

# Town of Embden



## Minutes of the Board of Selectpersons

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April 6, 2015

### 19:00 PM Meeting held at the Embden Town Office

**Board Members In attendance.** Scott LeHay, Elizabeth Pratt, Charles Taylor

**Board Members Absent.** None

**Other Officials Present.** Dwight Barron, Ruth Blake, Robert Dunphy, Eleanor Ketchum, Terriann Lamontagne, Leo Mayo

**Members of the Public Present.** Joe Creamer, Timothy & Torry Wahler, Larry Witham.

**Secretary.** Bonnie Baker

1. Charles Taylor called the meeting to order at 19:03.
2. **Consent Agenda.**
  - 2.1. Approved the minutes of the Board of Selectpersons dated March 16, 2015 as written (3-0).
  - 2.2. Reviewed Warrant #2015-007 totaling \$42,996.32. (3-0).
    - 2.2.1. S. LeHay asked for clarification regarding the two 'overpayments' being refunded on this warrant. R. Blake explained that she had overcharged those individuals for their registrations.
    - 2.2.2. S. LeHay asked about the 'not collected' amounts that the town was paying to the State for motor vehicle registrations. R. Blake disclosed that she had "missed charging" for certain items. She added that one individual had paid her only the excise and then waited a month to pay the rest saying that he had not had the money.
3. **Appointments & Resignations.**
  - 3.1. **E-911 Addressing Officer** – E. Pratt made a motion (2<sup>nd</sup> – S. LeHay) to appoint Eleanor Ketchum as E-911 Addressing Officer (3-0) for a term of 1 year.
  - 3.2. **Animal Control Officer & Deputy** – E. Pratt made a motion (2<sup>nd</sup> – S. LeHay) to appoint Pam Graf as Animal Control Officer, and Michael Davendonis as Deputy Animal Control Officer (3-0) for a term of 1 year.
  - 3.3. **Planning Board Member (1) & Alternates** – E. Pratt made a motion (2<sup>nd</sup> – S. LeHay) to appoint Leo Mayo as Planning Board Member for a term of 5 years (3-0).
  - 3.4. **Local Plumbing Inspector & Alternate** –
    - 3.4.1. E. Pratt made a motion (2<sup>nd</sup> – S. LeHay) to appoint Leo Mayo as Local Plumbing Inspector for a term of 1 year (3-0).
    - 3.4.2. E. Pratt made a motion (2<sup>nd</sup> – S. LeHay) to appoint Robert Dunphy as Alternate/Deputy Local Plumbing Inspector for a term of 1 year (3-0).

**3.5. Board of Appeals Members** – Tabled until next meeting.

**3.6. Code Enforcement Officer and Alternate/Deputy** –

3.6.1. S. LeHay made a motion (2<sup>nd</sup> – E. Pratt) to appoint Robert Dunphy as Code Enforcement Officer for a term of 1 year (3-0).

3.6.2. Alternate/Deputy tabled until next meeting.

**3.7. Recreation Director** – E. Pratt made a motion (2<sup>nd</sup> – S. LeHay) to appoint Tammy Murray as Recreation Director for a term of 1 year (3-0).

**3.8. Emergency Management Director(s)** –

3.8.1. E. Pratt made a motion (2<sup>nd</sup> – S. LeHay) to appoint Robert Dunphy as Emergency Management Director for a term of 1 year (3-0).

3.8.2. R. Dunphy requested the authority to choose and appoint his own deputy this year. S. LeHay responded, "I feel you can recommend someone, but the Selectmen need the ultimate say."

**3.9.** S. LeHay asked to add an agenda item for School Board Director. He stated that there was a vacancy that needed to be filled until June 30<sup>th</sup>. E. Pratt made a motion to appoint Larry Witham to serve as RSU 74 School Board Director beginning immediately until June 30, 2016 (3-0).

**4. Department Officials Reports.**

**4.1. E-911** –

4.1.1. E. Ketchum advised that she had spoken with A&M Ambulance to ask if they were having any problems finding Embden roads. She said they told her there was no more issue here than anywhere else.

