

Islesboro Island News



January/February 2022

\$5.00

2021 begins with COVID-19 surge

In the last issue of the IINews, we reported that there had been 25 cases of COVID-19 from the onset of the pandemic in March 2020 until December 13, 2021. As of this writing, February 11, 2022, that number stands at 65 reported cases. There may be more as some people have gotten Covid tests on the mainland (or with the free home test kits now available), and though reporting results to the Islesboro Health Center is strongly encouraged, it is not legally required.

The good news is that no deaths, hospitalizations or known serious illness have resulted. People have certainly gotten uncomfortably sick, whole families have had to quarantine for weeks at a time as the virus spreads from one family member to another, and businesses have had to adjust to employee absences. From day to day, at least in January, parents had to shift gears rapidly as the school went partially remote and the preschool closed completely.

IHC Director, Dorie Henning says interactions with the school and preschool have improved over the last year, "We work closely with the school and preschool providing guidance as to best practices and testing. It's a functional and positive relationship". IHC staff oversee weekly sentinel testing at Islesboro Central School for 70 students, ICS staff and other essential workers in the community. It has been an essential tool in optimizing in-person learning. The CDC is now questioning whether the testing fully vaccinated people is the best use of resources and the program will be reevaluated in the next several weeks.

The majority of the cases in the last month have been children; largely because the island's adult population is well-vaccinated and the kids spend a lot of time together. The Maine CDC reports Islesboro's vaccination rate at 91%. With six large scale vaccine clinics undertaken, the health center believes that rate is possibly higher with up to 98% of adults over 65 having received at least two shots and most of those boosted. ISC Principal Kate Legere estimates that 94% students in grades K-12 have been vaccinated.

IHC has received multiple grants and federal funds to help with the significant additional costs associated with COVID-19 mitigation- testing, community vaccine administration, education and prevention. Staff member Beth O'Mara, assisted by new island resident Sierra Thatcher RN, recently applied for and received a Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Vaccine Confidence Grant. This will provide up to \$49,500 in claims reimbursement for testing, treating and vaccinating uninsured patients for COVID-19. It can also be used for costs associated with access, like ferry tickets. The grant covers any vaccines and IHC staff are coordinating with Hannaford pharmacy to come to the island to hold a vaccine clinic for adults needing Pneumonia and Shingles shots. IHC staff are also performing an assessment with the school to determine how many children are in need of routine vaccines and the most practical way to meet that need.

Meanwhile, the Islesboro Health Center advises residents to follow CDC guidelines- wear a mask in public indoor settings and get vaccinated. Recently, free home test kits were delivered to the Island Market, Durkees Store, the ALP Library and the Islesboro Community Center for distribution to the public free of charge (1 per household member). Tests are also available M-F from 1-2pm in the Municipal Building lobby. Another 400 are expected soon. And 1000 N-95 masks have been ordered, also to be distributed free to the public. Vaccine and booster clinics are held on Thursdays from 1-2pm. Please call ahead to reserve your dose.

COVID-19 2/14/22			
	#confirmed cases	#deaths	Vaccination rate
Islesboro	65	0	91%
Waldo County	4788	52	70%
Maine	187,697	1828	75%
United States	76,649,746	905,957	65%
World	409,910,528	5,783,776	62%

Sources, CDC, WHO and the NYTimes

An Update on the Municipal Building Project

In March of 2021, the Islesboro Select Board acknowledged that the Municipal Building did not have sufficient space to accommodate the three Town departments housed there – the Islesboro Health Center, Public Safety (which includes Policing, Emergency Medical Services, and the Fire Department), and the Town Office. That's a lot going on in a 6000'+- square foot building. Select Board members Phil Seymour and Lauren Bruce were asked to investigate further; they gathered information, and presented their findings to the Board.

After much discussion with Town staff, Town Manager Janet Anderson, and island residents with expertise in health care facility design about options to remedy the over-crowded situation, in May of 2021 the Select Board authorized 2A architects to prepare a schematic design for a new Islesboro Health Center building. 2A Architects began their work in August of 2021 but finding that they were not sufficiently experienced in the regulations associated with rural health care facility design, in early 2022 asked to end the contract. The Select Board agreed; 2A will not charge for work done to date. Town administration are currently in discussions with another architectural firm.

At their meeting on November 10th, the Select Board appointed the Health and Safety Building Committee and gave them the following charge: 1) carry out the decision by the Select Board to investigate the construction of a new Health Center building; and 2) investigate the feasibility of remodeling the Municipal Building if the Health Center vacates the building, and of building a Fire Department sub-station up-island.

