

Islesboro Select Board
Regular Meeting
Town Office Meeting Room & via Zoom
Wednesday, February 12, 2025 @ 5:30 PM

APPROVED
2/26/25

MINUTES

Members Present:

Chair Shey Conover, Melissa Burns, Peter Anderson

Members Present via Zoom: Vice Chair Lauren Bruce, Stephen Pendleton

Others Present:

Town Manager Janet Anderson, Linda Gillies, Peter Willcox, Bill Boardman, Andrew Coombs, Owen Howell, Janis Petzel, Scott de Grasse, Mike Clayton, Murt Durkee, Andrew (Pete) Anderson, Paul (Babe) Hatch

Others Present via Zoom:

Terry Sanderson, Dan Tutor, Laura Staines Giardino, Silas, Josh Conover, Elizabeth Hayden, Crazy House, Jim Mitchell, Fred Porter, Doug Welldon, Dustin, Maggy Willcox, Jesse Burns (HODPS)

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

Minutes of January 29, 2025, Regular Meeting.

MOTION BY P. Anderson, seconded by M. Burns, to approve the minutes of January 29, 2025 Regular Meeting, as written. No discussion. Roll Call. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no.

MOTION BY P. Anderson, seconded by M. Burns, to take the Agenda out of order to hear the Up-Island Public Safety Garage update. No discussion. Roll Call. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no.

UP-ISLAND PUBLIC SAFETY GARAGE UPDATE

S. Pendleton shared his Power Point Presentation on the bid history and budget of the Up-Island Public Safety Garage (UIPSG).

- We went through several rounds of formal bids over a 13-month period. The bid amounts were excessive for a garage, although that garage needs to be built to Fire Department specs that are mandatory in the State of Maine. The responses were far beyond what the budget was going to be able to maintain.
- We then went into discussions directly with Federal Steel Buildings. They put together some numbers for the community, and they also had a suggestion of a company who could do the construction management and oversight of the project, which was Northport Builders. The original estimations are listed. The Select

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Board approved going forward with Northport Builders, and since then, we've been in a period of discussions and negotiations, because it appeared that the combination of Northport Builders and Federal Steel would work well for us.

- The budget for the building is \$432,000. The latest quote that was provided to us with all the requirements listed. We were waiting for the electrical, which came in much higher than Northport had anticipated. This brought the amount up to \$569,301.
- Some line items of note: septic, a large parking area that we could reduce, and drilling the new well. If we removed those, we are down to \$481,650.
- There are interior partitions. There's in-slab heat that's not that much (put it in now or we're not going to have it). There's a good-sized generator that's associated with that. If we strip all that out, the quote would be at \$443,950. Still a little over, but there are potential contingency funds that may be available. There's a significant contingency fund for the Health Center, and we wouldn't want to pull any funds from that until that's delivered and we know that those funds are available.
- The money that's earmarked for the Up-Island Public Safety Garage has been put in an interest-bearing account. There are dollars associated with that. Murt has a reserve fund for the Fire Department as well. There could be a few others.
- We are within striking distance of being able to make a recommendation to the community, but we want the community to be telling us what should be in this and what should not.
- We have to decide what features are a must for that to move forward, determine the gaps between the funds we actually have on hand and the quote, and determine whether the community is okay with a certain amount of risk of having to rely on yet-to-be-defined contingency funds to be allocated toward the project. Or do we halt the project?
- L. Bruce added that we might be facing an increase in the cost of steel. Pete clarified that we heard from Stephen Blatt Architects that the cost of steel won't be going up because of the tariffs, but they will be having a yearly price increase in April. If we want to go ahead with this, we ought to buy the building, and at least have it on site.

Murt Durkee stated he just received this presented information, which is helpful to understand why the UIPSG is pricey. He listed some things we can eliminate: The large, 240V air compressor. There will be one truck that requires air, and Murt has the old, small air compressor that's meant to go up to the facility. It only needs 110V. Murt also does not want an EV charger at the station at this time; this could be addressed at a later time. To Murt's understanding, the electrical cost is up because you need a 400-amp service to run a couple of heat pumps, rather than a traditional 200-amp service. This doubles or triples the cost.

