

Islesboro Select Board
Regular Meeting
Town Office Meeting Room & via Zoom
Wednesday, August 12, 2026 @ 5:30 PM

☒ APPROVED
8/26/26

MINUTES

Members Present:

Chair Peter Rothschild, Stephen Pendleton, Dylan Purington

Members Absent:

Vice Chair Peter Anderson, Holly Fields

Others Present:

Town Manager Janet Anderson, Fred Porter, Frank Start, Doug Welldon, Murt Durkee, Peter Willcox, Bill Tilden, Scott de Grasse, Paul Nichter, Carole Nichter, Mike Clayton, Owen Howell, Shey Conover, Paul (Babe) Hatch

Others Present via Zoom:

Andrew (Pete) Anderson, Josh Leach, Jeanne Porter, Ruthann Hewett, Amy Mulnix, Jason Hatch, Ted Pendleton, Janis Petzel, Maddy Bruno, Michael Miller, Daniel Tutor, Pam Larson, Priscilla Fort, Michael, Elana

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

Minutes of July 29, 2026, Regular Meeting.

MOTION BY S. Pendleton, seconded by D. Purington, to approve the minutes of July 29, 2026 Regular Meeting, as written. No discussion. Motion passed, 3 yes, 0 no.

P. Rothschild requested that any comments related to the Tickborne Illness discussion be saved for when we reach item #6 (Old Business) on the agenda.

VISITOR COMMENTS

Frank Start stated he believes this section used to be for visitors' comments and petitions. A petition has been delivered and certified through the town. It pertains to item #6 on the agenda. Frank's understanding is that it is valid, requesting a Special Town Meeting.

P. Rothschild reiterated his request that we defer discussion on this topic for item #6.

Paul Hatch stated that one of his trucks has sustained damage to its windshield from the brush along the side of the road. He asked when the Town is going to do something.

J. Anderson replied that Jordy Watson will start cutting back the brush after Labor Day.

S. Pendleton stated that, in response to previous complaints, we acquired a piece of equipment with a mulching arm to deal with roadside cutting. We are going to train our

team to run that, perhaps on less traveled roads to start. He added that we've listened and taken corrective action. Let's give it a month or two to see how it goes.

P. Rothschild added that the Board hears Paul, and hopes that in a month he will feel that the problem is being addressed. We have made a concerted effort to address this.

FERRY SERVICE UPDATE

Peter Willcox reported that he will need to write a report by August 30th. If anyone has any ideas to add, let him know. At the Ferry Service Advisory Board (FSAB) meeting on Thursday, they pointed out that revenue is up 18%. The Maine State Ferry Service (MSFS) has used Seaward Services in the past for filling crew vacancies. We have not used them this year so far, but will have to soon for an engineer. An AB from Vinalhaven died of a drug overdose. The automated system that was planned for tickets in the parking lot in Lincolnville will not be in for the foreseeable future. They haven't found an agency to manage that. The insurance for all seven vessels was \$55,000. For the new hybrid vessel just going into service, the Dinsmore, insurance will be \$125,000. The integrator for the new Islesboro boat (currently being called the Mitchell), is different from the Dinsmore. Bids are out for the Mitchell; no bids have come back. They are expecting a fare increase next year, approximately 18%, partly due to the increased insurance costs of the hybrid boat.

SEA LEVEL RISE UPDATE

Shey Conover reported that the next Sea Level Rise Committee meeting will be tomorrow at 4:30. The committee has received the 90% designs for the Narrows project from GZA Engineering, which includes raising the road four feet, larger revetments at the current stone wall to the south, and a larger engineered revetment in the middle. There would not be a revetment in the northern section. The cost is projected at \$8.1 million. There are two grants pending: the FEMA BRIC grant and the Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund grant. If we are successful in receiving both of those, our local match would only be around \$110,000, which we currently have in capital reserves. State and federal funding is iffy. It's a very competitive landscape. The FEMA BRIC grant requires a Town Meeting vote to approve 25% of the \$8.1 million in matching funds. \$1.9 million of that federal match would be funded through the state grant that is pending. Unfortunately, we hear about the federal grant before we hear about the state grant, and in order to be eligible to continue negotiations for the federal grant, they need a Town Meeting vote to approve the 25%. Shey, Janet, and Peter will be meeting with Town attorney Kristin Collins tomorrow, and with a woman from MEMA who has suggested that we need a Special Town Meeting for this, to try to develop some warrant language that has some guardrails on the request to approve \$1.9 million. Shey anticipates coming back in a couple of weeks with more information, discussion, and a formal recommendation from the Sea Level Rise Committee. It is likely we will request a Special Town Meeting.

