

Islesboro Select Board  
Regular Meeting  
Town Office Meeting Room & via Zoom  
Wednesday, June 8, 2022 @ 6:00 PM

MINUTES

**Members Present:**

Chair Gabe Pendleton, Vice-Chair Shey Conover, Melissa Burns, Lauren Bruce

Via Zoom: Phil Seymour

**Others Present:**

Town Manager Janet Anderson, John King, Dick DeGrasse

Via Zoom: Jennifer West, Maggy Willcox

Call to Order: Chair Pendleton called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and a quorum was established.

**MOTION BY L. Bruce, seconded by S. Conover, to approve the minutes of May 25, 2022, as written. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no.**

VISITORS COMMENTS

FERRY UPDATE

John King spoke about the last Ferry Advisory Board Meeting of May 19. The Commissioner attended via Zoom. The Commissioner was asked about a year ago by the Joint Transportation Committee to do a full review of the Ferry Service. He has not yet started that, but he did announce to the Board that he is going to embark on that and try to get a report out by the end of the year. Background: When he was first asked to do the review, there were two bills that Representative Genevieve MacDonald put in to the State Legislature, one on behalf of Matinicus, to increase the statutory limitation on the number of annual runs to Matinicus, and one on behalf of Swan's Island because the legislation states that the Ferry Service *may* serve Swan's Island, but does not say *must*. The legislation that currently exists provides that 50% of the operating budget of the Ferry Service will be paid for by the Highway Trust Fund. The State pays all the capital expenses (for example, when they build a new boat). The operating expenses run about \$12M/year, so the contribution from the highway fund is about \$6M. There was no discussion by the Ferry Advisory Board about how this review was going to take place. At the May meeting, the Commissioner said that the Highway Trust Fund contribution was indeed an issue that was going to be pursued by the Transportation Committee and one that he was going to address. He went on to say that the tariffs that exist in the State of Maine aren't that high. He also said that when we got Tariff 9, they projected out the expenses and revenues for four years, and the intention was to keep Tariff 9 for at least four years. Tariff 9 went into effect in 2019, so ends next year. The point is, all of this may coalesce at once. The Joint Committee of Transportation consists of three Senators and ten Representatives. There is one Representative from Bar Harbor, everyone else is west of Route 95, and probably more interested in roads and bridges than ferries.

Islesboro Select Board  
Regular Meeting  
Town Office Meeting Room & via Zoom  
Wednesday, June 8, 2022 @ 6:00 PM

There is a capital plan in place which includes the building of the successor to the Margaret Chase Smith, through 2032. John believes the total budget for DOT is \$550M, so \$6M is a small portion of that, but it's clear the Commissioner thinks the tariffs are not very high, and it's going to get revisited. John has started to do a comparison of ferry systems and what it costs to ride boats in the United States. It's hard, because there are some outliers. The Massachusetts Steamship Authority, which runs to Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, is very expensive and demand is high. In North Carolina, everything is free or very low cost. Our ferry service is pretty commensurate with the rest of the country when you take out the outliers. Our rate is close to everyone else's rate, and we have the shortest run. The rate differential does not reflect the mileage differential. John's intention with the study is to show that this island doesn't have the great deal that the Commissioner thinks we do. Another goal is to get our elected representatives onto the Transportation Committee, or have some kind of voice in this process.

L. Bruce asked if the State got much infrastructure money for transportation. John said he asked about that at the Advisory Board meeting. There was a discussion about how we would need to do grant proposals to the US DOT. There is a small bill for new boat propulsion systems, and a big one available for systems that run more than 50 miles. Chellie Pingree has written a letter saying that this should be interpreted to include the Maine State Ferry Service. If the Ferry Service added Monhegan, we would get to 50 miles.

G. Pendleton suggested working together with other islands to make a concerted effort to get our various legislators and representatives on the Transportation Committee. There was a discussion about how to make that happen. It's worth looking at which representative have more power. Vinalhaven and North Haven have shown interest in working on this. G. Pendleton offered to help write a draft letter to get this rolling.

The ferry crew is bare bones right now, the upper deck of the MCS has been closed. This has been a problem with other boats as well. In addition to losing the contribution, costs are going up because they are trying hire people at the highest rate they can. They are trying to get a hiring stipend, but they're not getting many new hires.

