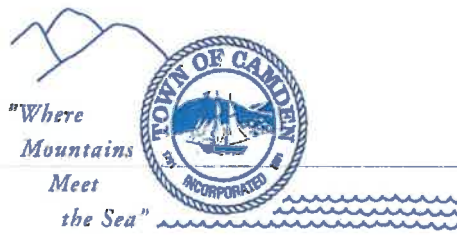


Office of:

Town Manager
Tax Assessor
Tax Collector
Town Clerk
Treasurer
Code Officer
Finance Director
Harbor Clerk



Town Office

P.O. Box 1207
29 Elm Street
Camden, Maine 04843
Phone (207)236-3353
Fax (207)236-7956
<http://www.camdenmaine.gov>

January 22nd, 2021

VIA EMAIL: kpierce@mleahy.com
Kenneth D. Pierce, Esq.
Monaghan Leahy, LLP
95 Exchange Street
Portland, ME 04113

Dear Mr. Pierce

I am in receipt of your letter of January 21, 2021 regarding the Special Town Meeting scheduled for January 25, 2021. We can agree that it is not optimal, but nothing is in this time of COVID-19 when work must be done, and Town Government must do its best to proceed with the issues of the day.

To address a few of your non-substantive issues, which are appropriate to be made at the Town Meeting or at the prior public meeting when the Select Board approved the Warrant Articles, the time and process of calling the meeting are routine. All special Town meetings in historical memory have taken place in the evening after the typical work day, to accommodate working citizens. Your conjecture that the scheduled January 25th Special Town Meeting surmounts to "voter suppression" implies that all open Town Meetings/Special Town meetings in Maine routinely and regularly suppress voters. This is an issue your client should be addressing with State Legislators as opposed to the Camden Select Board, which is not a Town Council, as is stated in your letter.

As to location, it is not optimal, but it was chosen to accommodate more people than we could accommodate in the traditional Opera House venue. The current applicable Executive Order from Governor Mills limits in-building gatherings to 50 people. We cannot be in the position to turn people away from the meeting, and it was concluded after discussion that the greater capacity at the Snow Bowl was the most significant factor to consider. Voters will hear and be heard and all will see and communicate with the Moderator and Town Officials from the warmth of their car, except when speaking. The technology is low tech – car radios and mobile microphones. As you may be aware, multiple other Towns in Maine have conducted their comprehensive Annual Town Meeting warrant article voting in this manner. We are using it for a discrete matter of limited scope.

The lengthy process of using the Referendum Ballot, without the opportunity for discussion and input from the voters, is not attractive in this instance. The fundamental premise of Town Government in Maine includes the opportunity to debate the merits of the proposed contract in question. We have made a judgement call on the best way to accomplish that for the contract in question, considering all the factors at play. That decision is open to comment, but it is certainly legally appropriate, and consistent with how Camden residents normally approve budgets, financing and appropriations for projects. I recommend that instead of your client focusing their efforts on "protesting the validity of the vote", they participate in local direct democracy by showing up at the Special Town Meeting on Monday January 25th and expressing their concerns with this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Audra Caler', written in a cursive style.

Audra Caler
Town of Camden
Town Manager