

**Town of Mount Desert
Selectboard Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 3, 2022**

Selectboard Members Present: Chair John Macauley, Matt Hart, Martha Dudman,
Wendy Littlefield

Board Member Geoff Wood was not in attendance.

Town Officials Present: Town Manager Durlin Lunt, Town Clerk Claire Woolfolk, Tax Assessor Kyle Avila, Finance Director Jake Wright, Fire Chief Mike Bender, Police Captain David Kerns, Police Chief Jim Willis

Members of the public were also in attendance.

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

Chair Macauley called the meeting to order at 6:30PM.

II. Minutes

A. Approval of minutes from December 6, 2021 meeting

MOTION: Ms. Littlefield moved, with Mr. Hart seconding, approval of the December 6, 2021 Minutes as presented.

There were questions regarding MRC Director Mike Carroll's comments summarized on Page 2, Paragraph 3, and questions regarding the Town Office hours discussed on Page 5, Line 32.

It was agreed to review the MRC Director's comments for possible revision.

Motion approved 4-0.

III. Appointments/Recognitions/Resignations

A. Jennifer McWain Buchanan has been awarded the Lifetime Certification from the Maine Town & City Clerks' Association

The Board offered congratulations to Ms. McWain Buchanan for her achievement.

IV. Consent Agenda *(These items are considered routine, and therefore, may be passed by the Selectmen in one blanket motion. Board members may remove any item for discussion by requesting such action prior to consideration of that portion of the agenda.)*

A. Public Works: Miscellaneous Project Updates

B. Hancock County Commissioners Meeting Minutes from December 7, 2021

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

Motion approved 4-0.

1 **V. Selectmen's Reports**

2 None Presented.

3
4 **VI. Unfinished Business**

5 *A. Discussion of Community Outreach Plan by A Climate to Thrive*

6 ACTT representative Johannah Blackman reported on the Community Outreach Plan.
7 Joining the Community Resilience Partnership has been integrated into the Community
8 Outreach Plan. To join the Community Resilience Partnership the Town must host a
9 community-wide meeting to discuss community actions and identify priorities. Ms.
10 Blackman proposed January 20, 6PM as a potential Zoom meeting date. ACTT has an
11 outreach/publicity plan prepared for the meeting, and can handle invitations, meeting
12 facilitation, and Zoom.

13
14 Another step for joining the Community Resilience Partnership requires Town leaders
15 and Department Heads to complete a resilience self-evaluation. Ms. Blackman suggested
16 ACTT host a meeting of Department Heads in the coming weeks to help facilitate the
17 evaluation. An invitation to the meeting will include the Selectboard members for those
18 who want to attend.

19
20 Ms. Blackman introduced Naomi Albert, a colleague who's worked on the Action Plan.

21
22 *B. Discussion of Community Resilience Partnership*

23 In addition to the self-evaluation and community meeting explained previously, the Town
24 must pass a resolution to join the Partnership after the other steps have been completed.
25 A template resolution is available. A committee or point person is appointed to oversee
26 initial implementation of the plan. This will allow the Town to then apply for funding.

27
28 *C. Review and possible adoption of the Town of Mount Desert Boston Cane Policy*

29 Chair Macauley suggested a replica cane for presentation. The ceremony can be held as
30 it traditionally is with the replica cane and certificate. Discussion of where to get a
31 replica ensued and several ideas were brainstormed.

32
33 Adoption of the Boston Cane Policy was discussed. Clerk Woolfolk noted the policy can
34 always be revisited.

35
36 MOTION: Ms. Dudman moved, with Mr. Hart seconding, adoption of the Town of
37 Mount Desert Boston Cane Policy, with the addition of the presentation of a replica cane
38 and certificate as discussed.

39
40 Clerk Woolfolk noted the Policy includes wording to the effect that the Board may
41 modify the requirements by a majority vote. Such wording allows for a digression from
42 the letter of the policy should there be special circumstances.

43
44 Motion approved 4-0.

45
46 **Addendum:**

1 **A. Casco Bay Advisors Proposal**

2 This Addendum was submitted to the Selectboard late and therefore not included in the
3 Agenda or Meeting Packet. Several Board Members had not seen the proposal
4 information. Because some Board members have not reviewed the addendum, the Board
5 is likely not prepared to discuss the item. It was agreed to table the Item to the next
6 meeting.

7
8 MOTION: Mr. Hart moved, with Ms. Dudman seconding, tabling Addendum Item A,
9 Casco Bay Advisors Proposal, to the next scheduled Selectboard Meeting.

10
11 Motion approved 4-0.

12
13 **VII. New Business**

14 A. *Consider meeting for the second session of third-party requests on February 24, 2022*
15 Manager Lunt reminded the Board the third-party requests were split into two sessions
16 last year.

17
18 Warrant Committee Chair Phil Lichtenstein noted the Board meets with the Warrant
19 Committee on February 22, 2022. This second meeting would occur February 24, 2022.
20 The Warrant Committee meeting schedule was discussed, and a schedule was distributed.

