



SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

MONDAY, MARCH 20, 2023 AT 5:00 P.M.

COUNCIL CHAMBER, 59 MAIN STREET, ORONO, MAINE

MINUTES

1. Swearing In of Newly Elected Officials *(Video record time 0:0:04 - 0:01:49)*

Chair Pro Tem Cheryl Robertson welcomed everyone to the Special Town Council Meeting. She noted that Councilor elect Sarah Marx was absent and would be sworn in at a later date. She also noted that RSU#26 School Board elect members Jacob Eckert and Kevin Roberge would be sworn in at a later date.

Town Clerk Shelly Crosby swore in Town Councilor Dan Demeritt (for 3-year term) to the faithful discharge of his duties.

2. Roll Call to Open the Special Town Council Meeting *(Video record time 0:01:50 - 0:02:20)*

Present: Council Chair Pro Tem Cheryl Robertson, Geoffrey Wingard, Leo Kenney, Sonja Birthisel, Robert Laraway, Dan Demeritt, and Town Manager Sophie Wilson.

Absent: Councilor-elect Sarah Marx.

3. Acknowledgements by Council Members *(Video record time 0:2:21 - 0:05:59)*

Rob Laraway acknowledged everyone who took part in the recent election and thanked them for the work that they do. He also acknowledged the Orono High School Jazz Band for receiving a silver medal in the Instrumental Jazz Festival and the Orono student that won the Outstanding Soloist Award.

Geoff Wingard stated the Town has held two of the Community Conversations and the third one will be held soon (March 30th). He expressed his appreciation for those who have attended to discuss infrastructure, service issues, and Parks & Recreation.

Sonja Birthisel acknowledged the sunshine. She noted that the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging Committee would be holding its first meeting in April, or soon thereafter. She acknowledged the Town Manager's efforts in getting that group together and all those who are willing to serve.

Leo Kenney acknowledged Meghan Dean and Dan Demeritt for putting out a survey to community members regarding the recreation program. He noted 99 responses were received.

Dan Demeritt thanked Shelly Crobsy, Belle Ryder and staff for their work with the election, and specifically in counting the write-in votes for Sarah Marx, keeping things transparent, and having a successful election.

Cheryl Robertson acknowledged today as the first day of spring, and that it is the perfect day for new beginnings with new Councilors.

4. Public Comments *(Video record time 0:5:60 - 0:10:41)*

Town Planner Kyle Drexler responded to the public comments regarding the work environment at the Town Office being poor, or threatening, and the reason for unionizing. He noted supporting a union can be positive. He spoke of the Town Office work environment being communicative, open, flexible and team spirited. He spoke positively about the culture of collaboration and team spirit.

Code Enforcement Officer Pat Estey stated in his opinion the work environment is not toxic, and he feels it is very family-oriented.

5. Town Council Internal Planning Discussion *(Video record time 0:10:42 - 0:16:36)*

Ms. Wilson presented a draft internal planning schedule for the second quarter for Council to consider. Mr. Wingard noted he would not be available Monday, March 27th. Councilors spoke in support of the schedule as presented.

6. Town Manager's Update *(Video record time 0:16:37 - 0:54:28)*

Ms. Wilson provided an update on the following items:

- Changes within the Police Department to reduce overtime; Officer Courtney Boucher is back part-time and reserve officers will receive (green pin/blue pin) field training. Public Safety Director Geoff Low provided a lot of details about the (green pin/blue pin) reserve officer training.
- Recap of Opioid Settlement agreements.

7. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Geoff Wingard and seconded by Rob Laraway. All voted in favor, 7-0. The Council Meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Minutes are not verbatim. A video-recorded version is available on the Town's website at www.orono.org.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy W. Ward, Executive Assistant