

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

☒ APPROVED
3/26/25

MINUTES

Members Present:

Chair Shey Conover, Peter Anderson, Stephen Pendleton, Melissa Burns (6:17)

Members Present via Zoom: Vice Chair Lauren Bruce

Others Present:

Town Manager Janet Anderson, Brian Bohanon, Peter Willcox, Fred Porter, Murt Durkee, Ken Smith, Josh Leach, Janice Leach, Linda Gillies, Charles Cilley, Scott de Grasse, Owen Howell.

Others Present via Zoom:

Maggy Willcox, Dan Tutor, Elizabeth Hayden, Nita Villarreal, Pete, Dick de Grasse, Rachel, iPhone2.

Call to Order: Chair Shey Conover called the meeting to order at 6:15 PM, after the budget workshop went overtime, and a quorum was established.

Minutes of February 26, 2025, Regular Meeting.

MOTION BY P. Anderson, seconded by S. Pendleton, to approve the minutes of February 26, 2025 Regular Meeting, as written. No discussion. Roll Call. Motion passed, 4 yes, 0 no.

VISITOR COMMENTS/PETITIONS

None.

FERRY SERVICE UPDATE

Peter Willcox reported that he sent an email to the Select Board earlier today with three questions from the MSFS that should be answered before the Ferry Service Advisory Board meeting next Thursday: 1. Who to communicate with? Peter stated the updates are sent to him and Janet, but we can ask for them to be sent to the Select Board as well if the Board would like. 2. How does the Select Board feel we should change the Tariff? We are facing a 13.5% tariff raise. How do we want to do that? Are we in favor of a straight across the board tariff raise? Or do we want it focused on cars and trucks? 3. What reliability do we expect as an island? They seem to be saying that if we ask for 100% reliability, they'll have to spend more money. Personally, Peter feels we would be likely to understand a delay or cancellation due to weather, but not because a crew member has gotten so drunk that he can't report for work.

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S. Conover responded to the questions raised. Regarding who should be included in updates, she feels that keeping it with Peter, Gabe (as the alternate), and Janet, on the Advisory Board's email list, would be easier for them to keep track of in terms of who is in each position, rather than having to keep track of Select Board terms and changes after Town Meeting. Peter and Janet are doing a good job of forwarding that communication.

Question 2. Tariffs: How to allocate a 13.5% increase? P. Anderson suggested recommending level across the board. This seems most fair. S. Conover added that, while moving passengers is less expensive than moving cars, we have a parking problem already. We're not set up yet to help people take advantage of passenger rates. P. Anderson suggested adding this point to the response: the parking problem is already exacerbated. If they want to encourage foot traffic, they need to meet us in the middle and get that parking lot done. S. Pendleton agreed with the first comment, raising it across the board. M. Burns asked if there is any possible way to prevent them from raising the tariff.

Scott de Grasse asked if we've looked at what other ferry services are doing for tariffs. The privately funded ferry services that serve Martha's Vinyard in Massachusetts charge higher rates for commercial vehicles that are based off-island. He is concerned about our on-island businesses being charged higher commercial rates. P. Anderson replied that we've asked them about resident and non-resident rates in the past, and it was not received well. The logistics of proving who's a resident was one of the biggest hurdles to them. S. Conover added that a couple years ago, the Island Institute commissioned an independent study that looked at ferry models from a number of different places.

S. Conover stated that to respond to the question, we would recommend a 13.5% increase spread across the board, but would ask that the DOT consider a resident rate structure. Peter Willcox stated that it's his understanding that the DOT said we could sell tickets for whatever rates we want to, if we bought them first. We'd have to take responsibility for buying and selling them. S. Pendleton added that we're required to pay in 50% of the DOT's operating expenses. That's an arbitrary number that was determined about 20 years ago. Maybe could lobby to decrease that to 45% of the toll. S. Conover stated that we can ask Genevieve if now is the right time. In the past, they've been hesitant to do that because, based on the composition of the transportation committee, reopening the rate discussion would likely backfire on us. However, there are now a number of people on the transportation committee who are more understanding of coastal issues.

Question 3. Reliability: S. Conover stated that if you're not shooting for 100%, what are we doing? We understand that things happen, but if their target is 95%, they have too much room to not try when they are meeting that goal.

ISLESBORO EMERGENCY FERRY TASK FORCE UPDATE

Peter Willcox reported Genevieve McDonald announced in an email today that Bruce Van Note has withdrawn the notion that all the ferries will live on the mainland, except for Islesboro. He is still proposing that Islesboro's ferry berth overnight on the mainland.

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The wave buoy is expected to go into Lincolnville's harbor in the next couple of weeks. This is something that was offered by the University of Maine, so that we can collect good data on the seas going into the Lincolnville pen, and try to show that the proposed wave attenuator, which is much like the one at Islesboro, will not be adequate to base a ferry near year-round.

