



**TOWN COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 22, 2009**

Michael Bowie, Chair At Large 2009
Gina Mason, Vice Chair District 1 2010
Fern Larochelle, Jr., At Large 2010
Roger Cote, At Large 2011
Janet Henry, District 1 2009
Dale Crafts, District 2 2010
Norma Wells, District 2 2009

CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE TO THE FLAG. The Chairman, Michael Bowie, called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance to the flag at 7:00 PM.

ROLL CALL. Members present were Councilors Wells, Bowie, Mason, Crafts, Henry, Larochelle and Cote. Also present were Stephen Eldridge, Town Manager; Cathy Ricker, Finance Director; Rosie Bradley, Economic Development; Twila Lycette, Town Clerk; Jerry Samson, Assessor; Elwood Beal, Public Works; Budget Advisory Board members Richard Main, John Wierzbicki; School Committee member Janice Comber; and approximately 25 citizens in the audience.

Councilor Bowie said I would like to go over the voting results from yesterday's Bond issues. I would like to, first, thank the citizens for turning out. We had 1,392 total voters across town, which I think is very good for the weather we had. On Question 1 with the Upland Road match of \$394,000.00, there was 756 in favor and 632 against. On Question 2, which was the road improvements of \$916,000.00, there were 735 in favor and 654 against. On Question 3, which was for Public Works equipment and capital improvements for \$369,000.00, there were 535 in favor and 851 against. On Question 4, which was the River Trail matching funds of \$320,000.00 there were 644 in favor and 746 against. On Question 5, which was for \$500,000.00 to develop and design the high school, there were 487 in favor and 902 against. I think it was a good turnout, although maybe not everybody is pleased with all the turnouts, but I think it was a good turnout for the citizens of the town.

PUBLIC HEARING

CDBG Planning Grant

Rosie Bradley said we would like to put in an application for a \$10,000.00 CDBG Planning Grant for our downtown revitalization effort. It does have a \$2,500.00 match; we have a match contingency fund that has money for the match. The grant will be to hire a consultant that will put together a formalized plan of action and will work with the Revitalization Committee; this is a preliminary step as we move forward with some of the other things we are doing.

Ms. Bradley said the grant is due on Friday April 24. She said it is complete; we have to do this process tonight. One thing that is required is signatures from everybody that is here. I am going to pass around this around because everybody has to sign this because it has to go in with the grant. If you could make sure it goes all around and have the Councilors sign it and Mrs. French will collect that at the end of the meeting.

Ms. Bradley explained this is just an attendance sheet to say that you attended the Public Hearing. Everybody can sign it; it is a record of everybody that attended.

Dorothy Fitzgerald, resident of Lisbon Falls, said what is the purpose of the grant. What do you intend to accomplish with it? Ms. Bradley said we have been collecting data. What happens is, a consultant will come in and help us do some very preliminary visualization of downtown. We will look at design, we will look at strategic planning pieces. Mrs. Fitzgerald said, which downtown, we

have two downtowns. Ms. Bradley said this will actually be for the Lisbon Falls Main Street downtown; that is the beginning portion. We have to start somewhere, unfortunately, because we are divided and not connected we are trying to think outside the box. Hopefully we will be able to take Village Street as a downtown, take Lisbon Falls as a downtown, and use Rt. 196 as our connector; that is our big plan and our goal.

Mrs. Fitzgerald said there was a downtown Lisbon Falls revitalization about fifteen or sixteen years ago that was never totally, fully completed. They did revitalization not only downtown Lisbon Falls, but School Street. I do not see the purpose of another downtown Lisbon Falls revitalization. Downtown Lisbon Falls looks pretty decent. All of the storefronts are filled up. The streets are improved. The sidewalks are in pretty decent condition. The trees that were planted on Main Street and School Street have been vandalized over the years, some totally gone, some just broken and in terrible shape. There are several park benches for downtown Lisbon Falls and some nice street lamps that the kids would stand on the benches and tip over the street lamps. They had to be removed. I just do not understand why a downtown Lisbon Falls revitalization, my opinion.

George Caron, Lisbon resident, said I would like to say, talking about consultants. Is there not somebody local that we could, someone within our system, like does the town have an architect or something like that that already exists. That would be my question. We are hiring somebody; should not we already have somebody like in Public Works that already does that sort of stuff?

Councilor Bowie said we do not have an architect. We might have an architect that lives in town, but we do not have an architect that works for the town. I believe this is to get grant funding to then do, and it can be whoever that we elect. It will go out to bid, but it can be whoever is the low bidder, or whoever fits within the dollars that they are looking to give us as part of this grant to do the strategic planning and visualization work that goes along with this.

Mr. Caron said I was thinking we have an engineer. Somebody, who, you know, can the town pick up the grant. The consultant sounds nuts.

