

04/19/2023 Sorrento Select Board Meeting Minutes

Attending in person at the Sorrento Community Building were Selectmen Rob Wilpan and Jon Mickel, Selectwoman Diana Gazis, Town Clerk Kathi Moore, Fire Chief Joey Clark, Town Attorney Daniel Pileggi, Deb Ashe-Gordon, Tom Bailey, Gina Bennett, Earl Bierman, Myles Bierman, Jeff Harden, Ann Hoffner, Bill & Joanne Holmes, Gerry Mehl, Elizabeth Moriarty, Bill & Lensa Neleski, Crosby Noyes, Colleen Ober, Mark Ober, Steve Ober, Daphne & Ted Preuss, Clay & Jane Savage, Dale Strohmaier, Ann Weimer, Hilly Welch-Crary & Trina Wellman, Roger Woodworth, Rob Morang from HCSO, plus numerous attendees via Zoom.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Rob Wilpan.

BOARD MEMBER RESIGNATION: Rob made a motion to accept the resignation they received via email of Select Board member Jon Mickel, seconded by Diana. Vote: Gazis aye, Wilpan aye, Mickel recused himself. Motion passed.

Rob read the following statement concerning his efforts to bring the use of computer programs for the Town's finances to the Town Office:

Welcome everyone:

When I was asked to run for the office of Selectman in 1996 by Louis Sutherland Sr. I choose to do so to contribute to our Town. Once I was elected Louis said, "So you know computers. We have this DOS program called "Town Menu" which Lefty Stone in town developed and we bought a computer." I would like for you to use it for the Town's disbursements." And that began my efforts to bring Sorrento's accounting into a new age. We eventually replaced Town Menu with Quickbooks with the help of a "Quickbooks professional" to setup a system which would allow for easy account balancing but he later said that Quickbooks couldn't automatically balance the accounts so I was the one who continued to tie the disbursements with the resources recorded by our Town Clerk, appropriations and previous balances for the Annual Report and the auditor. It has always been a very taxing effort in the time crush between the end of the fiscal year at the end of June with the last fiscal year's bills still coming in and the deadline to get everything to the printers for the Annual Report for September's Annual Meeting. Before we had a Town Office Building the Selectmen held their meetings in the office on top of the old fire house. Thelma White can attest to my many all-nighters working up there to get this done each August. Sometimes we were actually able to get our audit completed before this deadline, but not often. The current complaints for the lack of correct balances have been compounded by the fact that after Esther Clement retired her replacement had medical problems compounded by the pandemic. I am so grateful for Darla Crocker for helping bring the accounts in line. She will find mistakes which I will embrace because I know I will finally be able to hand off this burden to the Town Treasurer where it belongs and do what the selectpersons are supposed to do which is to supervise the accounts. The current efforts of certain people to discredit my efforts as a selectman are big slap in the face. This has to stop. Their efforts to divide the residents of Sorrento has to stop.

Thank you.

Rob read a reminder about meeting procedures.

DISBURSEMENT WARRANT: Kathi presented Disbursement Warrant #20 to the Select Board to be signed. Rob made a motion to accept the warrant, seconded by Diana. Vote: Gazis yes, Wilpan yes, motion passed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION pursuant to M.R.S. Title 1 Chapter 13 Subchapter 1 §405 (6)(A)(1) for the purpose of a discussion with the Town Clerk/Treasurer concerning performance issues: Rob moved to proceed to executive session, seconded by Diana. Vote Gazis aye, Wilpan aye, motion passed. Town Clerk /Treasurer Kathi Moore waived her right to an executive session and requested that the discussion to be held in open session.

Kathi read her statement:

Kathi: The taxpayers pay my salary I have nothing to hide and I have done nothing wrong. I choose to waive executive session and discuss all issues in this public forum. I will not apologize for bringing forth to this select board any evidence of misuse or theft of town funds. As Town Treasurer that is my duty. I took an oath of office. I expected the full support of the entire select board, not harassment retaliation or false accusations. I was not aware of any job performance issues until the posting of this meeting agenda having received every year glowing excellent reviews from the entire selectboard. I'm doing the jobs of at least two people including working at home nights and weekends. For what? To be accused of performance issues. If the intention is to pressure me to quit, I will not.

Rob responds: Ok thank you.