The committee members are Pete Anderson, local building contractor; Bill Boardman, former Code Enforcement Officer; Derreth Roberts, retired nurse and member of the IHC Advisory Board; Jay Zlotkowski, owner of Island Plumbing & Heating and former Select Board member; Laura Read, entrepreneur; Lauren Bruce, Select Board member with managerial and communication experience; and David Sessions, former CEO of a company specializing in the construction of medical buildings. Non-voting members are Jennifer West, volunteer secretary; Gabe Pendleton, Select Board Chair; and Phil Seymour also on the Select Board. Ex-officio members include Janet Anderson; Murt Durkee, Islesboro Fire Chief; Dave Dyer, Code enforcement Officer; Dorie Henning; IHC Director; Fred Porter, Public Safety Officer; Vern Ziegler, Town assessor; Janis Petzel, Islesboro Energy Committee; and Dr. Christine Robb and Linda Gillies, both HCAB members. The size of the committee is a good indication of the importance of this initiative.



The former waiting room- now office space for two people plus storage



Fire Chief Murton Durkee's office formerly the cooler

Inside

- Around the Town15
- Augusta News/Vicki Doudera10
- Bulletin Board2
- Church News/Pastor Trish Goodspeed27
- Classifieds28
- Cooks Column/Betty Boucher24
- Crossword/John Rex-Waller11,24
- Ferry News/John King4
- HSBC/Lauren Bruce5
- Island Mind/Janis Petzel11
- IMB Update/Roger Heinen7
- Journal Island Garden/Sandy Oliver23
- Land of the Free/Eva Murray12
- News and Notes6
- Newsmakers14
- Real Estate29,30,31,32
- Remembrances27
- Report from Away/John Train24
- School News/Superintendent19
- School News/Principal19
- Student View/Lucy Kossuth20
- Tick-borne Disease/Linda Wentworth9
- Trust Topics/Steve Miller22
- Also featuring
- Elizabeth Elliott26
- Janis Petzel/Anne McKee13
- Chris Trim25
- Submissions from: Burger-Jurger Boys, Murt Durkee, Priscilla Fort, Lindsay Govoni, Katie Heckel, Bonnie Hughes, Devan Landry, Maura Michael, Margie Mills, Patrick O'Bannon, Melissa Olson, Doug Welldon, Peter Willcox
- Photography by: Anne Bertulli, Peter DiLalla, Trish Goodspeed, Laura Graf, Kate Legere, Maura Michael, Margie Mills, Linda Wentworth

Second class postage paid at Islesboro, ME, and at other locations. USPS Permit #010334.

HSBC...continued from Page 1

We asked Islesboro Historical Society President Patrick O'Bannon to provide us with a history of this building at 150 Main Road; "According to the History of Islesboro, Maine (1983), the current town offices began life as the Pendleton & Coffin store in the spring of 1979. Prior to that date, Donald K. "Donnie" Pendleton and John A. "Jack" Coffin had operated out of the former F.S. Pendleton & Company store in Guinea. They had the new building constructed as a "supermarket" about three-quarters of a mile south of the old store. Pendleton & Coffin sold the property to Ronald and Carolyn Ellis in 1981. The Ellises closed the store in September 1982, and in 1988 the Town acquired the building."

The building is essentially unchanged since it became the Town Municipal Building in 1991. You can easily see its long, narrow grocery store origins. For many years the building served the departments well. However over the past three decades, changes in program practices and the island's population have led to growth in the health and safety services that the Town provides, and the space requirements have grown as well. The last two years of pandemic response has only illuminated, in stark terms, the existing conditions.

The first committee meeting on December 29, 2021 included a virtual tour of the Public Safety and Health Center spaces - well worth watching when it becomes available on the yet-to-be-created website. During this meeting and two Zoom public information meetings held in January, a clear picture of the overcrowded circumstances was presented. Fred Porter and Murton Durkee spoke about the limitations of their work space; Durkee noting that his long, skinny office was once the meat locker/cooler. This section of the building has poor ventilation- no air conditioning and only one window...in the bathroom. Durkee installed one where space allowed in his office, high up on the wall where he now can't get at because the locker is filled with the necessities of his job. Fred Porter shares his 8'x8' office with his assistant Carrie Reid and 30 years accumulation of the tools of his trade. It not private enough and is too uncomfortably close to conduct an interview and Porter said essentially everything happens in the meeting/training room, which also houses the bathroom and a small kitchen. When Reid is working, he has to take the phone into the garage for privacy. He has recently had to meet with DHS representatives regarding families dealing with pandemic-induced stress in the garage when either Durkee and/or Reid are using the office spaces. There isn't a safe, designated area to meet criminal justice requirements for evidence storage. There is no space to set up an emergency command center when needed; the meeting room becomes the radio room. Trainings are difficult because of lack of space - the Friends of the EMS recently purchased a \$20,000 "Sim-Man" which can't be used because there is no room to set him up.

