



**SELECT BOARD MEETING**  
**Town of Southwest Harbor**  
**Town Office & Via Zoom\***  
**6:00 p.m. ~ Tuesday, January 23, 2024**

**Minutes**

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Ball called the meeting to order at 6:00p.m.
2. **ROLL CALL:** Chair Carolyn Ball, Vice Chair Natasha Johnson, James Vallette, Luke Damon, Chapin McFarland, Town Manager Marilyn Lowell, and Town Clerk Jennifer LaHaye
  - A. **Excused Absences** (*if any*)
3. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA:** *Request of the Town Manager for a motion to adopt the agenda as presented.*

Johnson motioned to approve the agenda with the removal of 6.C - Solid Waste Update Task Force Extension. Seconded by McFarland. Vote: 5-0-0.

Remove 6C. From the agenda as it was discussed in a previous meeting.

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** *Request of the Town Manager for a motion "to approve the minutes of...."*
  - A. January 9, 2023 – SB Minutes

Johnson motioned to approve the minutes as amended. Seconded by McFarland. Vote: 5-0-0.

Vallette noted to include the motion made by Johnson that included the extension of the task force at the of the public hearing.

**5. APPROVAL OF WARRANTS:**

Town Payables: W# 76	School Payroll: W#73
Town Payroll: W#0118, 0125	School Payables: W# 71, 74
Trust & Agency: W# 72,75	

Johnson motioned to approve the warrants as presented. Seconded by McFarland  
Vote:5-0-0.

**6. REGULAR BUSINESS:**

- A. **Community Policing Certificates:** *Request of Chief Noel March (University of Maine Augusta) to present two Community Policing Certificates.*

Chief Noel March of the University of Maine Augusta presented Chief John Hall with a Community Policing Certificate, after Chief Hall successfully completed the course. Chief March discussed the importance of community policing and the philosophy behind it. Lieutenant Franklin Burke also received this certificate and was present by Zoom. Chief Hall will present Burke's certificate to him at a later date.

- B. Solid Waste Ordinance:** *Request of Ellen Pope to review final Solid Waste Ordinance DRAFT after SB amendments and Public Hearing input from residents.*

Johnson motioned to authorize the SWTF to move forward with the proposed Solid Waste Ordinance and work with Town Clerk to have items ready to go on the May 2024 Referendum Ballot. Seconded by McFarland. Vote: 5-0-0.

- C. Harbor Fee Schedule:** *Request of Harbormaster to get authorization from SB to update Harbor Fee Schedule for 2024.*

Manager Lowell discussed the requested change in the Harbor Fee Schedule. She noted that increasing the mooring rental fees from \$35.00 to \$40.00 will generate about \$350 more per year. The committee also discussed the recreation launch fee. Ball expressed concern with the per touch, she noted it is a difficult way to measure. This would mean the Harbormaster would need to monitor all the time to have an accurate account of who is using it. Ball questioned how the Harbormaster would manage this. Harbormaster Kushla, present by Zoom, discussed the revenues of the Harbor and discussed the changes to the recent ordinance. Revenues will increase significantly. Members discussed the potential for at least a \$33,600 increase in revenue in fisherman permits alone.

- D. Manset Turnout Area:** *Request of Town Manager to discuss the Manset Turnout Area and the updating of Traffic and Parking Ordinance.*

Mr. Edward Buttler was present in the audience and provided a map of the turnaround. He would like the town to move the sign and replace it with a sign that states just “20-minute parking” if the town no longer allows vendors to sell. He discussed having a verbal agreement with RF Jordan Inc. Because they are parking on the turnaround, they were going to fix that area as they are not paying to park there currently. Manager Lowell advised that RF Jordan Inc. would be returning to do more work on the sidewalk project this spring. If the town decides to not allow vending in that space the parking ordinance would need to be changed. Mr. Butler expressed a concern for safety if vending continues with the new configuration after he took his land back. Damon noted for Select Board members to be mindful about past board decisions related to parking in Seawall, and noted the board should not show favoritism.

- E. Health Inspection-CEO- 125 Bass Harbor, Rd.:** *Request of Chair Carolyn Ball for update on CEO Health Inspection of 125 Bass Harbor Road.*

Vallette motioned to approve the signed consent agreement and for SB members to also sign the original document. Seconded by Johnson 4-1-0. Ball nay.

- F. Adoption of FY24/25 Budget:** *Request of Town Manager to adopt the FY24/25 Budget.*

Johnson motioned to confirm the amount of (~~\$1,211,735~~) (\$1,245,335) for (Revenues) be approved for advancement to Warrant Committee. Seconded by McFarland. Mooring registration will increase by \$30,000.

Vallette motioned to confirm the amount of (\$513,650) for (Administration) is approved for advancement to Warrant Committee. Seconded by Johnson. Vote:5-0-0.

McFarland motioned to confirm the amount of (\$94,679) for (Code Enforcement) is approved for advancement to Warrant Committee. Seconded by Johnson. Vote:5-0-0.

Damon motioned to confirm the amount of (\$2,375) for (Boards & Committees) is approved for advancement to Warrant Committee. Seconded by McFarland. Vote:5-0-0.

Johnson motioned to confirm the amount of (\$949,169) for (Contracted Services), which includes budgets for Harbor House, SWH Public Library & SWH-Tremont Nursing Services, is approved for advancement to Warrant Committee. Seconded by McFarland Vote: 5-0-0.

Vallette motioned to confirm the amount of (\$843,617) for (Debt Service) is approved for advancement to Warrant Committee. Johnson Vote: 5-0-0.

