

Stockton Springs Select Board Minutes

March 10, 2025, Evening Meeting


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 20 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	Betsy Bradly called meeting to order 6:00pm roll call – see attendance above
2.	Approval of Minutes	2/24/25 select board meeting and special town meeting Betsy Bradley made a motion to accept select board minutes from February 24, 2025, meeting and the Town Meeting minutes from 2/24/2025, Marsha Shute seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.
3.	ARPA Funds Reclassification	Per John Bellino, the only option for reallocating the funds is to use them for broadband. The next payment of \$52,000 is due in 2026. This leaves a little left over from the original, about \$30,000ish to pay off part of the ambulance bond before December 2026. John to make sure that there is some reminder that we disburse this before the deadline
4.	Tax Acquired Properties Policy	The select board reviewed the policy provided by John.  Stockton Springs Tax Acquire Property Poli

		<p>John Bellino noted that we cannot act on this policy until it is voted on in the June town manager because at the last town meeting it was authorized to sell properties via auction. Will have to change how it's reworded to allow for this policy.</p> <p>John will take an action item to add a warrant to the town meeting for the new wording.</p>
5.	Keep the Heat on Policy	<p>The policy has been expanded so that residents can request additional heating assistance beyond the 100 gallons previously approved. This applies to all heat sources (wood, electric etc.). It also will fund heating system repairs.</p> <p>Betsy Bradley made a motion to approve the Keep the Heat on policy, Marsha Shute seconded. The motion was carried by unanimous vote.</p>  <p>Keep the Heat On 2025 Update.pdf</p> <p>John will see if we have a place for policies to be stored online and if so will post this on the town website.</p> <p>Sarah Hardy will also add link to the minutes if they become available on the website.</p>
6.	Contract with Prock for dock project	<p>Prock is able to start the work and will complete the project by the deadline of April 30th.</p> <p>This is to purchase 10 docks for the harbor – paid for with a grant and matching funds. Seven long docs and 3 finger docks will be constructed.</p>  <p>Dock Preservation Project.pdf</p>
7.	Personnel Policy review	Deferred to the meeting on the 24th
8.	Solar Moratorium	<p>Betsy Bradley read aloud the moratorium ordinance draft that was reviewed by MMA legal counsel: (note this is not the final version of the</p>  <p>Solar_Moratorium document) 03102025version.pdf</p> <p>A type-o was identified in page 2 #2 where “he” should be “the”</p> <p>Also, the extension should be fixed to indicate two 180-day periods.</p> <p>Q: Andrea Staples - What happens next?</p>

		<p>A: There will be two public hearings held before the town meeting to approve the moratorium. If there is a huge momentum to have a special town meeting before the June meeting then that can be done.</p> <p>Q: Who would request an earlier meeting? Abram Guay – consider this him asking for a special meeting now.</p> <p>Toupie Rooney – there must be 60 days before the vote, it has to be on a warrant article (because it’s an ordinance).</p> <p>Q: If building were to start now on the solar farm, how would that work? A: Toupie Rooney - If it’s been approved by the planning board then the build would proceed. Nothing has been approved by the planning board. Though the application has been completed, it is awaiting the site inspection. The planning board is going to vote about it at the next meeting after that inspection.</p> <p>Toupie Rooney– before the moratorium was raised, the request for solar farm was made and application completed.</p> <p>Q: Abram Guay – when the town of Belfast established a moratorium on big box stores inside the bypass, it was heard and the moratorium was approved that day and then it went into public discussion to refine the policy. Why can’t we go about it that way? A: Kristi Trafton- the acting legal counsel for the town, indicated a moratorium could be written retroactively to today only.</p> <p>Abram Guay - Request to add retroactivity to the moratorium.</p> <p>Betsy Bradley mentioned that the people with the pending application had legally gone through the process according to laws in place.</p> <p>Kristi Trafton: Yes the moratorium could be written so that anyone with a complete application would not be affected by the moratorium. If we vote in June to approve the moratorium it will be retroactive to today.</p> <p>Q: Betsy Bradley– Toupie are there other projects under consideration? A: Toupie Rooney – one other project has begun research.</p> <p>Michael Qualley – lives on old county road, none of the neighbors want this array and he thinks they should have their voices heard.</p>
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Q: Becky Sipret – the original moratorium draft from the previous town manager, says it will take effect 45 days after it was signing. And the original was actually retroactive. Why isn't that in this version?

Because that's really the only significant change.

A: The lawyer drafted it. He recommended taking the retroactive portion out unless there is still a project in the permitting phase

Angie Porter – there are only a few people who will be able to see it. Someone would have to walk up the hill and go behind the woods.