S. Conover asked if there had been any discussion by the committee about the electrical service and any changes that would drastically reduce the phase requirements. S.

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Pendleton replied that there hasn't been any discussion about the air compressor or the 400-amp service. We can take that back to the architect and see if there's a way to change that. L. Bruce added that we do have to take this back to Northport Builders and get another quote because we asked them to take off certain things and put them in as alternates. She thought we had told them that we did not want the EV chargers.

M. Burns asked about the date of the budget. The third slide shows it at 9/26/24. S. Pendleton replied that that is for the building, taken from previous minutes. He copied what was stated in a public discussion. The building cost is still the same through the end of February, or most of March. Pete clarified that this is a carryover date from previous attempts at giving us a quote. This just came to us in the last couple of weeks, just after the last Select Board meeting. S. Conover added that her understanding is that Northport Builders started an estimate for us with the shell. We as a Select Board approved \$432,000 to be spent, and approved moving forward, contingent upon getting a full estimate for services. Their first numbers included the building and construction, but not electrical and some other subcontracted items. The number we just received is for the entire package.

S. Conover asked what we gave Northport for a budget. Pete replied that we told them \$400,000. L. Bruce clarified that Bill Boardman made the suggestion to leave ourselves a little contingency room and ask Northport Builders to look at bringing it in under \$400,000. This is our first full estimate, but we have to take it back because there are things in there which we had already asked him to take out.

M. Burns asked if we have what they presented on 9/26/24, and then documents that show the updates, so we can see the progression. S. Pendleton replied that we could probably go back and look at the history, but what's important today is that this project is starting to bog down, and time usually kills projects. If this project is one that we want to support and move forward, we have to take the most recent quote and have them do one last number, then maybe pull additional things out ourselves. We'll probably still have a slight gap. S. Pendleton wants to know from the community how we feel about utilizing contingency funds from other areas, because this budget has no contingency.

Michael Giardino stated that he and Laura had offered to look at the plans and offer their two cents as architects. The project's architect seems to have covered the life safety requirements for an asset like this, which does have to meet higher standards. The estimates in the slide presentation are very broad swipes at budgets. To be useful, you'd need to see a detailed breakout, especially of electrical, so you can make determinations as to options. If you don't need a 400-amp service inside the building now, you could bring 400 amps to the shut-off point so it's ready to go in the future. For the parking, is that a paved lot, or a crushed stone parking lot? If it's a paved lot, we can probably save money by making it crushed stone, at least in the beginning. The septic system is \$30,000. Maybe put a blackwater pipe from the bathroom to the outside and stuff it off, and for the immediate future, use a composting toilet. Those are the kinds of things to

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look at if we have enough detail. The generator might be a use-group requirement, but that's easy to determine.

M. Burns asked Murt if the 400 amps are just for the heat pumps. Murt replied that he doesn't know directly, but he does know that you have to jump up quite a bit of amperage to provide power for heat pumps. With a 200-amp service, you can't run two heat pumps.

M. Burns asked Steve and Lauren if there's an alternative plan for heat if we don't use heat pumps. S. Pendleton replied that there is no plan for alternative heat.

L. Bruce stated that we could provide Michael and Laura with more detail with the architects' designs. She added that we are probably going to lose this contractor if we delay much longer. The price of the building is very likely to go up. Although these are all good questions, the big question is, do we want to go forward? Or since we couldn't come in at under \$432,000, do we need to abandon the project? If we're not going to abandon the project, we could certainly go forward with more detail and bring it back again, but we can't do it in good faith unless we're willing to tell the contractor we're just fine-tuning it. We're not asking him to do more work without good faith.

S. Pendleton added that this contractor is hesitant to do the project now because the scope keeps changing and they're having to do a lot of work. We don't have a backup for this, which is why the point is to focus on getting a directive from the community. Do we have enough information to move forward, knowing that we're going to get as close as we can to \$432,000 and then use some contingency funds? We can get more information, but we were shooting for a late fall cement pouring, and here we are in mid-February. If we keep doing this, the project won't happen. We as a community need to make some decisions and go with the outcomes of those decisions.

