

**COUNCIL MINUTES OF
February 20, 2025**

COUNCIL PRESENT: Marcia Delaware, Elijah Ames, Heidi Kinney, Danny Hutchins, Charles Ellms, Andrew Bermudez

EXCUSED ABSENCE: Adam Briggs

I. PUBLIC HEARING

NONE

II. MINUTES

1. Approve/Amend Council Minutes of January 9, 2025

Motion to approve: **Marcia Delaware**

Second: **Heidi Kinney**

Vote: Unanimous in favor, motion passes

III. NOMINATIONS, APPOINTMENTS, & ELECTIONS

NONE

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Manager's Report

Trampas King started by thanking the Public Works Department and the Police Department for keeping everyone safe during all the storms. **Mr. King** informed everyone that the Town Hall is open Monday - Friday from 8:30 to 4:00 for people to walk or play basketball. The ice-skating rink has been open daily, and the hut is open limited hours. There are skates available to sign out for the season. There is finally some good snow and the snowmobile clubhouse is open for breakfast and lunch on Saturdays and Sundays. There is a committee that has been formed for the Comprehensive Plan and there is a survey that you can fill out online or there are paper copies at the Town Office. The survey will be available for thirty days and it is a very important part of the plan. **Heidi Kinney** asked if it is only open to Dexter residents. **Mr. King** stated that it isn't as some people work here or have summer homes here.

2. Departmental Reports

Andrew Bermudez commented that **Juli Kimball** had a busy month.

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. Order A2025-2 Tax Payment Extension

BE IT ORDERED, that the Dexter Town Council, pursuant to Chapter 2, Administration; Article VII Sec. 2-192 of the Dexter Code of Ordinances, hereby extends until March 18, 2025, the time period for owners of record and lien holders to bring their accounts current. Owners of record and lien holders are required to make full payment of all property taxes and costs assessed against properties that have tax liens that mature on February 7, 2025. Municipal Quit Claim deeds will be issued at the April 10, 2025, meeting on properties that have satisfied full payment of their taxes. Action will be taken to dispose of any remaining properties with outstanding tax balances with matured liens.

Filed February 20, 2025
CHARLES ELLMS

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Second: **Marcia Delaware**

Vote: Unanimous in favor, motion passes

2. Order A2025-3 Accept Donation from Hartley Charitable Foundation

BE IT ORDERED that the Dexter Town Council hereby accepts the generous donation from the Hartley Family Charitable Fund in the amount of \$1800.00.

Filed February 20, 2025

HEIDI KINNEY

Second: **Marcia Delaware**

Mr. King stated that we get this grant every year and there is a committee that decides where the money will be spent.

Vote: Unanimous in favor, motion passes

3. Order A2025-4 Accept Bid for 2025 Loader

BE IT ORDERED that the Dexter Town Council hereby accepts the bid submitted by SR1 Equipment in the amount of \$135,000.00 for a front end loader for the Highway Department.

Filed February 20, 2025

DANNY HUTCHINS

Second: **Marcia Delaware**

Chuck Ellms discussed the differences between the Hitachi and the XCMG which had the lowest prices. In order to add on the things to the Hitachi that were included with the XCMG it would increase the Hitachi price by about 15,000. Elijah Ames asked why we are replacing the one we have. **Mr. Ellms** stated that it is an older machine with a lot of hours on it. You never know how long it will last. If we need to buy one next year it could be 20% to 25% higher with the tariffs. **Heidi Kinney** asked where the funds were coming from. **Mr. King** stated that they were able to cut \$50,000 out of the Highway budget and the rest will be from the Highway Equipment Reserve.

Vote: 5-1 in favor (Ames), motion passes

4. Order A2025-5 Transfer Money from Highway Equipment Reserve

BE IT ORDERED, that the Dexter Town Council hereby authorizes the Finance Officer to transfer \$85,000.00 from Highway Reserve Equipment Account #E130-05-511-13 to Highway New Equipment Account #E105-01-507-10.

