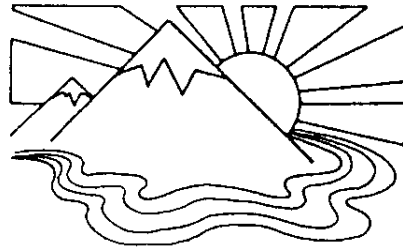


Carrabassett Valley Select Board Meeting
5:00 p.m. Monday July 10th, 2023 at the Library



The Town provides a zoom link for members of the Public to link into Town of Carrabassett Valley Select Board and other public meetings. To participate by zoom you must use the link provided in an email from the Town (this link is the same for any Town public meeting and is provided on the email in which the Board or Committee Agenda was sent out in). You may also obtain this link by sending an email to the town office (townofcv@roadrunner.com) during normal business hours.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5312682243?pwd=TGxrUExKcXdqQTdlZUZhYUVteG5GZz09>

If you need to “phone in”:

Dial by Phone – 1-929-205-6099 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 531 268 2243

Passcode: 04947

Review and sign Payroll Warrants: #

Review and sign Expenditure Warrants: #

AGENDA:

1. MINUTES of the previous meeting (June 12th, 2023) are attached.

2. APPOINTMENTS TO CONTRACT ZONING SUBCOMMITTEE: In an effort to move forward for consideration by the voters a proposed ‘Contract Zoning Ordinance’ a suggestion was made to appoint a sub-committee of two or three Planning Board members and two or three Select Board members. The Planning Board has appointed three members and, if agreed, the Select Board would appoint two or three members. The Plan is to review the latest (May) draft that the Planning Board has worked on and attempt to move forward an acceptable ordinance for voter consideration.

3. 2023 PROPERTY TAX BILLS AND VALUTION ADJUSTMENTS: The Town’s Tax Assessor is in the process of committing property taxes and bills will go out soon. Regarding property tax valuations, the Assessor will be raising valuations over a two-year period. In 2023, the Assessor is adjusting values upwards across all properties. This will be followed in 2024 with a more

market specific defined approach. As you know, property values have increased dramatically and the Town's property assessment values are well below market sales.

Regarding property tax increases, we have just seen a huge increase in the Town's Franklin County Tax Assessment (from \$947,681 in 2022 to \$1,412,261 or an increase of \$464,580 or 49%). This increase is far more than any we have seen in the past. Franklin County is on a different fiscal year than the Town (July 1st versus calendar year) meaning that our 2023 tax bills will reflect one-half of this increase (we will need to pick up the other half of this County tax increase next year). We have attached a spreadsheet that shows the Town's fiscal year tax commitment for the Town, School and County. We anticipate a property tax increase of approximately 8%. We hope to have more information at the meeting.

We are planning to provide an insert (attached) into the tax bills that go that explains the market adjustments to property valuations and other information (possible changes to the State's Maine Property Tax Stabilization for Senior Citizens Program and (new) tax payers options for paying on line.

4. BRIEF PROJECTS AND OTHER UPDATES (if time allows).

5. MEET WITH STATE LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE MICHAEL SOBOLESKI (House District 73 which includes Carrabassett Valley). Rep. Soboleski has asked to meet with the Select Board.

6:00 PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING CONCERNING THE U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE IN OUR HIGH PEAKS REGION: Please see attached information.

**Minutes of the Select Board Meeting
June 12, 2023**

Location: Carrabassett Valley Town Office Conference Room

Time: 4:30-4:50

Board Present: Karen Campbell, Lloyd Cuttler, Bob Luce, Jay Reynolds

Board Absent: John Beaupre

Others Present: Dave Cota, Tim Gerencer, Tim Flight, Sue Davis, Annie Twitchell, Travis Chandler, Mark Leathers, Anne Poirier-Flight, Tom Cromwell, Bill Gilmore, Bob Carlton; Jeff Rosenberg on zoom.

Chair Bob Luce opened the Monday, June 12, Carrabassett Valley Select Board meeting at 4:30. After passing along a payroll and expenditure warrants, *the Board approved the May 15 minutes, moved by Jay Reynolds, seconded by Lloyd Cuttler and passed unanimously.*

2023 wood harvesting plan on Town's public lot

Representatives of American Forest Management, Bill Haslam and Matt Jacobs, reviewed plans for this year's wood harvesting on the public lot. Plans call for a two-to-three-year harvest on approximately 212 acres. Responding to questions, Haslam covered several points:

- Prices are not the best but their relationship with Sappi promises market and fair pricing
- Little to lose by harvesting this year using the July-November window, waiting till it's dry enough and getting out before having to plow snow
- Regeneration and sustainability are reflected in their timing:
- Approximately 2300 cords will be harvested on the 212 acres which is just above the calculated annual growth rate and harvesting will not exceed the annual growth rate for the entire public lot.
- 22-23 cord an acre inventory is very good, higher than public reserve land

Town Manager Dave Cota noted that the Town has spent \$400-500,000 on recreation infrastructure on the Town's public lot over the past ten years, including installation of all the concrete panel bridges that stood up under the May 1 flooding, and road construction for harvesting, which can be used later. This has created a current \$100,000 revenue deficit (from the wood harvesting) to be covered by the wood income from the proposed wood harvest. Cota indicated that the Town has held public informational meetings prior to years when harvesting as taken place as is the case with this meeting.

