

Islesboro Select Board
Regular Meeting
Town Office Meeting Room & via Zoom
Wednesday, March 11, 2026 @ 6:00 PM

APPROVED

3/25/26

MINUTES

Members Present:

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

Others Present:

Town Manager Janet Anderson, Murt Durkee, Peter Willcox

Others Present via Zoom:

John King, Kate Misenheimer, Daniel Frohling, Daniel Tutor, Anna Congdon

Call to Order: Chair Shey Conover called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM, and a quorum was established.

Minutes of February 25, 2026, Regular Meeting.

MOTION BY P. Rothschild, seconded by M. Burns, to approve the minutes of February 25, 2026 Regular Meeting, as written. No discussion. Roll Call. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no. Unanimous.

VISITOR COMMENTS/PETITIONS

None.

FERRY SERVICE UPDATE

No update.

SEA LEVEL RISE UPDATE

S. Conover reported that tomorrow's meeting is cancelled due to timing of grant RFPs coming out. The next meeting will be in April.

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

No updates.

P. Anderson stated that there is a big pile of insulation on the floor of the Up-Island Public Safety Garage. He asked if it is excess or if there's a plan for it. Murt Durkee stated he doesn't know about it. Most of it might be usable. We will bring it to the contractor's attention.

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UPCOMING MEETINGS AND SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- Harbor Committee Public Hearing: March 12th, 6:00pm
- Health Center Advisory Board: March 16th, 10:30am
- Planning Board: March 23rd, 5:00pm.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

- Packet included Agenda for 3/11/26 and Minutes of 2/25/26 Select Board Regular Meeting.
- Committee Minutes
 - 12/9/25 Municipal Broadband Committee minutes
 - 1/9/26 Ad Hoc Ferry Ticket Committee minutes
 - 2/4/26 Housing Committee minutes
- Correspondence
 - 3/10/26 email from EJ Dupont, Director of MSFS, notice of temporary closure of one parking lot in Lincolnville for construction work, March 15 to mid-June.
- Handouts:
 - Bar Harbor Wealth Management Feb. 2026 capital reserves sub-accounting.
- Manager:
 - The Harbor Committee has submitted its “Public Working Waterfront Infrastructure Fund” grant application, completed by Reed Silvers of the Midcoast Council of Governments, for Mosely Dock replacement.
- Warrant #19

CORRESPONDENCE

Covered in Town Manager’s report.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Discuss New Name for the *Margaret Chase Smith* Replacement Vessel
 - S. Conover stated that the DOT seems amenable to us offering a suggestion. A number of different names have been recommended.
 - Peter Willcox stated that, on the recommendation of Jackie at the Lincolnville terminal, he suggests that the new ferry be named after a woman. Ours is currently the only vessel in the fleet that is named after a woman.
 - S. Conover stated she likes that thought. *Frances Perkins* was a name that came up early in the conversations, as Jackie had put forward.
 - P. Anderson stated that keeping it the sole female-named vessel in the fleet would be a nice gesture.

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- M. Burns suggested the name she had floated previously, *Jessica Meir*. She's the first female astronaut from Maine, and she was the first female commander of the International Space Station.
 - P. Rothschild stated that Frances Perkins was the first female Secretary of Labor, a Roosevelt appointee. She was extraordinarily effective.
 - John King added that Frances Perkins had a family residence in Waldoboro. Her name was raised the first time around when we polled residents, and she got some votes. She was the Secretary of Labor for the entire FDR presidency, and if it weren't for her, we wouldn't have Social Security benefits, and a lot of other stuff.
 - P. Anderson suggested coming up with a list of two or three names, and find a way to get a public vote, perhaps at Town Meeting.
 - P. Willcox stated he doesn't think there's a deadline. The boat hasn't even been decided on yet.
 - P. Willcox proposed *Cornelia "Flyrod" Crosby*. She was the first Maine Guide, male or female. He also suggested *Mary Patton*, who at age 19, sailed a square-rigger around Cape Horn when her husband got brain fever.
 - S. Conover stated it sounds like we are in agreement that we would like it to be named after a woman. It would be helpful to have a quick couple of sentences about who each woman is or was, then present it for a public vote.
 - M. Burns offered to take on the project.
 - Peter Willcox will ask the Maine State Ferry Service if there is a deadline for a recommendation.
 - P. Anderson suggested getting the school kids involved with the teacher leading a discussion. It would be interesting to see what they would like.
2. Report/Recommendation from the Ferry Ticket Committee (FTC)
- S. Conover stated we received the detailed memo from John King. She thanked the committee for their work on this. Ultimately, this is a budget decision. It sounds like the recommendation is to put it in as a separate warrant, because it would be a new program.
 - J. King stated he has corrected some typos in the memo. Apologies for that and for leaving Brian Bohanon's name off.
 - J. King stated the proposed budget contains three options. The majority of the committee thought 10 tickets per household, which would include 10 vehicle tickets, would be appropriate. Our recommendation is to put it before the voters at Town Meeting.
 - Because of the timing of the budget, we wouldn't be able to fund this program until July 1.
 - P. Willcox pointed out that the impact is about \$8 for \$100,000 of property tax, which isn't very much. It would make a huge difference to community members who are struggling to afford living here and buying ferry trips.