S. Conover added that Genevieve had a one-on-one conversation with Bruce Van Note, and he said he wanted to work collaboratively to come up with a solution. Lincolnville is not a suitable harbor. We will continue to fight. There are two legislative bills that have been released, and several more that have not been released yet. The DOT is planning to schedule one or two ferry days, so that everything that relates to this issue will be done over a shorter period of time, and people from the islands can go to Augusta to testify. The relevant legislative bills will be posted on the Town website soon. The next EFTF meeting is next Thursday, March 20th.

UP-ISLAND PUBLIC SAFETY GARAGE UPDATE

S. Pendleton shared a Power Point presentation with updated figures since the February 26th meeting.

- The building cost increased by \$6,200. As of April 1st, there will be an additional increase of \$15,000. Based on the conversation at the last SB meeting, the committee asked for a revision to the proposal to replace heat pumps with oil-based radiant heat.
- S. Pendleton stated he spoke with City of Hodgdon Fire Chief Kidd. Their town put heat pumps in their existing fire station three years ago. The Chief reported good reliability. The boiler rarely kicks on. Even when they go out, the building has recovered by the time they get back.
- The committee had a call with the architect today. They're working on a revised design and getting a revised quote from the contractor. We will have that at the next meeting. The redesign is going to cost another \$2,000 - \$3,000.
- If we as a community want to save this project, we need to purchase this building now. We need to authorize \$25,000 and have that aspect of the project paid for.
- Options:
 - Purchase the building in March. This locks in the cost to avoid a significant increase.
 - Use the existing quote with heat pumps and ask the Select Board to recommend moving forward with this option.
 - Wait until we receive the new quote changing the heating system and decide at the next Select Board meeting.
- S. Pendleton pointed out that there are also two heaters planned for the ceiling with fans to help in recovery.

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- M. Burns asked where the building will be held until it's ready to be put up. S. Pendleton replied that the building won't get delivered until early May. We will put it at the building site.
- Fred Porter asked if some of the groundwork would be done prior to the delivery. S. Pendleton replied that once we have a contract signed, we can prioritize what needs to be done and what sequence it's done in.
- F. Porter asked if buying the building guarantees the contractor. The longer we wait, everyone is going to be booked up, which kicks everything back months. S. Pendleton replied that if that's the concern, the option is to take the quote we have now, with the heat pumps, and recommend we do that tonight.
- F. Porter asked what it would take to secure the contractor for a certain time frame. S. Pendleton stated he talked to the contractor after the last SB meeting and asked him, if we get this done by the end of March and buy the building, will we be able to move forward quickly? The contractor said yes, but he's not going to guarantee a time slot until he gets a contract. S. Pendleton added that he asked the contractor about the language at the bottom of his contract, which the Board didn't want to accept. We don't want to give him \$25,000 prior to having a contract. He agreed to change it.
- S. Conover asked to clarify that the contractor will put us in a time slot if we choose one of the two quotes, hopefully before our next meeting. S. Pendleton answered that yes, that's what he said.
- P. Anderson asked about the turnaround time for him to produce the contract. If we say yes to the contract on March 26th, but it takes him until after April 1st to produce it, will we maintain the cost of the pre-April deadline before it goes up \$15,000? S. Pendleton stated that this is why he is separating the two items. There's the purchase of the building, which we could approve tonight, and move forward without a contract. It's a risk, but it's tied to reducing a \$15,000 increase. If we agree tonight to purchase the building, we'll work to get a contract.
- Murt Durkee stated he favors purchasing the building now to show good faith to the contractor that we will pursue this project.
- Murt stated that if we go with the conventional boiler, he disagrees with the notation that there won't be much cost savings. A 400-amp service is pricey.
- Murt added that mainland fire stations could easily have a service tech repair the heat pumps, but on the island, there's no one who can service them.
- Charles Cilley stated the Fire Department refills the truck in winter with pond water. Discussion about the indoor water tank for refilling. It's a one-time fill.
- S. Pendleton stated that if we agree to purchase the building tonight, we will then be able to get the details listed out for the options.
- S. Pendleton stated his recommendation is the project will fail if we don't buy the building now.
- P. Anderson stated that no one in this room is a licensed electrician. We can bicker about the efficacy of heat pumps vs. boilers until we are blue in the face. He asked if anyone on the committee could talk to someone who is

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knowledgeable about efficiency and firehouses, so we can put to rest the issue of which one is better. S. Pendleton stated that he would take that on. He added that the architect group brings in experts that they can ask.

MOTION BY P. Anderson, seconded by M. Burns, to buy the building today and proceed with Phase I. Discussion as below. Roll Call. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no.

