



**Manager's Memorandum  
Selectboard Meeting  
September 16, 2025,**

To: Selectboard  
From: Tony Ward, Town Manager  
Date: 09-11-2025  
Re: Selectboard meeting 09-16-2025

Below are notes for agenda items for September 16, 2025, meeting

**5. Managers' Update**

- A. The storage room above the Casco Post Office at the Casco Community Center has been in disrepair for some time and is continuing to deteriorate, creating potential safety concern.

Staff will be working with an engineer to inspect the area, determine the root cause of the damage, and identify the necessary repairs. The findings will be incorporated into the budget process to ensure that the repairs needed are properly addressed.

- B. The Town Employee Safety Committee has held its first quarterly meeting as part of the Workers' Compensation Safety Incentive Program. The committee will focus on facility inspections, reviewing workplace incidents, ensuring compliance with safety policies, and leading a wellness program to support Town employees.
- C. The Town recently held a community forum on the Greater Portland Council of Governments' Capital Improvement Survey, facilitated by GPCOG's Tony Planet. About 17 residents attended and shared their perspectives. To encourage broader participation, a virtual community forum will be held via Zoom on **September 18, 2025, from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.** at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87398919973>. Details are also posted on the Town's website, Facebook page, and digital sign.
- D. Town staff recently met with Owens McCullough of Sebago Fiber to conduct a preliminary inspection of the sand/salt shed. Initial access was limited due to debris and building constraints, but Public Works staff cleared the area, moved sand, and removed panels to allow a more thorough review. Sebago Technics will return soon to complete the inspection and provide guidance on the shed's condition, potential improvements, and whether the existing structure could continue to serve as a storage facility.

## On-Going Business

### 6. The Selectboard will discuss future planning options.

#### Background

Town staff and I are in the process of finalizing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for planning services. The primary focus of this RFP will be the Village zoning (P1 in Comp Plan) update, which is a key step in preparing for future growth while preserving the character of the Village.

#### Scope and Timeline

The RFP will seek planning services for a 5–6-month engagement, with the objective of preparing a draft zoning ordinance for presentation at the June 2026 Town Meeting. This timeline allows sufficient opportunity for community input, Planning Board review, and refinement prior to consideration by voters.

#### Transitional Support

During this interim period, I am in discussions with a potential planning resource who can assist the Planning Board with its ongoing responsibilities. This temporary support will help maintain continuity and ensure that Board activities are not delayed while the RFP process is underway.

#### Next Steps Related to RFP

- Finalize and issue the RFP for planning services.
- Confirm availability of interim planning support for the Planning Board.
- Provide updates to the Selectboard as proposals are received and reviewed.

#### Future Decisions

For future discussions and the draft FY2027 budget, the Selectboard should consider the benefits and detriments of hiring a full-time planner. For context, the 2024 MMA Salary Survey is included in this packet. While not a comprehensive study due to the limited number of participants, the survey provides a benchmark for planner compensation, with a reported mean of \$84,381 and a median of \$81,003. This information was provided because of the overlap between contracted planning services and municipal planner positions.

#### Pros and cons of options

##### Contracted Planning Services

##### *Pros:*

- Flexible: Services can be scaled up or down depending on workload and budget.
- Cost control: Predictable expenses tied to contracted hours or scope of work.
- Access to specialized expertise that may not be feasible to hire in-house.
- No long-term employment obligations (benefits, retirement, etc.).

##### *Cons:*

- Limited availability: Contractor may not always be accessible when urgent matters arise.
- Less continuity: Potential turnover if the contract is not renewed.

- Less direct integration with staff, boards, and community.
- May not provide the same level of long-term planning vision.

#### **Full-Time Town Planner**

##### *Pros:*

- Dedicated resources with consistent availability.
- Stronger integration with Planning Board, Selectboard, committees, and staff.
- Greater continuity and institutional knowledge for zoning updates and long-term projects.
- Ability to proactively address planning issues rather than working project-to-project.

##### *Cons:*

- Higher overall cost when including benefits, retirement contributions, and overhead.
- Less flexibility if workload fluctuates.
- Recruitment challenges, given competitive market, and limited candidate pool.
- Long-term budget commitment.

### **7. The Selectboard will discuss the Foreclosed Property Policy.**

Included in the Selectboard packet is an updated draft policy regarding tax-acquired properties that identifies staff review process and preliminary options for the Selectboard. This updated area is *Section 4. Procedures required prior to the disposition of tax-acquired properties*: of the policy. This policy has been prepared in compliance with Maine law.

### **8. The Selectboard will discuss the schedule of the zoning work group.**

The Village Zoning Work Group recently held its first meeting to begin reviewing Casco's Village (P1) zoning. The group outlined a strategy to guide this work and set the stage for future recommendations.

Much of the detailed review will take place within Town committees and boards, while the Work Group will serve as the connection point to bring information together. Working with the Town's contracted planner, the group will:

- Make sure Village zoning reflects the Town's Comprehensive Plan.
- Look at different zoning approaches, including the option of moving toward form-based zoning.
- Host community forums in the affected Villages to share information and hear feedback.
- Develop a timeline for next steps, including preparing recommendations for a future Town Meeting.

The goal is to ensure any updates to Village zoning are well-informed, transparent, and guided by community input.

The next three scheduled meetings of this work group are October 8<sup>th</sup>, November 12<sup>th</sup>, and December 10<sup>th</sup>.

## **.New Business**

### **9. The Selectboard will receive updates from the Code Enforcement Office.**

Code Enforcement Officer/LPI John Wiesemann will be present at the meeting to provide the Selectboard with a synopsis of trends occurring in his Department and permitting applications.

### **10. The Selectboard will consider a letter of support for Loon Echo.**

Loon Echo Land Trust has asked the Casco Selectboard to support their application for grant funding through the Maine Trails Program. The proposed grant would help fund the development of new trails at Rolfe Hill, designed to be accessible for adaptive mountain bikers and other adaptive trail users.

As part of this request, Loon Echo is seeking a formal letter of support from the Selectboard to include with their grant application. A draft letter has been provided in the Selectboard packet for review.

### **11. The Selectboard will discuss Open Space activities with the Open Space Commission chair.**

As discussed at the Selectboard's last meeting, the Board is beginning a new process of receiving short monthly updates (about 10 minutes) from Town boards and committees on a rotating basis.

The first update will come from the Open Space Commission, presented by Sam Brown.

The draft schedule for upcoming updates is:

- Safe Streets Committee – October 21
- Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee – November 18
- Water Quality Committee – December 16
- Berry Property Work Group – January 20

This new process is intended to keep the Selectboard, and community better informed about the work of Town committees and to highlight ongoing projects and priorities.

### **12. The Selectboard will consider designated Municipal Official representing the Town of Casco for Maine Municipal Association's Annual meeting.**

Included in the Selectboard packet is an authorization for the Town's voting representative at the Maine Municipal Association Annual Business Meeting, scheduled for October 8, 2025, at 1:15 p.m. at the Bangor Cross Insurance Center.

Since the Town Manager will already be attending the conference, it is recommended that the Selectboard authorize him to serve as the Town's voting delegate at this annual meeting.