S. Conover stated that she understands that, but also wants to make sure the contractor realizes that if they heard we had a \$400,000 budget and within the last two weeks we got the final number, which exceeds that budget by over \$100,000, that we need some time as a community to have a conversation about that. We hope the contractor would recognize that we're not dragging our feet, we're doing our due diligence that we need to make sure that we can pay the bills.

S. Pendleton stated that we should frame the talking points that we need to address in the next two to four weeks, where we say we're going to put a stake in the ground by mid-March. What do we feel we need to outline to get an answer so that we can make a decision?

Janis Petzel asked, if we whittle down the project, do we have \$100,000 in contingency funds to use? Things are never going to get cheaper. Everyone seems to have agreed that we need an up-island station for safety. Look what happened when the Narrows went

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out. If we can figure out how to whittle down some of the expenses and put the septic off until later, we need to do it.

Scott de Grasse stated that with Steve's recommended reductions, we're down to \$443,000, so our gap is \$20,000. S. Pendleton clarified that the septic and well are definitely to be pulled. The parking was gravel parking, but it was very large, and we can reduce the size. We don't need interior partitions. There's not going to be a bathroom. If we keep the in-slab heat and the generator, we're probably within \$20,000 – \$30,000 of the \$432,000. There are funds available. The interest-bearing account has at least \$10,000. Scott pointed out the EV charger and air compressor are still in the quote, and can be eliminated. That will be significant.

S. Conover agrees that we're close and things are not going to get less expensive. It is remarkable that we shaved off \$500,000 from where we started with the original quote. It will be helpful to have greater detail on the \$569,000 quote so we can tease out what changes we want to make that have minimal impact, so we can get to the real number. It would be helpful and appreciated by the community to have an informational meeting about this, to inform what the final contract is that we sign. We likely need to sign by our March 12th meeting, so we can get something nailed down before steel prices go up. S. Conover asked the MBP Committee if they could find a date for a public information meeting, so we can let Northport Builders know that our goal is to have something signed by March 12th. L. Bruce replied that it's a good suggestion, but is unsure of the timing.

J. Anderson suggested not having a public hearing until we have a new quote.

S. Pendleton summarized that we'll get the details that created the summary. We'll have the items we discussed today removed. He will work with Mark Ouellette tomorrow, and can have a similar package that is specific to the dollars. He will try to get something next week so that everyone can have several days with the information before the next Select Board meeting.

S. Conover suggested having a public information meeting an hour before the Select Board meeting on February 26th, with the goal of having the information out there ahead of time for people to review. It sounds like the committee is close to having a recommendation for the Select Board, and it would be good for the community to understand that recommendation.

M. Burns asked Pete about some line items that list ferry fees and lodging twice. Are they actually double billed? And could we get clarification on the lodging rates and location?

Scott de Grasse pointed out that there's a plumbing fee of \$30,000 to connect to the septic system. If we're just roughing in the septic system, and not connecting it, there should be some savings there.

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M. Burns asked about the installation of Murt's water tank. L. Bruce replied that the engineer increased the size of the slab to accommodate the water tank.

S. Conover thanked the committee members for putting in the work on this. It has not been an easy job, and often has come with more work and disappointment. She appreciates all the work to make sure we have a good product as affordable as possible.

Back to Order of Agenda

VISITOR COMMENTS/PETITIONS

Babe Hatch stated he submitted a letter to Jordy Watson about two months ago regarding the condition of the roads with the limbs and trees. He wanted to know when something is going to be done. J. Anderson replied that Jordy did not give the letter to her. Babe stated the letter is hanging in the Public Works garage. J. Anderson stated that she hasn't seen the letter, so she can't answer it. Silas and other people have done a lot of clean-up. She asked Babe to give her a list of areas that need attention. Babe said he'd get a copy. He stated his trucks are getting torn up.

