

**TOWN OF ROME, MAINE
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
JUNE 12, 2017
MINUTES**

Chairman Richard LaBelle called the meeting of the Board of Selectmen to order at 6:04 p.m. in the Selectmen's Office at the Rome Community Center in Rome. Selectmen LaBelle, Stratton, and Charles were present. A quorum was declared. Also present at all or parts of the meeting were Kimberly Brooks, Carroll Bubar, Dr. Andrew Cook, Abby DiPietro, Carl Gartley, Albert Knight, Tammy Lyons, Ed Pearl, Jr., and Louis Turner.

Selectman LaBelle opened the public hearing on revised cemetery lot fees at 6:04 p.m.

Selectman Stratton states that she believes an increase in fees is appropriate.

Treasurer Tammy Lyons states approximately one or two lots per year are sold. The current fee for a cemetery lot of five plots is \$150.

Resident Albert Knight states the item should be put to a vote of Town Meeting next year.

Selectman LaBelle closed the public hearing at 6:08 p.m.

Charles/Stratton Motion to accept minutes for May 30, 2017 selectmen's meeting
LaBelle, Stratton, Charles in favor (3-0)

RSU 18 School Board Director Dr. Andrew Cook and Assistant Superintendent Carl Gartley speak to the Board regarding the school budget process. Mr. Gartley also fields questions from the Board related to the status of the schools. Dr. Cook has provided the Board with a list of potential concerns/inquiries related to the schools.

Selectman LaBelle stated that he was disappointed with the lack of public hearings throughout the budget process. In the past, each town was scheduled for a public hearing (Rome was included in Belgrade). This was a time for residents to come out on a more flexible schedule and to learn about the budget proposal.

Selectman LaBelle asked Mr. Gartley what his sense of the budget process has been for this year. Mr. Gartley says that the process has been very quiet this year and is unsure of the final outcome.

Selectman LaBelle asks Mr. Gartley if the District is working on any plan to ease the burden to taxpayers. The number of students enrolled at the schools continues to plummet while costs continue to rise. Mr. Gartley states that folks do not want to close schools and that they are looking for additional state funding. Selectman LaBelle states that the school district should stop blaming the state for a lack of funding and hold ourselves accountable on a local basis.

Selectman Charles states his disappointment with the school performance. In public meetings, he is also disappointed with the lack of respect and decorum for the American flag. There has been a lot of disagreement at the state level regarding budgets and school funding. Selectman Charles suggests calling legislators to enforce the 55 percent rule.

At the Board's inquiry, Assistant Superintendent Gartley discussed the process of transitioning back to a town that was on a tuition basis. In the past, this provided the town with a significant cost savings. After joining then-SAD 47, education costs for the town have escalated. Mr. Gartley states he believes tuition-basis would be more costly for the Town of Rome. These rates would be negotiated between the RSU and the Town and he wouldn't foresee the district

negotiating costs down. Mr. Gartley also discusses the potential impact of a special needs student on a Town's education costs, which can be significant.

Resident Albert Knight has purchased an abutting lot to his primary residence and has found tires buried. Mr. Knight is requesting permission to take 25-30 tires to Waste Management in order to get the tires out of the land.

LaBelle/Charles Motion to authorize Albert Knight to take tires, dumped on his property by someone else, to Waste Management.
LaBelle, Stratton, Charles in favor (3-0)

Resident Louis Turner has a large tree in his front yard that he believes is in the Town's right-of-way. The tree is dying and should be removed. Mr. Turner would like the Town to remove the tree. Road Commissioner Carroll Bubar suggests that Mr. Turner contact Central Maine Power to notify them of the potential damage to their utilities. Mr. Bubar will also notify CMP.

Road Commissioner Carroll Bubar provides an update on summer roadwork. Watson Pond Road is being finished. Bubar has brought gravel in for the shoulder of the road in certain places; this will be complete within the next few days. Mr. Bubar will complete brush cutting this year; he will provide the Board with a price at the next meeting.

Road signs provided through the DOT grant program will be progressively installed. Bubar will begin this in the next two weeks. Selectman Stratton notes that street signs on both ends of Mercer Road are missing and need to be replaced.

The Code Enforcement Officer is not present; there is no report. It is noted that June 17 is the deadline for the DiPietro junkyard on Augusta Road to come into compliance. This will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

Selectman Stratton reviews the surveys submitted by residents interested in serving on the Town of Rome Academic Options Exploratory Committee. There were eight surveys received. The committee is to be established with five members.

Stratton/Charles Motion to appoint Elaind Eadler, Lynn LaBelle, Doris Mathias, Chip Ridky, and Hannah Workman to the Town of Rome Academic Options Exploratory Committee.
Stratton, Charles in favor; LaBelle abstains (2-0-1)

The Board has received a letter from the State of Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry ordering the Town to discontinue its use of Warden's Report immediately. Warden's Report is an online service that allows residents to get a burn permit at no cost. The program automatically notifies a designated group of individuals, as determined by the Fire Department. According to the State, no online service is legally authorized to issue burn permits. All links have been removed from the Town website and the Assistant Fire Chief acknowledges the request of the State and direction of the Board.

LaBelle/Charles Motion to recess at 7:53 p.m.
LaBelle, Stratton, Charles in favor (3-0)

Selectman LaBelle calls the meeting of the Board of Selectmen back to order at 7:58 p.m.

Treasurer and Tax Collector Tammy Lyons provides the Board with the general warrant and an update on her office. Lyons is requesting daily cash-ups from all employees. This was a request of the auditor, but will also assist in recordkeeping related to credit card transactions.

LaBelle/Charles Motion to establish a policy that all Town Office employees must complete a daily cash-up and submit it to the Treasurer.
LaBelle, Stratton, Charles in favor (3-0)

LaBelle/Stratton Motion to accept a donation in the amount of \$500.00 to Rome Fire and Rescue from Tall Pines Charitable Foundation (John & Wendy Schlosser).
LaBelle, Stratton, Charles in favor (3-0)

LaBelle/Charles The meeting be adjourned.
LaBelle, Stratton, Charles in favor (3-0)

Meeting adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly R. Brooks
Assistant to the Selectmen