Councilor Mason said I have been part of the revitalization effort. Some people are very concerned about this and they have a lot of misinformation about this. The revitalization grant is a bunch of different things. This is only the beginning portion of what we are trying to do. I realize there was an effort fifteen or sixteen or however many years ago it was, but things have changed drastically since then. This town has taken on a lot of new businesses; a lot of businesses have improved in this town and that is great. But would it not be even better if we could make our town look nicer, have nicer businesses come in? I was driving through the Topsham/Brunswick area yesterday and they have really done a good job with that area, making things look nice. The good part of this is that a lot of the preliminary information has been gathered already. We can save on that part of it, because of these visioning sessions that we have had. We have had three so far, and we have one more coming up May 12. It is important for citizens to attend because it is more than just making streets look pretty; it is a lot of other things also. This is only the beginning portion of that. I would like to folks to understand that, and please feel free to come to those sessions because it will help to inform you a lot more.

Donna Stevens, resident of Lisbon, said Ms. Bradley the \$2,500.00 matching money is money that we are not spending out of next year's budget. It is money we have already raised. So, the \$10,000.00 as the grant is basically free money. So, that is not going to cost us anything.

Mrs. Stevens said I think as a newer resident to Lisbon and someone who really loves it here and is really excited about it, I am really excited about the revitalization. I think that we definitely have had instances of youth causing vandalism, but I think for the most part we really do have a great town. We have some very good youths. I moved up from Portland and one thing I was impressed with is the lack of kids just chilling out on the streets and doing stuff that is unproductive. I think the Police force has an open minded communication with the kids and does a pretty good job

keeping them in line. One hope that I have for the revitalization is that as we bring in new businesses and really nice housing and developing of old run-down buildings that we have, one thing I am really hoping is that we can bring something into Lisbon for the youth here to do to help them become more productive members of society. Moving forward I am hoping that Lisbon can overcome things that have been done in the past. Get Lisbon moving into a more nowadays type of mind. Do not quote me on it, you can look it up, but I think Lisbon in 2008 was marked either 5th or 7th largest growing community in the entire State of Maine; that is something to be really excited about. We have wonderful things that we could do here. \$10,000.00 is free money, it is not going to impact our taxes next year at all because they already have the \$2,500.00. I think that is something definitely to get excited for and something positive that people can look forward to. I think the youth would really benefit from a center brought back in when revitalization happens. I think we have some good kids here.

Mr. Beal said that as the Public Works director I think I can shed some light on this. I think it would be a great idea to revitalize downtown. That project I was part of when it started, it was closer to 22 or 23 years ago. Although brick and cement is a beautiful thing in North or South Carolina, it is not the way to go in the State of Maine; the maintenance on it is ridiculous. As many times as we have had to replace bricks in driveway entrances, the cement chips and breaks. I think there is a better way to do it that would be a lot more efficient.

Marie Hale, Lisbon resident, said Ms. Bradley, does this tie into what we saw a couple of meetings ago with the gentlemen from Vermont? Ms. Bradley said the transit oriented project is actually an offshoot; that is a project that is happening, but all of the information and data does all tie in together. It is going to be pulling bits and pieces from a lot of different things to move everything forward. Mrs. Hale said some of the information from those gentlemen from the University will be able to be used in this whole. Ms. Bradley said absolutely, the discussions on Smart Growth will all be taken into consideration. Mrs. Hale said so this will all be pulled from some sources. Ms. Bradley said yes.

Councilor Larochelle said when you limit it to downtown. I know you have been working on the mill project, which is a huge building just sitting there. Will that be encompassed in this study? Is it just limited to downtown Main Street or is it the whole surrounding area, too? Ms. Bradley said it is the whole surrounding area. It will encompass that whole area. It also looks at the whole community. We call it downtown revitalization because that is how they deem it, but some of the things that come into play are walkability. We have been talking about trails and the walkability from Lisbon, from Lisbon Falls, and really creating those connectors. Those are all pieces that are going to get pulled in. This is, as Councilor Mason said, very preliminary basic steps to get us rolling and to get us on the right track.

Ms. Bradley said, regarding the gentleman's questions about the consultant, when you are looking at consulting for downtown revitalization, you typically will hire a consultant which that is a specialty of theirs; there are several of them that specialize in downtown revitalization. As far as the design looking at the use of the second and third floors of downtown and how to make those more useable so they are not vacant. You want people living in your downtown so that they are utilizing your downtown businesses. The mill does, it is really the pinnacle of our downtown, so that big development project ties into that as well.

Councilor Larochelle said that was his big concern; that working as a town to get that to be a building that something is done with in the future. Having an idea or picture of what that could be will help us move forward with possibly taking that over, or not taking it over but getting people interested in doing something with the mill.

