

**Town of Mount Desert  
Selectboard Minutes  
January 2, 2024**

**Board Members Present:** Chair John Macauley, Rick Mooers, Martha Dudman, Geoff Wood

Selectboard Member Wendy Littlefield was not in attendance.

**Town Officials Present:** Town Manager Durlin Lunt, Tax Assessor Kyle Avila, Town Clerk Claire Woolfolk, Public Works Director Brian Henkel, Fire Chief Mike Bender, Finance Director Mae Wyler

Members of the Public were also present.

**I. Call to order at 6:30 p.m.**

Chair Macauley called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

**II. Minutes**

*A. Approval of minutes from December 18, 2023 meeting*

MOTION: Ms. Dudman moved, with Mr. Mooers seconding, approval of the December 18, 2023 Minutes as presented.

Motion approved 3-0-1 (Wood in Abstention).

**III. Appointments/Recognitions/Resignations**

*A. Recognition of the promotion of Royce Gordon to the position of Highway Division Foreman effective December 11, 2023*

MOTION: Mr. Wood moved, with Ms. Dudman seconding, recognition of the promotion of Royce Gordon to the position of Highway Division Foreman effective December 11, 2023 as presented and with congratulations.

Motion approved 4-0.

**IV. Consent Agenda**

*A. Hancock County Commissioners Meeting Minutes from December 5, 2023*

MOTION: Ms. Dudman moved, with Mr. Wood seconding, acceptance of the Consent Agenda as presented.

Motion approved 4-0.

**V. Selectboard's Reports**

No Selectboard Reports were presented.

**VI. Unfinished Business**

*A. The Sustainability committee recommends moving forward with the three solar projects for the following sites:*

- *Somesville Fire House*
- *Otter Creek Pumping Station*
- *Northeast Harbor Treatment and Pump Station*

1 MOTION: Mr. Wood moved, with Ms. Dudman seconding, moving forward with the three solar  
2 projects for the following sites: Somesville Fire House, Otter Creek Pumping Station, and  
3 Northeast Harbor Treatment and Pump Station as presented.  
4

5 Public Works Director Henkel noted an additional component of the work was presented  
6 regarding a feasibility review of the Northeast Harbor Municipal parking lot and the Seal Harbor  
7 Treatment Plant parking lot as potential sites for solar arrays. It was suggested the Town  
8 coordinate with GF Johnston on that review. GF Johnston will design the solar arrays being  
9 voted on. Feasibility work will not add to their cost.  
10

11 AMENDED MOTION: Mr. Wood moved, with Ms. Dudman seconding, moving forward with  
12 the three solar projects for the following sites: Somesville Fire House, Otter Creek Pumping  
13 Station, and Northeast Harbor Treatment and Pump Station, and coordinating with engineer GF  
14 Johnston regarding research on development of parking lot canopies as presented.  
15 Motion approved 4-0.  
16

17 Resident Dennis Shubert opposed the project. He opined that the margin for error on the work is  
18 thin. He reported that the Long Pond Solar Farm was at 60% of predicted output for eleven  
19 months in 2023. Sensitivity analysis he conducted resulted in a base case similar to what has  
20 been presented by the consultants. He conducted additional negative case analysis as well. He  
21 warned of a variety of possibilities affecting the pricing, such as the loss of the 30% government  
22 reimbursement, higher than expected construction costs, energy costs and net energy building  
23 reimbursement changing, and the possibility that the ability to connect to Versant would be  
24 discontinued. He believed that the worst-case scenario was that the solar panels would provide  
25 electricity valued at the same amount that Versant charges, with the additional cost of  
26 transmission and distribution costs. If the Town is unable to connect to Versant, the system will  
27 only provide electricity to the building the array is connected to.  
28

29 A Climate to Thrive Representative Beth Woolfolk stated that the Phase One costs proposed  
30 include ensuring that the solar arrays can connect with the grid. Anything left over will go  
31 toward the development costs. She stands by the estimates presented of development costs and  
32 the construction costs. Based on her discussions with multiple contractors, the prices she  
33 presented are conservative. She anticipates the cost to be less than those presented. She noted  
34 the 30% tax credit Mr. Shubert was concerned about losing is locked in until 2030.  
35

36 Mr. Shubert asserted that the most likely negative scenario is higher construction costs. If prices  
37 go up, the price for the Town will go up. He feared the Town would have solar arrays providing  
38 electricity only to the buildings to which they are connected. Additionally, he believed  
39 electricity costs would go down.  
40

41 Ms. Woolfolk took into consideration the possibility that electricity prices may go down over the  
42 next year or two, based on world events and supply chains leveling out. Over a longer period of  
43 time however, costs are likely to rise. She noted that there are a number of large projects being  
44 approved that will eventually drive distribution costs up. She believed the worst-case analysis  
45 shows over time that it will not cost the Town. The project eventually pays for itself.  
46

1 Chair Macauley believed the Town's goal was to enhance its green energy use. With the value  
2 the Town will receive and the data it will provide, it's worth investing the money to proceed with  
3 the work.

