

GREENWOOD SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES

April 8, 2025 – 5:00 pm

All Meetings are audio recorded.

Item 1: Roll call and determination of a quorum

Roll Call: Chair Amy Chapman, Selectman Norman A. Milliard, Selectman Robert Oickle, and Deputy Clerk Angela Lovejoy.

Item 2: Pledge of Allegiance

Item 3: Introductions - Chapman introduced:

- a. Zoom participants.
There were no zoom participants
- b. Participants were present.
Anne and John Kwoka – 486 Howe Hill Road
Rose Lincoln – The Bethel Citizen

Item 4: Chair Statement

If you wish to speak, please wait until the Chair has opened the floor to Public Comment or until we are at the agenda item you wish to speak on. Once the Chair has recognized you, please stand, state your name for the record, the agenda item, and the nature of your business. All comments and questions must be addressed to the Chair.

Item 5: Approval of Warrants

Expenditure Warrant # 40 – \$ 23,160.90 covering period Mar. 26, - Mar. 31, 2025

Expenditure Warrant # 41 \$ 68,602.32 covering period Apr.1, - Apr. 8, 2025, of which includes voucher #1133 to Flanders Electric in the amount of \$29,000.00.

The Board reviewed Warrant #40, and Warrant #41.

There was no discussion on the Warrants.

Selectman Milliard motioned and Selectman Oickle seconded to approve Warrant # 40, and Warrant # 41 as presented. Vote: 3-0. Motion passed.

Item 6: Review and approve minutes of March 25, 2025

The Board reviewed the minutes of March 25, 2025.

Selectman Oickle motioned and Selectman Milliard seconded to approve the minutes as read. Vote: 3-0. Minutes are approved.

Item 7: Selectmen contacted outside of meeting - No contact.

Item 8: Comments from the Public – No comments.

Item 9: Agenda Items – (15-minute limit per item)

- a. Discuss Letter from MMA regarding FY 2026 – FY 2027 State General Fund Budget – What's at Stake

Selectman Chapman said the Board received a “very scary” communication from MMA (Maine Municipal Association) saying that, if the State didn’t have a budget, the Town might have to pick up the bill for the State’s share of Greenwood’s expenses. She said they were advising the Town that a group of current and former Maine Lawmakers had submitted an application for a people’s veto referendum challenging the enactment of the budget – challenging the bill which contains the baseline appropriations and expenditures necessary to closeout this fiscal year and enable the State to continue operations. Chapman said if they were successful, they needed to collect 62,000 signatures (per Bob Oickle) by June in order to get it on the agenda. She said, if it were successful, it would freeze the budget until after November, and possibly beyond. Chapman said it stated in the letter that, “if the question were approved by the voters” (if they could get the signatures collected and get the question on the budget for November and get it approved) “then the budget was null and void and the delay in funding would be extended until the legislature could reconvene to draft and adopt a replacement budget”. Chapman said she believed they were now talking about next winter. She read from the document, “That means, without a budget, State funding for K-12 education and County Jails as well as revenue sharing for municipalities will not be available on July 1st (the beginning of Greenwood’s fiscal year). Depending on the outcome of the citizen’s petition, local governments could be without State funding until late November or later.” Chapman said the concern was that, absent a State budget, property taxpayers would be on the hook for funding the State and local share of school, county, and municipal services. She said they (MMA) were basically just making the Towns aware of that and wanted the Selectman to let people know what was at risk. Oickle asked Chapman if this had ever happened before since she had been on the Board. Chapman said no. She said it was a really big deal to basically throw a monkey wrench into a budget. She said it happens on a local level on school budgets and things – she cited Rumford as an example – but, she said, she had not known it to happen on the State level in the 16 years she’d been a Selectman for Greenwood. Oickle said that it wasn’t that the Town wasn’t going to get the money, it was just that it was going to be delayed. He asked Chapman if that was accurate. Chapman said the Town might not get the money in the amount that the State had appropriated for the Town. She said they might pass a budget with lower appropriations. She said the State had to give the Towns money for the schools but there was an argument about how much of the State’s share should be funded. Milliard said that 55% was the projected amount but the State had not ever actually paid that amount (for decades). Chapman said that among the appropriations were 1 ½ billion for K-12 education, \$265 million for each year biennium for revenue sharing (because it was a two-year budget), and \$20.3 million in both fiscal year 2026 and 2027 to support county jail operations. She said all of those things would have to be paid for because we couldn’t just open the jails and shut down the schools. She said she guessed they would have to pass a supplemental budget and collect a supplemental property tax. Oickle said he was wondering if they could float the amount. He wondered what amount they were talking about. Milliard asked Lovejoy if she had an idea on how much, in the last fiscal year, the Town received from the State for education purposes. Lovejoy said she did not think the Town got the money directly and did not know. Chapman said the money always came in after Town Meeting and so the Town didn’t usually have a figure until after Town Meeting. She said she didn’t know what the figure was either. Oickle asked if the money went to SAD#44. Chapman said she thought so but there was a specific number for each Town. Rose Lincoln said the School Board had been trying to figure out the budget for SAD#44 even though the actual public meeting was not until May. She said there was an approximation online.