Ms. Bradley said one thing I would like to add, too, is that I spoke with a couple of consultants to get estimates of preliminary costs, knowing that we will have \$12,500.00. We also have in kind that we are adding to our grant which almost equals over \$30,000.00 and that includes all of the time that

the Revitalization Committee meets, all of the sessions that we have held. All of those get incorporated into the grant as in kind match as well, so that improves it. When I was talking with the consultants, one of the things we were discussing is that typically it is going to run around \$30,000.00. I said I am only going to have \$12,000.00, tell me what \$30,000.00 is going to buy me. We actually are so far ahead of the game because of the visioning sessions we have already done. Typically people pay somebody to do those and they pay a consultant to come in and gather that data and do the surveys that we have done. When I told them that we have already held those, we have data and we have two surveys, they said we were really ahead of the game; that is going to save us a tremendous amount of money.

Councilor Cote said is the town of Lisbon also going to be taken into effect at the same time or are you going to do this later. Village of Lisbon, not always Lisbon Falls.

Ms. Bradley said we typically will start with the core, the Main Street and your downtown, and that happens to be Lisbon Falls. It will grow as we start moving forward pulling that in. We have a couple of ideas that we have been talking about in ways to start doing that, that you will be able to see as we start bringing those together. It is going to be a phased approach. It is going to be steps. It is not something that is going to be done in six months. It is not something that is going to be done in a year. This is the beginning steps and phases of a very long project. Some towns do this for many, many years before they get to their final goal. What happens is that as you reach a goal and you complete something, something else is going to be added to the other end that you want to do. It is a cycle that will continue. You are always going to be improving.

Councilor Mason said a lot of that, Councilor Cote, is what is allowed with the grant money. They only will give you a certain stretch. We would love for it to go from Main Street downtown right up 196 to Village Street in Lisbon, but that might not be exactly what they include in the beginning part of the process.

Councilor Cote said the reason I was bringing it up is that Lisbon Falls is looking fairly decent. Lisbon died. There is nothing in Lisbon. The only thing we have in Lisbon is the Fire Department. If we are going to revitalize anything the Village is worse and needs help.

Mrs. Stevens said one of the things I keep trying to understand coming here six years ago, I do not understand the difference between Lisbon, Lisbon Falls, Lisbon Center, Lisbon Village. I understand that people who grew up here, there used to be a difference. I understand that, but I think moving forward we are one community. The only way to get current in the here and now and get the young people to be excited about the community is to stop envisioning our self as different. If we have to start with Lisbon Falls, that is all going to trickle down into Lisbon. We are all going to benefit from that. Not everybody is going to fit in Lisbon Falls. You are going to see your property values go up, you are going to see so much pride in your community. There is nothing saying that after that grant goes by, we cannot turn around and say, I live in the Gross Development, we have Graziano's, this beautiful restaurant that brings in people from Lewiston/Auburn. Look at all the other great wonderful things we have here to enjoy and things we can bring in. It is not as if Lisbon is not going to benefit. It is not as if we cannot go back and say, look what we have done so far, let us do more and keep going. I think if people band together we can get that positive energy flowing and really make Lisbon a great place it deserves to look like and already is.

Paul Griesbach, Main Street, said I agree. One thing I see is a real positive attitude about the community. I think there is a sense that when the town accepts money, it is as if somebody is going to get a foot in the door and it is going to cost us more money. I do not think that is the case here. Part of this, I am assuming, is that there will be building standards. The town is not going to be doing a lot of this work, but when people decide to do a project, there will be things that they have to do to comply with the plan. It is not so much that we will be doing things, but if you do not plan, it will just happen. It will happen in a way you do not want it to happen. This makes a lot of sense so that the development will be something we like to see, instead of just being a mess.

CONSENT AGENDA

VOTE (2009-66) Councilor Wells, seconded by Councilor Cote, moved to approve a Victualer's License for Dr. Mike's Madness Café; Victualer's License for Maria Burchfield d/b/a Maria's Place; Liquor License & Special Entertainment Permit for Graziano's Restaurant; Itinerant Vendor-Mass Gathering Permit for Riverside Flea Market; Renewal Victualer's Licences for Angelo's Pizzeria, Big Apple, Canton Pearl, Casa Mia, Inc., China Inn, Coombs-Mountfort Post 158, Food City, Good Time Lanes, Kennebec Fruit Company, Lisbon Dunkin Donuts, Lisbon Getty aka Nino Corp., Lisbon House of Pizza, McDonalds, Miller's Variety, Sam's Italian, Sausage Kitchen, Slovak Catholic Assoc., X-tra Mart in Lisbon Falls; Renewal Mobile Home Parks for Avery Street Park, Town and Country Mobile Home Village, Whispering Pines Trailer Park, Worumbo Estates, and Worumbo Park; and to accept the minutes of April 7, 2009. **Order passed -Vote 7-0.**

COUNCIL ORDERS, RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES

VOTE (2009-67) Councilor Wells, seconded by Councilor Crafts, to accept the \$600.00 from a criminal forfeiture. **Order passed -Vote 7-0.**

Councilor Bowie said although it is not on the Agenda, we have late breaking information from the Chief of Police. We have to take a vote on a forfeiture and transfer of assets. There is \$600.00 from a criminal forfeiture that if we as a Council do not vote on, the money will be transferred over to the State.

