

**MUNICIPAL OFFICERS MEETING MINUTES  
&  
PUBLIC HEARING**

**April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
7:00 p.m.  
9:40 p.m.**

**Eric Durgin  
Cory Hale  
Karen James**

Meeting called to order with all 3 Municipal officers present. 41 residents present for the public hearing.

Eric opened the public hearing at 7:01 p.m. and explained the purpose of the public hearing.

Mt. Division Rail to Trail - Dan Hester is a proponent of tearing up the existing tracks and improving the bed for a multipurpose trail. He explained that the railroad MCRR can still bring the train back at anytime and put tracks down on the trail if ever needed. If track is left and trail built beside the track it would be a major issue when coming to the trussell over the river and over Pequawket Lake in Brownfield.

Patty Barber – spoke against tearing up the track and read a lengthy explanation of reasons bringing back the train would bring economic growth to the town and be very useful to businesses in the area for shipping purposes.

Bev Russell – stated that in the North the trail is beside the track and in the South the trail is beside the track but the area connecting the two sections will have to be trail on the track bed because of the crossing of the river, pond and wetlands.

Rep. Rick Bennett – stated that the DOT hearing had over 200 people attend and 210 people were for tearing up the tracks because even if the train was to come back in use the tracks would have to be replaced and 5 were against. He stated that every town that currently has the rail to trail has been very beneficial to the towns and has seen economic growth. There are 28 miles to join the trails from Sebago Lake region to NH line.

Dave Kingsman from Lovell is the chairman/president of the Mt. Division advisory committee – In Quebec there is 22 miles of trail that 1 million people use and in brought in 2 million in revenue for the abutting communities. He has ridden many of the trails and seen new businesses pop up everywhere.

Terry Eagan from Brownfield – is for the trail over the tracks not beside because of the extreme cost of replacing the existing tracks and bed sufficient for rail service.

David Newman – owns Bike shop in Cornish – supports trail over track

Bruce McLaughlin – feels that the trail is not diversified enough and allow ATV's, and motorcycles on these trails. Feels it would not benefit sportsman enough.

Sally Williams – has more questions for the Mt. Division pertaining to abutting property owners before any develop would begin or allowed since her property abuts the rail now.

David Kingsman assured Sally that Mt. Division has put rules and regulations in place to make it easier for abutting property owners now.

Ed Leborgne – stated that these trail systems are fantastic and provide great access throughout the state as well as economic growth for businesses. He has gone on a few and seen what they have done to improve the communities. The snowmobile club maintains the trail all winter.

Jeff Gilliland – supports trail – economic boom wherever they put these trails but would like to know the contamination these old railroad ties and rails are causing along the tracks now.

Andy Buck from Brownfield – feels should postpone and that the state should spend the money on bigger issues such as health issues, drug overdoses, and mental health systems.

Dr. Joseph Dekay – has studied issues and the trails would be a benefit to health issues including health, drugs, and suicide issues.

Allyssa Carmichael – feels paving the trails would be better for people that have issues with wood ticks and other allergens or health issues.

Jan Williams – in favor of the trail over track

Patty Barber – but we can do both!

Dan Hester – issue again is the causeway across Pequawket Lake in Brownfield and the trussell. If try to go around the lake you have to deal with abutters.

Brian Schnell – thank you for all your work and likes the trail

Pat Dearnott – what is the cost to the town.

David Kingman – stated the cost for trail is 18 million dollars for 28 miles for trail but that is after the pulled up ties and rails are sold. No cost to towns.

Rick Bennett – stated there would be an interlocal agreement with the town and it is being paid for with federal funds and capital expense through the state. There would be a MDOT engineer study.

Myles Heard – who would be responsible for law enforcement along this trail? Feels since trucking and shipping expenses have increase so much that businesses would benefit from the train coming through.

Perry Perkins – is the towns liable for insurance?

Ellie Stein – in favor of the trail but wants it kept quiet with no motorized vehicles

Eric asked for a poll of those present. All those in favor of pulling tracks and building new bed with trail = 25 for and 6 against.

Public hearing for the Hiram Fire Dept Ordinance – Eric explained that this would unify the departments and have one fire chief with 2 deputy chiefs. Budgets would stay the same.

Perry Perkins asked if this would save the town money? And feels chief salary should be less money.

James Siracuse – the money for volunteers is not an issue but if this one chief is in charge of making sure there is all the MDOL trainings and compliances are met, inspections of trucks etc it will cost the towns more money.

Guy Lehouillier asked who is in charge of enforcing this ordinance?  
Board stated the fire chief and municipal officers.

Ethan Norcross – stated that the ISO rating should not change for insurance purposes for residences.

Board stated that the salary for the fire chief is \$5,000.

Terry stated that it would save the town money by combining expenses for purchases of equipment and combined training sessions so not paying double fees.

ADU Hearing – Guy explained the law that was LD 2003 for accessory dwelling units and additional dwelling units being allowed on a parcel with the primary dwelling unit.

Jan Williams stated that maybe we should postpone passing an ordinance for the ADU's since the state has several bills to review and adopt that may change the ordinance and the state has not even developed any regulations for the ADU's. Also with added housing it will increase our school cost.

**Public hearings were closed at 8:40 p.m.**

Board reviewed minutes and approved as read.  
Board reviewed warrants and signed with no changes.

**Board reviewed payrates for employees for 2023. Road commissioner from \$25 to \$27, experienced crew members from \$18 to \$20 and unexperienced crew \$15 to \$16/hr. Terry will retype and have ready for signatures next time.**

SHFD painting interior – Ken getting quotes – but approve  
Town office – Marylou asked about getting the interior painted and board stated to get some quotes.  
Renovation of office – get quotes and plans  
Flooring for the HFD – tiles are popping up and need to be replaced – Bruce will get quotes with the square footage of area needed to be replaced.

**Mt. Division support letters – motion made, seconded and voted in favor to sign the letters of support.**

**Board signed the Dispatch contract renewal for a 1 year contract –**

**Board reviewed the certified ratio document for the state – Terry explained that according to our assessor in order for us to be able to declare 100% we have to increase all buildings by 30% and all land by either 20% or 30% depending on location as well as the increase in well and septic for all properties. This will increase values but lower the tax rate at the same time you will be able to receive full reimbursements for the town. Board agreed and signed the CR document for the state.**

Cable Franchise – meeting Mon. April 24<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. at Cornish to go over the franchise renewal.

Ken Harmon asked if okay to purchase a large tarp to cover the sand/salt pile at the town garage? Board agreed and will reimburse Ken upon receiving the receipt. Ken stated there is approximately 1,000 yards left.

Todd Pierces' snowplow trucks are being stored on the town property.

**Board voted to go into executive session at 9:10 p.m. in accordance MRSA 405 SS 6A for personnel issues. Out of executive session at 9:35 p.m.**

**Board voted to increase Emma pay from \$17/hr to \$18/hr. Road Commissioner to \$27, road crew to \$20 and \$16.**

Meeting adjourned,  
Respectfully submitted,  
Terry Day