Oickle said he was thinking that, if the budget were delayed, and, assuming that the dollar amount was similar to what they would normally get, then the Selectboard would have a time frame where they would have to supply the extra money. But, he said, it wouldn't necessarily be that they would have to pass it on to Greenwood taxpayers. Chapman agreed. She used an example, explaining that if the calculated budget were 1.5 billion and a budget of 1.4 billion was passed instead, then Towns would be on the hook for the difference of .1 billion. The Board agreed with that assessment. Milliard said it was a scary uncertainty. Chapman said she thought Oickle was right – she didn't think that the budget wasn't going to happen, it was just that the idea that it might happen six months later than it should. Oickle said it was scary, but especially for Towns that did not have the capacity to temporarily come up with the extra money. What were they going to do? Chapman agreed and said that some towns did not have a "rainy day" fund or a surplus. Oickle said they would have to pass it on to the taxpayers, and then what? Reimburse the taxpayers when they got paid by the State? Lovejoy said the towns would probably have to get some sort of loan. Chapman said collecting 62,000 signatures sounded daunting, but a lot of times people would sign things without knowing the details of what they were actually signing for. Oickle said it also depended on how it was presented. He asked if they knew the reason why it was being done – did they think the budget was too high? Chapman said yes. She said it was a People's Veto and anyone could get signatures to put it on the November ballot. The number of signatures depended on how many people voted in the last election. She said the number was high because the last election had a good turn out. Chapman said the letter from MMA was letting the Board know that right now it is a "wait and see" situation but, don't just wait, have a plan just in case. There was discussion on whether the Town received funds for the school directly from the State or not. Chapman said she believed the school received the money directly from the State and then deducted a certain amount from each Town's bill. Chapman said the budget issue was definitely something to make people aware of at Town Meeting. Milliard agreed. Oickle said that part of the communication was that they should get in touch with their legislators. He asked if there was something they should be doing collectively to respond and say they were not happy. Chapman read from the letter that MMA advised the Town to "Demand the adoption and implementation of a budget before July 1st. The legislature's inability to adopt a budget does not bode well for Maine and, more importantly, related burdens should not be borne by the property taxpayers." She read, "While members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee continue to discuss budget matters, it does not guarantee that a State shut down will be averted." Chapman said they needed a budget that would pass by 2/3rds vote. Oickle said the letter was dated April 3rd and they hadn't heard anything since that letter. He said he assumed MMA would keep them informed. Chapman said she assumed the same. She said she didn't think there was a lot that the Selectboard could do at the present time. It was mentioned that Greenwood's Town Meeting for the current year is May 17th. Chapman asked if there was any more to discuss on the issue. Milliard and Oickle said they were all set.