OTHER BUSINESS

A. FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Ricker said you all got your March reports. I wanted to point out a few things on them. One of the most interesting things about this month is that if you look at the Excise Tax collected in March of this year versus March of last year, they were within \$66.50 of each other. So, there was no decrease. Ms. Ricker said she asked Mrs. Bailey out front, what she thought traffic was looking like to her and she noted that there are many new car registrations, but they are new used cars. She also noticed that we have many people moving into Lisbon Falls, which I thought was a good sign.

Ms. Richer said overall in the Revenue section Excise Taxes are down approximately \$54,000.00; State Revenue Sharing is down about \$31,000.00; Investment interest is down about \$80,000.00 over last year; Recycling income is down approximately \$10,000.00 over last year. I talked to Mr. Ricker last week and he does not hold out much hope for the rest of this year in terms of Recycling income. He feels that it is going to be less than flat for the remainder of this year.

Ms. Ricker said I looked at Real Estate taxes today and we are at about the same place as last year at this time. The courtesy letters have gone out, so the lien process is rolling. It will be completed before the end of this year. I think last year it rather washed over into July of last year.

Ms. Ricker said looking at the Expense side in the Insurance account we will have money left over. My estimate right now is about \$80,000.00. We will be overdrafted in the Legal line because I am assuming we will be billed for our Bond legal council before the year ends.

Ms. Ricker said I looked at Snowplowing today because the report that you got, they had not finished paying their contracts for the snowplowing season. So, as of today, it is overdrafted about

\$58,000.00, that includes the first FEMA grant, but we have not received the second FEMA grant. I am not sure what amount we are going to receive.

Ms. Ricker said last month I noted the heating overdraft at the MTM Center and the rest of the MTM Center budget does not look so good either. There is not going to be enough in the 1250 account, which is the Town Buildings Account to completely offset the overages of the MTM piece, so that will be something we will have to address.

Councilor Henry said that you do a great job of keeping track of everything.

Councilor Bowie said are we going to work on any plans for some of these overages. Ms. Ricker said what would you like to do. Councilor Bowie said I know you had mentioned in a couple of cases that you had money that is going to cover some of the other ones, like the MTM or the town building was not going to be enough. I think we should at least start to think about, because it is April, where any additional spending we could cut back on within the remainder of the year to try to at least make the bottom line net out to zero.

Ms. Ricker said right now there is enough in the Insurance account to cover even the Snowplowing, assuming that the snow is done.

Councilor Wells said, Ms. Ricker, why is it all of a sudden, I do not remember this ever being on here before, but the Overlay account is on here. Ms. Ricker said because I wanted it to balance out. If you look at the Revenue side, the Revenues equal the budgeted expenditures and they never did before and it was sort of annoying to me. Overlays is one of the things that balances it out. Overlay is obviously a source of an increase for our surplus this year, but I do not know that that will happen if we have our; right now our total Revenues are only out about 64 percent as opposed to 75 percent of where they should have been. I think the majority of the Overlay is going to be used to cover those Revenue shortfalls; that is my theory right now and I certainly could be wrong.

Councilor Larochelle said, going back to MTM, we actually have the MTM as one line that shows \$4,181.00. Is there still in \$56,040.00 that is in Town Buildings; is MTM in both of those numbers or is it just separated this year, just that one line. This year the numbers for MTM is in the Town. Ms. Ricker said that is correct. MTM has always been separated from Town Buildings and going forward with the new budget year, they will be combined and budgeted in one place. They are totally separate this year.

B. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Eldridge said last meeting I told you about the Durgin Bridge. The plans did finally show up; our Engineer does have them if anybody is curious on what they are doing; that will be this summer.

Mr. Eldridge said Ms. Bradley and I attended the AVCOG Western Maine Economic Meeting and General Assembly. We had presentations from several different groups. The one I found most interesting was from William Cohen from VERSO, which is a big paper company, talking about the paper industry in Maine and trying to protect the paper industry. The amount of money they feed into the economy is huge and it was a real eye opener; we have to do all we can to keep them there.

Mr. Eldridge said Diane Nadeau, our librarian, announced that they received a \$400.00 grant the Community Health Information Partnership to purchase materials for medical wellness and exercise. Today they had a great program with the Wheeler's from Bowdoinham. They had an outside park where they brought in lambs and goats with many kids chasing lambs and kids and having a great time.

Also, Mr. Eldridge said, there is a Lisbon Falls walking workshop. AVCOG's project is to make Lisbon a more active community. If anyone would like to join us, it is at 1:00 at the MTM Center. We will be walking through all parts of Lisbon Falls and we will be back at the MTM Center at 4:00 p.m. This is part of a grant project that AVCOG is doing for us. If you can attend, that will be great.

Mr. Eldridge said you got an invitation today from the American Legion to participate in the Memorial Day parade, 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 a. m.. Let me know and I will tell them who is going to attend. They would like you to march in their parade.

