

SELECT BOARD MEETING
Town of Southwest Harbor
Town Office & Via Zoom*
6:00 p.m. ~ Tuesday, January 6, 2026

Minutes

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Burby called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. **ROLL CALL:** Chair Noah Burby, Vice Chair Chapin McFarland Natasha Johnson, Carolyn Ball, Dan Norwood, Town Manager Karen Reddesen, and Town Clerk Jennifer LaHaye.

A. Excused Absences *(if any)* None.

3. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA:** *Request of the Town Manager for a motion to adopt the agenda as presented.*

Johnson motioned to amend the agenda to remove the warrants from the agenda. Seconded by McFarland. Vote: 5-0-0.

4. **REGULAR BUSINESS:**

A. Investing: *Review and discussion of CD renewal options*

Johnson motioned to authorize the Town Manager to invest CD funds in the amount of \$125,000 in a 24-month CD with Bar Harbor Bank and Trust in the amount around 3.8%, or in the alternative the best rate available for a 24-month CD as of January 7, 2026, with bond interest being deposited to SWH checking account as revenue. Seconded by McFarland. Vote: 5-0-0.

Town Manager Reddersen presented an overview of available CD options through Bar Harbor Bank and Trust. Johnson expressed she was in support of investing in at least a 13 month CD at the highest available rate but would prefer a longer-term investment. She advised as everyone gets settled into their positions, she would like to view a cash analysis to see how much we could be investing. Ball stated the Town is investing very modestly. This was the first attempt in investing. Manager Reddersen noted that interest rates fluctuate frequently and had already changed since she prepared the Select Board packet. Members agreed they preferred a longer-term investment option.

B. Zoom Meeting Access by Harbor Committee: *Discussion of usage of Zoom for meeting access by the Harbor Committee*

Select Board members discussed Zoom meetings for the Harbor Committee. Nick Madiera Chair, of the Harbor Committee was present at the meeting. Johnson shared she felt it was imperative to have Zoom capabilities in those meetings. She believes there could be a high participation level and noted the transparency would be great too. Select Board members generally agreed they would like to see the Harbor Committee use Zoom for their meetings, which lead to discussion of creating a remote policy for all committees. The policy most committees are working from is outdated and dates to the Covid era.

Madeira noted he personally was not a fan and believes it is a “hold over from Covid.” He shared he believes meetings are more productive without the distractions of Zoom technology. He shared the city of Bangor has experienced some challenges with the public related to Zoom.

Anne Napier, a Harbor Committee member, supported Zoom, noting it could help her attend safety during slippery and dark weather conditions and has advocated for this for years now.

Town Clerk LaHaye noted that the intent is not to move all meetings to a remote format, as some committees have expressed the wish to do so in the past. Residents value the in-person meetings and suggested drafting a policy to allow remote participation in cause of illness or special circumstance, such as a vacation.

Manager Reddersen advised the office to work on a draft policy for all committees and to bring it forward later.

C. Code of Conduct Policy: *Review and update of the Southwest Harbor Code of Conduct Policy*

Select Board members reviewed the Code of Conduct Policy. Several members discussed suggestion and amendments to the Policy. An amended draft will be presented to the Select Board later for review and further discussion.

D. Budget Review: *Request of Town Manager to give brief overview of the DRAFT FY27 Budget.*

Town Manager Karen Reddersen presented the initial draft budget, available for public review at the Town Office. She noted competing priorities, and thanked Becky Gatcomb for her assistance and hard work on the budget. Updates included a review of operating costs, adjustments to the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) and anticipated needs with each department. The draft reflects at 26% increase with an estimated 11.44 mill rate, which Manager Reddersen acknowledged as significant but these items that have been presented as needs within the Town. Burby noted that the county tax had a significant increase. He explained that under state law municipalities do not have leverage once the warrant has been issued by the county. Anyone wishing to influence the county budget should attend county meetings and voice their concerns.

5. LIAISON REPORT:

Conservation Commission- Johnson noted there was a Conservation Commission meeting tomorrow, they are going to focus on creating a policy related to removal of trees.

Harbor Committee – Norwood reported the committee did not have enough for a quorum to proceed. Noel Musson will be presenting at the committee to discuss updating the Harbor Plan.