Becky Sipret – there is more than visuals at question here. There is environmental risks associated with solar panels.

John Bellino noted that the moratorium language can be changed because it's not yet signed

Abram Guay – notes the date in the copy he has is from 2023

John Bellino mentioned that it is a draft, probably from the version that this policy was modeled after. There was some discussion about how the drafts are rapidly changing so it's difficult to keep track of drafts that folks had access to previously. The one reviewed in the meeting was the most recent version.

Q: Becky Sipret – the site on blueberry lane is at the peak of a water protection area. Thinks we should consider this.

A: Toupie Rooney – there is a DEP review portion. There must be a storm water management plan. There are other protections that must be included as well.

Rich (didn't catch last name) – works for the company behind this plan and has been working on this project for a year and half. He wants to say that 98% of the concerns have been addressed, which is why they delayed the walk through. Invites others to join that walk through and pfas, watershed etc. can be considered and factored. It's a good project – existing road, few site lines, no wetlands etc. They still need to talk to CMP to indicate how much it will cost.

Q: Becky Sipret – what benefits will the town get?

A: Rich - This will be a taxable project by the town. Still need to determine at the town how to assess it. This is a new state law in the last couple of years – previously it wouldn't have been taxed.

April 29th is the site visit.

Q: Theresa Gagne – is the public able to come really?

A: Toupie Rooney – yes it's public but it's to be handled like a regular planning board meeting where it's most important that the business

		<p>get done, and rules about the public speaking etc. would be the same as a regular meeting.</p> <p>Q: George Russel – if the public is allowed on this property, if someone falls and breaks their leg, who is liable? A: Abram Guay – the project manager just said the public could come. He’d sign a waiver to attend if necessary.</p> <p>Q: Andrea Staples – if the moratorium fails, will the town still work on an ordinance? A: Select Board – yes they will still work on it. Working with the planning board.</p> <p>Toupie Rooney suggested that a committee get together of all different opinions to draft the ordinance (similar to how the marijuana ordinance was drafted previously). It was completed in 3 months.</p> <p>Abram Guay – would like to be part of a committee to create the ordinance.</p> <p>Q: Michael Qually – how many studies will it take and how long will it take for the planning board to approve it? A: Toupie Rooney – we have to go with what we know now. The application has been done, only needing the site plan and if they meet the criteria of the existing ordinances then it can be approved. The project still can’t go forward until the DEP approval happens and generally the DEP doesn’t get involved until the planning board approves.</p> <p>Q: Theresa Gaffney – in the planning board approval process there is a section about “good neighbor.” How much does that play in the decision? A: Toupie Rooney – used a wedding venue as an example (noise issue) where the owners didn’t even realize there was an issue. Once the conversation was had, it was addressed. She hopes that something similar could be done here.</p> <p>Q: Brian Abru – will we add the retroactive dates to the moratorium? A: Kristi Trafton – yes it can be added in before the next meeting on the 24th. It would be amended to indicate pending permitted projects. She indicated that a lot of the discussion happening tonight is really more appropriate for the hearing, not for select board meeting.</p> <p>Cassy Mills – thinks the statement about “retroactiveness” should indicate that the moratorium apply up to the point of approved permits from planning board.</p>
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		<p>Toupie Rooney clarified the steps already completed: came for an informational meeting, filled in the application, did site plan, answered all of the 26 questions, then they got on the agenda for the planning board and went through the approval process. Their application is complete just pending the site visit – this wasn't a rushed process.</p> <p>Rich – originally the planning board was just going to do a somewhat casual walk through and they asked that it be treated as a formal meeting. They want public input.</p> <p>Q: Betsy – will he (Rich) be at the next planning board meeting? A: Rich - Yes he will be there. He would also like all the documents about the project to be posted on the town website.</p> <p>Rich also noted that the moratorium ordinance is based off something very old, it wasn't originally based on grounded panels. Suggested changes to the ordinance. Can't touch the project till DEP is approved, also not seeing the decommission plan in the ordinance.</p> <p>Q: Bruce Carigan - There's a couple of bills going through the state related to net metering? Is that applicable to this project? A: Rich – there are 4 bills starting public hearing, may consolidate into one bill. Not clear about what the program is going to be but there is still room for improvement. He doesn't think the program changes will impact the project on Blueberry Hill. Thinks any impacts would only be to the larger scale projects.</p> <p>Q: Teresa Gaffney – Ragen Paul has submitted LD451 wanting testing for wind and solar panels for PFAS. We know Maine has a huge problem with PFAS on agricultural land – should we be more concerned about that instead of pushing ahead on something that may be a massive concern for agricultural land. If in 20 years someone changes their mind, what is the legacy on the land? She says that panel manufacturers don't have to say what's in their panels. Is there going to be soil testing, water testing, what's the decommission plan? She hopes that the moratorium will go into effect so that there is time to study those impacts. A: Betsy Bradley – Searsport Water district does test the water. Questions need to be answered and considered in the ordinance, that's why there would be a moratorium to make sure a committee gets going to work through all of the questions. It's also why the moratorium could be extended if the work isn't completed.</p> <p>Kristi Trafton – these questions would need to be considered in the hearings. The purpose of the moratorium is to provide the time to create the ordinance.</p>
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Kathy Kamzelski – if we have two public meetings to vote on the moratorium, then we need 2 weeks to notify before the hearing, does it make more sense to skip the moratorium and instead focus on getting the ordinance written in time for June meeting with all the deadlines being met?