Proposal for a fish and wildlife refuge

Professional forester and Franklin County Commissioner Bob Carlton reported on a federal proposal to create a fish and wildlife refuge in the high peaks region. Not a national park, it is simply a protective action. It would cover approximately 400,000 acres including the 4,000-foot peaks Saddleback, Mt. Abram, Sugarloaf, Redington, Crocker and Bigelow, reaching from Byron and Rangeley Plantation to Wyman and Dead River Township, encompassing most of Carrabassett Valley. When considered 10 years ago, Kingfield resident David Guernsey reflected that if it had been in place years before there would be no Sugarloaf.

Carlton explained that Federal designation is harder to work with than State, citing an instance this year when clearing wood for the new Sugarloaf expansion. Early in January they were notified that they would have to be finished by the end of January because of the timing for a

long-eared bat restriction. They sped up and completed at great expense, only to be told that the restriction had been moved to March 31.

Much of the land, used for recreation, Carrabassett's primary economic activity, is already protected. After the experience of the Bigelow preserve excluding recreation, Carrabassett was sure to include language in the Crocker designation that allows it. Cota and others pointed out that the mountain tops and more are already protected, with several areas specifically preserved:

- Appalachian Trail corridor, with National Park designation
- Bigelow Ecological Reserve
- Crocker Mountain Ecological Reserve
- Mt. Abram Ecological Reserve

Mark Leathers thought the map looked like it could have been done by the Maine AT Club. Carlton reported that two of the three County Commissioners voted against the refuge, that state representatives are all opposed; they are waiting to hear from the Congressional delegation—Angus King is about 75% against it.

There will be a stakeholder's meeting on the 28th at Sugarloaf, though specifics have still to be determined. Tim Flight would like to see a public meeting as well, where residents could see the actual proposal and be able to react to it. *The Board appeared willing to provide this.*

Caribou Pond Road

The Caribou Pond Road into the Crocker Preserve sustained measurable damage in the May 1 flooding. The road receives a fair amount of use for access to the AT and other recreational purposes. Cota reported working with Weyerhaeuser and the State, both of which agreed to share the estimated \$3,600 expense with the Town of repairing the road. Sugarloaf has already put some money into repairing the entrance off Route 27. When asked about state law prohibiting the use of municipal money on a private road, Cota explained that the Crocker Reserve Land provides for a public right-of-way across the Caribou Pond Road.

Jay Reynolds moved that Carrabassett Valley pay up to \$1,200 toward the repair of flood damage on the Caribou Pond Road, seconded by Lloyd Cuttler. The motion passed unanimously.

Stratton-Eustis food pantry

The Town has received a request from the Stratton-Eustis Food Pantry for \$1,000. Select Board member Karen Campbell volunteers for the Pantry and believes that it serves 6-to-8 Carrabassett families. Chair Bob Luce noted that there is a balance in the Town's Social Service and Event budget, but as this is a first-time request, he recommends \$500, adding that they would like to do more in the future.

Cuttler moved that the Town give \$500 to the Pantry as this is a first-time request, that the Town looks forward to doing more in the future. Seconded by Jay Reynolds, the motion passed unanimously.

School Budget Town Meeting

Town Manager Cota noted that the warrant for the town meeting to approve the Carrabassett Valley School budget includes an article to see if the Town will expend \$30,000 to make improvements to the Outdoor Center Road. Cota explained that the first 300 feet of the road as it

leaves Route 27 is always in terrible shape in the Spring. He explained that paving that section will make a significant safety improvement, also allowing traffic to exit 27 more safely.

Informational:

Cota reported that planned repairs to the Narrow-Gauge Pathway have been delayed “until the trail dries out.” He expects it will be completed in the next two to three weeks.

Proposed Par-3 golf course

Recent discussion at the June 6th Golf Course Greens Committee meeting indicates that Sugarloaf is moving forward with the proposal for the Town to support building a Par 3 golf course adjacent to the existing Town-owned course. The concept is for Sugarloaf will donate the land to the Town, which will build the course and lease it back to Sugarloaf.

Real estate taxes from the new development will more than defray associated costs. Apparently, this project proposal may move forward over the next few months. Cota will keep everyone informed. A project may be put in front of the Town voters to approve the bond financing.