6. MANAGER REPORT:

Town Manager Reddersen provided an update related to the Harbor Management Plan. The Coastal Communities and Shore & Harbor grants were submitted yesterday to the state; she is working closely with Planning Commission and Harbor Committee on this project. She noted the Departments received a new phone system, and noted the office was working through navigating that new system. This was to address some security issues that the Police Department had been experiencing. Manager Reddersen stated she will meet with the Solid Waste sub group on Thursday, and the budget may be adjusted following that discussion regarding solid waste.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Nick Madiera from the Harbor Committee would like to present the Lobster Buyer Truck application.

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

- Lobster Buyer application
- Zoom Policy
- Explore cost of vending out ordinances
- Explore Ordinances that are out of date
 - > discussion took place related to establishing a committee that would be able to focus on amendments to Ordinances. Johnson explored other alternatives such as outsourcing this work to reduce staff workload. Manager Reddersen referenced current priorities and the potential need for an additional staff member which would be presented later in the budget meeting. Johnson would like to have this as a discussion topic next week or soon, as the Board reviews the budget and discusses consideration of funding for ordinance-related support.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE: *Adoption of a motion to confirm the date of the next special meeting for Thursday, January 8th at 6:00 p.m. in the Pemetec Elementary Library...*

McFarland motioned to confirm the date of the next meeting for Thursday, January 8th at 6:00 p.m. in the Pemetec Elementary library. Seconded by Johnson. Vote: 5-0-0.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

- A. Southwest Harbor Public Works Union Collective Bargaining Agreement:**
(To be considered in executive session, as permitted by 1 MRSA 405 (6) (D).

- B. Police & Dispatch Union Collective Bargaining Agreement:** *(To be considered in executive session, as permitted by 1 MRSA 405 (6) (D)*

McFarland motion to enter executive session, at 7:05 p.m. pursuant to 1 MRSA 405 (6) (D) for discussion of labor contracts and proposals and meetings between the Town of Southwest Harbor and the Teamsters Local Union No. 340 for the Southwest Harbor Public Works Department, and for discussion of labor contracts and proposals and meetings between the Town of Southwest Harbor and the New England Police Benevolent Association, Inc. Local 615 for the Southwest Harbor Police and Dispatch Units. Seconded by Johnson. Vote: 5-0-0.

McFarland motioned to exit executive session, at 8:08 p.m. pursuant to 1 MRSA 405 (6) (D) for discussion of labor contracts and proposals and meetings between the Town of Southwest Harbor and the Teamsters Local Union No. 340 for the Southwest Harbor Public Works Department, and for discussion of labor contracts and proposals and meetings between the Town of Southwest Harbor and the New England Police Benevolent Association, Inc. Local 615 for the Southwest Harbor Police and Dispatch Units. Seconded by Johnson. Vote: 5-0-0.

McFarland motioned to approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Town of Southwest Harbor and the Teamsters Local Union No. 340 Southwest Harbor Public Works Unit for the period of January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2028 and direct the Town Manager to sign on behalf of the Town of Southwest Harbor. Seconded by Johnson. Vote: 5-0-0.

McFarland motioned to approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Town of Southwest Harbor and the New England Police Benevolent Association, Inc. Local 615 Southwest Harbor Police and Dispatch Units for the period of January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2028 and direct the Town Manager to sign on behalf of the Town of Southwest Harbor. Seconded by Johnson. Vote: 3-2-0. Norwood and McFarland nay.


1. ADJOURNMENT:

McFarland motioned to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Johnson. Vote: 5-0-0.

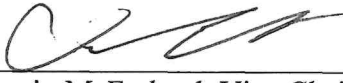
Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer E. LaHaye
Town Clerk


APPROVED



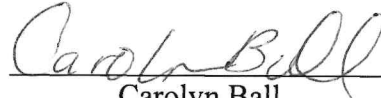
Noah Burby, Chair



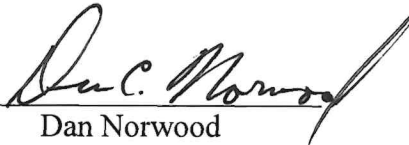
Chapin McFarland, Vice Chair



Natasha Johnson



Carolyn Ball



Dan Norwood