C. BUDGET

Mr. Eldridge said in your packets there is quite a bit of information. Don Fellows, member of the Advisory Board, put together a spreadsheet. He sent it to us and we added to it to make it an interactive process. If you look at this so at our next workshop you will be familiar with it. When we plug in amounts under "Adjust" that will readjust a number on the right hand side of the new budget, it will also give you a total on the bottom page on each page, so you will know how close we are to the zero we are looking for. We will have the opportunity to interact with it, change it, take it out, put it back in, and then come to a decision of what you want to do.

Mr. Eldridge said there is another worksheet in your packet, which shows where we started with the Excise Tax. The Excise Tax is going to be the biggest shift we see in the coming year. We are expecting the bill to pass in November, so we will have six months of less Excise Tax than normally, which is \$965,000.00 versus \$1,200,000.00. The following year, to project a little bit out, if that bill does pass, the total annual amount that we will have will be roughly \$757,000.00, which is quite a big difference from what we had this year of \$1,200,000.00. I plugged in the Bond amounts; our projections were, if you start with the \$951,000.00 Revenue shortfall for the coming year, then looking at "Initial Cuts", this is where Ms. Ricker and I started with closing the gap of \$951,000.00. We looked at a number of layoffs. We looked at alternative cuts and reductions because we had some savings in insurances and other areas. We still, even with the recommendations we had, the wage freeze and changes in health insurance, which they all agreed to, we still came up with only \$607,069.00 for savings that we could find, so we are still short. Looking at the other page behind that, you will see the recommendations you made at our last workshop. You restored \$307,000.00 back into the budget. You were looking at \$358,000.00 in other areas, which puts us in a fairly good position, but some of the things you are seeing here, next year we are still going to have to address, or the year after when we go into the 2010-2011 budget, which you see on the other page. You are still going to have, if you were to put the Revenue shortfall difference of what you are going to see this coming year and what we are going to see after that in 2010-2011, you are still going to be \$335,000.00 short in Revenue. If you were to restore the wages that were frozen this year that will add roughly another \$80,000.00, and if you were to restore and maintain all the Expenses you were planning to put back in, you will see an additional \$310,000.00 and that will put us at a \$725,000.00 shortfall in 2010-2011. Something to think about. Unfortunately we have to look at putting everything on hold this year and hope the economy gets better. 2010-2011 is going to be a very difficult year, just like this year was. It is up to you what you want to do, you made some good recommendations I thought and we should stick to them, the call in the end will be yours and I will administer it. These are numbers you will have to look at; we are going to a public hearing on April 28. The public will have many questions, but we have to look at 2010-2011 because we are going to be shy. If the Excise Tax bill fails, we will be in a much better position, but we still will not close that gap.

Councilor Cote said at the last workshop we had, we removed \$235,000.00 that we were going to put into roads. Are the roads that were going to be repaired by that money, going to be repaired under this new Bond issue?

Mr. Eldridge said no, the \$235,000.00 that is in your Operating Budget is just for shimming and overlay of roads that the pavement is deteriorating, but is structurally in good shape. Mr. Beal and I have talked about that and we did discuss at our last workshop that we could hold off with this coming year and not fund that. You are going to have to put it back into the budget for 2010-2011 or you will lose all that you have gained.

Councilor Cote said with the vote turnout the ways that it did the townspeople have made it clear they are passionate about their roads. Is this something we are going to renegotiate?

Councilor Bowie said we have not made any decisions. We are going to have another workshop after the public hearing.

Councilor Cote said I have been hammered on intensely about King Road and Ferry Road.

Mr. Eldridge said those are the roads in the Bond, so those are the roads that are going to be fixed this year. King Road will not be done until Durgin Bridge is fixed. The Bond covers a three-year span. We are going to try to get as much done as we can each year, but we are going to wait for the Durgin Bridge to get fixed first.

Mr. Eldridge said tonight I just wanted you to look at this information, be familiar with the spreadsheet where it is interactive so when we start looking at those numbers we can plug them in and you can see the bottom line. Also, to recognize the fact that the Department Heads, Ms. Ricker, and I worked hard to come up with something that was palatable and looking at not just the coming year but also 2010-2011. I hope the Excise Bill fails and we will be able to do some of the other things we were talking about and we may be able to come out of it okay, but, I need a crystal ball to do that.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

George Caron said I just want to thank the Police Chief of the Town of Lisbon for not arresting me yesterday. I was kind of mad because I could not believe that the town would on the ballot itself. I spent twenty-two years in the Air Force defending this country and the government is telling us. I do not know if anyone else agrees with me, but I am saying you already know you guys want these things voted on, so I do not see the point in saying that we are suggesting to do it. So that is why I was outside there. I was into it about forty-five minutes, and then a young police officer came over and told me to stop yelling. I said I want to talk to your boss. I was brought into the Chief. The Chief said if you do not stop yelling, I am going to have to run you in. I said I do not have the bail money, so I will stop yelling, but I stayed out there saying that no this is wrong, no you should not. I do not know what the purpose of this is, but the Town Clerk told me it is within the Town Charter. I do not know, that seems, I do not know, suggesting the way to vote is not really a good thing to do.