Filed February 20, 2025

ELIJAH AMES

Second: **Heidi Kinney**

Vote: Unanimous in favor, motion passes

5. Order A2025-6 Accept Grant for Tree Removal

BE IT ORDERED, that the Dexter Town Council hereby accepts the grant in the amount of \$185,131 from the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. The funds are to be used for planting new trees, removing dangerous trees, and stump grinding.

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MARCIA DELAWARE

Second: **Charles Ellms**

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Trampas King stated that this is a grant that was applied for by the Dexter Development Association. It isn't a matching grant but the Town does need to front the money and will be reimbursed. There are a lot of bad trees that need to be cut down and some with branches that are falling off. Some of the trees will be replaced with others that are more suitable for the area and climate. The grant gives two years for it to be used.

Vote: Unanimous in favor, motion passes

6. Order A2025-7 Accept Grant for Fire Department

BE IT ORDERED, that the Dexter Town Council hereby accepts the matching grant in the amount of \$4,996 from the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. The funds are to be used for Wild Fire Defense for the Fire Department.

Filed February 20, 2025
CHARLES ELLMS

Second: **Elijah Ames**

Chief Connor was in attendance and stated that they ordered lightweight gear for grass fires and such.

Vote: Unanimous in favor, motion passes

7. Order A2025-8 Accept Bid for Tree Removal

BE IT ORDERED that the Dexter Town Council hereby accepts the bid submitted by Tucker's Tree Service in the amount of \$28,925.00 for the removal of dangerous trees.

Filed February 20, 2025
HEIDI KINNEY

Second: **Marcia Delaware**

Trampas King explained that the second part of the bids was for the company to also clean up all the wood and the debris. There are a lot of trees that are really big, and it wouldn't be cost effective to have the Highway Department do the cleanup. **Marcia Delaware** stated that Tucker's did the work at Ronco Park recently and did an awesome job.

Vote: Unanimous in favor, motion passes

8. Order A2025-9 Pawn Broker License Renewal

BE IT ORDERED, that the Dexter Town Council hereby approves the Pawn Brokers License for Benjamin Vawser dba Bailey's Pawn Shop, 16 Main Street.

Filed February 20, 2025
DANNY HUTCHINS

Second: **Charles Ellms**

Vote: Unanimous in favor, motion passes

Marcia Delaware made a motion to add Order A2025-10

Second: **Elijah Ames**

Vote: Unanimous in favor, motion passes

9. Order A2025-10 Transfer of Forfeiture Assets

BE IT ORDERED, that the Dexter Town Council hereby approves the Transfer of Forfeiture Assets if so approved by Penobscot District Court.

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ELIJAH AMES

Second: **Danny Hutchins**

Trampas King stated that we got a letter from the DA that we might be getting 85% of the money that was confiscated from a drug bust.

Vote: Unanimous in favor, motion passes

10. Proposed Ordinance – Solar Moratorium

PROPOSED ORDINANCE

FEBRUARY 20, 2025

THE TOWN OF DEXTER HEREBY ORDAINS A MORATORIUM ORDINANCE REGARDING
COMMERCIAL SOLAR ARRAYS

WHEREAS, the Maine Legislature enacted several laws intended to encourage development of renewable energy projects in the State of Maine;

WHEREAS, as a result of these laws, developers are proposing unprecedented numbers of commercial solar arrays throughout the State;

WHEREAS, the Code of the Town of Dexter, Maine (the “Town Code”) does not include any regulations related to commercial solar arrays, and this use would likely fall under the category of “essential services,” which receive no substantive review and are subject to few approval standards; and

WHEREAS, the unregulated location and operation of commercial solar arrays within the Town of Dexter raises legitimate and substantial concerns about environmental, health and safety impacts of such uses, as well as visual impacts and other considerations related to the appropriate siting of these arrays;