In the Health Center, where in these days of Covid up to 10 people are working at one time, every inch of space is being utilized and often doing double duty. Currently, the waiting room is being used as office space for two staff. The lab is in the same space as the kitchen, the counter for each function is delineated by orange tape. Providers share office space, making it difficult to do patient record dictations. The pharmacy houses not only a supply of medications but also loaner medical equipment, as well as cleaning products. The exam and trauma rooms also serve as storage spaces - just the rolls of paper for the exam tables take up a lot of room, for example. The trauma room houses the cleaning supplies and autoclave for sterilizing, which should be in the lab (if there was room); the oxygen tanks stored in that room shouldn't be out in the open. Both exam rooms are on the main hallway and conversations within can be heard through the walls. Henning notes that while the facility continues to pass Medicare inspections, which are primarily based on quality of care, it barely meets the bare minimum requirements.

Both Henning and Porter spoke to the effects such crowded conditions have on staff. Henning notes that working in a space that is inadequate "adds another level of stress during a very stressful period." Porter stated, "Professionalism is the most important part of the work we do. Confidence comes with training and training takes adequate space. Especially on the island, people take a lot of pride in what they do in service to its citizens. They deserve a place they can be proud of."

Porter invites the public to come take a guided tour of the Public Safety building to see what's what. Just call first.

In the coming months, there will be more public informational meetings. Your opinions are welcome - contact any committee member.



Dark Harbor village
Mergie Mills photo

Why Consider a New Health Center Building?

There are many needs on Islesboro, such as housing for our residents and workers, repair of our iconic lighthouse, preparing for sea level rise, and addressing ferry issues. All of these are important and we are fortunate that committees composed of volunteers are working on each one of them. Another significant concern is the serious overcrowding in our Municipal Building.


At the core of this overcrowding is the Islesboro Health Center, which serves many more patients than when the building was renovated in 1991. The ingenious IHC staff has utilized every nook and cranny to confer with patients and to store supplies, drugs, medical equipment, etc., but for a long time lack of space has been an everyday problem. Here are examples:

- What used to be the patient waiting room must now be used as a staff office.
- The staff "break area" houses a multi-use refrigerator and is inches from the medical lab/blood draw area (delineated by red tape).
- The trauma room is the only available storage area for oxygen tanks, sterilizing equipment and more.
- The Municipal Building is a remodeled grocery store that was never properly ventilated, insulated, or soundproofed to assure privacy.

Why don't we move Public Safety, which includes Policing, Emergency Medical Services and Fire, out of the building to give the IHC more room? Or why not add rooms at the back of the Municipal Building? With the help of town staff and island residents with building knowledge, the Select Board and Town Manager Janet Anderson have reviewed these options in detail and have concluded that given the age and layout of the building, any remodel would not adequately address issues that current building codes require in medical facilities, such as privacy and ventilation. Furthermore, remodeling the space for the IHC would be extensive and necessitate shutting down the IHC for many months.


The first step in this complicated process is to find out what a new IHC building would cost. In the summer of 2021 the Select Board appointed a Health and Safety Building Committee and charged it with obtaining a preliminary design and cost estimate. That work is underway, and we should have a design and estimates by this fall. Please look for updates as we move forward (via Constant Contact, IINews articles, and a forthcoming website, which will include your frequently asked questions and answers). And thank you for your interest in and support for this vital work.

*Submitted by Lauren Bruce
Member, Islesboro Select Board
Chair, Health and Safety Building Committee*


Always a Window Seat! 

Reliable Charter Flights From Maine's Premier, Full Service, Aviation Operator Since 1946. Take short hops to or from Islesboro or fly directly to or from your final destination, virtually anywhere in the Continental U.S. and Canada.

Select the airplane that fits your needs from the following:



(3) **Beech Baron 58's:** Twin engine, 6 seats, club seating, 225 mph



Piper Seneca II: Twin Engine, 6 seats, 200 mph, *new offering in 2016*

Travel on your schedule, for business or pleasure, and save valuable time.

You can elect to fly with 1 or 2 pilots.

Fast, easy, secure and comfortable.


Avoid the airline hassle in your choice of a single engine, twin engine or turboprop airplane and your bags arrive with you!

MIF also offers approved flight training from Private through Professional ratings

We have Long and Short Term Hangar Space available and our NEW Corporate Hangar is NOW OPEN!

Please call to discuss rates and details.

MAINE INSTRUMENT FLIGHT

Since 1946 

Augusta State Airport

Tel. 888-643-3597 or 207-622-1211

www.mif.aero