21
22 MOTION: Ms. Littlefield moved, with Mr. Hart seconding, approval of a second session
23 of third-party requests on February 24, 2022, as presented.

24
25 Motion approved 4-0.

26
27 B. *Sale of spirits and fortified wine for consumption off the premises on days other than*
28 *Sunday; Place referendum question on the secret ballot election for May 2, 2022*
29 Clerk Woolfolk explained this item was originally voted on in 1991 but was not properly
30 voted. The vote must be by ballot. Adding a written ballot question to the candidate
31 election the day before Town Meeting is a better way to accomplish the required vote.

32
33 MOTION: Mr. Hart moved, with Ms. Dudman seconding, placing the referendum
34 question of sale of spirits and fortified wine for consumption off the premises on days
35 other than Sunday on the secret ballot election for May 2, 2022, as presented.

36
37 Motion approved 4-0.

38
39 C. *Review of FY 2023 Budgets: Public Safety*

40 **Fire Department:**

41 The addition of the Ambulance Service to the Fire Department has resulted in a sizable
42 increase to the budget.

43
44 12 positions are in the proposed budget. This includes the four current full-time
45 firefighters. The Bar Harbor Fire Department is unable to partner with the Town of
46 Mount Desert in co-staffing the Somesville Fire Department for at least the next year.

1 Without Bar Harbor's partnership, the options are either to cover shifts with a Mount
2 Desert staff of twelve (allowing for four employees per shift), or a staff of nine (allowing
3 for three employees per shift) with the hope that Bar Harbor is able to partner next year.
4 Staffing a station with only three employees per shift will be a challenge, particularly in
5 July and August.

6
7 Chief Bender hopes to hire employees who are cross trained as both firefighters and
8 EMTs, or hire employees certified for one or the other and willing to cross-train. Chief
9 Bender believed it too much to ask the Town to support two crews certified in just one or
10 the other. Chief Bender confirmed there was room for on-call personnel certified in just
11 firefighting or just as an EMT. The priority is to have at least one EMT per shift.

12
13 Transitioning to a 24/7 schedule results in a longer shift for the same amount of pay.
14 Firefighter Tom Wallace did not believe this was fair. It may affect hiring.

15
16 Town Manager Lunt explained that firefighters and police officers are on the same salary
17 band. The payrate is based on a 40-hour week. Chief Bender agreed the wages were set
18 up for a 40-hour workweek; The proposed schedule creates a 53-hour workweek. Some
19 of the 53 hours is downtime. Boosting the payrate would result in Mount Desert being
20 out of sync with comparable salaries for the rest of the State and change the dynamics for
21 fire departments across Mount Desert Island. The proposed payscale is compatible with
22 other nearby towns, both on and off the island.

23
24 Chair Macauley believed it was a question of time management, which is not the job of
25 the Selectboard. Other communities have systems that are working.

26
27 Manager Lunt reminded the Board that current Mount Desert firefighters were hired for a
28 40-hour workweek and the Town is now trying to expand it. The choice is to pursue the
29 proposed schedule where the hours are increased resulting in a lower hourly wage, or to
30 maintain 40 hours per week. Other Towns may have started with a non-traditional
31 workweek.

32
33 New employees would be hired at this proposed rate. For current employees the
34 proposed schedule adds 830 extra hours a year to their work time for the amount they
35 currently make.

36
37 Mr. Hart believed that if the Town is asking someone to work an extra 16 hours per week
38 they should be compensated.

39
40 Chief Willis tried to explain that wages for Public Safety employees are calculated
41 differently per the Fair Labor Standards Act, which includes a 7K exemption allowing an
42 employer to average hours over work periods to avoid excessive overtime. The Town
43 Attorney was consulted and approved.

44

1 Mr. Hart noted the benefit of working a longer shift means time off work is longer as
2 well. However, it is difficult to tell a current employee they must now work longer hours
3 for the same rate of pay.
4

5 Ambulance Service Director Mahaney mentioned that Fire Departments in other
6 communities are operating on a 42-hour schedule, but it requires an additional crew. Bar
7 Harbor operates on a 56-hour schedule. They've lost employees to Towns with the 42-
8 hour schedule. Director Mahaney believed a 42-hour schedule is a good way to retain
9 employees. It would likely be difficult to hire the additional crew necessary for this
10 schedule.
11

12 Chief Bender did consider the 42-hour shift. Considering the increases already required
13 for the Fire Department, he had hoped to find an alternative to hiring an additional crew,
14 at least for the coming year.
15

16 Mr. Hart suggested it might be worth moving slowly and learning along the way. It will
17 not be perfect. But it's easier to hire more as necessary than to eliminate positions.
18

19 Discussion on salary options ensued. Salaries are set by the Town Manager. Firefighters
20 are hourly employees and not salaried.
21