Comprehensive Plan

Cota provided the Select Board with a proposal from The Musson Group of Southwest Harbor, Maine, to provide services for a comprehensive plan for the Town. The Town previously put out bids for the work and the Comp Plan Committee is ready to work with them. Musson proposes a timeline that would start this summer with a Project Kickoff Meeting, to be completed in one year by summer of 2024. Not including reimbursable expenses such as mileage, accommodations, website registration, survey costs, printing, food., etc., the cost was outlined as \$67,500.

Jay Reynolds moved to accept their proposal, seconded by Karen Campbell. The motion passed unanimously.

Cota reported that State representative Mike Soboleski, whose District includes Carrabassett Valley, would like to meet with the Select Board later this month or in July.

Cota reminded the Board that Hazardous Waste Collection Day will be July 8th, 8 am to noon at the Town’s transfer station. Those using the service from other towns in the county need to indicate their residence so that the respective towns can be billed. These collection days rotate, the next year’s program will likely to be in Kingfield.

Cota also reported that there will be a car event at the Airport on June 24 from 9:00 am to noon when the Squad-Driven East Coast Event will kick off their Maine-to-Miami tour. They will be staying at Sugarloaf the night before and invite the public to view the beginning at the Airport on Saturday.

There will be approximately 30 high-performance “Super Cars,” some of which will participate in timed races on the airport runway. Squad-Driven is a foundation donating to charitable organizations and is a marketing brand for automotive enthusiasts.

Karen Campbell moved to adjourn, seconded by Jay Reynolds and accepted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Davis, Secretary

2023 Town of CV Property Tax Assessment Comparison

	2022	2023	Increase	% Increase
Net Municipal Budget	\$2,213,287	\$2,355,608	\$142,321	6.40
Net School Budget*	\$1,584,200	\$1,648,223	\$64,023	4.00
Franklin County Assessment**	<u>\$978,066</u>	<u>\$1,179,971</u>	<u>\$201,905</u>	20.60
Totals:	\$4,775,553	\$5,183,802	\$408,249	8.50

Notes:

The Net School and County Assessment figures above are what the Town will pay in 2023.

The Town is on a different fiscal year than the School or County.

*The School Budget was reduced by \$321,057 in Surplus Funds in 2023 compared to only \$25,000 in 2022.

**The Franklin County Assessment increased from \$947,681 in 2022 to \$1,412,261 in 2023 an increase of \$464,580 or 49%.

Dear Carrabassett Valley Property Taxpayers

The Town is undergoing a “Market Value Adjustment” on property tax valuations so you will see a change in the Town’s valuation of your property this year. We are adjusting values upwards across all properties. We plan to continue this process in 2024 with a more defined approach. As you know, property values have increased dramatically. If you are interested, we have a link on the Town website (carrabassettvalley.org) where you can search valuations of all properties. If you have questions concerning your property valuation you may call our Tax Assessor, Mike Rogers, at 207-235-2506.

You will likely also see an increase in your property tax bill this year due in part to a large increase in our share of the Franklin County Budget Assessment. You should not see an increase in your tax bill if you have previously provided the Town with an acceptable 2023 application for the State’s ‘Maine property tax stabilization for senior citizens program’. Please be advised that it appears that the State Legislature may repeal this program beyond this year and may provide more targeted (income based) property tax relief in the future. We will provide more information on this on the Town website as this develops.

Also, you may now pay your property tax bill via the Town’s website either by the e-check (\$1.50 total charge) option or the credit card (2.65% charge) option. We anticipate that the e-check option is going to be very popular.

Please see your tax bill for tax due date and mailing address information. You may also call the Town Office (207-235-2645) with any additional questions. Thank you.

NOTICE: PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING JULY 10TH

U.S Fish and Wildlife Service Proposal for the High Peaks Region

A PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING CONCERNING A U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE PROPOSAL TO EXPLORE DEVELOPING A NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE IN THE MAINE HIGH PEAKS REGION WILL BE HELD IN THE CARRABASSETT VALLEY LIBRARY AT 6:00 P.M. JULY 10TH.
(The library address is 3209 Carrabasset Drive)

The Town of Carrabasset Valley Select Board will be hosting this meeting for the public to learn about and participate in this process. The project proposes to acquire land or purchase conservation easements from willing sellers on approximately 5,000 to 15,000 acres in the High Peaks Region (roughly defined on their map). The Service is studying locations that hold high value for species they have management responsibilities for like migratory songbirds, waterfowl and endangered species. Local and statewide interests have raised concerns and questions about whether or not this specific conservation model is in the best interest of our area.

Paul Casey from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&WS) will provide a brief presentation and the public will have the opportunity to comment and ask questions. This meeting is open to citizens of the region and other interested parties. Space is limited to approximately eighty-five people. Citizens can also participate using this zoom link:

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5312682243?pwd=TGxrUExKcXdqQTdlZUZhYUVteG5GZz09>

You can obtain more information provided by USF&WS about this proposal via this link:

<https://www.fws.gov/project/evaluating-new-refuge-lands-maine-high-peaks>