P. Rothschild added that if we receive the FEMA grant and have the Special Town Meeting to approve the \$1.9 million matching funds, and if we don't get the state grant, which would diminish the commitment by 85 or 90%, we can abandon the whole thing, and just go back to an interim solution to temporarily fix the problem for about half a million dollars.

Paul Nichter urged the Board to proceed carefully, because it wouldn't be the first time that the state has screwed us out of money.

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

Up-Island Public Safety Garage: S. Pendleton reported that he sent an email to the contractor, Rod, on Monday reminding him that the September contract end-date is coming up, and that we haven't seen a lot of movement. The Town attorney has given some advice. S. Pendleton will reach out to Rod tomorrow. We may have to withhold money to facilitate a conclusion.

Murt Durkee stated that this is hopeful news. He emphasized that we keep a fire under the contractor, and encourages that we do hold back money to make sure the punch-list is finalized. We need to understand his timetable.

Mike Clayton asked if there's a reason they are not working. S. Pendleton stated that there is no reason. The contractor has been saying two weeks for a while.

Frank Start asked about a performance bond. S. Pendleton stated that this went through before he came on board, and he's not sure. J. Anderson stated she would have to look and see if we have that.

Scott de Grasse stated that the well that was drilled (440' at 1 gal/minute) is not much of a well. Murt Durkee replied that it's a trade-off. For that building, 1 gal/min is doable because no one will be living there. It will be used to automatically replenish the 1,500-gallon fire cistern. He appreciates the well. It gives us year-round fresh water.

Public Safety Renovation: Murt Durkee reported that the cabinetry is in place, and a template has been done for the counters. They've done more sheet-rocking and mudding. The contractors are going back to working during inclement weather. The sprinkler company will come soon to put three heads in and do some other work at the station.

S. Pendleton stated that the EOC extension is also coming along.

J. Anderson added that the flooring will be done soon, as we approved the funds for that.

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

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

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- Scott de Grasse reported that the dock subcommittee has decided that a moratorium on new docks is not necessary at this time. They will continue reviewing the ordinance for possible language changes.
- Sea Level Rise Committee: August 13th, 4:30pm.
- Harbor Committee: August 20th, 5:30pm.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

- Packet included Agenda for 8/12/26 and Minutes of 7/29/26 Select Board Regular Meeting.
- Committee Minutes
 - 6/4/26 Housing Committee minutes
- Correspondence
 - 8/9/26 letter from Steve Miller re: Ryder Cove Rd Controversy
 - This was a misunderstanding. Steve Miller has cleared it up.
 - The big rocks that were piled there are for a sea wall that's being built for the owners on the north side of the town right-of-way there.
 - J. Anderson went there today to look at a leaning tree they were asking about taking down. The owner is going to put a retaining wall around it; that's part of her permit.
 - 8/6/26 Maine Municipal Association sent us a \$1,378 dividend check because of our good performance and loss prevention efforts.
- Handouts:
 - Posting for Winter Sand Materials, due back 8/25/26.
 - Bar Harbor Capital Reserve subaccounts for July 2026
 - July Revenue and Expense reports
- Manager:
 - Paving: Jake from Performance Paving will be out in a few weeks to pave. Road striping will occur this Friday, 8/14. He's giving us a good deal on the tar. The area at Grindle Point is around \$14,000, but we need to do prep work on the road prior. That didn't include the guardrail. She envisions putting some rocks where people are parking perpendicular, which really upsets Taylor Watts, the property owner.
 - Discussion about plans to create parking on Ferry Road to keep people from parking illegally on Taylor Watts' property.
 - Fred stated that in order to write tickets for violations, he would need a formal complaint and probable cause, which would be the owner stating he doesn't want vehicles on his property. This would be criminal trespass. No one has contacted Fred about the issue. If Taylor Watts and the Town want to enter into some kind of agreement that the Town will enforce his property through the ordinance, Fred can better enforce it.