Diana: So now we're going elsewhere?

Rob: Do we want to discuss everything else in public or do we want to move?

Kathi: I got nothing to hide and I've done nothing wrong so go for it.

Rob reads his concerns.

- 1) Treat all Sorrento residents, guest and officials with respect and keep your opinions to yourself. Many people have told me that you take every opportunity to bad mouth me. "You have to watch your back with Kathi" is what I hear often. Another example is the discussion concerning the current election day arrangements. Several people flagged the number of people employed during election days. The Board discussed your opinion of your staffing needs and sided with you so that worked out OK. But you told me that "I know who complained about this. It was Penny Sutherland. I'll never call her to help at an election again.
- 2) You very rarely communicate with me to ask questions. It was clear at the 4/5/2023 BOS meeting that you don't have a full grasp of how to fully balance a specific account, even when the starting balance is zero. You emailed prior to the meeting that the FD account was over by 25% and couldn't expend any more without voter approval. I explained, step by step, how that wasn't so and that there was actually about \$1,000 left. Jon said to me "how is she supposed to know that. She can't look into your head." Yes, that's true. You proudly display your training certificates but you refuse to admit that you need help to learn what is necessary to fully do your job. The process of the commitment starts with writing the Annual Meeting Warrant. The amounts raised and appropriated for the various accounts need to be carefully listed in a spreadsheet so that the commitment is properly calculated. The last time I asked you to do this,

(check it), you missed an item. We all make mistakes and I have made quite a few with this but I'm not even sure you looked at it. My wife found an error for me to correct.

- 3) When Jon was discussing the rental building during the BOS meeting he said that Christopher approached Kathi and asked about renting the office. At the following BOS meeting I explained that I spoke with Christopher. He told me that a woman, not Kathi, approached him, encouraging him to rent the office. He later told me that there were witnesses and that they said it was Susan Dougherty. You had no problems putting in the minutes that Christopher spoke with you.
- 4) You said that you are very busy and that you need an assistant during the summer. That may be so but you allow Susan Dougherty in the office when you are closed to the public. This is supposed to be where you can work more efficiently without walk-in interruptions. Several people have told me that you continue cordial conversations with people waiting to be helped. Another place where you can be more efficient.
- 5) The Clay Savage petition is very interesting. The petition says typed "We, the undersigned are sending this letter of recall to superintendent Michael Eastman to inform him that in RSU 24 we want to remove pornography from our schools" But in your handwriting it says "Petition to Recall Janet Wilpan", this doesn't sound like a proper petition.

Kathi: Do you want me to go through these things, line by line?

Rob: um, sure

Kathi: If you would like me to treat you with respect I expect the same thing. You don't treat any women with respect. You are very condescending very condescending and no I don't like to talk to you on the phone you are very micromangement, you micromanage the heck out of me. I don't need to be micromanaged. I'm not David. I do my job and I do it well. Ask everyone in this audience (she points to the whole audience) except your few cronies that, ah, yep.

Rob: Well I'm sure you do a good job serving people at the window but there are things you need to learn and you refuse to learn them.

Kathi: Who's going to teach them to me? What do I have to learn?

Rob: Me.

Kathi: You don't know shit about what goes on to run a town office. You don't know about the reports that need to be sent to the State. You just don't have a clue.

Rob: Stop pointing please.

Kathi: You were acting as treasurer and town clerk when David was absent October, November and December 2020. That is illegal. You are not supposed to run a town office.

Rob: Right. I had checks building up and bills building up. And Maggi did soon after. And I informed the auditor about it and I turned over those responsibilities as soon as possible to Maggi.

Kathi: So I guess that I am not as perfect as you are.

Rob: No that's not the case Kathi, you refuse to work with me. That's the case. But I know more about how to run this town in certain aspects and you refuse to work with me.

Kathi: Is that why you called the Secretary of State's Office the other day and said that I refused to give you a voter list?

Rob: No I said that you refused to give someone else a voter list.

Kathi: Clay Savage is the only one who asked me for a voter list and I did not realize that I could give one. Who asked me for a voter list?

Rob: Darla Crocker, last year.

Kathi: That's a blatant lie. The (only other) one who asked me for one is Connie Dedham and I gave her one because she was acting as a democratic party chair.

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Besides humiliating me what is your goal...what is the reason for all of this?