WHEREAS, the Town’s current ordinances are insufficient to prevent serious public harm that could be caused by the unregulated development of commercial solar arrays;

WHEREAS, a moratorium is necessary to allow the Town to analyze and plan properly for increased development of commercial solar arrays; and

WHEREAS, the Council, Planning Board and Code Enforcement Officer shall study the current Town Code to determine appropriate amendments to address commercial solar arrays; and

WHEREAS, it is anticipated that such a study, review, and development of recommended Ordinance, changes will take at least one hundred and eighty (180) days from the date the Town enacts this Moratorium Ordinance;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it ordained by the Town Council of the Town of Dexter, that the following Moratorium Ordinance on Commercial Solar Arrays be, and hereby is, enacted and, in furtherance thereof, the Town Council does hereby declare a moratorium on the location, operation or licensing of commercial solar arrays within the Town.

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For the purposes of this Moratorium, "commercial solar array" is defined as a solar energy collection structure of any size that primarily serves an offsite user such as the electric power grid.

This Moratorium Ordinance shall take effect once enacted by the Town Council, in accordance with the provisions of the Town Code, but shall be applicable as of April 12, 2025, as expressly provided below. The moratorium shall remain in effect for one hundred and eighty (180) days from the effective of this Ordinance, unless extended, repealed, or modified by the Town Council, for the express purpose of drafting an amendment or amendments to the current Town Code to protect the public from health and safety risks including, but not limited to, compatibility of commercial solar arrays with existing and permitted uses in residential, commercial and industrial zoning districts.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that this Moratorium Ordinance shall apply to commercial solar arrays that are proposed to be located within the Town on or after the April 12, 2025, applicability date of this Ordinance; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that notwithstanding the provisions of 1 M.R.S.A. § 302 or any other law to the contrary, this Moratorium Ordinance, when enacted, shall govern any proposed commercial solar array for which an application for a building permit, Certificate of Occupancy, site plan or any other required approval has not been submitted to and granted final approval by the Code Enforcement Officer, Planning Board or other Town official or board prior to April 12, 2025, the applicability date of this Moratorium Ordinance; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that no person or organization shall develop or operate a commercial solar array within the Town on or after April 12, 2025, applicability date of this Moratorium Ordinance without complying with whatever ordinance amendment or amendments the town meeting may enact as a result of this Moratorium Ordinance; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that during the time this Moratorium Ordinance is in effect, no officer, official, employee, office, administrative board or agency of the Town shall accept, process, approve, deny, or in any other way act upon any application for a license, building permit or any other type of land use approval or permit and/or any other permits or licenses related to a commercial solar array; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that those provisions of the current Town Code that are inconsistent or conflicting with the provisions of this Ordinance, are hereby repealed to the extent that they are applicable for the duration of the moratorium hereby ordained, and as it may be extended as permitted by law, but not otherwise; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that if commercial solar arrays are established in contravention of this Moratorium, each day of any continuing violation shall constitute a separate violation of this Moratorium Ordinance, and the Town shall be entitled to all rights available to it in law and equity, including, but not limited to, fines and penalties, injunctive relief, and its reasonable attorney's fees and costs in prosecuting any such violations; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that should any section or provision of this Moratorium Ordinance be declared by any court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid; such a declaration shall not invalidate any other section or provision.

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Marcia Delaware made a motion to move the Ordinance for Public Hearing in March

Second: **Elijah Ames**

Vote: Unanimous in favor, motion passes

VI. PUBLIC FORUM

There was much public comment concerning the dangers of Solar Farms.

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

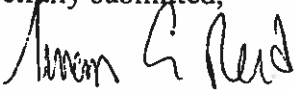
NONE

Marcia Delaware made a motion to adjourn at 7:21pm

Second: **Heidi Kinney**

Vote: unanimous in favor, motion passes

Respectfully submitted,



Susan E. Reed, Town Clerk