Councilor Wells said, Mr. Caron, if you look at a ballot, it was no different than what you saw on the town floor, but you saw the recommendations of both the Council and the Selectmen. The Council voted yes on those Bonds to move them forward. The Budget Advisory Board voted yes on those Bonds to move them forward. We were not suggesting how you vote, we were telling you whether the Council approved it or not as if you had been on the town floor and seen the Warrant. There were times where you saw that the Budget Advisory Board and the Council did not agree and you would see that the Selectmen might have said yes and the Budget Board said no. All you were seeing on that ballot was that the Council had already reviewed it, they felt it was appropriate to move it forward, but they were not telling you how to vote.

Mr. Caron said it said yes vote. Councilor Wells said it says the Council recommends yes, Budget Advisory Board recommends yes. But that is what is recommended. It is still your choice as a voter

to go in and make your decision, as you saw by three of the Bonds not passing. Mr. Caron said that is what I am saying. People like me see something like that and they say no, I am not going to follow that. It showed did it not?

Donna Stevens, Lisbon resident, said I have a couple of questions. For the Public Hearing that is next week on April 28, is that at 6:30 or 7:00 at Lisbon Community School? Councilor Bowie said 7:00. She said has the Budget Advisory Committee submitted anything to the Town Council and or the School Committee with their recommendations on the Budget? Is that something they would typically do?

Councilor Bowie said they will provide us with recommendations. I believe we agreed, I do not want to put words in the Advisory Board's mouth, but I believe we agreed to sit down together and hear their recommendations after the Public Hearing, so we both get to listen to what the citizens were discussing. Then we would hold a workshop with them to hear what their recommendations were with regard to the Budget.

Donna Stevens said okay, now I understand. I would like to make a comment to the town of Lisbon voters. I am very concerned about the \$500,000.00 Bond not passing. I have been at a couple of meetings and I have made a couple of comments. I was so saddened to hear that that did not pass this morning. I really cannot imagine writing a letter to every single student in this community is the only thing that could have been more effective in saying that we do not care about you or your future.

She said we are doing so much to work towards building this community into something fabulous. So much energy and effort going into bringing Lisbon about to be a revitalized community and yet we are telling our students, drop out of high school because honestly they are not going to get into college if we lose our accreditation. Whatever beefs people have in the past with things that have been done, we need to band together as a community and get past that. Like it or lump it, you are going to spend \$500,000.00 either way whether you get State funding or you do not. Our part is still going to be \$500,000.00. We have to come up with a blueprint. Now we have no way to do that.

Mrs. Stevens said I do not know if anyone is aware or not, but a week ago we were formally placed on probation. We have until May 1 to submit to NEASC what we are going to do before we lose our accreditation. My daughter is a sophomore. My son graduates this year. She has talked about being a veterinarian since she was seven. If this high school loses its accreditation, graduations will be the only school in this state to not be accredited. There is no veterinary college in the State of Maine, but she will not be able to go to any college outside of the State of Maine from an unaccredited high school. I have asked Principal Healy and I have looked into it, two other times in history high schools have lost their accreditation. They have received them back; it took them fighting tooth and nail for almost a decade to get it back. I have three children who I now have to look at, honestly, possibly moving to a different school district. I look back and think of all that I am planning to do for this community and all this positive energy we are putting in and I hear so many people complaining about the youth. Honestly, are we giving them any incentive to fight and stand up for this community and to stay in this community? I cannot imagine telling them, other than a personal letter to each one saying we do not care about you, your future, or your education. I am very sorry; I understand people feel very strongly on both sides, but as a parent of a student I have never had anybody in the six years of meetings that I have attended, the School Department meetings, the School Budget meetings, or the Town meetings, I do not recall much fuss being made about the fact that we spend about \$250,000.00 a year above and beyond what the State says is acceptable for sports, and I support that, but people do not make a fuss about that. But when it comes to our actual status of being accredited or not, nobody wants to spend the money; I do not get it.

Councilor Bowie said I would like to try to answer that in two parts. First of all, I have not talked to Council yet, but I am going to ask Council to see if they would like to sit with the School Board to figure out a way to move forward based on the situation we are in. I think this is a town issue, it is

not a School Board, Town/Municipal-side issue, it affects the entire community. I think we need to figure out how we can work together and try to move this forward.