S. Conover asked if the work on the limbs on East Shore Drive was completed. J. Anderson answered that it was done. S. Conover stated we put out a call for people to indicate areas of concern. Do we have progress on that? J. Anderson answered that it's ongoing.

S. Pendleton stated that this is a valid point that's been brought up by a number of people.

S. Conover stated that it would be helpful if Janet could scan Babe's letter to Jordy and send it to the Select Board. This has been going on long enough that it would be helpful to have regular Public Works updates at Select Board meetings to figure out how we can get our hands around this.

Babe added that he thinks the UIPSG will be too small. He thinks that one truck up there is not enough, as it will pump the 1500 gallons of water out in less than five minutes. We'll need to build an addition next year. Murt replied that the idea is to get an early response up-island. There will be two bays at the garage, one for the ambulance during storms. It's to address the isolation between the islands. We've been cut off more than once. It would be just a start. If we can't get a two-bay garage passed, how are we going to get a four-bay garage passed? We need to start somewhere.

Mike Clayton stated that it's all about the Narrows then. We can spend \$400,000 on rocks on East Shore Drive. Why can't we spend another \$400,000 for big rocks for the Narrows? All we need is something to keep the waves off the road. Farley did a beautiful job on East Shore Drive. Why can't we just do that at the Narrows? M. Burns replied that different scientific studies have found that throwing rock money at the Narrows isn't going to be sustainable. In order to make something more substantial and

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sustainable, we hired Shri to help us look at the different ways to do something more effective than just dumping \$400,000 worth of rocks into it. Mike questioned why we are paying someone \$50,000 a year to tell us the tide is coming in and out.

S. Conover clarified that what we're trying to do with that study is to make sure that what we build there is a 50 – 100-year solution, and will sustain increased storms and increased water levels. We're trying to accomplish it as quickly as possible, and we are funding it through state and federal grants as much as possible. It's not taxpayer money that has been funding the majority of the work to date. Because it was also permitted by the Army Corps of Engineers, we want to make sure the design is done in a way that respects that we have the permits in place that are required. We will see some bigger rocks there, but we also need to rebuild the underpinning so we're not just going higher with something that has a crumbling foundation, which is what is happening with the current revetment.

SEA LEVEL RISE UPDATE

S. Conover reported that the SLR Committee will meet tomorrow, February 13th, at 5:30. Anyone can attend and hear an update and ask any further questions.

FERRY SERVICE UPDATE

Peter Willcox had no update. The last Ferry Service Advisory Board meeting was three weeks ago. Nothing since then.

ISLESBORO EMERGENCY FERRY TASK FORCE UPDATE

S. Conover reported that the EFTF workshop that was scheduled February 5th was cancelled because there was a Union meeting, where town officials were invited to have a conversation about the topic. Next meeting will be next Wednesday, February 19th.

M. Burns asked Peter Willcox if there's been any discussion about Bill Geary being promoted and who might take over his current position. Peter replied that the new spot hasn't been posted yet. They have closed the applications for the Assistant Director's position that Derek Dosti left about a month ago and haven't made a decision yet. Bill Geary will continue to work on the Ferry Board until his position is filled, but they haven't posted it yet.

Scott de Grasse asked if anyone else has had success with writing to legislators. He's had four solid responses. S. Conover replied that she's been copied on a number of legislator letters from the "ferryconcerns" email address. The topic is being kept top-of-mind for them. She hasn't received an update from Genevieve McDonald about where things stand with the legislative process. She will attend our meeting next week. Legislators have done a good job of responding to every letter that she has seen.

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S. Pendleton requested that someone ask Genevieve about when the DOT budget session will be. It would be good to have a few people attend and make a little noise. S. Conover stated that she will send Genevieve an email about that.

MUNICIPAL BUILDING PROJECT UPDATE

Covered in the UIPSG Update.