22 Manager Lunt suggested bringing to the next meeting the schedule mentioned by Director
23 Mahaney, compared to the schedule proposed. Ms. Dudman felt it wise to have several
24 options to look at. Ms. Littlefield would like some clarity on what the pay per hour
25 breakdown is for the various schedule options.
26

27 Mr. Wallace reminded the Board that the employees were hired as firefighters and are
28 now training for EMT certification. This is a significant addition to the job, with added
29 training and responsibility. He added that this is not a skillset easily found; the Town
30 will likely be looking for employees already working in the same field in other Towns.
31 Training is expensive.
32

33 Director Mahaney suggested four shifts of three employees. That would meet the goal of
34 a 42-hour schedule with the number of people the Town hoped to hire.
35

36 Chief Bender pointed out that if the wages change, a shared coverage arrangement with
37 Bar Harbor will likely not happen. Four employees per shift are required to ensure
38 effective coverage.
39

40 Finance Director Wright pointed out that anyone in Town can be classified as a salaried
41 employee and all Town employees are calculated at a 40-hour workweek.
42

43 Training budget costs are estimated; it's difficult to know how many the Town will need
44 to train. The figure presented is the cost of training per the number of potential new
45 hires.
46

1 Chief Bender hoped to promote a Lieutenant to Captain, resulting in two Fire Captains in
2 the Department. This brings Mount Desert in line with Bar Harbor, which has two
3 Captains. Mount Desert is currently paying their firefighters more than Bar Harbor.
4

5 If the employees necessary can't be hired, the Town will likely have to contract
6 firefighters. This would prove costlier than employees, and the Town would have no
7 control, other than to terminate the contract.
8

9 The hiring process has just started. It could prove difficult to hire the number of
10 employees proposed. Anyone the Town hires will likely have to travel; they won't be
11 able to afford living in Town.
12

13 Chief Bender noted Overtime in the budget has increased, averaging 3 hours per week
14 per employee in overtime. Firefighters will average 56 hours worked per week. Under
15 the Fair Labor Standards Act the Department is allowed to pay 53 hours of regular time
16 pay. The additional three hours per week are overtime. Additionally, stipends will be
17 provided for employees with higher levels of licensing. This will provide incentive to
18 pursue more training.
19

20 **Police Department:**

21 Mr. Hart asked about the Patrol Officers line item in the Police budget. Chief Willis
22 noted his own salary appears to have gone up, however Mount Desert is responsible for
23 only 40% of the budgeted amount shown. Regarding the Patrol Officer increase, a Patrol
24 Officer on light duty has returned to regular duty, this shifts his expenses back into the
25 Patrol Officer budgeted amount.
26

27 Dispatch consoles are being purchased, increasing the budget. They will be connected to
28 the Bar Harbor dispatch system. Chief Willis reported it may become difficult to staff
29 dispatch 24/7.
30

31 **VIII. Other Business** *(Addendum items may be considered at the Selectboard's discretion via majority vote to do so under Other*
32 *Business or out of order.)*

- 33 A. *Such other business as may be legally conducted*
34 No Other Business was presented.
35

36 **IX. Treasurer's Warrants**

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

| | | | |
|---------------|---------|------------|---------------------|
| Town Invoices | AP#2238 | 01/04/2022 | \$829,339.48 |
| Total | | | \$829,339.48 |

38 MOTION: Mr. Hart moved, with Ms. Dudman seconding, Approval and Signature of the
39 Treasurer's Warrant as shown above.
40

41 Motion approved 4-0.
42

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

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------|----------|------------|
| State Fees & PR Benefits | AP#2235 | 12/22/21 | \$3,209.94 |
|-----------------------------|---------|----------|------------|

| | | | |
|---------------|---------|----------|---------------------|
| | AP#2237 | 12/29/21 | \$1,365.55 |
| Town Payroll | PR#2214 | 12/24/21 | \$122,119.16 |
| Town Invoices | AP#2236 | 12/23/21 | \$0.00 |
| Total | | | \$126,694.65 |

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

3
4 Motion approved 3-0-1 (Littlefield in Abstention)

5
6 *C. Acknowledge Treasurer's School Board AP/Payroll Warrants as shown below:*

| | | | |
|----------------|-----|--|---------------------|
| School Payroll | #13 | | \$172,467.60 |
| Total | | | \$172,467.60 |

7

| | | | |
|--------------------|--|--|-----------------------|
| Grand Total | | | \$1,128,501.73 |
|--------------------|--|--|-----------------------|

8 MOTION: Mr. Hart moved, with Ms. Dudman seconding, acknowledgement of
9 Treasurer's School Board AP/Payroll Warrants as shown above.

10
11 Motion approved 4-0.


12
13 **X. Adjournment**

14 MOTION: Ms. Dudman moved, with Mr. Hart seconding, adjournment.

15
16 Motion approved 4-0.

17
18 The Meeting adjourned at 8:02PM.

19
20 Respectfully Submitted,

21
22 
23
24 Wendy Littlefield