

**TOWN OF ROME, MAINE**  
**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
**JANUARY 22, 2018**  
**MINUTES**

Chairman Richard LaBelle called the meeting of the Board of Selectmen to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's Office at the Rome Community Center in Rome. Selectmen LaBelle and Stratton were present; Selectman Charles is absent. A quorum was declared. Also present at all or parts of the meeting were Kimberly Brooks, Andrew Cook, Tammy Lyons, Ed Pearl, Jr., and Denny Phillips.

Recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Selectman LaBelle opened the public hearing on the proposed warrant article to transition the offices of Treasurer, Tax Collector, and Town Clerk from elected to appointed.

Resident Andrew Cook posed three questions he deemed important in examining whether or not the change was necessary: 1. What is the driving factor? 2. What are the checks and balances? 3. Is this a more appropriate time to consider a town manager form of government?

Selectman Stratton stated that there will be expanded hours, which will bring townspeople a greater level of convenience. She has worked in the office for years in the past and believes this is a logical solution to the Town's current situation. She does not believe this would cost much, if any, more than what is being spent presently.

Resident Denny Phillips states that he likes the small town feel in Rome and questions whether the current system is broken.

Selectman LaBelle stated that most everyone he speaks with appreciates the same small town feeling and this doesn't intend to change that. It would create an office where access was expanded, checks and balances would be enhanced, costs would be controlled, and qualifications could be guaranteed. These positions are highly technical and require specialized training; the Town currently does not have a succession plan. Currently the Town Clerk and Excise Tax Collector are deputized, but the Tax Collector and Treasurer has resisted appointing a deputy.

Mr. Cook states that there are other positions within the town that are technical and are entrusted to appointment: Plumbing Inspector, Code Enforcement, Excise Tax Collector, and more. He believes that if these are technical positions, that there is good consideration of the costs and benefits.

Treasurer and Tax Collector Tammy Lyons believes the questions should be posed by secret ballot on Friday before Town Meeting. She believes it is important for maximum public participation. She suggests the possibility of voting in November.

Selectman LaBelle states his support for putting the question before open Town Meeting on Saturday with the possibility of a motion to request secret ballot voting that day. He believes that public participation is great, but that voters need to be well-educated about the pros and cons related to such a transition. Selectman Stratton stated her support for considering the articles at open Town Meeting on Saturday, which would support an open dialogue. This would allow people to ask questions, get answers, and cast an informed vote.

Excise Tax Collector and Assistant to the Selectmen Kimberly Brooks inquired about having a plan for backup in the event an employee goes out on leave.

Selectman LaBelle declared the public hearing adjourned at 6:21 p.m.

Selectman LaBelle declared the meeting recessed at 6:21 p.m., as there was no quorum.

Selectman LaBelle called the meeting back to order at 6:24 p.m. A quorum was declared.

Stratton/LaBelle        Motion to accept minutes for January 8, 2018 selectmen's meeting.  
LaBelle, Stratton in favor (2-0)

Road Commissioner Carroll Bubar filed his report with the Board prior to the meeting. He stated that in the recent flooding, Crystal Spring Lane washed out and required gravel be brought in to make the road passable. This job was completed by contractor Bruce York. There were also six beavers removed from the wetlands on Crystal Spring Lane.

Tax Collector and Treasurer Tammy Lyons provided an update on her office. She reminded the Board that the auditor would be in January 25-26. The Board requests a preliminary total of the undesignated fund so that the budget and warrant could be completed. The Board requested a revenue and expense report after this evening's warrant transactions were posted.

The Board is in receipt of a letter dated 10 January 2018 from John O'Donnell, Esq. of Tilton & O'Donnell, on behalf of Robert & Janice Moreau. Attorney O'Donnell claims the notice of automatic foreclosure was improperly served upon the owners, as the returned certified card was signed by a minor. The letter states that the owners are prepared to pay 2015 taxes in full. Selectman LaBelle states that there will be no action on this letter until the next meeting; he will be recusing himself and the Board will require the other two members present in order to make a determination.

The Board is in receipt of a letter from Waste Management regarding the contractual increase in solid waste disposal. The contracted increase figured to be 3.7%; however, Waste Management will be capping the increase at 3%, effective February 1, 2018.

The Board is in receipt of a public notice from the Town of Belgrade Planning Board. There will be a hearing at the Belgrade Town Office on February 1, 2018, at 7:00 p.m. regarding a proposal for Brightside Marina. While the parcel is in Belgrade, it is on Great Pond Stream, which means Rome property is directly across the stream.

The municipal attorney has conducted a preliminary review of the 2018 Town Meeting warrant. She has made some suggested changes and will conduct a final review once the Board has had a chance to vote on all items.

LaBelle/Stratton        Motion to warrant an article to be voted on by secret ballot to raise and appropriate \$315,000, plus monies received under LRAP, for the paving and reconstruction of North Pond Road.  
LaBelle, Stratton in favor (2-0)

LaBelle/Stratton        Motion to warrant an article to raise and appropriate \$9,700 for TRIO software.  
LaBelle, Stratton in favor (2-0)

Selectman LaBelle stated that he discussed the process of recuperating funds from FEMA and MEMA related to Tropical Storm Philippe. The Town's EMA Director has not filed a request for public assistance and has not been in communication with the County EMA Director. The deadline for filing the request is February 2. Selectman LaBelle will reach out to the county and ensure the filing is made prior to the deadline.

Selectman Stratton discussed her interest in establishing a local response plan, in the event of an emergency. There must be a local plan and effort that will open up the Community Center for the public, in case of need. She believes the warming shelter was important in the community during the 1998 ice storm. She will continue to focus on this moving forward.

LaBelle/Stratton      The meeting be adjourned.  
LaBelle, Stratton in favor (2-0)

Meeting adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly R. Brooks  
Assistant to the Selectmen