donating sick leave to others – there is no sick shared bank – for example he could donate some of his time to another person. Angie agreed that “banked sick time” is a personal bank only but there is a form that someone can give another person some of their time. The employee can’t give away non-banked time, and no employee should ask another person for their time.</p> <p>Q: Bonnie – for budget purposes, when days are carried over, is that a liability that is included in the budget? A: John – no but that did come up with one of the dept heads. He said it should be budgeted. But it was clarified that sick time isn’t paid out, only unused vacation is paid out. There is a policy that all vacation has to be used before the end of the fiscal year, so it limits the liability from growing very much.</p> <p>Betsy would also like to see something in the policy about pay raises. John has a step chart, and asked should it be in personnel policy or part of the budget?</p> <p>Betsy said in past raises weren’t approved separately, it was part of the budget as an admin line.</p> <p>George mentioned that step charts don’t work for long-term employees because they max out.</p> <p>John mentioned that he’s always had a step chart, Betsy suggests we revisit this topic.</p> <p>Sarah recommended a promotion path that lines up with step chart, as that the model used in many companies.</p> <p>Tom Moore indicated that it’s very challenging to set up payroll with a step chart. Amber indicated that it only needs to happen once a year. She also mentioned that is would be good for the employees to understand the payroll expectations, so thought a step chart would be helpful.</p> <p>Betsy – clarified about sick time. If someone leaves, they can only give away sick time away if someone needs it. It can’t be doled out to people without need.</p> <p>George – when he leaves there’s no retirement, no compensation for his 30+ years of service etc. and would be interested in some sort of payout for banked sick time.</p>
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11.	Treasurers warrant and report	<p>There is a regular warrant plus a special payroll warrant to correct an error that was made in a previous month.</p> <p>Why the special warrant? There was a line missing from the spreadsheet and it was only noticed after the warrant was signed. This corrects that omission.</p> <p>Marsha made a motion to accept accounts payable 53 and payroll warrant 52. Betsy seconded, the motion was approved by unanimous vote.</p> <p>The select people signed the warrants and payroll paperwork.</p>
12.	Planning Board applicant	<p>The letters of intent to renew committee members are due by the end of April.</p> <p>Q: Betsy asked if we are lacking in any committees? A: Diane indicated we were full except alternates in a few committees.</p> <p>Scott Pace has submitted a request to join the planning board as an alternate. John checked with Code enforcement officer, and she indicated the process is to have the select board vote on it.</p> <p>Liz Lenharr recused herself from voting.</p> <p>Q: Margaret asked if there was a conflict of interest? Not to have him on the board, but if anything were to come up?</p> <p>Marsha made the motion to appoint Scott Pace to the planning board as an alternate member. Seconded by Betsy. All in favor (Betsy and Marsha).</p> <p>Dianne indicated this alternate position will expire in June 30, 2025, but it can renew if he submits a letter of intent to stay.</p>
13	Public Comment – any topic	<p>A. <u>Public</u></p> <p>Q: Becky -sent an email to all select members, was wondering how to get something on the agenda? A: Marsha got the email and clarified that she cannot respond via email. She mentioned that the planning board has it in their hands.</p>