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- Planning Board: February 24th, 5:00pm.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

- Packet included Agenda for 2/12/25 and Minutes of 1/29/25 Select Board Regular Meeting.
- Committee Minutes
 - 1/30/25 Lighthouse Committee
 - 1/8/25 Minutes of Emergency Ferry Task Force
- Correspondence
 - 2/3/25 forwarded email from Dave Kinney from Mackenzie Kersbergen regarding Lincolnville/Islesboro ferry terminal project update.
 - 2/4/25 email from Robert McFerren, MDOT, announcing Bill Geary has been selected to fulfill the duties of Multimodal Director in MDOT Bureau of Maintenance and Operations.
 - 1/31/25 Bar Harbor Wealth Management Capital Reserve sub-accounting
 - 2/10/25 email from Janis Petzel re: presenting on Energy Committee grant application.
- Hand-out:
 - Draft minutes of the 1/22/25 Emergency Ferry Task Force meeting.
- Manager
 - Working on budget.
- Warrant FY25 #17

CORRESPONDENCE

M. Burns stated she had forwarded an email from the Northport administrator, James Kossuth. His idea is that the majority of the members to the county budget committee could be municipal officials, but he's asking that not all of them are required to be. He sent an email with his findings, and he was hoping that we would make a decision about supporting Northport's request to not be required to have an elected official be on the

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budget committee. M. Burns requested that everyone review the email so we can make a decision at our next Select Board meeting.

S. Conover thinks it's a great proposal. Broadening it a bit would be helpful. He did a good job of explaining the way other counties do it. Add this to next agenda.

Scott de Grasse asked a procedural question on the Ferry Task Force. He stated that he and his father submitted a summary of the findings from CMP. Were those notes disseminated to the Select Board? He wants to understand how that works. S. Conover replied that the people included in that email were the EFTF members who are meeting next week to talk about it. Generally, then those meeting minutes are forwarded to the Select Board, or if there's a recommendation that comes out of that, the notes will come back to the Select Board.

OLD BUSINESS

1. None.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Energy Committee Grant Presentation by Janis Petzel.
 - Janis Petzel stated that she is representing the Energy Committee and is asking the Select Board to okay our submission of a Concept Paper to the Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations (OCED). The program is Energy Improvements in Rural and Remote Areas.
 - This is a seven-page general overview of what we would like to get money to do here, which is establish a microgrid and solar that would help stabilize our energy supply during power outages, and in general make it more affordable for electricity on the island.
 - The Concept Paper does not obligate us to do anything. It just gets us through the door to when we would submit a full application to this organization in August.
 - We will have a copy of the seven-page paper before the next Select Board meeting.
 - If we get this money, which is a long shot, it would not cost the Town any direct funds to do it. It would be grant funded, including a project manager and grant manager, as we are aware of concern about overloading staff.
 - If we make it through the gate with this Concept Paper, we'll have a full-blown presentation, and we can provide more details then.
 - This agency is hoping to fund between 20 and 50 projects for up to \$10 million each. What we are talking about might cost that much.

MOTION BY M. Burns, seconded by S. Conover, to bless the Energy Committee with our well wishes and approval to charge ahead. No further discussion. Roll Call. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no.

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OTHER BUSINESS

1. None.

APPROVE WARRANT: FY25 #17

MOTION BY M. Burns, seconded by P. Anderson, to approve Warrant FY25 #17. No discussion. Roll Call. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no. Unanimous.

APPOINTMENTS:

Grindle Point Sailors' Museum Committee: Michael Clayton.

MOTION BY M. Burns, seconded by P. Anderson, to appoint Michael Clayton to the Lighthouse Museum Committee. No discussion. Roll Call. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no. Unanimous.

CHAIR COMMENTS

S. Conover: No comments.

VICE-CHAIR COMMENTS

L. Bruce: No comments.

INDIVIDUAL SELECT BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

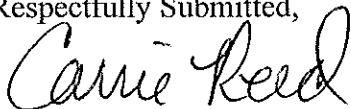
S. Pendleton: The \$500,00 that was whittled from the UIPSG project was directly related to Lauren and Pete's work. They've done a great job and it should be recognized how much they've done for this effort.

M. Burns: No comments.

P. Anderson: No comments.

Motion by M. Burns, seconded by P. Anderson, to adjourn meeting at 6:48 PM. No discussion. Roll Call. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no. Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,



Carrie Reed
Secretary