

Islesboro Select Board
Regular Meeting
Town Office Meeting Room & via Zoom
Wednesday, December 4, 2024 @ 5:30 PM

APPROVED
12/18/24

MINUTES

Members Present:

Chair Shey Conover, Vice Chair Lauren Bruce, Melissa Burns, Peter Anderson, and Stephen Pendleton

Others Present:

Town Manager Janet Anderson, Valerie Maleport, John King (6:00)

Others Present via Zoom:

Brian Bohanon, Elizabeth Hayden, Maggy Willcox, Peter Willcox

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

Minutes of November 20, 2024, Regular Meeting.

MOTION BY P. Anderson, seconded by M. Burns, to approve the minutes of November 20, 2024 Regular Meeting, as written. No discussion. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no.

VISITOR COMMENTS/PETITIONS

Brian Bohanon stated that Maine's new Paid Family Medical Leave Act starts accepting money in January of 2025, but does not actually start offering benefits until mid-2026. Since we're a municipality with 15 or more employees, we have to contribute 1% of the total annual pay of the Town employees to this Paid Family Medical Leave fund. Since we have over 15 employees, we have the option of having the employees pay ½ of that 1%. However, Brian recommends against having the Town employees contribute half a percent of their paychecks, and instead suggests that the Town cover it all. It's not currently budgeted for, since we didn't plan on this expense coming up, but Brian has generated enough extra interest income to cover the entire amount of the first half of next year, so we have the funds to cover this. We don't have to ask the employees to take a half a percent pay cut, basically.

S. Conover asked exactly how much is that one percent per year, thinking we'll have to budget for it going forward. Brian replied that he'll have to do more math to get an exact figure, but he estimates it will be under \$20,000 per year.

MOTION BY L. Bruce, seconded by M. Burns, to proceed with his recommendation. No further discussion. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no. Unanimous.

Brian added that since he worked with the bank earlier this year to increase the interest rate that we get on our unspent funds, he did a comparison of what we've earned just in

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the Municipal Building donations account, with the new interest rate vs. what we would have earned with the old interest rate. He squeaked an extra \$21,000 out of those donations.

L. Bruce added that Brian was finally successful in being able to register to access the \$846,000 federal grant funds. Brian stated that it took several weeks, but working with Janet and Page (we needed some IT help to pull this off), he was able to sign in and access those grant funds just today.

FERRY SERVICE UPDATE

In the Select Board packet is a draft letter to Commissioner Bruce Van Note, drafted by John King after a small group strategy meeting to figure out how to best communicate our many concerns to the MDOT. This letter references a similar one from North Haven.

Peter Willcox stated the letter says it all. S. Conover added that we are looking for approval to send this to Commissioner Van Note, and we talked about copying the Ferry Service Advisory Board, the Town of Lincolnville, and our State reps, Chip Curry, Stanley Paige Ziegler, and Michael Ray. J. Anderson asked if it should go to the governor.

P. Anderson stated we should send it to as many people as we can. S. Pendleton suggested Senator Jared Golden.

S. Conover stated that she's not sure about the governor yet. We talked about this being one of possibly several letters, recognizing that we will likely have to escalate it.

M. Burns suggested this could be more of a warning shot across the bow to the governor, saying, this is what's coming, then as we have to escalate, she can't say she wasn't aware of it, and maybe it would help to curb it earlier.

L. Bruce stated that, on the other side, the governor will know about it. She'll get a report. That allows us then to escalate by sending something to the governor.

S. Pendleton stated the he would add to the 6th paragraph that there is no harbor in Lincolnville. No one in their right mind would dock a ferry overnight in open water. The captains and others have said that's not a feasible idea. S. Conover pointed out that this is covered on the second page.

P. Willcox stated that people from MDI have the same concern. They've also suggested that docking their boat on the mainland is not the right thing to do at all. S. Pendleton is concerned that in rough weather, they will want to berth it at the island, and it will be haphazard. P. Willcox stated he mentioned this to Bill Pulver, COO of MDOT. He agreed, but all their engineers tell them that with the proposed wave attenuator, the ferry will be safe on the Lincolnville side.

Discussion about who will receive the letter: Commissioner Van Note, the Ferry Service Advisory Board, Bill Pulver. Discussion about media: Midcoast Villager, Village Soup,

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PenBay Pilot, Islesboro Island News, Constant Contact, Island Institute Working Waterfront (Tom Groening), Maine Monitor. North Haven sent their letter to Bill Geary and the Ferry Service Advisory Board.

S. Conover stated she would feel better about sending it to the media than sending it directly to the governor at this stage.

MOTION BY P. Anderson, seconded by M. Burns, to approve this letter as written and send to our list of recipients. No further discussion. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no. Unanimous.

SEA LEVEL RISE

S. Conover reported that the next meeting date for the SLR Committee will be December 12, 3-5. GZA Engineering will join remotely to present their findings from the 30% design.

MUNICIPAL BUILDING PROJECT

L. Bruce reported that the committee received a letter from Murt Durkee, requesting a meeting regarding the Up-Island Public Safety Garage.

S. Pendleton added that the group had a call last week, introducing him to the gang. He's going to follow up and get a call to the contractor, and politely push him to set dates.