Janet spoke with Impy, who informed her that the new ticketing system has been pushed back two weeks.

The Island Institute is now doing a survey on the ferry service. [www.surveymonkey.com/r/maineferries](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/maineferries). Janet sent the link to Tina to send out to the Town. The survey we did on island last fall seems to have had an impact at the Ferry Service.

**MOTION BY M. Burns, seconded by L. Bruce, to take the agenda out of order. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no.**

Islesboro Select Board  
Regular Meeting  
Town Office Meeting Room & via Zoom  
Wednesday, June 8, 2022 @ 6:00 PM

**NEW BUSINESS**

Dick DeGrasse presented a report on wholesale electricity and the possibility of the Town of Islesboro buying power at wholesale rates vs. the retail rates our citizens are paying now under the Standard Offer. Retail rates are extremely high and include the distribution charges we're already paying for through CMP. Dick learned that Vermont Public Power Supply Authority (VPPSA) would be willing to sell wholesale power to Islesboro. Islesboro would have to create an entity called The Islesboro Electric System, or something similar. He explained how CMP would continue to service the billing and maintenance. CMP cannot own the generation of power under Maine Law. The Utility Commission created the Standard Offer, which is a retail rate, and it's 11 to 11.8 cents per kilowatt hour. VPPSA quoted him 7 cents per kw hour. This program would cost nothing, but would save our townspeople a lot of money. He is hoping the Board will vote to create a municipal entity and appoint Dick to work out the details. VPPSA gets their power from nuclear and hydro. Other towns aren't doing this because they don't know how. CMP reads the meters and sends the sum to the supplier of wholesale power. We have a single zip code and single meter; we're in a unique situation which gives us an opportunity which other communities may not have. It's essentially just an accounting switch.

L. Bruce suggested a formal Board or Committee would be more appropriate than appointing a single person to represent the Town.

M. Burns stated she didn't see the harm in giving Dick permission, with the understanding that if this is to bloom, a Board would be set in place for the more formal conversation.

There were questions about whether individual customers would still be able to choose alternative suppliers, such as solar. Dick answered yes, customers can still choose suppliers, and explained that this would be base-level power, 24-hours/day, as another option. In the future, the Town could have a solar farm, a battery bank, and charging of our potential electric ferry. The off-peak rate would apply to charging of the ferry, and we could integrate that in the future.

John King spoke about how he attended a Maine Island Coalition meeting, where Hank Berg from Casco Bay Lines spoke about the new ferry that's in the works for Peaks Island. The infrastructure in Portland is good, yet they ended up designing a hybrid ferry rather than an all-electric ferry, because it runs from 5:30am – 11pm every day and power would need to be topped off during the day. They decided the numbers wouldn't work for all-electric due to the peak CMP rates. John's concern is, if we leave it to Maine State Ferry Service, DOT, and CMP to get the infrastructure for an all-electric boat in place in the next 5 years, that may not happen. There are some electric co-ops in the State, but there are no similar models for what Dick is proposing. It would be nice if we got the State and CMP on board to promise the infrastructure be in place in 4 – 5 years. We might as well be upfront, so that we don't end up in a similar situation as Casco Bay.

Islesboro Select Board  
Regular Meeting  
Town Office Meeting Room & via Zoom  
Wednesday, June 8, 2022 @ 6:00 PM

G. Pendleton stated he is in favor of lowering the cost of power for the Town, and for pushing the envelope on things like this. If we can make it work, it's a real win. However, we need more time to think about this, digest, and figure out what the best way forward is, and how we want to organize. G. Pendleton summarized Dick's proposal for clarity.

S. Conover asked if people would need to opt in to the Town program. Dick answered that we would opt to do the whole town at once, but people don't have to. Janet asked if the Town would need to vote, or have a Public Hearing. Dick is unsure of procedure. We would contract with a supplier for all the accounts on the island. Customers could opt out, or choose an alternative supplier just like they can do now, but most would probably want the cheaper option. Dick is willing to make a few more phone calls to negotiate with other suppliers if he has authority to represent the Town. G. Pendleton is willing to entertain a motion to give Dick authority to make calls on behalf of the Town, but limit the ability to enter into any agreements.