**4.2. Winter Roads Contractor** – No Report.

**4.3. Animal Control** – No Report.

**4.4. Board of Assessors** –

4.4.1. T. Lamontagne informed them that she had nothing to report.

4.4.2. R. Dunphy asked what the tax due dates would be this year. C. Taylor pronounced that the Assessors would not be able to commit until it had been determined what amount of money would be needed for the 22 step withdrawal process if the town opted to pursue that option.

4.4.3. C. Taylor said, "I know we have all talked about sitting here how our school and county tax amounts are so high due to the correlation with valuation. Is there a way to decrease the [Town's] valuation?" T. Lamontagne asserted, "I am a Certified Maine Assessor, and I would do nothing to put that in jeopardy. What are you asking me?" Torry Wahler stated that she had the 2015 State Valuation. She stressed that some properties were being taxed at well over 100%, and some were well below 60%. Tim Wahler added that out of all the towns in Somerset County, Embden's value had increased 138% in the last 10 years. C. Taylor commented that the state auditor had Embden valued at close to 100%. L. Witham asked why the town did not drop that percentage as low as possible. He questioned, "Why are we at 100% when these other towns around us are not?" He added that they had been informed at the last Withdrawal Committee Meeting that Anson and New Portland were not at 100%. T. Lamontagne replied that they were, and the only one in our school district not at 100% was Solon. Lengthy discussion continued.

4.4.4. C. Taylor emphasized, "These are the discussions we want to be privy to. Can [the Assessors] get an outside company to come look at the town?"

4.4.5. T. Lamontagne announced that the Assessors had reviewed all of the waterfront property in town this year.

**4.5. Planning Board** –

4.5.1. L. Mayo specified that the State had finally the SLZ ordinance, but the town needed to amend its ordinance rather than just adopt the state ordinance. He suggested having the STM and public hearing on the proposed changes in a couple of months when the nonresidents were present.

4.5.2. He expressed that permit applications were starting to come in.

**4.6. Local Plumbing Inspector –**

4.6.1. L. Mayo said he had nothing to report at this time.

**4.7. Board of Appeals – No Report.**

**4.8. Code Enforcement Officer –**

4.8.1. R. Dunphy advised he had received five applications, however would only be doing two of them at this time.

He declared, “If I can’t see the ground to measure, then tough luck.”

4.8.2. He revealed that one violation had been forwarded to the town attorney.

**4.9. Health Officer –**

4.9.1. R. Dunphy stated there was nothing going on.

**4.10. Road Commissioner – No Report.**

**4.11. R.S.U. #74 –**

4.11.1. D. Barron reported that the proposed budget had been signed and sent to the towns.

4.11.2. He added that if Embden planned to withdraw, it should be done ASAP.

**4.12. Recreational Director – No Report.**

**4.13. Town Clerk/Treasurer –**

4.13.1. B. Baker submitted a Treasurer’s Report and TRIO expense report for review.

**4.14. Registrar of Voters.**

4.14.1. B. Baker announced that the School Budget Validation Referendum election would be held Tuesday, May 12<sup>th</sup> at the Town Office. She added that polling hours would be from 09:00–20:00.

4.14.2. She informed the board that the Public Hearing for the proposed school budget would take place Thursday, April 30<sup>th</sup> at 18:00.

4.14.3. BOS reviewed and signed the warrant calling the School Referendum vote for May 12<sup>th</sup>.

**4.15. Tax Collector –**

4.15.1. BOS reviewed written report.

4.15.2. R. Blake expressed that there were currently 130 accounts owing approximately \$92,000 in real estate taxes for 2014. She added that \$6,261.95 had been collected since her last report.

4.15.3. She advised that 30-Day Notices would bring money in.

**4.16. Community Center –**

4.16.1. C. Taylor presented the sprinkler system inspection report.

4.16.2. E. Pratt announced the following events:

Chicken Pot Pie Supper – May

Picking Parties – Sundays

Weight Watchers – Every Wednesday

4.16.3. E. Pratt revealed that Steve and the Good Ole Boys would no longer be a BYOB event.

4.16.4. She disclosed that there would be no more alcoholic events held at the ECctr. Torry Wahler asked how this might affect future events. R. Blake specified the group had never made any money on the BYOB events.