- Dan Tutor stated that he ran three 34,000 BTU heat pumps in his uninsulated greenhouse as a primary source of heat on a 200-amp service. They worked great.
- Scott de Grasse added that there are a lot of detailed questions that have to be asked of other fire departments beyond how's it working. He also stated that he hasn't heard any discussion about Phase II, which would be putting in a well, restrooms, and showers.
- S. Pendleton replied that that Scott's Phase II was actually the first plan, but it was \$1.4M. We know where we're at and what we have in front of us for money. We've talked to the people who will be using the facility, and they say it's important to have this building. We're doing what we have with the funds.
- P. Anderson added that Phase II is listed in the estimates we've looked at. There's well drilling and plumbing listed.
- Murt Durkee added that the first quote was way too high. He blames the committee for not analyzing why that bid was over \$1M. We went through different approaches and rearranged some things. The committee and others have worked hard to get the overall costs down to the \$400,000 range for the budget. We cut the well, septic, interior walls, bathroom, etc. No one was looking at the heat pumps, solar array, and EV chargers. Take all that out and you'll see a big difference in price, and we might be able to bring back the well, septic, and interior partitions. It took the committee a year to figure out to look at alternatives on the heat source, at Murt's suggestion.
- S. Conover stated it would make sense to have the architect come to the meeting when we have the estimate to walk us through any questions that come up.

SEA LEVEL RISE UPDATE

S. Conover reported that the next SLR meeting is tomorrow, March 13th at 4:30.

MUNICIPAL BUILDING PROJECT UPDATE

L. Bruce reported that there is no update.

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- Planning Board: March 24th, 5:00pm.
- Budget Workshop: March 19th, 5:00pm
- Board of Appeals Hearing: April 2nd, 6:00pm

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TOWN MANAGER REPORT

- Packet included Agenda for 3/12/25 and Minutes of 2/26/25 Select Board Regular Meeting.
- Committee Minutes
 - 2/27 Board of Appeals schedule and deadlines re: Losee Application MD 01-24.
 - 1/21 Minutes of ALP Library Trustee meeting
 - 2/19 Minutes of Emergency Ferry Service Task Force
 - 2/27 Minutes of Lighthouse Committee
- Correspondence
 - February Bar Harbor Wealth Management capital reserve sub-accounting.
 - 2/27 email from Barbara Arseneau with the total Waldo County budget \$12,778,840.43.
 - S. Conover asked what the total Waldo County budget is.
 - 3/3 letter to Maple Grove Cemetery Committee re: rescinding permission to use the Cemetery during East Shore Drive shutdown.
 - 3/4 letter to Waldo County Commissioners supporting Northport's suggestion to allow one member who is not an elected official to be on their board.
 - 3/4 Peter Willcox forwarded email from William Geary on the 2025 Fare Adjustment illustration of 13.5%.
 - 3/7 East Shore Drive repair update: roadway will remain open.
 - 3/10 letter to Maple Grove Cemetery Committee requesting their gate open the weekend culverts get replaced at Loranus Cove. Response: Linda Achorn and David Pendleton answered that the Town could use the roadway as long as it's not muddy.
- Hand-outs
 - 1/23/25 MSFS Advisory Board Minutes
- Manager
 - 3/10/25: 19 Broadband accounts deactivated. Half have paid up.
- Warrant FY25 #19

CORRESPONDENCE

Covered in Town Manager's report.

OLD BUSINESS

1. None.

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NEW BUSINESS

1. None.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. M. Burns reported that the Lighthouse Committee would like to install a railing in the tower for safety purposes. We have a call in to the insurance company. The railing quote that we have is from a steel company. They have the funds in their budget. Would it be appropriate to ask the Board to give them permission pending insurance approval to go forward with the purchase of the railing and installation?

MOTION BY P. Anderson, seconded by S. Pendleton, to allow the Lighthouse Committee, pending insurance approval, to purchase and install a railing in the light tower. No discussion. Roll Call. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no. Unanimous.

APPROVE WARRANT: FY25 #19

MOTION BY M. Burns, seconded by P. Anderson, to approve Warrant FY25 #19. No discussion. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no. Unanimous.

APPOINTMENTS:

None.

CHAIR COMMENTS

S. Conover: No comments.

VICE-CHAIR COMMENTS

L. Bruce: No comments.

INDIVIDUAL SELECT BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

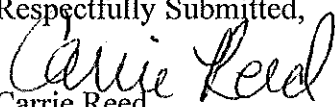
M. Burns: No comments.

S. Pendleton: No comments.

P. Anderson: No comments.

Motion by M. Burns to adjourn meeting at 7:13 PM. No discussion. Motion passed, 5 yes, 0 no. Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,


Carrie Reed
Secretary

