



**SELECT BOARD MEETING
Town of Southwest Harbor
Town Office & Via Zoom*
6:00 p.m. – Tuesday, April 8, 2025**

Minutes

- 1. CALL TO ORDER:** Ball called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
- 2. ROLL CALL:** Chair Carolyn Ball, Vice Chair Natasha Johnson, James Vallette, Noah Burby, Town Manager Karen Reddersen, Town Clerk Jennifer LaHaye. Chapin McFarland via Zoom, Deputy Treasurer Becky Gatcomb via Zoom.

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 and removed Kristen Roulet's appointment. Seconded by Buby. Vote: 5-0-0.

~Kristen is still waiting to receive her certification from the academy which should happen later this week.

- 4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** *Request of the Town Manager for a motion "to approve the minutes of...."*

A. March 11, 2025-SB Minutes

Johanson motioned to approve the minutes as amended. Seconded by Burby. Vote: 5-0-0.

~Minor grammatical errors were corrected

5. APPROVAL OF WARRANTS:

Town Payables: W#103

Trust & Agency: W#99,102

Conservation: W#100

Town Payroll: W#0327,0403

Trust & Agency: W#99,102

School Payables: W#101

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

6. APPOINTMENTS:

- A. Police Officer Constable:** *Request of Town Clerk to confirm Town Manager's appointment for Charles Rick Graham as an Officer/Constable for the Town of Southwest Harbor.*

Burby motioned to confirm the Town Manager's appointment for Chales Rick Graham as an Officer/Constable for the Town of Southwest Harbor. Seconded by Johnson. Vote: 5-0-0.

7. REGULAR BUSINESS:

- A. Introduction of Interim Southwest Harbor Water/Sewer District Supervisor:** *Introduction of Aaron Zurek, Interim Southwest Harbor Water/Sewer District Supervisor to the Select Board and community*

Town Manager Karen Reddersen presented Aaron Zurek, the current interim Water/Sewer District Supervisor to the Select Board. Zurek has been with the district for about 2 ½ years. He had worked previously in Castine and Ellsworth. He reports about nine years of experience with Water and nineteen years in Sewer. Zurek reports he is currently enrolled in a prep class for his certification. By next month he plans to hold a Grade Three in Treatment. Select Board members welcome Zurek and discussed the need for more communication and District updates and hoped he would assist.

- B. Amendment of a Conservation Easement Adding Real Property to Chris's Pond Conservation Easement and Acceptance of Deed-Town of Southwest Harbor and Maine Coast Heritage Trust:** *Request of the Town Manager to review the Amendment of a Conservation Easement Adding Real Property to Chris's Pond Conservation Easement, accept Chris's Pond Expansion Deed and authorize Town Manager to sign the amended conservation easement and related documents*

Johnson motioned to authorize an amendment to the existing Chris's Pond Conservation Easement, held by Maine Coast Heritage Trust, to add approximately 3 acres of land to the easement area; and authorize the Town Manager to sign all documents necessary to accept the land donation of a total of three acres, and complete the conservation easement amendment documents, including but not limited to the Amendment of a Conservation Easement and the Conservation Easement Baseline Documentation. Seconded by Burby. Vote: 5-0-0.

Town Manager Reddersen presented Misha Mytar from Maine Coast Heritage Trust. Mytar provided a timeline of previous discussions and work with the select board related to the conservation easement related to Chris' Pond. She explained to members MCHT is now ready to move forward with the land donation. Nothing has changed with the acreage. Three acres of land will be donated to the Town. Mytar noted the reason it has taken a little longer than expected. The land in the back part of the pond needed to be sold. They were successful in selling to an abutter. 2.8 acres of the three donated acres will be moved into the existing conservation easement. The .2-acre (former site of the Letcher house) will be given with no conditions to allow for less restrictions in the future. This could be a location for a small parking lot if needed.

Johnson discussed previous grant opportunities. Johnson wanted to explore if this gift would impact future grant opportunities. Mytar clarified in the future the Town would not be able to use the land as a match, referring to a previous grant that was once explored, but other grants could still be explored. Ann Ratcliff from the Conservation Commission noted the Commission was in support of this and feels this is

the best option and agrees with the land donation. Next steps after this meeting would be closing documents.