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- P. Rothschild suggested getting together with Fred and discuss how to best approach this.
- Ted Pendleton would like to find a way to limit off-island contractors from parking on the island in general, to address a bigger picture that includes a lack of affordable housing for people who are already here.
- P. Rothschild stated we are just trying to bring order to a disorderly situation. It's not a matter of encouraging or discouraging off-island businesses from working here.
- Maddy Dodge Field updates.
- Email from Donna Griswold, attorney for Lindsay Higginson, who is donating her Airport Hangar to the Town. She's asking for a receipt in the amount of \$35,000. We already own the land.
- Tina and Janet just finished interviews on administrative assistant candidates. We will talk about our thoughts on Friday, and make a decision.
- Harbor Master Earl MacKenzie sent an email this morning letting us know that we got the grant for the Seal Harbor pier, for \$219,000. We can go forward with posting it.
- Warrant #4 – FY27

CORRESPONDENCE

1. Covered in Town Manager's Report.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Discuss forming a small, well-vetted committee to come up with an appropriate solution to the tickborne illness problem on Islesboro.
 - P. Rothschild stated that, regarding the petition to call for a Special Town Meeting, submitted by Frank Start on August 11, 2026, he and Janet had a discussion with the Town's attorney. From her email reply: "In the absence of a charter provision requiring it, it is not clear that lack of a circulator's oath is a fatal flaw."
 - J. Anderson stated that the petition has been validated.
 - P. Rothschild continued, "Please advise the board that despite the recent request that a special meeting be called, there is no obligation to do so. The petitioned article needs only to be put on the next warrant issue or to vote within 60 days to set a date for a meeting. If you have no open town meeting planned until the next annual meeting, the Select Board would be voting to 'place the petitioned article on the 2027 annual town meeting warrant, unless a special meeting is called sooner.' Also, note that this petition does by reverence to section 2522 request an open meeting petition, not a ballot vote."
 - P. Rothschild clarified that the Select Board's intention for the proposed committee was to study the issue of how to address the problem of tick-related

illnesses. This would be a group of Islesboro residents who would solicit expert opinion on options for addressing the problem. Why not let them go study this? If we don't like their recommendations, so be it.

- Bill Tilden stated that so far, no committee has been formed, and nothing's been done. Nobody suggested cleaning all the deer off the island. There's been a lot of rumor going around. Bill was part of the last committee, and eliminating all the deer was never a solution. The Deer Reduction Committee's solution was to take deer down to 10 per square mile (140 deer on the island).
- Paul Nichter stated that the reason for that concern is because of what the last time involved. He is not opposed to a committee to study it. His concern is that the last committee was front-loaded with people who had an agenda, and had already determined that we needed to knock the deer population down. This was evidenced by their comments, actions, and the conclusion that they reached. We do have a problem with Lyme, and most of us have learned ways of fighting that, with cleaning up our yards, using bug spray, tick tubes, etc. A committee can bring out other ways of doing that, as long as they are not people who have predetermined in their mind what we need to do.
- Fred Porter stated he appreciates the Board holding space where we can talk about our concerns. He's the one who "started the fire on Facebook." This was because of the mention of White Buffalo. He would like the Board to take White Buffalo, or any company with the same mission, off the table. That company kills all the animals. There's been a long tradition of hunting on Islesboro. The mention of White Buffalo raised antennae. That is not the option. During COVID, we learned that everybody must take care of themselves. It's the same with Lyme. We have a good system. Fred challenged the Board to hire an independent surveyor this winter with drone technology for a deer count. We're worried about history repeating. Another question is, what does "well-vetted" look like? And who would be picked for the committee? We need a better deer count. 50 – 55 per square mile is not accurate. Is the Board willing to take White Buffalo and the extermination of all deer off the table?
- S. Pendleton replied that we were asked to have this discussion at the last meeting. The idea is to set up a committee to look at this. It's not the Select Board's position at this point to determine who's on the committee, the topics for discussion, an agenda, etc. It's our responsibility to the community to determine whether we want to approve a committee to look at this and start the process all over again. White Buffalo may be a component of the committee's research, which will take months.
- P. Rothschild added that he asked Bill Tilden to find members for the proposed committee, including hunters and other people, to have an objective study of how to reduce the incidence of tickborne illnesses.
- Fred Porter reiterated that if the Board can tell him that they will pick options other than White Buffalo, he will leave and praise the Board on Facebook.

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One of the things that's most important to him is how we're going to vet that committee. There needs to be a game plan for vetting.

