

Islesboro Select Board
Regular Meeting
Town Office Meeting Room & via Zoom
Wednesday, December 17, 2025 @ 5:30 PM

☒ APPROVED

12/31/25

MINUTES

Members Present:

Chair Shey Conover, Vice Chair Peter Anderson, Melissa Burns, Peter Rothschild, Stephen Pendleton

Others Present:

Town Manager Janet Anderson

Others Present via Zoom:

Daniel Tutor, Daniel Frohling

Call to Order: Chair Shey Conover called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM, and a quorum was established.

S. Conover sent condolences to the Pendleton Family. It was devastating to hear about Keith's unexpected passing, and we send our thoughts to Tina, Brittney, Roxanne, and Kaden, and the entire Pendleton Family. Keith has done a tremendous amount for this community, and he'll be sorely missed by all. We appreciate Melissa Burns stepping up to set something up online where folks can donate to help support the family during this difficult time.

Minutes of December 3, 2025, Regular Meeting.

MOTION BY P. Anderson, seconded by P. Rothschild, to approve the minutes of December 3, 2025 Regular Meeting, as written. No discussion. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no.

VISITOR COMMENTS/PETITIONS

None.

FERRY SERVICE UPDATE

S. Conover stated it was nice to see so many people at the meeting yesterday, online and in person.

P. Rothschild stated that the DOT is proposing a design that seems like a slightly improved version of the Margaret Chase Smith. In a previous rendition, the budget was \$25M, and the over excess was \$42.5M. The same thing might happen again. He recommends we move ahead with the plan as quickly as possible, because nothing is getting cheaper.

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P. Anderson stated it seemed DOT put a lot of thought into the design, and they presented a good argument as to why we should go with the designs they recommend. That was nice to see.

S. Pendleton suggested writing a thank-you letter to the DOT representatives from the Select Board, complimenting them on their points and the open dialogue, and that we look forward to continuing that.

M. Burns stated she has a little more faith in their estimate this time, after the previous rendition showed them a more realistic cost. They came with a little more education.

P. Anderson suggested requesting more regular updates, directly to the Select Board, which would perhaps increase accountability to us. S. Conover replied that there was a request during the legislative session that the Ferry Service Advisory Board include a Select Board member instead of someone appointed by the Select Board, with the intention of wanting people who could make decisions speak on behalf of the Town at meetings. There's some value in that, but there is also value in having someone be able to come back to the Select Board and have a thorough discussion. It's unrealistic for any one of us to speak for the community without feedback.

S. Conover stated she would draft a positive and encouraging letter to the DOT.

P. Rothschild agreed with the person who said during the meeting that we need detailed breakdowns of the previous bid and the estimate for this current design. S. Conover replied that she can ask them to follow up with the budget details. Peter Willcox and John King feel strongly about wanting something better than the hybrid system. While there are cost implications to that on the capital improvement side, it's worth asking about the analysis on the impacts to operational savings in the long term. P. Rothschild added that we can't have a discussion about the overall economic reality of going to an all-electric system because they're saying it's too expensive on the capital side, and there's not enough in the federal grant that's funding this project. It seems we won't get anywhere with an alternative, so let's just go ahead with this design for now.

SEA LEVEL RISE UPDATE

S. Conover reported that GZA Engineering sent the 60% final design yesterday. The December SLR Committee meeting was postponed. Part of finalizing the budget is going to be recognizing impacts to abutting properties, which will likely need some negotiation between the Town and landowners. S. Conover anticipates that she and J. Anderson will do that in consultation with attorney Kristin Collins.

MUNICIPAL BUILDING PROJECT: UP-ISLAND PUBLIC SAFETY GARAGE, & PUBLIC SAFETY RENOVATION UPDATE

Up-Island Public Safety Garage: S. Pendleton reported that they are putting the siding on, and it looks like the building will be closed up before any major storms.

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Public Safety Renovation: S. Pendleton reported that there was a meeting today with Fred Porter, Janet Anderson, Pete (Andrew) Anderson, Michael Giardino, and Laura Staines Giardino. The remaining money appears to be around \$62K. The two options on the table were the expanded training room, or the kitchen, but not enough money for either. However, they've come up with some creative options in the floor plan that would allow the limited dollars to accommodate getting the training room done, addressing a couple of ADA issues, not including the front entrance. Fred was positive. Laura and Michael will remeasure and then create new drawings, with two options. They will get back to us in January.

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- Harbor Committee: December 18th, 6:30pm.
- Planning Board: December 29th, 5:00pm.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

- Packet included Agenda for 12/17/25 and Minutes of 12/3/25 Select Board Regular Meeting.
- Committee Minutes
 - 9/9/25 Islesboro Municipal Broadband Committee minutes
 - 10/2/25 Islesboro Housing Committee minutes
 - 11/10/25 Islesboro Energy Committee minutes
- Correspondence
 - 11/15/25 email from Town Attorney Kristin Collins re: Islesboro selling resident ferry tickets. She thinks there's no issue with subsidizing the resident rate.
 - P. Anderson asked if she understood that we were asking about seasonal vs. year-round residents, not just homeowners.
 - J. Anderson stated that for a resident rate, you'd need to have a driver's license or something that shows residency.
 - S. Conover stated there would need to be a small group to work out the details of exactly what the definitions need to be, who would be eligible, and how it would work. With a recommendation, we would decide if it's something to include in the budget. She asked the board if it makes sense to have a small group do the work of putting recommendations together, or if there are fundamental concerns about this as a project.
 - P. Anderson stated it seems widely supported in the community, based on the survey. As such, it's our job to look into it as much as we can. He has concerns about whether a town can resell tickets, and where the money comes from.
 - P. Rothschild stated that his problem with the proposal is that it doesn't distinguish between needy people and unneedy people. His main concern is it lets DOT off the hook. It's the thin edge