C. USDA Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) Grant Award-Community Facilities Grant Agreement and Resolution of the Select Board to accept a \$2,415,000 Community Facilities (CDS) Grant for the Public Works Garage: *Request of the Town Manager to review and approve the USDA Community Facilities Grant Agreement and approve a resolution to accept a \$2,415,000 Community Facilities (CDS) Grant for the SWH Public Works Garage*

Johnson motioned to accept and approve the USDA Community Facilities Grant Agreement as presented and direct the Town Manager to sign the agreement. Seconded by Burby. Vote: 5-0-0.

Burby motioned to approve and accept in all respects, a proposed grant of \$2,415,000 from the USDA Rural Development for the construction of the public works garage in Southwest Harbor, ME in accordance with the Form RD 3570-3, Community Facilities Grant Agreement,” and authorizes the Town Manager and Town Clerk to execute and deliver all documents, and to take any and all actions necessary to carry into effect such grand funding, including, but not limited to, Form RD 400-1, Equal Opportunity Agreement, and Form FD 400-4, Assurance Agreement. Seconded by Johnson. Vote: 5-0-0.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Select Board of the Town of Southwest Harbor approves and accepts in all respects, a proposed grant of \$2,415,000 from the USDA Rural Development for the construction of the public works garage in Southwest Harbor, ME in accordance with Form RD 3570-3, Community Facilities Grant Agreement,” and authorizes the Town Manager and Town Clerk to execute and deliver all documents, and to take any and all actions necessary to carry into effect such grant funding, including, but not limited to, Form RD 400-1, Equal Opportunity Agreement, and Form RD 400-4, Assurance Agreement.

D. 2026 Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) Grant Opportunity-Wood St.: *Request of the Town Manager to work with Olver Associates Inc. to apply for potential funding for Wood Street improvements*

Johnson motioned to work with Olver Associates Inc. to submit a grant application for Wood Street improvements. Seconded by Burby Vote: 5-0-0.

E. Review of FY26 Legal and Accounting Reserve Account Request: *Request of Select Board Chair to review proposed Legal and Accounting Reserve allocation for FY26*

Reddersen reported that she and the Fiscal Officer Becky Gatcomb reviewed what was spent in previous years related to legal expenses. Reddersen wanted to make sure the board is fully aware of this information. The following information was discussed with the Select Board to determine if adjustments need to be made to the proposed FY26 Legal Reserve Account:

- In FY22/23, the Town began with approximately \$53k, spent approximately \$28k, and with some minor audit adjustments, resulted in an ending balance of \$27,583.
- In FY23/24, the Town allocated \$10,000, spent approximately \$58k, and will have some anticipated minor audit adjustments, leaving us with an ending balance of -\$19,361.

- In FY24/25 (current), the Town allocated \$15,000, spent \$22,646 YTD, and currently have a balance of -\$21,008.

Select Board members agreed that they were satisfied with the amount they previously agreed to allocate to the Legal and Accounting Reserve for the FY25/26 budget. It was noted that there were several factors that resulted in having more consultation with the attorney in past years. Members did not foresee the same issues in this fiscal year. No action was taken.

F. Town Warrant: *Request of Town Manager to present and adopt final draft of the FY26 Town Warrant.*

All Select Board members agreed at 7.5% interest rate for unpaid taxes.

Amendments:

Article 24: Ambulance funding – Include:

Sources of funding: \$145,000 – FY24/25 Tremont Police Contract, \$15,000 to be raised by the taxpayers.

Article 26: Community Services – delete Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry. (listed twice) - Include: Northern Light was not funded this year. \$1,700 was allocated to the Mount Desert Nursing Association that offers comparable services.

Article 27 & Article 45 Amend /Include: Note * indicates a proposed reserve line item. *State provided funds* were previously authorized by the Select Board for this purpose. Make sure both Article 27 and Article 45 note this.

Johnson motioned to approve the FY25/26 Town Meeting Warrant to be voted at Town Meeting on Monday, May 5, 2025. Seconded by Burby Vote; 5-0-0.

G. Discussion of MMA Memorandum regarding Tax Exempt Bonds: *Request of the Town Manager to discuss benefits of Tax-Exempt Bonds and potential resolution by the Select Board in support of the preservation of Federal Tax Exemption of Municipal Bonds.*

Town Manager Reddersen discussed the tax-exempt bonds and how this could impact our Town. Reddersen is looking for direction and support with moving forward to draft a resolution for the Select Board's review.