		<p>John said a moratorium ordinance was drafted but wasn't approved.</p> <p>The select board had already voted to go forward with the ordinance and the ordinance would have to be voted at a town meeting. This is the only way the moratorium can be in place.</p> <p>Someone in the crowd indicated they thought there could be an immediate moratorium if the select board took a vote.</p> <p>Q: Becky - asked for further clarification on when the moratorium will be on the agenda and when. A: John said he'd attempt to reach the lawyer</p> <p>Q: A resident asked: What is the definition of "large scale"? A: Betsy said that the code enforcement officer needs to define it.</p> <p>Q: Becky – is the moratorium public? She indicates that some towns do put draft ordinances publicly. A: No, it's not because it's still a work in process.</p> <p>Betsy mentioned the select board did vote to go forward with the moratorium, they thought it was binding but as it turned it wasn't binding.</p> <p>Liz described how she went to a seminar last February, that focused on how towns could put ordinances in place to stop solar farms. She came away from that seminar and found out that there was no ordinance or moratorium in Stockton Springs. The previous town manager did not put together anything beyond the initial vote from the board, so they were unaware the process wasn't complete till recently when the code enforcement officer informed them.</p> <p>Clarification from Diane and Liz that the moratorium will not include property owners that decide to lease out their private land for solar development. It only would stop someone from buying property with the intent of making a solar farm.</p> <p>Liz did say that there could be some stipulations about size of the array, and about how far from the center of town someone could make the farm.</p> <p>Kathy Kamzelski – has a copy of the ordinance from Thorndike and will forward to the board as an example. When it came up in their town, they did a moratorium against all solar development, it would last 6 months but is renewable.</p> <p>Q: Dawn – she is a landowner who has 240 acres with a very big tax bill and is considering a solar farm, this is what they need to do to be able</p>
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to retain their property. It's been owned by her family for 8 generations and they do not want to be told what to do with their property. She wanted to know what needs to be done to proceed.

A: Angie – indicated she needs to come in and talk to the code enforcement officer

Q: An unidentified resident asked what about younger residents who come into the area – will they be left with the responsibility of cleaning up solar farms that fail?

A: Dawn indicated that the contract they are considering will include disposal.

Resident: solar on farmland or lands not zoned for this purpose, it can be problematic. He recognized that private landowners have a need and shouldn't be told what to do. However, he's concerned that there are a lot of unknowns and the long-term planning must be done. He recognized it's a complex issue and looks forward to joining the select board to make sure ordinances are done well and to the benefit of all.

Question – was the moratorium the select board voted on temporary?

A: It was clarified that the vote was really only to authorize going forward for making the ordinance, it was not binding.

John indicated that he would work with the code enforcement officer tomorrow.

Q: Margaret Laing– where do we stand today

A; John – in the same place as before.

Resident mentioned that this is the town asking the select board to keep working on it.

Another resident pointed out that there are already ordinances that do control what people can do on their land – like he would be prohibited from cutting down all the trees on his land. So why can't the ordinance stop private residents from building solar farms?

John- suggests coming to the planning board to make their case about the ordinance.

Becky – has spoken to many people in other towns that the select board were able to vote on moratoriums.

Betsy reiterated that the code enforcement officer said that their vote was not sufficient to enact the moratorium – that there has to be more definition included in the voted moratorium.

John indicated he will put this on the agenda for the next meeting.

Scott Pace – asked if the attorney can assist on what needs to be done? Because neither the select board nor the town manager are experts on creating moratoriums.

An attorney (name not captured by note taker) who identified herself as recently moved to town and who seems to be representing the interests of the folks asking about the moratorium, asked for the name of the attorney

A: Tim Pease

This person wanted additional details about what will be on the agenda for the next select board meeting.

John – it will be Update on the solar moratorium. Where the information from the lawyer will be explained

Q: the planning board had a plan to meet on March 4th

A: Amber – the meeting was cancelled, there is going to be a walkthrough of the property.

Q: unidentified resident said – there's been a lot of reference to the previous town manager. What happened?

A: Betsy – they cannot say based on the advice of the lawyer because it was in executive session. And there can't be a request to make the content public after the fact that would have had to been requested before the executive session

Select board meeting on March 10th meeting timing – some portion will be in daytime, some in evening. Look at the town website for specific times.

Q: Can the planning board come to the select board meeting, so both are together –

A: It will have to be in evening to accommodate. John to see if that's possible.

Betsy offered this clarification based on her understanding the municipality must vote on the moratorium which means that the town must vote on the moratorium in a town meeting. Which is why they had planned to include it in the June town meeting.

Q: A resident brought up that the moratorium was voted in the December 6th meeting. Why wasn't this followed up with till now?

A: John – when he started he went through files to follow-up with in-limbo issues. He's only been here 3 weeks.

Residents expressed their dissatisfaction with customer service in the town.

Q: Becky asked how many clerks there were, and do they use the same email address?