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- S. Conover stated we have three more budget meetings, so this topic of discussion may continue as we proceed. When we did the survey, we didn't have a lot of details included about what the cost would be, but the response was positive. Providing additional information for the community to vote on feels like a responsible thing to do as the Select Board.
- M. Burns suggested having the number of tickets determined before Town Meeting. P. Willcox stated the committee is suggesting 10 as the number. M. Burns read from the memo that the projected cost of the 10-ticket program is \$53,812.50.
- P. Anderson asked if the committee had any discussion about the lifespan of a program like this. John King replied that the committee is floating this as a pilot program for the coming season. If the response is positive, the committee would probably recommend that we do it again next year.
- P. Anderson stated that, while this is rooted in a great idea, he is concerned about trying anything like this in this year, and about it extending for years to come as the ferry service continues to raise prices. He is also concerned people won't understand the impact this will have on taxes. Also, what if we start helping people, then we can't afford it and take it away?
- S. Conover stated she would like to hold public informational meetings ahead of Town Meeting. Additionally, there are a number of things we would need to understand better if it were to run for a year, such as the impact on Town Office staff, or tweaks that would be recommended. Her hope is that the pilot program could provide enough information to have a powerful argument so that when the new Tariff structure happens, it would be an opportunity to have them change the rates so that they are more closely aligned to the resident rate we're trying to do.
- John King stated that if this were approved, it would be likely that the media would pick up on it. Bruce Van Note was not willing to listen about resident rates. The fact that we can get close to a resident rate for \$55,000 on an \$18-million operation is a compelling argument that resident rates will not hurt the revenue situation much, and would give us a foot in the door on that.
- S. Conover stated that if this passes, we should approach it as a true pilot program and make sure we are going through due diligence to understand what works and doesn't work, and if it's worth continuing, and be upfront with the community. It has the potential to grow a lot of legs and become much more expensive.
- John King stated he will be back in mid-April, and will be happy to be the point person for informational meetings.
- P. Rothschild stated that this is the first time someone has proposed that the Town subsidize ferry tickets. The DOT has proposed in its White Paper that they'd like to privatize the operation. He is worried about the precedent this sets with DOT, and what reaction this may have with the people in DOT who would like to deaccession the whole problem.

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- P. Willcox stated that the DOT directorship of the Ferry Service is different now. There's a big improvement at Advisory Board meetings, with general attitude. It would be our hope that they would do this for the rest of the islands after we have determined it. The new leadership is better.
- S. Conover stated she has struggled with the question of how DOT will view the Town subsidizing ferry tickets. We're not trying to reduce the 50% subsidy, so we're not trying to take on more of the state burden in running the ferry service. The way she understands this to be structured is basically saying to DOT that we find the way they've set the tariffs to be unsustainable for the year-round population, so we've developed a program to change the formula to reduce the costs to make it more sustainable.
- John King agreed and explained that when the State was trying to get out of this, they were proposing to switch the 50-50 burden to 45-45, and the islands can contribute 10. That's about \$2-million, and how do we figure who pays what? We're saying that this is an unsustainable tariff situation that the DOT should change, but in the absence of them changing, we're going to take a temporary step to make things sustainable for us.
- Peter Willcox added that the 45-45-10 proposal that was part of the White Paper has been officially withdrawn by the DOT.
- P. Anderson stated he thinks we're putting a lot of faith in assumed empathy that the DOT has for us. He thinks that empathy isn't there, and it's silly of us to think that us subsidizing any expense they levy on us is going to tell them to levy less of an expense.
- S. Conover asked if the Board supports putting this to the community to vote, based on the recommendation for the 10 tickets. The next step to move this forward would be for the Town attorney to review it for warrant language.

MOTION BY M. Burns, seconded by P. Rothschild, to approve the continuation of investigation, with public information meetings for more community input to take place before Town Meeting. Discussion as below. Roll Call. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no.

Unanimous.

- J. Anderson stated that we need to have a warrant article to go in the Town Report, and a budget amount.
- John King stated that the peak season goes from June through September, which will give us a one-month lag. Maybe what we do is limit the total amount that we budget for this year, and leave that other four-week period for June of 2027. The proposal is based upon the use of 10 tickets over a four-month period, but it will be a three-month period because of the fiscal year starting in July.
- S. Conover stated that this would create the same issue the following year if it is successful. If it's not successful, we save \$10,000. If it is successful, then we don't have the issue of the gap in June of 2027.
- M. Burns asked what kind of tickets will be offered. 10 vehicle tickets or 10 passenger tickets. J. King replied that each household would have a head of

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household. Most would buy 10 vehicle tickets. The head of household would be entitled to buy 10 tickets for passengers for the other members of the household to be distributed as they desire. A family of four would be entitled to buy 10 vehicle tickets, 10 passenger tickets, and 20 minor tickets.

- J. Anderson stated it seems like a lot for the Town Office staff in the summer.
- M. Burns suggested that perhaps at the start of the program, we only sell vehicle tickets. Maybe scale it down a little, and still help with the most costly tickets.
- John King stated one of the major concerns was helping families with kids. For a family of four, the difference is \$33.25 per trip.
- P. Rothschild thanked the committee members for their effort.

NEW BUSINESS

1. None.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. None.

APPROVE WARRANT: FY26 #19

MOTION BY M. Burns, seconded by P. Rothschild, to approve Warrant FY26 #19. No discussion. Roll Call. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no. Unanimous.

APPOINTMENTS:

1. Museum: Ashley Rossiter & Douglas Carmichael
2. Reserve Law Enforcement Officer: Eric Bonney

MOTION BY M. Burns, seconded by P. Rothschild, to approve the slate of appointments. No discussion. Roll Call. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no. Unanimous.

CHAIR COMMENTS

S. Conover: I appreciate everyone's help tonight in getting me to my son's birthday celebration.

VICE-CHAIR COMMENTS

P. Anderson: The new IAP duplex is slated to open next week.

INDIVIDUAL SELECT BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

S. Pendleton: No comments.

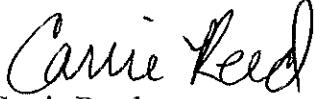
M. Burns: No comments.

P. Rothschild: No comments.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carrie Reed".

Carrie Reed
Secretary