Rob: In order for this town to function properly, we have to work together. And you refuse to work with me. Are you going to change?

Kathi: Am I going to change, are you going to change?

Rob: What am I doing wrong?

Kathi: Your attitude

Rob: What attitude, specifically.

Kathi: Your micro-management attitude.

Rob: You have to be more specific.

Kathi: You do realize that I am hold up in my office, locked, with pepper spray because I fear for my safety.

Rob: From who?

Kathi: Retaliation over the findings that I found and brought it to you guys, and ya, the wrong doings that the fire dept did. And retaliation.

Rob: That's unfounded.

Diana: For people who come to the office and want something its really been nice. But the thing is as Rob said we need to work together and I think the problem started getting worse when the Fire Department started being questioned. That period. I think what would help would be for you and me to understand what would be the primary things that you should be doing with your time. I think getting

the newsletter, is one primary thing, and getting things ready for the auditor is another.

Kathi: It has been in a box since probably...

Diana: Well, anyway, I think that it would help to be clear what those things were and also to be clear where the selectpersons... you work for us.

Kathi: I work for the Town.

Rob: But you report to us.

Diana: This is to make things better but it's not anyone's humiliation. It's just going forward. I don't think we need to have a big thing about it. That's what I think.

Rob: Concerning the Clay Savage petition, the petition that Clay Savage submitted.

Kathi: OK, the town has no form and in order to save time I used his petition.

Rob: Right, but why is it written on top..

Kathi: Because I hand wrote that.

Rob: (Addressing Clay Savage.) You had typed on it addressing this recall to Eastman. But you realize that it is not proper to hand write on top of it Recall Janet Wilpan.

Clay Savage: You have to have on any petition what you are doing and who you are recalling.

Rob: Yes, but when you have it hand written its hard to show that the person signing it actually read everything at that time.

Kathi: Well, the Town has no form so to save time that's why I did this. And looking back at it now, yes, I probably should have, ... retyped the petition.

RECALL PETITION: The Select Board received a petition from Sorrento resident Clay Savage to recall RSU 24 School Board member Janet Wilpan. Since the Town has no charter or recall ordinance, Rob made a motion to take no action on the petition, seconded by Diana. Vote: Gazis aye, Wilpan aye, motion passed.

WILMA DYER LETTER: Rob made a motion to dismiss the letter, based on research that Wilma Dyer is not a real Sorrento resident and all allegations in the letter are false, seconded by Diana. Vote: Gazis aye, Wilpan aye, motion passed.

LETTER TO SORRENTO'S MUNICIPAL SEWER SYSTEM USERS: Rob made a motion to send a letter to Sorrento's municipal sewer system users, seconded by Diana. Vote: Gazis aye, Wilpan aye, motion passed.

DONATIONS FOR LEGAL FEES: Rob made a motion to accept donations to the Legal Fees expense

account, seconded by Diana. Vote: Gazis aye, Wilpan aye, motion passed.

DONATIONS FOR WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT: Rob made a motion to accept donations to the Administrative account for the development of a Town website, seconded by Diana. Vote: Gazis aye, Wilpan aye, motion passed.

HARBOR POWER UPDATE: Jon will pass along to Rob the name and phone number of an electrician to contact.

CB BOILER WATER FEED REPAIR UPDATE: No update.

FIRE DEPARTMENT RECORDS UPDATE: Joey sent Rob a training schedule; it answers a lot of the questions that Jon had a year ago.

SORRENTO ROAD POSTING 2023 UPDATE: Joey missed posting the roads this spring.

ADMINISTRATION & TRIO ACCOUNTS UPDATE: There is not extra money in these accounts.

POLLINATOR MEADOW PROPOSAL: Hilly made a proposal to plant a pollinator meadow at Hamilton Park, all labor and materials will be via donation/volunteer. Rob made a motion to the request to approve a pollinator meadow at Hamilton Park, seconded by Diana. Vote: Gazis aye, Wilpan aye, motion passed.

BULK TRASH DROP OFF DAYS: Kathi reported that bulk trash drop off days will be Saturday May 6 and Saturday August 12, at the Fuller Road salt/sand shed.

At 8:09 pm Rob made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Diana. Vote: Gazis yes, Wilpan yes. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted on 5/03/2023 by Kathi Moore, Town Clerk