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of the wedge. Whatever it costs, the taxpayers across the board on Islesboro will pick that up. DOT ought to have a reduced fare for island residents. If the problem is eliminating abuses, there's technology to make sure that doesn't happen.

- S. Conover stated that the only time they would reopen that conversation is in a new ferry tariff. We probably don't want to request that the state consider a new tariff. She would like to come up with a process to create something to propose to the community. It's easy to have wide support for something without understanding the price tag of it. We need to do the work to give people a full picture of what it's going to cost in a potentially difficult year. There may also be some value in defining for the state what residence looks like, because they never had a resident vs. non-resident rate. Being able to point to information about how residency worked could help when a new tariff comes up.
 - P. Anderson supported the idea of a small committee to figure out costs. He stated we owe it to our constituents to do what they seem to be supportive of.
 - M. Burns stated that she does not support the idea. This was brought to us before we got ambushed by Waldo County. The increased budget will probably increase the mil rate, and our constituents are going to get hit. If she didn't know about the budget increase, she would want to look into this idea because she wants to bring support to the community. We should table it until we know how much of our funds go to Waldo County.
 - S. Pendleton stated he would like to explore it further and put a committee together to do some analysis. Higher taxes might exacerbate the need for something like this. After we know more, we can determine if we should table it or make a change.
 - P. Rothschild stated a committee could study if this idea is the most effective way to subsidize access to the mainland.
 - P. Anderson asked if we should subsidize it at all. If we say yes now, what's going to happen in five years? It would be wise to look into it further, but we shouldn't rush it through.
 - S. Conover stated she would talk with John King and come up with a list of people for an ad hoc committee, to be approved at the next meeting.
- 12/13/25 email from Barbara Talamo thanking the Town Office for facilitating the IAP permitting efforts. The two Schnur Cottage families moved in Dec 12th.
 - P. Anderson stated that Barbara would like to add Barry Wherren to the list of people she wants to thank.

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- 12/15/25 Bangor Daily News article “Waldo County Delaying Vote on 36% Budget Increase After Hours of Public Outcry” sent by Doug Welldon.
- 12/15/25 email from Eric Buch to Waldo County Councilors et al following up to Friday’s Waldo County Budget Committee Public Hearing.
 - M. Burns thanked James & Anne Kosuth, who presented her statement about how disgruntled she was that they moved the meeting to an inconvenient time and then didn’t allow Zoom participation.
- 12/15/25 email to Nathaniel Benoit of MDOT from John King re: design of new ferry.
- 12/16/25 Meeting assets (Zoom AI Summary) for DOT Public Meeting for Ferry Design.
- Handouts:
 - 2026 Meeting Dates
- Manager:
 - Keith Pendleton passed away December 15th.
 - 6/30/24 Audit arrived 12/10/25.
 - Tom Michaud is remaining with Public Works.
 - Melissa Burns worked at the Town Office today, which was very helpful to us. Thank you.
- Warrant #13

CORRESPONDENCE

Covered in Town Manager Report.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Roadside Tree Trimming Equipment.
 - S. Pendleton asked if the research on equipment is moving forward.
 - J. Anderson stated that Dave Dyer has found a brand new one for \$55,000. There was a used 2024 one, which was actually more, because it doesn’t qualify for a municipal government discount.
 - S. Pendleton stated that he thinks this is one item that should be in the budget, regardless of restraints, because it is the singular, most important thing to the townspeople and workforce who have trucks, and it will illustrate that we’ve listened. If we amortize it over X amount of years, it’s not that much.

NEW BUSINESS

1. None.

OTHER BUSINESS

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1. None.

APPROVE WARRANT: FY26 #13

MOTION BY M. Burns, seconded by P. Rothschild, to approve Warrant FY26 #13. No discussion. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no. Unanimous.

APPOINTMENTS:

None.

CHAIR COMMENTS

S. Conover: No comments.

VICE-CHAIR COMMENTS

P. Anderson: Happy Holidays! Say, "I love you" to those you need to say it to.

INDIVIDUAL SELECT BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

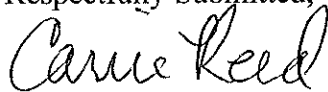
P. Rothschild: I think we have agreement about what to do about parking on Ferry Rd. Our engineer is working on a plan.

M. Burns: No comments.

S. Pendleton: The Pendleton loss surprised and impacted me. I'm sad for the family and wish them the best.

Motion by M. Burns, seconded by P. Rothschild, to adjourn meeting at 6:11 PM. No discussion. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no. Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,



Carrie Reed
Secretary