Councilor Bowie said, secondly, I would like to point out that by going on probation I do not believe we lose our accreditation. I do have information here that was provided to me. Of the schools in New England that are currently on probation (I have a two page listing), that happen to be three schools in Maine already on probation none of which have lost their accreditation. Some schools have been on this list since December 2003. Just because we go on probation, what NEASC is trying to do is send a message to us that you need to pay attention and you need to get something done. They have sent that message to us as a town and we need to address that. I do not believe they will take our accreditation away from us if we are making progress and we are working together to do something. Does that mean we go spend \$500,000.00 or does that mean we go look at things in a piecemeal process and try to put together a plan, which I believe they have asked for in their latest letter that allows us to address their concerns. I do not believe we automatically lose our accreditation just by being placed on probation. Probation in itself is, you are still doing everything you are doing, but when they take you off probation and they pull accreditation, is when we have to worry. Now the onus is on all of us to work together to figure out a way we can best move forward without impacting the town, because I think what we heard from the town is that we do not want to go spend a ton of money right now. We need to figure out how to address what NEASC is asking us to address in the most prudent fashion that allows us to at least stay on probation or get off probation.

Mrs. Stevens said I understand that probation is not having our accreditation pulled. Is that list of schools on the town website? Councilor Bowie said this is public information on the Internet through NEASC or whatever. Mrs. Stevens said but as being part of the town meeting, it is public record. Is that or the letter to the Council or to the School Department from NEASC, is any of that. Councilor Bowie said it is all public information. Mrs. Stevens said yes I understand, is it all on the town. If it is being sent to the Town Council, is there anything that is on the town website for the citizens of Lisbon to go obtain.

Councilor Wells said this is on the school website, so the letter that is from NEASC to Principal Healey, which is four pages, is on the school website, so that is very easy for you to obtain. It does explain on the very last page what must be addressed immediately and then how the school needs to go forward; so that is on the website.

Mrs. Stevens said we have until May 1 or May 15. May 15, to submit something to them; has anyone met and come up with a plan as of yet? Councilor Henry said I spoke to Prudence Grant and they are already having meetings to address all of that in a time efficient manner.

Mrs. Stevens said how soon do you anticipate the Town being able to meet with the School Committee. Councilor Bowie said I would have to get agreement with the Councilors first then have an agreement with the School Committee then we can sit down and figure out how we can work together to try to help each other out. We at least have a budget workshop coming up, although I think this is more than just a budget workshop. We do have that coming up in mid-May.

Mrs. Stevens said I want to thank the Council and certain parts of the School Committee, too, for the hard work they are doing. I do have the utmost respect for all of you. Being so concerned, I know just asking to see how far we are progressing, because we received that letter two weeks ago, we are already halfway to having to submit something to them. That is the only reason I am asking, I am not meaning any disrespect, I know are working hard. I know you have full time jobs, too. I do appreciate it all, I am just doing my part to make sure everybody is working together and not trying to block or sandbag each other for whatever reasons that everyone is keeping the students front and foremost in all of it.

Richard Main, Libby St., said I think it is unfortunate if anybody thinks that a no vote is a vote against the students. The townspeople spoke something like 66-34 percent not to go forward with that particular referendum article. The NEASC told the town in their letter that by May 15 they had to send a written response as to what they are going to do regarding the issues that they addressed. There were two bullets that they stated very clearly that had to be done. They used the term immediately, which I assume is now. It is issues like the absence of doors on restrooms, the lack of communication in the boys' locker room, those kind of things which do not cost \$500,000.00 and would not take a year and a half to complete. In fact, they probably could be completed if the School Committee and the Town Council met and decided that immediately we went out for RFPs and get the information that we need, they could have contracts in place before May 15. The work is not that expensive that has to be done by that time. They also have the time to at least do the first bullet, have the work completed by the June 23 or June 24 meeting of the NEASC because that is the date that probation would be issued as opposed to now. It has not been affirmed by the Commission and will not be done until at least June 23. A special report is required by September 1 and other issues that are needed can be taken care of by that time. There is summer coming up; there are people that need to have some work done and have some employment. We can get those things done. It is not a question of whether we can; it is a question of whether we will. I know that we can, we can do it. I would encourage all of you to participate in that project to complete what needs to be done and get it done as quickly as possible.

Mrs. Fitzgerald said Mr. Main, it seems you did a really great job in addressing a lot of these issues that need to be addressed immediately. Back in the early 1970s the high school was not accredited and yet there were students that were accepted into colleges. I do not know what the criteria is for accreditation, but it would appear to me to be the teachers, the curriculum, the test scores, and so forth that would have the higher impact on a student getting into college. Many home schooled students are getting into college, so I am wondering if this accreditation thing is a little overrated. I know that the school needs many repairs. The original building where the gymnasium was built in 1950, 51, 52, I graduated from the old high school in 1949. The newest sections that are falling apart were built in the 1970s; those are the sections that need a lot of work right now. The original building seems to be in better condition than the new additions that were done later. Again, I do not understand accreditation, but I think it would be based on teachers, curriculum, and test scores.