Toupie Rooney- Need 60 days to be given to the clerk before the town meeting. Interested people can ask to be on that committee – send an email or call

Kristi Trafton – if we were to expedite the ordinance in time for the June meeting then a moratorium wouldn't be needed based on timing. However, the board and town want the moratoriums so that new projects are paused.

Diane - There wouldn't need to be a special town meeting for the moratorium to be extended.

Q: Becky Sipret- is it in the best interest of the town to have the project managers involved in the town meetings and the ordinances? She doesn't think they should be writing the ordinance for us.

A: Toupie Rooney – Yes they should be involved because they are providing information. Information from all sides of the issue is needed to build the ordinance. Then the town will vote on it. Suggests going forward with the moratorium then take the time to get a well written ordinance put together.

Betsy Bradley – reiterated that it will be important that the committee must represents all opinions and points of view.

Rich – agrees it may seem odd to have someone like him there but he says that there are so many towns that have done the leg work and we should reference their ordinances rather than starting from scratch.

Concern was noted about the potential for conflict of interest with the people developing the project with people who also work for the town. Toupie says that all the rules have been followed.

Q: Are the neighbors taken into account in the approvals?

A: Toupie – they were taken into account at the public meeting held the month before.

Q: Becky Sipret – how is it that this is a commercial project if this is a residential zone?

A: Toupie – utilities are allowed in that zone

Q: Once the retroactive date is put into the moratorium ordinance, how will people get it to review it?

		<p>John Bellino will post to it to the website. It has to be available 10 days before the public hearing, it will need to be ready by Wednesday of this week. Hard copies can also be available in the office.</p> <p>Kristi Trafton- also suggests having paper copies at the hearing.</p> <p>Betsy Sipret - John what day will this be posted? Kristi Trafton – on Wednesday</p> <p>The hearing will be prior to the next select board at 6pm on the 24th.</p> <p>Betsy Bradley – if anyone wants to be on the committee reach out to John Bellino via email, call or in person.</p> <p>Betsy Bradley – thanks for all the feedback and the civil conversation</p>
9.	Treasurers warrant and report	<p>The select board reviewed the warrant provided by John Bellino. It was noted the date on the paperwork is incorrect – it reads as February but should be March. It is noted that it is effective as of today.</p> <p>There was a question about a land use line item under revenues – John indicated that we have a lot more revenue than budgeted. A negative in the form indicated more than budgeted.</p> <p>Betsy Bradley made a motion to approve accounts payable warrant #56, seconded by Marsha Shute, approved by unanimous vote.</p> <p>The select board members signed off on the warrant.</p>
10.	Public Comment – any topic	<p>A. <u>Public</u></p> <p>Q Sharon Bannon - about broadband plan – what is the end result for the average citizen? A: Liz Lenharr provided some details – she has attended 1 meeting so far. They are going to build the infrastructure from Winterport down 1A. This first phase is considered the “backbone” project.</p> <p>Q: Sharon Bannon - Was that voted on? A: Liz - Yes it was approved long before Liz was a select board member. Before her, the previous town manager attended these meetings. At some point a website will be made live where people can express their desire to hook up to the service. There must be another grant to get the fingers out to the community.</p> <p>Q: Sharon - She doesn’t have internet and doesn’t want it, will she have to get it? A: Liz - It is an opt in situation. There will be a reduced connectivity fee, there are different packages that can be enrolled in. It is being handled through Unitil. It’s bringing service to underserved</p>

communities. The committee is called “1A Broadband”. It includes Winterport, Frankfort, Stockton, and Prospect. Liz is trying to catch up on what has happened over the years.

Betsy Bradley – reminded everyone that the catalyst for this was the pandemic when students didn’t have internet to attend remote school.

Q: Brian Abru – is it broadband, not fiberoptic?