Item 10: Other business and communications –

- a. John Kwoka attended the meeting and was concerned about the setback change from the current 10 feet to the proposed 25 feet. He asked if it was on the next Town Meeting agenda. Selectman Chapman said she did not think it was on the agenda for the next Town Meeting because it would require review and a hearing before it could be voted on. Oickle said it was not a big deal and could be done. Lovejoy said the setback had been 20 feet before it was changed to the current 10 feet because a group

of residents in Town wanted to be able to build closer to their property lines in accordance with their neighbors. Oickle asked if the current proposed change was the Planning Board's recommendation. Kwoka said he believed most of the Planning Board would support the 25 feet. He said it would take care of some of the issues that had come to their attention recently. Milliard said on the March 25th meeting agenda there was an item listed to discuss the Land Use Ordinances changes for the annual Town Meeting. He said Kim explained about the individuals on Howe Hill who were requesting setback changes and the Planning Board agreed to ask the voters at the annual Town Meeting if they would approve the changes. It was agreed that the change was going to be discussed and voted on at the 2025 Annual Town Meeting. Some of the proposed changes were discussed including commercial structure setbacks.

- b. John Kwoka mentioned the Town had nothing for ordinances or codes regarding campgrounds. He said anyone who wanted to have a campground had to pass hurdles with the State to say they had a campground but there were no local rules. He said the State used the term "wilderness" campgrounds for campgrounds that did not require any amenities. He said there was a proposed site in Greenwood for a campground that had the potential to become a site for homeless people if the Town allowed primitive camping 24/7. He said the individuals did not plan to have on site management and he was concerned that there would be no one around to advise people on campfires, trash, etc. Chapman asked if there was anything in the State regulations about length of occupancy. (There was not.) Anne said the particular campground idea in question was "off the books" for this year. She said she didn't think they understood the hurdles involved for what they wanted to do. She said the State required licensing on 5 or more sites and you could literally open 4 sites in your backyard (she said there was an app called Hipcamp that allowed people to air B&B their backyard). Anne said she thought that, if Greenwood were going to allow campgrounds, it would be wise to go with seasonal only because winters in Maine were rough. Chapman said they had a conversation before about campers and the fact that they were not to be lived in year-round in Maine. She said septic issues needed to be addressed even for wilderness camping. Anne said the previous proposed campground owners were going to put in only one pit toilet with no running water and no accommodations for trash (for 15 sites). She said the State had specific regulations for these campgrounds except for the "wilderness" designation. She said the rules did require 10,000 sq. ft. per site for "wilderness". She said if the Town wanted to think about it, she would encourage them to follow the State guidelines but limit the campgrounds to seasonal only. Chapman asked if wilderness, by definition, meant only tents. Anne said the law didn't State what could be brought in as a shelter. She said a wilderness site was going to rent for \$15-\$20 per night vs State park sites at \$45 per night, and commercial campgrounds at \$50 per night. Oickle said typically, at a campground, there was a choice of shelter (tent or camper, etc.). John said the Town's rules and regulations were silent to campgrounds and he wished the Board to consider rules for campgrounds including a rule that they could only operate from May 1st to October 31st and that they must have on-site personnel 24/7. Chapman said there were no rules in any of the Town's ordinances at the moment for campgrounds. She said what John was suggesting was that the Town come up with a separate ordinance regulating campgrounds that was slightly more restrictive than the State. John said he was concerned about the aforementioned campground proposal trying to find loopholes for complying to regulations. He wished for the Town to have some solid rules to go by for campgrounds. Milliard asked what kind of land the owners were thinking of having their campground on. Anne said they had 14 acres and planned on using 4 for the campground. She said she thought the stumbling block right now was hiring an engineer for the 10,000 square feet per site and figuring out trash and septic management, etc. Lovejoy said the road into the property would

also need to be brought up to specs for a fire truck to get to the property in an emergency. She mentioned that there must be other Towns that had similar ordinances that Greenwood could go by, and that sanitation would definitely be of concern. There were such things as composting toilets, but, if there were a lot of people, how would anyone keep track of who is actually using them and where the contents were disposed of? Chapman said there was also no water on site so every bit of water used for cooking and washing dishes would need to be hauled in. Anne said health and safety issues would definitely need to be addressed. She said the above-mentioned property had only a permit for a shed to store tools in until they figured things out. She was concerned for the future when the proposal was put on the table again next year. She wished the Town to have some definite rules set in place. Milliard asked Lovejoy to reach out to other municipalities to see if there were any existing ordinances they could look at. The Board agreed to look into the issue of adopting a campground ordinance.