McFarland motioned to confirm the amount of (\$46,222) for (Insurance) is approved for advancement to Warrant Committee. Seconded by Damon. Vote: 5-0-0.

Damon motioned to confirm the amount of (\$43,688) for (Municipal Buildings) be approved for advancement to Warrant Committee. Seconded Johnson. Vote:5-0-0.

Johnson motioned to confirm the amount of (\$28,894) for (Community Service Organizations) be approved for advancement to Warrant Committee. Seconded by McFarland. No Vote.

Damon motioned to amend the above motion and confirm the amount of (\$28,894) for Community Service Organization excluding both Mt. Heights Cemetery and Downeast Transportation, also known as Island Explorer. Seconded by McFarland. Vote: 5-0-0.

Johnson motioned to confirm (\$12,500) for Mount Heights cemetery approved for advancement to the warrant committee. Seconded by McFarland. Vote: 5-0-0.

Vallette motioned to confirm (\$10,000) for Downeast Transportation, also known as Island Explorer, for advancement to the warrant committee. Seconded by Johnson. Vote; 5-0-0.

McFarland motioned to confirm the amount of (\$344,553) for (Highway) is approved for advancement to Warrant Committee. Seconded by Damon. Vote 5-0-0.

Damon motioned to confirm the amount of (\$813,204) for (Police) is approved for advancement to Warrant Committee. McFarland. Vote: 5-0-0.

Johnson motioned to confirm the amount of (\$380,006) for (Dispatch) is approved for advancement to Warrant Committee. Seconded by McFarland. Vote: 5-0-0.

Vallette motioned to forward the draft amount of (\$287,407) for the (Fire Department) for consideration of the Warrant Committee. Seconded by Johnson. Vote: 4-0-1. Abstain McFarland.

~Damon expressed concern having another firefighter stationed for 10 hours per week, 52 weeks a year, as they just moved to employing a fulltime firefighter. Damon is supportive of rewarding the people who are showing up and who are training but doesn't see the per-diem position as a good use of time. He feels the town is too small for that much coverage and requiring a volunteer to be at the station on a Sunday, he doesn't see how it contributes to work/life balance. Damon believes things are moving very quickly.

~Johnson does believe the town needs that coverage. Johnson noted that the Department is telling them they need more help.

~ Vallette suggested the landscape is changing; many volunteers are off the island and there seems to be coverage challenges with the ambulance. Vallette noted that Chief Chisholm has informed the select board of these challenges and respects the Chief's perspective. He added the town is an aging community and fewer people are providing services and volunteering locally. He would like to respect what the chief is proposing.

~Ball noted a dilemma of increasingly putting people into the hourly wage or per-diem does disincentive those that are volunteers. She is worried the town is adding more positions when we should be looking at having a full-time Fire Chief. Ball noted that wasn't something that would be decided this budget.

McFarland motioned to confirm the amount of (\$139,169) for (Harbor) is approved for advancement to Warrant Committee. Seconded Johnson. Vote: 5-0-0.

Johnson motioned to confirm the amount of (\$637,002) for (Reserved & Restricted Funds) is approved for advancement to Warrant Committee. Seconded by McFarland. Vote: 5-0-0.

Manager Lowell discussed information about the FMLA, and regulations surrounding it. She noted that Becky would be taking training around this, to learn more about who was eligible full-time/part-time. Manager Lowell noted that it has been increased by \$3,000.

Vallette motioned to confirm the amount of (\$335,060) for (CIP) be approved for advancement to Warrant Committee. Seconded by Johnson. Vote: 5-0-0.

Johnson motioned to confirm the amount of (\$5,887,067) for (Schools Appropriations) be approved for advancement to Warrant Committee. Seconded by McFarland. Vote: 5-0-0.

Johnson motioned to confirm the amount of (\$386,802) for (County Tax) be approved for advancement to Warrant Committee. McFarland. Vote: 5-0-0.

**Grand Totals: \$11,732,564** (This does not include Revenues)

Ball is recommending using some of the monies from the undesignated fund balance to go towards lowering the taxes. The town is currently looking at a 9% increase in the mill rate. Members suggest an amount of \$250,000 to go towards reducing the mill rate.

**7. LIAISON REPORT:**

- Vallette went with Tony to EMR to observe the discussion. EMR is expressing interest in the hazardous waste facility, depending on the details.
- ADD will be meeting this Friday. They will be starting discussion regarding the upcoming EMR contract.

**8. MANAGER REPORT:** See attached.

**9. SUGGESTIONS FOR THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING:** *No action will be taken, other than to place the requested items on the next agenda.*

- **Town Manager Search**
- **Chief Hall – Tremont Coverage Proposal**
- **Harbor Fee schedule**
- **EMR – Recycling**
- **Appointments – Katie Higgins & Thomas Chisholm**

**10. NEXT MEETING DATE: Adoption** of a motion to confirm the date of the next regular meeting for Tuesday, February 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. in the Town Office meeting room.

Johnson motioned to confirm the date of the next meeting for Tuesday, February 13th at 6:00 pm at the Town Office meeting room. Seconded by McFarland. Vote: 5-0-0.

**11. ADJOURNMENT:**

Johnson motioned to adjourn at 8:58 pm. Seconded by McFarland. Vote: 5-0-0.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jennifer E. LaHaye  
Town Clerk

**APPROVED**

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Carolyn Ball, Chair

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Natasha Johnson, Vice Chair

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James Vallette

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Luke Damon

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Chapin McFarland