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- Planning Board: December 16th, 5:00pm.
- IMB Committee: December 17th, 3:00pm.
- Housing Committee: December 19th, 5:00pm.
- Energy Committee: December 10th, 5:15pm.
- Sea Level Rise Committee: December 12th, 3:00pm.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

- Packet included Agenda for 12/4/24 and Minutes of 11/20/24 Select Board Regular Meeting.
- Committee Minutes
 - 11/19 Minutes from ALP Library Trustee Meeting
 - 11/25 Draft Minutes of the Grindle Point Parking Committee
- Correspondence
 - Letter to Bruce Van Note re: proposed changes to Maine State Ferry Service emergency service. Select Board to sign.
 - Bar Harbor Wealth Management, November capital reserve sub-accounting.
- Manager

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- S. Conover asked about the process to change ordinances. She thought it ultimately had to end with a Town Meeting.
 - J. Anderson stated that this an ordinance that Select Boards can manage. It does not have to be voted on. Towns are in charge of their vehicles and traffic. You still have to set it up like an ordinance. We posted it on the 2nd. J. Anderson provided a draft with changes.
 - The Select Board will vote on this at the next meeting.
- Warrant FY25 #12

CORRESPONDENCE

S. Conover reported that she received an email from Harriet Bering from the Energy Committee, wanting to make sure the Select Board knows they are working on a grant to submit to the DOE for \$50,000.

Janis Petzel explained that the money is for planning. Once we get it, we're in the pipeline for an increased chance of further money for projects. There's another, bigger, grant that we'll be applying for from a different agency. The planning for both is very similar. We're going to plug away at trying to get money for community solar and microgrid type projects. That's why we're having the info session at the ICC on Saturday.

Janet asked who will manage grants. Janis replied that the money would be granted to the Town, so the Town would manage them. We're also applying for an Island Fellow. Janet suggested that maybe the Fellow could help with grant management. At the Town, we have several little grants and a couple of big ones that we're trying to manage. Several other committees would like to have grants. It would be nice if they could figure out a way to manage it themselves. There's a lot of reporting that goes on with these.

Janis stated she will bring that up with the Energy Committee.

S. Conover suggested setting aside a time to talk with Brian and Janet as part of the application process. Each grant has different levels of detail required. We want to have clear understanding and expectations set up going into the application process. The more communication, the better.

OLD BUSINESS

1. None.

NEW BUSINESS

1. None.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. None.

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APPROVE WARRANT: FY25 #12

MOTION BY M. Burns, seconded by L. Bruce, to approve Warrant FY25 #12. No discussion. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no. Unanimous.

John King arrived at 6:00. S. Conover relayed that the letter was approved unanimously, and that most of the discussion was around who to send it to.

John King reported that he just got off the phone with Jon Emerson. To the best of his knowledge, he hasn't heard anything back after sending out the North Haven letter. J. King recommends sending a copy of our letter to the North Haven and Lincolnville Select Boards, as well as the Ferry Service Advisory Board members. Media may be premature. The other islands are as interested in this as we are, and if we generate interest with them, we can speak in one voice. It might have more impact.

P. Anderson stated that he doesn't think we should wait on anyone else. We are at a critical juncture. It seems safe to assume that the other islands are on our side. With our Select Board meeting every two weeks, and the other islands' schedules, it could be many weeks before we make our next move. I'd be hesitant to wait to form a unified thing, because there's an unspoken unity already.

M. Burns agrees with P. Anderson. The letter is strongly worded. We have heard a unified opinion from other islands. If we put it out to the media outlets, this helps the people on other islands and in the area to be aware of what's going on, and it might spark important conversations with their Select Boards. If we can show that we're being public and putting forth the effort, it works in the favor of the citizens of the islands and surrounding towns and counties.

L. Bruce stated a better result could be that the media picks it up because they're hearing it from multiple islands, and feel there's a story there. Having a story written by a reporter is better than us buying space.

S. Conover suggested we can share it with the media in a way that does that, saying this is a major concern of our community and other communities, and we would be happy if this is an issue you'd like to cover, basically giving the media a heads-up. She would be happy to have a conversation with Tom Groening at the Working Waterfront about what degree he'd be willing to cover it.

J. King suggested that if we share it with the media, we should give Mr. MacDonald from North Haven a heads-up, since we referenced his letter.

S. Pendleton stated he agrees with P. Anderson. I'm a little more aggressive on things like this. Working with them hasn't worked at all. They posted images of the new boat on social media. They are just moving the new plan along. The only thing that's ever going to make them change is if there's enough public opinion. Someone's got to take the lead.

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S. Conover stated it makes sense to call Jon Emerson and the Town of Lincolnville to let them know how we're responding as a result of the communication from our joint meeting.

APPOINTMENTS:

None.

CHAIR COMMENTS

S. Conover: No comments.

VICE-CHAIR COMMENTS

L. Bruce: Thank you, John. Excellent letter.

INDIVIDUAL SELECT BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

P. Anderson: Congrats to Energy Committee for going for these grants.

M. Burns: ICS's Winter Concert is tomorrow night, full of fun for K-12. It will also be livestreamed.

S. Pendleton: No comments.

**Motion by M. Burns, seconded by L. Bruce, to adjourn meeting at 6:18 PM. No discussion.
Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no. Unanimous.**

Respectfully Submitted,



Carrie Reed
Secretary