4  
5 Mr. Shubert argued that 72% of the Town's electrical energy is already renewable.

6  
7 Motion approved 4-0.

8  
9 *B. Consider a warrant article to raise \$270,000 to fund phase one of development for the above*  
10 *referenced solar sites.*

11 MOTION: Mr. Wood moved, with Ms. Dudman seconding, a warrant article to raise \$270,000  
12 to fund phase one of development for the above referenced solar sites as presented.

13  
14 Sustainability Chair Phil Lichtenstein requested that Ms. Woolfolk present her work to the  
15 Warrant Committee once the article has been written.

16  
17 Motion approved 4-0.

18  
19 *C. Discussion of Boston Cane Award – Dorothy Renault*

20 Town Clerk Woolfolk reported an application from Dorothy Renault was received. She thanked  
21 Board Member Dudman for her help. If the Board approves the application, she will work on the  
22 logistics of presenting the cane.

23  
24 MOTION: Ms. Dudman moved, with Mr. Wood seconding, presenting the Boston Cane Award  
25 to Dorothy Renault.

26 Motion approved 4-0.

27  
28 **VII. New Business**

29 *A. Consider authorizing Fire Chief Mike Bender to apply for a grant from the Maine EMS*  
30 *Stabilization Funding Program*

31 MOTION: Mr. Mooers moved, with Mr. Wood seconding, authorizing Fire Chief Mike Bender  
32 to apply for a grant from the Maine EMS Stabilization Funding Program as presented.

33 Motion approved 4-0.

34  
35 *B. Authorize use of the balance of the WW Bond Reserve 4050500-24203 to subsidize the*  
36 *10/1/24 and final principal payment on MMBB CWSRF loan 2003FFRS and, by extension,*  
37 *reduce necessary appropriations*

38 Finance Director Wyler reported that Acadia National Park provided funds for the completion of  
39 the project. There is a balance of \$155,000.00 left the Town hopes to put towards the  
40 \$220,000.00 final payment, leaving the Town to budget for \$65,000.00.

41  
42 MOTION: Ms. Dudman moved, with Mr. Wood seconding, authorizing use of the balance of  
43 the WW Bond Reserve 4050500-24203 to subsidize the 10/1/24 and final principal payment on  
44 MMBB CWSRF loan 2003FFRS and, by extension, reduce necessary appropriations as  
45 presented.

46 Motion approved 4-0.

*C. Review of FY 2025 Budgets: Public Safety*

A review of the Public Safety Budget ensued.

Manager Lunt provided a memo on Public Safety. He noted his memo's budget amount includes Debt Service, General Government, and Public Safety.

Manager Lunt pointed out that budget increases do not correlate to tax increases. Revenue affects the tax increase. Costs in this budget are driven by wages and benefits.

Fire Chief Bender noted that in terms of salary the Town is relatively competitive with other Towns. The Town has hired eleven new employees. Housing has been an issue. His employees can't afford to live in Town. Manager Lunt hoped to do a review of salaries and benefits next year. He hopes to have it well before next year's budget season.

**VIII. Other Business**

*A. Such other business as may be legally conducted*

There was no Other Business.

**IX. Treasurer's Warrants**

*A. Approve & Sign Treasurer's Warrant as shown below:*

Town Invoices	AP#2441	1/3/2023	\$229,902.55
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$229,902.55</b>

MOTION: Ms. Dudman moved, with Mr. Mooers seconding, approval and signature of Treasurer's Warrant as shown above.

Motion approved 4-0.

*B. Approve Signed Treasurer's Payroll, State Fees, & PR Benefit Warrants as shown below:*

State Fees & PR Benefits	AP#2439	12/20/2023	\$4,347.75
	AP#2440	12/28/2023	\$5,345.92
Town Payroll	PR#2415	12/22/2023	\$167,900.04
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$177,593.71</b>

MOTION: Mr. Mooers moved, with Ms. Dudman seconding, approval of signed Treasurer's Payroll, State Fees, & PR Benefit Warrants as shown above.

Motion approved 4-0.

*C. Acknowledge Treasurer's Town Voided Disbursements & School Board AP/Payroll Warrants as shown below:*

School Invoices			\$0
School Payroll	PR#13	12/22/2023	\$184,015.06
Voided Disbursements			\$0
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$184,015.06</b>

MOTION: Mr. Mooers moved, with Ms. Dudman seconding, acknowledgement of Treasurer's Town Voided Disbursements & School Board AP/Payroll Warrants as shown above.

Motion approved 4-0.

<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>\$591,511.32</b>
--------------------	--	--	---------------------

**X. Adjournment**

MOTION: Mr. Mooers moved, with Ms. Dudman seconding, to adjourn.

Motion approved 4-0.

The Meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Geoffrey Wood