**MINUTES**

**MADISON PUBLIC HEARING & SELECT BOARD**

**OLD POINT SCHOOL MEETING ROOM 104**

**108 OLD POINT AVENUE**

**Monday February 26, 2024**

## 6:00 p.m.

1. The meeting was called to order at 6pm and all saluted to the flag.
2. Roll Call: All Select Board members were present.
3. Consent Agenda

A/P Warrants: #22 – 02-12-2024 - $527,558.51

Payroll Registers: #6 – 2-8-24 = $19,325.68, #7 – 2-15-24 = $15,177.41.

Motion by Ms. Estes, second by Ms. Dwyer. No discussion. Motion passed 5-0.

1. Acceptance of the minutes of the Select Board meeting on February 12, 2024.

Motion by Ms. Dwyer, second by Ms. Estes. No discussion. Motion passed 4-0-1 (Mr. Bean abstained).

1. Old Business:
2. Items of Communication:

Living Well reports: 2-18-2024, 2-25-2024.

Town Manager’s report on expenses and budget – currently at 57% (week 34 = 65%)

Audit draft received – response in progress – Town Manager working with auditors to answer questions and complete forms.

1. New Business
2. Public Hearing - Informative hearing regarding policing in Madison. Opportunity for citizens to ask questions and speak of their concerns.

Chairman Veneziano opened the public hearing at 6:03 pm with remarks that any specific incidents that require direct inquiry with the Sheriff should be directed to Sheriff Lancaster directly. Looking for comments on continuing our existing model of policing by the Somerset County Sheriff’s Office.

The Town Manager introduced Sheriff Lancaster who stated he had no remarks at this time. Scott Smith asked what exactly the Town of Madison is paying for. Sheriff Lancaster responded that there are three shifts, and a deputy is assigned to Madison for each shift, as well as an Administrative Assistant for 32 hours per week.

Mr. Smith asked about the purchase of police cruisers. Sheriff Lancaster responded that the contract includes the purchase of those vehicles and getting them equipped for patrol.

Mr. Smith followed up with a question of what the greatest number of calls from Madison to the Sheriff’s Department were. Sheriff Lancaster recited numbers from the annual report on 253 automobiles crashes, property checks, 77 theft complaints, 131 walk-ins, and some domestic issues.

Mr. Smith asked if the Town of Madison opted out of the current contract model, would the Sheriff’s Office still be liable to answer those calls and complaints. Sheriff Lancaster responded yes, but with over 18,000 calls from across the county last year, it may be a while before a deputy could respond.

Mr. Smith asked if the deputy dedicated to Madison would answer calls for Anson or other surrounding communities in the county. Sheriff Lancaster stated that there had been some severe staffing shortages over the last year. To that point, he would maximize the deputies’ efforts as needed, including calling him out of Madison for a short period of time.

Chairman Veneziano mentioned that the State Police have pulled back from their rural patrol. Sheriff Lancaster said that the State Police have reorganized and are policing the interstate 24/7 now. He anticipated that calls would go up about 1500 but they went up around 3000.

Ms. Triss Smith spoke up about the cost that the Town of Madison is already paying the county, with the annual assessment and the policing contract, putting Madison as the third highest paying town in the county. Also, the other communities without dedicated policing contracts are still getting services from the sheriff’s office without paying anything extra.

Mr. Tim Curtis clarified that Madison does pay about $800,000 toward the county assessment, of which $500,000 goes toward funding the jail, $200,000 goes to the Sheriff’s Office and the rest is split up into administrative services. It is significantly less than what Skowhegan, Pittsfield or Fairfield pays.

Mr. Smith asked if those figures were calculated on per capita or valuation. Ms. Curtis responded that it is both, and Madison pays about 6.5% of the total county budget.

Ms. Estes commented that she had previously asked Sheriff Lancaster to do a report on the assigned officers and was told he could do it for a cost. She wants to see what calls each officer assigned to Madison is called out for – whether it’s in Madison or not – in the monthly report to the Board.

Chairman Veneziano asked about a School Resource Officer. Sheriff Lancaster stated that the County Administrator and the Town Manager have been discussing this. The SCSO can build a model that will work for us. Chairman Veneziano said he’d like to see us move in that direction. Ms. Estes asked if the cost for an SRO was the same as a regular deputy. Sheriff Lancaster responded that there are certain standards that must be met, including finding the right person, and whether they are full-time or part-time.

Chairman Veneziano declared the public hearing closed after no further comments were made. The public hearing closed at 6:18pm.

1. Seeking volunteers for the Budget Advisory Board – we need one person to fill the slate required by ordinance.
2. Citizen Concerns:

Question was raised about a rumor/fact that the old Taylor’s Drug Store is being purchased by Acadia for a methadone clinic. Chairman Veneziano responded that as far as he knew, it was being purchased by Acadia. It is not the Board’s or the Town’s place to comment further.

Under that concern, Sheriff Lancaster introduced Betsy Richards, in partnership with Somerset Heart Health, who recently opened an office in Madison – the Community Connection Center – at the Old Point Avenue building on Thursdays from 1 to 4 pm. She helps connect people with treatment and recovery resources.

Mr. Tim Curtis spoke about the Town having nothing to do with the purchase of private property, no permitting is required. This is a private transaction. They will be offering a wide variety of services. There is a great need in our county for substance abuse counseling. He cautioned against making assumptions on social media.

Mr. Smith said he thought they are a non-profit organization, and it would remove a $500,000 property off from the tax rolls. That is not something that is known right now.

1. Select Board Concerns:

None

1. Executive Session to consider:

Personnel matter pursuant to 1 MRSA § 405-6(A).

Motion by Ms. Estes, second by Ms. Dwyer. No discussion. Motion passed 5-0. Entered executive session at 6:25pm.

Action out of Executive Session:

Motion by Ms. Estes, second by Ms. Dwyer to end the Town Manager’s probationary period as successfully completed. No discussion. Motion passed 5-0.

1. Adjournment:

Motion by Ms. Dwyer, second by Ms. Estes. No discussion. Motion passed 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:05pm.

NEXT REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING IS MARCH 25, 2024

OLD POINT SCHOOL

6:30 pm