**MOTION BY L. Bruce, seconded by S. Conover, to authorize Richard (Dick) DeGrasse, to represent the Town of Islesboro to negotiate for wholesale electricity rates on behalf of the Town. M. Burns suggested adding, "in association with the Islesboro Energy Committee." Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no.**

Janet stated the Town's attorney will need to look at anything we will sign. We will see what concerns come up.

Dick suggested being cautious about publicity right now, especially with other communities, as this is very early in the process.

Janet will type up a letter on Town letterhead giving Dick authority, that all Select Board members will sign.

**MOTION BY M. Burns, seconded by L. Bruce, to go back in order of the agenda. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no.**

#### **SEA LEVEL RISE**

The next Sea Level Rise Committee meeting is Thursday, June 16<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM. Gabe McPhail will be here in person.

#### **MUNICIPAL BUILDING PROJECT**

The next MBPC meeting is Thursday, June 16<sup>th</sup>, at 11am. Architect Stephen Blatt will be here. We should have progress on site, design, etc.

#### **UPCOMING MEETINGS AND SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

- Democrat & Republican Primaries on June 14<sup>th</sup> in Town Office Meeting Room. Town Office will be closed this day.
- Planning Board, June 27<sup>th</sup>.

Islesboro Select Board  
Regular Meeting  
Town Office Meeting Room & via Zoom  
Wednesday, June 8, 2022 @ 6:00 PM

**TOWN MANAGER REPORT**

Janet has been busy this week waiting on customers. Tina is on vacation, and with Cindy being gone, we've had people filling in. Excited about Town Meeting being over and only lasting two hours. About 85 people checked in.

Some applicants for Cindy's position, and will try this week to make appointments for interviews for next week.

S. Conover asked about training plan for new hire. Janet explained about gradual process and manuals. Tina will do most practical training. Some classes are online. Cindy has offered to do some training as well, if it works out with her schedule.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Discussion about fee schedule for Land Use and Development Review Ordinances. We passed at the Town Meeting some changes to various fee schedules. We need to think more about how much to charge. G. Pendleton suggested we keep rates as is for now, then take time to set new rates after researching and comparing with nearby towns. We may need to have Public Hearings, depending on circumstances, but we don't need a Town vote every time we need to make a change. Janet suggested creating a committee to gather information and set rates. M. Burns suggested that instead of establishing a committee, she volunteered to start the process of research, and ask for a workshop when necessary.

**MOTION BY L. Bruce, seconded by M. Burns to keep in place the fee schedule that was in existence before the recent Town Meeting. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no.**

S. Conover suggested creating a list of fees to review regularly, perhaps annually.

**MOTION BY S. Conover, seconded by M. Burns, to elect Gabe Pendleton as Chair of the Select Board for the new fiscal year. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no.**

**MOTION BY G. Pendleton, seconded by L. Bruce, to elect Shey Conover as Vice-Chair of the Select Board for the new fiscal year. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no.**

**MOTION BY M. Burns, seconded by S. Conover, to approve Warrant 25. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no.**

**APPOINTMENTS**

**MOTION BY L. Bruce, seconded by S. Conover, to appoint Wendy Huntington Evans as Alternate member of the Planning Board. Motion passed 5 yes, 0 no.**

P. Seymour asked if there would be a conflict of interest, as she is a real estate broker. Consensus was no, as she would recuse herself if she had a direct conflict of interest.

Islesboro Select Board  
Regular Meeting  
Town Office Meeting Room & via Zoom  
Wednesday, June 8, 2022 @ 6:00 PM

**CHAIR COMMENTS**

Gabe stated it was a successful Town Meeting this year; we got through it very quickly. It was fewer people than we've had in the past, but nice to have a new member of the School Board, and nice to have the same Select Board members back again.

**VICE-CHAIR COMMENTS**

She hopes she's not speaking out of turn, but it sounded like the Recreation Committee had offered, and Rob McHugh had accepted, the position of Rec. Director just this evening. He has a long history of doing programming with the Rec. Committee.

**INDIVIDUAL SELECT BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Melissa shared that her son Logan finished 7<sup>th</sup> in the State overall in Track & Field, so he brought home a medal to Islesboro. This is the first time in quite a while that we placed with a point in Track & Field as Islesboro. The team came in 28<sup>th</sup>.

**MOTION BY M. Burns, seconded by L. Bruce to Adjourn Meeting at 7:30 PM. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no.**

Respectfully Submitted,



Carrie Reed  
Secretary