Mrs. Stevens said one thing I wanted to mention about test scores, because it was brought up at a School Committee meeting. I made a comment at the last town meeting and after being advised of only one time at the podium, members of the School Committee had waited until after I sat down to bring up the comments I had made at the last town meeting. They implied that I said the teachers do not do their job and I never did that. However, they quoted numbers on the test scores. While the teachers work very hard and I do appreciate them and I know how much time and their own money they put into things, if we look at history of test scores in Lisbon, according to them, that Traci Austin said that in 2000 we ranked 30th percentile in testing. I think last year we had risen up to 50 percent, which is a huge accomplishment, but still it took us almost ten years to reach average. If they do look at more than accreditation, that would be fantastic news for me and I loved hearing that little bit of hope that was given to me tonight. The test scores are still really low. They have just now reached average, which is a great accomplishment, but it still something that is concerning to me.

Councilor Cote said one thing that I have heard repeatedly this tax season, or budget season, it has always seemed that they look to the taxpayer as if they were not fulfilling their obligations because they are not building a new school or they were in some way short-changing our youth because we are not building the new school. I live in a generation where I watched my parents and I watched a lot of relatives and friends who worked their butts off to pay their taxes every single year. And they have never once in this town turned their back on the school, the police department, or the fire department for any cause. Anybody that slights the general public for fulfilling their obligation, it is not the taxpayers, it is the economy and the times we are in. Anybody that does that, they are going to have to confront the whole town. We have done a great job. I do not think we have to feel one bit

unhappy about what we have accomplished. We will build a new school. We have built a new grammar school. We will move forward, but do not beat up on the taxpayers. They are doing the best that they can.

APPOINTMENTS - NONE

COUNCILOR COMMUNICATIONS

Councilor Henry said I go forward with you about meeting with the School Committee and working towards a solution. My daughter and Kirsten Fairbanks who deserve a chance to vote and wore their little tag "I voted today" and then when they found out they lost the \$500,000.00, which to them meant accreditation, she said to me why do not they care about the school. I told her it is not that they do not care and I think that there may be another solution. I am sorry the Bond went down for the Trails. I think that that would have a huge draw for the town. My last negative comment is the new analog situation. My husband refuses to get cable. We bought those little boxes. They do not work very well. March Madness was really March madness for me. Instead of watching soap operas, I am reading more books. The point is, Channel 6 and 8 are the only two stations that you can still see. I really miss Channel 10, which is my Jane Austen series. I think that advertisers out there, not everyone are seeing your commercials anymore.

Councilor Henry said the other thing is positive. I worked Saturday with Robin Tupper, Lynn Strout, and Joanne Campbell, the whole Booster group for the second annual Booster softball/baseball tournament which was like a round robin. We had Skowhegan, Foxcroft, and Old Town show up. We fed 160 athletes for free, which they were really thankful for. They really liked that. Also, I want to encourage everyone to call Barb Manocal at 514-3033 so they could get their own "flamingo flocking". It is May 1-14. It is \$10.00 to have someone flocked. I do know that there is a Councilor here that is going to be flocked. You can pay to give them to someone else. It will be done in the middle of the night and you will wake up to twelve flamingos in your yard. The next thing is the Boosters are putting on the Alumni and Friends One Pitch Softball Tournament on May 17. Contact Linda Morse at 353-9850 if you would like to get involved. We are preparing for the June 7 Senior's Sports Banquet. Seth Koenig from the Times Record is going to be the speaker. We are going to be giving out five golden Ls.

Councilor Crafts said Lisbon always has good voter turnout. If people vote, they care. I was impressed with the turnout for an off election. The vote means we care. I think that is a great indication of this election.

Councilor Larochelle said realizing you have to move forward, I do not think you can put down the efforts of the School Committee with the mailings and advertising they did. If will would have done it, they would have passed it by great numbers because they really put everything they could to try to make it happen. One of the good things you see happening from it and making it public, is, as many people have said before, there are a lot of people in town that do have a lot of energy to move forward. These people are saying give us a list of what needs to be done. There are many contractors in town that would be more than willing to work to correct some of the problems. Whether that can happen or not, I do not know. Along with Councilor Bowie and the rest of the Council I am sure we can work with the School Board. It is not them against us; it is we as a town. Maybe with some of the expertise we have in the town we can take care of problems ourselves and do it economically. Speaking of some of the kids and my stepson, I think they feel the school is doing everything they can to get a new school.

Councilor Bowie said I am assuming the Council is on board, I will have Mr. Eldridge set something up with the Superintendent and the School Board to see how we can help work through their issues and see what we can do, whether who budgets for what, or what money we can use from where to

try to do what can be done to help at least make progress towards whatever plan needs to be done for NEASC.

Councilor Cote said where we do have a new acting Superintendent, I hope he can be brought on board to these meetings also. I would welcome Mr. Green into the meetings also.

Councilor Wells said I think we need to manage to pull that off before May 15 because the public probably needs to hear the response on where that is going. Councilor Bowie said that makes sense.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - NONE

ADJOURNMENT

VOTE (2009-68) Councilor Cote, seconded by Councilor Crafts moved to adjourn at 8:15pm.
Order passed - Vote 7-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elizabeth French, Assistant Clerk

Cassette tapes are filed in the Town Clerk's Office.