A: Liz – it is fiberoptic. Bringing the cable down starting this summer, it will be all the way down rt 1A in 2026. But the fingers out to neighborhoods and homes will require additional grant approval.

Sarah Hardy – Announcement about a meeting on Wednesday at 6pm for the Resilience Committee to get input from the town about climate change vulnerability. Please join!

B. Select Board

none

C. Town Manager/Including Routine Updates

The antenna is getting reinstalled this week.

There is a bond meeting this week, the ambulance is here! There was a run within 2 hours of having it and 2 of the first runs were for Stockton residents. Unfortunately, the truck already required servicing because the side door wouldn’t open.

John raised the issue with the Sandy Point Road sink hole

George Russell – plowed over it twice with a loaded truck and couldn’t believe he didn’t go through. Below Hersey Retreat and Main St. A lot of fill went in. What happened was, the pipe froze, and the water comes down the hill with great pressure so when it hit the frozen part it came out the sides around it. It’s going to cost \$10,000 in repairs.

Q: John – can we get reimbursed from FEMA?

A: George – it was difficult before but can try.

John – an assistant harbor master has been selected. Alan Robbins is the new hire. Needs to be appointed tonight.

Betsy Bradley made a motion to affirm the hiring of Alan Robbins as Assistant Harbor Master, Marsha Shute seconded, the vote passed unanimously.

		Q: Where will the docks go? A: Right back into the existing positions
11.	Adjourn	Motion made by Betsy Bradley to adjourn at 7:45 pm. Seconded by Marsha Shute and approved unanimously.

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> <p>As of 3/10 – expected to be installed that week. Keeping open pending confirmation.</p>
1/20/25	Research new high-speed internet for Town facilities – town office, town garage, harbor master building	John Bellino	Assigned to new interim town manager in 1/27/25 meeting In process as of 2/10/25
1/27/25	Create warrants and plan for June town meeting: 1. Broadband, next phase (this will be June meeting)	Loren Cole or new Interim town manager John Bellino	Pending

2/10/25	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)	John Bellino	Pending
2/10/2025	Because of the cancelation of the Tally Ho purchase, can we use the ARPA funds for the ambulance? 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.	John Bellino	On 3/10 we learned that it must be used for broadband but that is only \$52,000 remaining so need to know what will happen to the remaining \$30,000
3/10/25	John to make sure that there is some reminder that we disburse the remaining funds (beyond the \$52,000) before the deadline		
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	Meeting during the week of 3/10/25
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. On 3/10/25 we have the final policy but it can't be put into effect until after the next town meeting. Will close the action item after that time.
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	Get the 2025 Planning Board meeting minutes posted to the town website	John Bellino	In process – need to see if other minutes after January have been posted.
3/10/2025 morning	Budget action: John to ask George about how they came up with this number for portable potties.	John Bellino	
3/10/2025 morning	Budget action: Amber – need to add a line to the budget for earned paid leave. She will work with John on that	John Bellino and Amber Poulin	
3/10/2025 evening	John will take an action item to add a warrant to the town meeting for the new wording of the Tax Acquired Properties policy.	John Bellino	
3/10/25 evening	John will see if we have a place for policies to be stored online and if so will post the “keep the heat on” policy on the town website.	John Bellino	
3/10/25 Evening	John Bellino will post the updated draft of the Solar Project Moratorium to it to the website. It has to be available 10 days before the public hearing, it will need to be ready by Wednesday of this week.	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	Contact Tim Pease (town lawyer) for next steps in acquiring funds and paying for the ambulance approved at the 12/30/24 town meeting 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.	John Bellino	discussed next steps in 1/27/25 meeting Complete, on 2/10/25 meeting.
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	Create warrants and plan for special town meeting or June town meeting: 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 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. a. The select board decided to initiate the negotiations. 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.	John Bellino	In process, see notes from 1/27/25 meeting notes. John to get final numbers in time to be included on the warrant for 2/24/25 special town meeting.

			Closed on 2/24/25 when the town voted against buying out the solar lease.
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
2/24/2025	<p>John will have a Stockton springs draft of the tax acquired property's sales policy ready for the next meeting (March 10, 2025)</p>	John Bellino	Discussed in 2/24/25 select board notes Completed draft reviewed in 3/10 meeting.
2/24/2025	<p>Create a clean copy of the Keep the Heat on policy and bring back to next meeting (March 10, 2025)</p>	John Bellino	Discussed in 2/24/25 select board notes

			Complete at 3/10/25 meeting
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 Complete – the budget review process began on 3/10/25
2/24/2025	Add solar moratorium to the next Select Board agenda (March 10,2025)	John Bellino	Complete. Reviewed moratorium at 3/10 meeting