A: There are two, and yes they share a single email address.

Q: Becky – another thing that’s confusing is how to get something on an agenda? The website says to email the select board.

A: Suggestion that residents can also send email to town manager. And additions would need to be requested at least 7 days before a meeting.

It was noted that there have not been any planning board meeting minutes posted in 2025.

There has only been one meeting this year. John will look into that.

B. Select Board

none

C. Town Manager/Including Routine Updates

1. Antennae project is in the works –

Per Tom Moore they have an estimate for \$1800 to put the antennae on the town office. Tom said he’ll hear on Wednesday when it can be installed. He says there is only one quote, and he doesn’t know anyone else who can give an estimate.

George said he was responsible for it coming down and that there was another person who could do it. Betsy also said her brother could do it.

George indicated the only way it can be mounted on the town hall building is on the side of the building.

Betsy – can we get it done for less than \$1800?

Tom has also indicated that the ham radio doesn’t need to come up and he’ll give it to EMA.

Folks in the crowd said the antennae for the ham radio can be put back up and the town won’t get rid of it because we own it.

2. Newsletter - John is also getting out the newsletter soon – it will be a combined feb/march newsletter

		<p>3. Hiring a new town manager – 26 applicants for the position of town manager – wasn't MMA supposed to be weeded out the best candidates? It doesn't seem so if there are that many.</p> <p>Next action to go through the list and decide on who to do a background check. John asked if the board would whittle down the list? They agreed to do that.</p> <p>Q: Margaret – how many live near Stockton. A: There were about 3 good candidates from within waldo county.</p>
14.	Adjourn	Meeting adjourned at 9:09 pm

Open Action item list:

Date raised	Action	Assignment	Status
1/13/25	<p>In public comment Tom Moore mentioned an emergency communication antenna which hasn't been mounted since the new roof. It couldn't be reattached because it would require puncture of the new roof. Betsy asked for the paperwork on what needs to be done, it had previously been provided to Mac. Tom will provide the estimate. The company is Atlantic Communications.</p> <p>a. Select board to decide on how to handle the antennae installation</p> <p>Betsy updated that Loren felt strongly that the antennae get moved off the town and onto the Emergency building. Dianne mentioned Tom Moore did have some concerns about the location and the facilities available at each location.</p> <p>b. Action as of 2/10/25: John to revisit this topic with Tom Moore. Determine which location is optimal. We will need to consider costs of installation and method of installation for each location. Suggest including Vern in discussion with Tom since they seem to have different opinions.</p>	<p>a. Betsy Bradley</p> <p>b. John Bellino</p>	<p>In process, see notes from the 1/27/25 meeting.</p> <p>Updated on 2/10/25</p> <p>Updated in notes from 2/24/25</p>
1/20/25	<p>Research new high-speed internet for Town facilities – town office, town garage, harbor master building</p>	John Bellino	<p>Assigned to new interim town manager in 1/27/25 meeting In process as of 2/10/25</p>
1/27/25	<p>Create warrants and plan for June town meeting:</p> <p>1. Broadband, next phase (this will be June meeting)</p>	Loren Cole or new Interim town manager John Bellino	Pending
2/10/25	<p>Since the cancelation of Tally Ho purchase, the \$140,000 needs to be placed in the correct firehouse building account (separate from the fire station equipment account)</p>	John Bellino	Pending
2/10/2025	<p>Because of the cancelation of the Tally Ho purchase, can we use the ARPA funds for the ambulance?</p>	John Bellino	