Select Board members directed Town Manager Reddersen to prepare a resolution for Select Board signature declaring support for the preservation of the Federal tax exemption for municipal bonds.

H. Discussion of Emerald Ash Borer found on MDI: *Request of the Select Board to discuss finding of the invasive species Emerald Ash Borer on MDI*

Board members discussed the concern for Emerald Ash Borer found on MDI. All agreed that more signage would be a good start. Members requested to have D.O.T signs by Trenton or Bar Harbor to notify visitors not to bringing in firewood onto or off the island. This could be something that the League of Towns could address at the next meeting.

I. Discussion of Four-Day Work Schedule for Town Office: *Request of Town Manager to discuss a four-day work schedule for the Town Office*

Board members continued the discussion of a four-day work schedule for the Town Office. Holidays were discussed. Reddersen noted the 13 holidays that have already been approved and outlined in the personal policy. Members agreed that they would not be in favor of adding the holiday to the work week if the holiday landed on a Friday. Instead, employees could accrue those holiday hours and use them later. This would reduce the office being shut down for only three days. Employees would also work the Fridays in September and February when Taxes are due.

8. FINANCIAL REPORTS: *Presentation of the monthly Budget Variance Report, Revenue Variance Report, and Reserves Report.*

Town Manager Karen Reddersen presented the financial reports. Members reviewed. No action.

9. LIAISON REPORT:

- The Harbor Committee is working with Clean Maine Shores and picking up around the shore. Burby reports being in decent shape, and the water flows in a direction that doesn't accumulate much debris on our shores. The school is also involved with this cleanup project. They will continue before the summer ramps up. Burby noted that the Committee was not interested in having a crab permit. This could be something included in the Fisherman permit.
- The Conservation Commission took down the old Elm tree in the center of town. This was an unplanned expense for them, about \$4,000.

10. MANAGER REPORT: *See report filed at the Town Office.*

Town Manager Reddersen presented her report. She noted that construction on the main street had begun; however, they could not start on time and started this week.

Chief Hall provided an update on the Riffle and Handgun upgrades. This was answering McFarland's previous question that a resident had raised to him about the Department's need to purchase such powerful rifles, referencing H&K rifles being purchased. Chief Hall advised that they have had two other malfunctions on the range, this has prompted speeding the process up to obtain new firearms. Currently there is no policy related to disposing of firearms. This policy will need to be drafted. The Current office firearms will go back to AmChar. The other firearms that residents may bring into the department will need to be disposed of, and a policy will need to be created before this can happen. Chief Hall explained the reason for the selection of rifle and silencer is to help reduce the secondary injury to an officer's hearing or bystander. At the range hearing protection is used, however in real life you do not have time to use hearing protection. They moved to a shorter barrel that you can remove and take off in the event you are in a smaller confined space. It is safer to use. It should be noted after this meeting held on 4.8.2025 Chief Hall provided the following information via email and notified McFarland the following: "The Department has purchased 2 new rifles. They are NOT H&K's those are way too expensive at around \$4,000.00 each for the comparable rifle. We purchased 2 FN (Fabrique Nationale) model 15SRPG2P LEO2 at approximately \$1,200 each."

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

- Parking Ordinance * Liquor License 3x

12. NEXT MEETING DATE: *Adoption of a motion to confirm the date of the next meeting for Tuesday, April 22nd at 6:00 p.m. at the Town Office Meeting Room*

Johnson motioned to confirm the next meeting date for Tuesday April 22, at 6:00 p.m. at the Town Office meeting room. Seconded by Burby Vote: 5-0-0.


13. ADJOURNMENT:

Johnson motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:09 p.m. Seconded by Burby. Vote: 5-0-0.

Respectfully Submitted,


Jennifer E. LaHaye
Town Clerk

APPROVED



Carolyn Ball, Chair

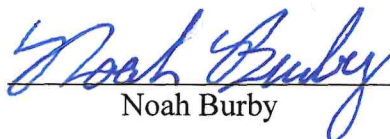
Natasha Johnson, Vice Chair



James Vallette



Chapin McFarland



Noah Burby