- c. Anne Kwoka was concerned about the proposed noise ordinance. She said she talked to Town Manager Kim Sparks about it. She said Sparks was only able to find one other Town in Maine that had a noise ordinance because they were extremely difficult to enforce. She said a measuring device was needed and an ordinance that contained specific measurements. She said she thought the Town's site plan ordinance had some noise restrictions in it. Anne said (if she were to enforce a noise ordinance) she might get calls late at night or early in the morning and that wasn't something she thought she wanted to deal with – wander into a contentious situation or altercation late at night. She said unless there was constant law enforcement who could show up any time of the day or night, it would be very difficult to enforce a noise ordinance, and she didn't really want to be on call 24/7. Anne mentioned she thought that working with parties involved could usually solve noise problems rather than clamping down with regulations. Chapman said a noise ordinance was wildly unpopular 10 years ago when the Selectboard brought a noise ordinance to Town Meeting. Oickle said the Board agreed with Anne and were aware of her concerns – it was one side vs the reality of whether or not an ordinance could actually be enforced. Chapman asked if the Town had heard back from the attorney on the issue yet. Lovejoy said she was not sure. Milliard said they had agreed to get additional advice on whether the enforcement would complicate things. Chapman said that advice was on whether or not they should bring forward an ordinance that they could not enforce. Oickle said he thought Sparks told him the Town's attorney said that if the Board put forward an ordinance that they couldn't enforce, they could be taken to court. John said if the Town had an ordinance but did not enforce it, the person being impacted could sue the Town for not enforcing the ordinance. Milliard read part of a letter and the email thread from Sparks and the Town's attorney stating something similar. Lovejoy mentioned the person enforcing the noise ordinance would also need to be trained, and that training was in Massachusetts. Anne said the Town would need to purchase a machine and take it to Massachusetts once a year for calibration. She said any successor to her position would also need to be trained. She said she was part time and she and John traveled out of Town sometimes during the week. During those times she would not be able to respond to noise complaints and adequately enforce a noise ordinance. Oickle said he agreed with the attorney that they should not pass something they could not enforce.

Item 11: Town Manager update to the Board of Selectmen - see attached.

Chapman asked if the Board wished to discuss anything on the update sheet (attached). She asked if Sparks met with Everett Excavation. Milliard said it had been rescheduled. Chapman said the next Board meeting would include a public hearing on

the budget and after that - Town Meeting Warrant and budget documents would be put together and signed.

Item 12: Meetings and Events

No Planning Board Meeting in April

April 22nd – Selectmen’s Meeting, Budget Public Hearing 5:00pm GTO

April 30th – Swap Shop Opening

May 3rd – Earth day, roadside cleanup – 9am GTO, rain date May 10th – 9am

May 5th – Planning Board Meeting, 5:30pm GTO

May 6th – Selectmen’s Meeting, 5:00pm GTO

May 13th – Conservation Committee Mtg, 10:00am GTO

May 17th – Annual Town Meeting, 9:00am Legion Hall

May 19th – Planning Board Meeting, 5:30pm GTO

May 20th – Selectmen’s Meeting, 5:00pm GTO

June 3rd – Selectmen’s Meeting, 5:00pm GTO

June 10th – School Budget Vote, 8am to 8pm GTO

June 16th – Area Selectmen’s Workshop, 5pm to 7 pm, Telstar Library

June 17th – Selectmen’s Meeting, 5:00pm GTO

Item 13: Adjourn - Having no further business, Selectman Oickle motioned, and Selectman Milliard seconded to adjourn the meeting at 5:50 pm. Vote: 3-0. Meeting is adjourned.