- Doug Welldon stated he was on two of the past committees dealing with this issue. He added that this has to be done with sensitivity in getting people involved. The sharp-shooters were not approved at that divisive Town Meeting. We learned that it was not a good process. It took several years for us to heal from that.
- Frank Start asked for clarification on the petition. Maine laws and Town ordinances do not require the Select Board to call a Special Town Meeting within 60 days unless there's already a scheduled meeting? The way he read it is that the Town can wait until the next meeting, or call one within 60 days, whichever comes sooner. If the Concerned Citizens of Islesboro turned in a petition in 2014 and got a Special Town Meeting, why not afford the same thing? There have been four committees with different names dealing with this issue, and they've all been made inactive. He feels it's prudent and right of the Town to hold a Special Town Meeting and let the people decide whether we will go down this road again.
- J. Anderson stated we will probably have a Special Town Meeting this fall for several items.
- S. Pendleton added that it sounds like the Sea Level Rise issue will require a Special Town Meeting, and there are several topics that the Town needs to give the Select Board direction on. We need to have a discussion on this, and then vote on having a meeting. He asked Frank the purpose of his petition.
- Frank stated the people who signed the petition would like it to be voted on whether we go down this road again. If we create a fifth tick committee, Frank would like committee members voted in and not just appointed. There is a history of missions changing. He wants the purpose of the committee stated.
- S. Pendleton requested that we not apply those past things. We're going to vote to have a committee developed. Defining it will be critical. Who is capable of writing that document in a draft form so people can look at it in another meeting, so we get a general consensus of approval?
- Bill Tilden stated that according to the bylaws of the Town, the Select Board has a right to form a committee.
- Janis Petzel stated that, before we vote on anything, we need to know what the problem is. Getting a deer census makes sense. If we do form a committee, she suggested bringing in a wildlife biologist, or someone with experience at assessing the science of diseases that are carried by ticks, because it's a complicated life cycle. If we do have an overpopulation of deer, it's not good for the deer or the understory of the forest, which is not good for the aquifer, fire risk, etc. It's a whole ecosystem that's out of balance. We need people with that kind of expertise to give us guidance before we vote.
- Amy Mulnix suggested putting together a committee with a diverse set of perspectives. The science is important, but so is personal experience. As someone who loves Quaker principles, having a group of people who disagree

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at the table allows us to have a conversation that builds a consensus. It should be a committee that has the trust of the community, with diverse perspectives, so that a proposal is brought before the town that represents that diversity.

- Fred added that this is a trust issue. He did not trust the process last time. We don't trust to have a committee. We need to get the trust back.
- Frank asked if there's any evidence to support that there's much different science than the last time. If we have the same information, we already have answers from previous committees.
- S. Pendleton suggested that, because we have a petition, it appears there's a requirement to have a meeting to see if we're allowed to have a committee formed. It's important that we have the Town attorney look at the bylaws to see if that's required. If, in fact, a committee is allowed to be created like that, then that's a situation we'll have to address at the next meeting. In the interim, we'll start discussing when it's appropriate to have a Town Meeting. We will bring the Narrows issue, and other discussions we need to have.
- P. Rothschild would like to focus our attention on what constitutes a well-vetted committee. If there's a process by which we can involve more people in forming such a committee, great.
- D. Purington stated it seems like there's an uptick in tickborne illness, and that is what was brought to us. The people present are bringing more stuff, and we're considering that, too. We had good intent with what we were bringing up, and not making any decisions at this time.
- Ruthann Hewett asked if there is a way in place for individuals appointed to a committee to be elected by people or whether they're usually appointed. If there is a committee formed and recommendations are brought to the Select Board, are those recommendations voted on by islanders or determined by the Select Board? P. Rothschild replied that the composition of the committee will be based on the comments we've had tonight to make sure it's acceptable to a broad segment of the community.
- Jeanne Porter asked what rights the townspeople have for the Town attorney, to answer legal questions. She doesn't trust the Select Board. She's seen decisions made without notification, and people are not aware or advised of what is on the agenda. She doesn't trust one politician.
- S. Pendleton replied that it's the same attorney. He takes exception significantly to those comments. The Select Board members are serving the community based on being elected. We represent the Town. We're not "those guys," we're "us." If you don't trust us, maybe you should attend more meetings and be more involved. He added that he asked the attorney about the legal requirement around forming a committee. We have to have someone to do the research. We pay our attorney to do that research. If you have a question about the legality, send it to Janet, and we'll have that question submitted.
- Frank asked if that means attorney correspondence will be made public without everyone having to fill out a FOIA request.