	1. Is there any benefit of paying off the bond early or does it make more sense to leave the ARPA money (\$82,000) in an interest-bearing account and accumulate interest? Confirm with Tim Pease.		
2/10/2025	In March, when the bond money for the ambulance comes in, add an item on the agenda to receive the bond money.	John Bellino	
2/10/2025	Find the policy documents related to the new state law requiring towns to engage real estate agents for the sale of town owned properties. Mac had obtained the policy drafted by Bangor's town manager. If they can't be found, reach out to Bangor for them again.	John Bellino	In Process Discussed in 2/24/25 select board notes.
2/10/2025	Bring the list of properties (tax forfeiture, gifted, town-owned) to be sold by the town for review at a future select board meeting.	John Bellino	
2/10/2025	Action item review pay "steps" and pay increase policies as part of the personnel review.	John Bellino	In Process Discussed in 2/24/25 select board notes
2/24/2025	John will have a Stockton springs draft of the tax acquired property's sales policy ready for the next meeting (March 10, 2025)	John Bellino	In Process Discussed in 2/24/25 select board notes
2/24/2025	Create a clean copy of the Keep the Heat on policy and bring back to next meeting (March 10, 2025)	John Bellino	In Process Discussed in 2/24/25 select board notes
2/24/2025	Email a copy of the draft town budget to the select board for their review	John Bellino	In Process Discussed in 2/24/25 select board notes
2/24/2025	Add solar moratorium to the next Select Board agenda (March 10, 2025)	John Bellino	
2/24/2025	Get the 2025 Planning Board meeting minutes posted to the town website	John Bellino	

Completed Action items:

Date raised	Action	Assignment	Status
1/20/25	Notify David Estes about his renewed contract for Harbor Master	Loren Cole	Per Skeet, David was contacted and accepted the position. Complete 1/27/25 meeting.
1/20/25	Place ad for Assistant Harbor Master	Loren Cole	Completed see notes 1/27/25
1/20/25	Place ad for Town Manager	Loren Cole	Completed see notes 1/27/25
1/20/25	Contact Rich Cromwell for assistance on hiring Town Manager	Loren Cole	Completed see notes 1/27/25
1/20/25	<p>Contact Tim Pease (town lawyer) for next steps in acquiring funds and paying for the ambulance approved at the 12/30/24 town meeting</p> <p>Update 2/10/25 - Complete and the application has been submitted. Awaiting final approval, committal from the bond. Expect the bond in March, leave this on action item to receive the bond money in the second march meeting.</p>	John Bellino	<p>discussed next steps in 1/27/25 meeting</p> <p>Complete, on 2/10/25 meeting.</p>
1/27/25	Ambulance Bond – to be submitted before 2/5/25 deadline	John Bellino	Complete, updated in 2/10/25 meeting
1/27/25	<p>Create warrants and plan for special town meeting or June town meeting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Buyout of solar panels on town garage, (special town meeting) 2. Create a 5 person select board (special town meeting) 	John Bellino	Warrants and Plan completed for Solar Panel Buyout and 5-person board in special town meeting. Closed on 2/10 meeting
1/13/25	Regarding the buy-out of the existing solar panels on the town garage. Per Linda Meadows, who has		In process, see notes

	<p>examined the contract and raised her findings in public comment, if we are to initiate the purchase we must indicate our intent before February 7, 2025, or we will have to wait another year.</p> <p>a. The select board decided to initiate the negotiations.</p> <p>b. Per Betsy – it would have to be raised as a budget item on the budget, thinks we should initiate the negotiations. No motion is needed Skeet – is this sundog solar? Danny Piper (gave his number to Loren) is a neighbor and thinks they'd work with the town, and thinks he'd be sure to come to a good deal.</p>	John Bellino	<p>from 1/27/25 meeting notes.</p> <p>John to get final numbers in time to be included on the warrant for 2/24/25 special town meeting.</p> <p>Closed on 2/24/25 when the town voted against buying out the solar lease.</p>
1/20/25	<p>Create the warrant for a 5 member select board for the next town meeting</p> <p>Must be done by Thursday, per Dianne warrant will be ready for signatures Wednesday afternoon.</p>	John Bellino	<p>In process, discussed next steps in 1/27/25 meeting. Due Thursday, in process as of 2/10.</p> <p>Complete. On 2/24/25 the town voted against increasing the number of select board members to five.</p>
2/10/2025	<p>Meeting Minutes from 12/23/24 Will be brought forth for approval at the next meeting.</p> <p>Make sure all approved minutes are on the town website.</p>	John Bellino	Completed in 2/24/25 meeting

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