4.16.5. Tim Wahler expressed his congratulations to the ECC, saying that the ECctr always seemed to have something going on. He asked how far the building was from becoming self-sufficient. E. Pratt replied that she did not think the group could ever be self-sufficient, however the ECC was giving back at least \$1,000 to the town every month. She noted that the group had purchased items for the building such as: new chairs and tables, ½ the cost of a new sound system, and AEDs for both the ECctr and the Town Office. She also mentioned that the group allowed both the boy scouts and cub scouts to use the building free of charge. L.

Witham interjected, "It is pretty near impossible to raise \$24,000, and that is what is needed to be self-sufficient."

4.16.6. L. Witham remarked that the ECC had delivered 35 free meals to shut-ins in November, in addition to serving approximately 150 people a free turkey dinner the next night.

4.16.7. C. Taylor specified that the entire amount budgeted for the ECctr was approximately \$57,000 for 2015.

B. Baker pointed out that \$12,000 of that amount was money that had been received from the ECC in 2014.

#### **4.17. Emergency Management Directors –**

4.17.1. R. Dunphy asserted he had nothing to report.

#### **4.18. RSU Withdrawal Exploratory Committee –**

4.18.1. R. Dunphy emphasized they needed to get the committee appointed.

4.18.2. C. Taylor announced that R. Dunphy had agreed to chair the committee.

4.18.3. He observed that a lot of good questions had been raised at the last meeting.

4.18.4. He stated that the committee was asking the BOS to pursue both options. Discussion continued.

4.18.5. Petition was presented to the BOS and accepted. The voting required by the 22 step process was discussed.

B. Baker asked if they were thinking about trying to vote on May 12<sup>th</sup>. E. Pratt said yes. B. Baker cautioned that if that were to be possible, they would need to move very quickly in order to have time for the absentee balloting process.

4.18.6. D. Barron vocalized that Embden was currently paying \$14,564 per student. J. Creamer stressed that Anson had 331 kids, yet was paying a very small amount per child out of their tax base.

4.18.7. C. Taylor informed the group that the school board did not have the authority to change the EPS model, only the additional local amounts.

4.18.8. Torry Wahler asked, "What if we had a reval. Everything we do is based on valuation. We need to look at how [we got] to the value we are at. Everything hinges on our valuation."

4.18.9. D. Barron acknowledged that there was a way to drop quickly, and that was to change to 100% pupil, but they would not be able to get other towns to vote for that. L. Witham replied, "If we can convince them we are serious, and there are dire consequences, maybe they will consider changing the method." R. Dunphy remarked, "But if we withdraw, then their state subsidy increases, so it is almost better for them and us if we withdraw."

4.18.10. R. Blake asked whether Anson paid the lowest amount per student. D. Barron read the following pre-subsidy amounts:

Anson	\$13,392
Embden	\$14,564
New Portland	\$13,949
Solon	\$13,973

4.18.11. D. Barron asserted that the debt service would still be what had been voted on for the new CCS, plus the amount for the HS renovations. He stated this would be \$2.06m over the next 15 years.

4.18.12. J. Creamer pointed out, "If you stop and think what Anson pays and puts into the district not including the subsidies, take the amount they pay and divide by 331 students, it comes out to \$3,000 per student."

4.18.13. Extensive discussion continued.

4.18.14. R. Dunphy announced that the next RSUWEC meeting would be held Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup> at 18:30.

4.18.15. D. Barron promised to ask Wednesday to set up a meeting with the full school board to get this out in the open. He said he would try to have the date at the next meeting.

**5. Board of Selectpersons Concerns:** None.

**6. New Business:** None.

**7. Old Business.**

**7.1. Discussion Regarding Future Options with RSU#74.**

C. Taylor made a motion (2<sup>nd</sup> – E. Pratt) to allow the Embden school board directors to enter into a discussion with the full school board (3-0).

**8. Correspondence.** BOS reviewed correspondence.

**9. Community Relations, Announcements, and Open Public Forum.**

**9.1. Open Public Forum:** None.

**10. Executive Session (Non-Public) (ME §405):** None

**11. Next Meeting Announcement & Adjournment**

**11.1.** Next Regular Selectperson's Meeting – Monday, April 20, 2015.

**11.2.** Motion to adjourn made by S. LeHay (2<sup>nd</sup> – C. Taylor). (3-0) Adjourned 21:01.

*Minutes submitted by:  
Bonnie A. Baker, Town Clerk*