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- Paul Hatch stated that Lyme is everywhere now. Are the numbers higher on the island because there are more people here?
 - P. Rothschild stated that one of the charges for the potential committee would be to get an independent evaluation of how big a problem this is. He encouraged anyone who is concerned about the vetting of the committee to let us have more of a dialogue about how to constitute independent research.
 - Fred stated that Select Board members need to understand that they are going to inherit some of the old trust issues sometimes. You have to take what you're told, listen to what we say, and put some thought into it.
 - P. Rothschild stated that the board is committed to finding an intelligent, rational, multifaceted solution to these problems. Let's try to do it better this time.
2. Request to the Groundwater Protection Committee to explore options for ordinance changes related to high-volume water usage and well-drilling.
- P. Rothschild stated he discussed this with Pam Larson, the chair of the Groundwater Protection Committee. She recommended we speak with Rod Pendleton, who is an expert in hydrology, and can advise on whether or not the ordinances we have now are adequate. He requested we put him on the agenda in September, and he can speak to the issues. We need expert advice.
 - Ted Pendleton stated there was a study done by Rod's firm about 10 years ago, and he gave a synopsis of that a few years ago. The data is out there.
 - Scott de Grasse suggested the Select Board get out in front of this. There are rumors that could spiral out of control.
 - Ted Pendleton suggested getting the report to the community.
 - Scott de Grasse added that the Planning Board recently discussed the water issue and whether we should be permitting wells, etc.
 - Maddy Bruno stated she is on the Groundwater Protection Committee and is a licensed hydrogeologist. The committee is looking at this. The more modern data that we can collect, the better we can tackle this. There may be needs like that in the future, and she hopes that people consider that as we move forward. She doesn't know if there's a more recent report than the one from the late 90s.
 - Pam Larson stated the last study was done in 1999. The Gerber report was in 1995. Rod Pendleton did a talk for Islesboro Islands Trust five or six years ago. Rod will speak to the whole community at the end of September. Date to be determined.
 - Fred Porter referred to the Crisis Committee that was created during COVID. At that time, Fred suggested that the Town ought to have a Public Information Officer, someone who vets the information, puts it in a form that doesn't overexplain or underexplain, and releases the information at the proper time. The Town also needs a policy on how to release information. FEMA does training on this.

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- Murt Durkee stated that every year there's a cycle, and it's dry at different times. He agrees that we need hydrologists to tell us what's underneath us. Rain patterns are sporadic. Somewhere in the state gets enough rain that the Forest Service allows burning at different class rates, and you can see that on their website. That's what he goes by. It's hard to predict when to allow burning or not. No one has indicated to Murt that any wells have gone dry. There might be reasons an individual's well is low, including overuse. Watering a lawn all day is stupid. If you have to water your lawn, do it early in the morning or late in the afternoon. The fire trucks are dirty because we don't dare to wash them, because it might be seen as wasteful. It's going to be touch-and-go. It's a problem all over the state.

NEW BUSINESS

1. M/M Junkyard Renewal

MOTION BY S. Pendleton, seconded by D. Purington, to enter into Public Hearing for M/M Junkyard Renewal. No discussion. Motion passed, 3 yes, 0 no. Unanimous.

- J. Anderson stated that the members all have a copy of the application. It's a renewal. There is also a report from Tom Michaud, the Codes Enforcement Officer, advocating for the renewal.
- The applicant had to send copies of the application to all abutters.

MOTION BY D. Purington, seconded by S. Pendleton, to exit Public Hearing. No discussion. Motion passed, 3 yes, 0 no. Unanimous.

MOTION BY D. Purington, seconded by S. Pendleton, to approve the M/M Permit Renewal for the Automobile Graveyard. No discussion. Motion passed, 3 yes, 0 no. Unanimous.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. None.

APPROVE WARRANT: FY27 #4

MOTION BY S. Pendleton, seconded by D. Purington, to approve Warrant FY27 #4. No discussion. Motion passed, 3 yes, 0 no. Unanimous.

APPOINTMENTS:

1. None

CHAIR COMMENTS

P. Rothschild: I assure visitors that we heard what you had to say. We are on the same team. We were duly elected to be your representatives. I will never mention W.B. again.

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VICE-CHAIR COMMENTS

P. Anderson was absent.

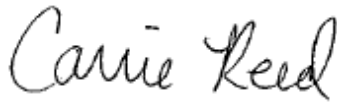
INDIVIDUAL SELECT BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

D. Purington: Thanks to everyone for sharing. I definitely heard what you were saying, and I agree that 55 deer per square mile sounded high.

S. Pendleton: No comments.

MOTION BY D. Purington, seconded by S. Pendleton to adjourn meeting at 7:29 PM. No discussion. Motion passed, 3 yes, 0 no. Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,



Carrie Reed
Secretary