

1

2 **Town of Mount Desert**
3 **Selectboard Meeting Minutes**

4 Monday, February 16, 2021

5 Location: Zoom Meeting

6 This Meeting was held via remote access.

7
8 SelectBoard Members Present:

9 Chair John Macauley, Geoff Wood, Martha Dudman, Wendy Littlefield, Matt Hart

10
11 Town Officials Present:

12 Public Works Director Tony Smith, Town Manager Durlin Lunt, Town Clerk Claire
13 Woolfolk Treasurer Kathy Mahar, Tax Assessor Kyle Avila, Fire Chief Mike Bender,
14 Ambulance Service Director Basil Mahaney

15
16 Members of the public were also in attendance.

17
18 **I. Call to order at 6:30 p.m.**

19 Chair Macauley called the Meeting to order.

20
21 **II. Minutes**

22 None presented

23
24 **III. Appointments/Recognitions/Resignations**

25 None presented

26
27 **IV. Consent Agenda** *(These items are considered routine, and therefore, may be passed by*
28 *the Selectmen in one blanket motion. Board members may remove any item for*
29 *discussion by requesting such action prior to consideration of that portion of the*
30 *agenda.)*

31 None presented

32
33 **V. Selectmen's Reports**

34 Ms. Littlefield noted that residents had come to her with concerns regarding the traffic at
35 the elementary school during student dropoff and pickup. Chair Macauley suggested
36 bringing the concerns directly to Police Chief Willis.

37
38 **VI. Unfinished Business**

39 **A. Re-establish the position of Director of Finance/Treasurer**

40 Town Manager Lunt reported that until 2011, there was a Director of Finance/Treasurer
41 position. The position was reduced to Treasurer when the Town was unable to find an
42 applicant who could successfully fill the role. Manager Lunt hoped to bring the position
43 back; the Town could benefit from the skillset such a role would bring. Materials
44 explaining how the position would work were presented to the Board.

45

1 Chair Macauley noted the ex officio role on the Finance Committee was not included in
2 the job description. Manager Lunt noted that role could certainly be clarified further in
3 the job description.

4
5 Manager Lunt confirmed he had reached out to MMA regarding filling the position.
6 March 5, 2021 is the deadline for the first round of Application closures.

7
8 MOTION: Ms. Dudman moved, with Mr. Hart seconding, to re-establish the position of
9 Director Finance/Treasurer at salary grade 7, effective upon the date of hire.

10
11 Manager Lunt confirmed the position posted with MMA was the position of Director
12 Finance/Treasurer.

13
14 Motion approved 5-0.

15
16 *B. Appointment of Kendall Davis to Acadia National Park Advisory Commission by*
17 *Interior Secretary David Bernhard*

18 Manager Lunt noted the appointment occurred in April 2020. The position
19 announcement was embargoed until recently.

20
21 Chair Macauley inquired about Mr. Davis' predecessor. Manager Lunt noted there were
22 nominations, but no one had been officially appointed.

23
24 No action from the Board was necessary.

25
26 *C. Approval of Fire Chief's request to amend the motion and approval to use up to*
27 *\$7500.00 from Town Office Building Reserve Account No.4050100-24570 from the*
28 *January 19, 2021 Board of Selectman's meeting to read "authorizing Fire Chief*
29 *Bender to spend up to \$7,500 to continue the review of the options for the Public*
30 *Safety Building from Fire Station Building Reserve Account No.4040300-24470 with*
31 *a balance of \$59,847.62.*

32
33 **ORIGINAL MOTION:** *Ms. Dudman moved, with Mr. Wood seconding, authorizing*
34 *Public Works Director Smith to spend up to \$7,500 to continue the review of the options*
35 *for the Public Safety Building from Town Office Building Reserve Account No.4050100-*
36 *24570 with a balance of \$123,468.00.10 Motion approved 5-0*

37
38 Mr. Wood noted the Action to be taken appeared to consist of just changing the account
39 number and authorization. Manager Lunt concurred.

40
41 Fire Chief Bender noted the money was originally intended to be taken out of the
42 Building and Grounds fund because the plan involved both the Fire Department and the
43 Police Department. Now that the project has been scaled back to include just Fire and
44 EMS, it was deemed better suited to take the funds from the Fire Department budget.
45

1 MOTION: Mr. Wood moved, with Ms. Dudman seconding, approval of Fire Chief's
2 request to amend the original Motion and Approval to use up to \$7500.00 from Town
3 Office Building Reserve Account No.4050100-24570 from the January 19, 2021 Board
4 of Selectman's meeting to read "authorizing Fire Chief Bender to spend up to \$7,500 to
5 continue the review of the options for the Public Safety Building from Fire Station
6 Building Reserve Account No.4040300-24470 with a balance of \$59,847.62, as
7 presented.

8
9 Motion approved 5-0

10
11 **VII. New Business**

12 *A. Service Groups/3rd Party Budget 2021-2022 Requests*

13 **Acadia Family Center**: No request was made.

14 **Acadian Youth Sports**: Acadian Youth Sports offers a variety of youth sports on Mount
15 Desert Island, Trenton and Lamoine. Those wishing to participate are never turned away.
16 It was noted Acadian Youth Sports missed the request deadline last year and so did not
17 request funding.

18 **Aid Society Otter Creek**: Chair Macauley reported that the Aid Society of Otter Creek
19 did not apply for money this year, nor did they apply last year. The Aid Society requests
20 funds only when a specific project is being planned for.

21 **American Red Cross/Pine Tree Chapter**: Funding received will go towards general
22 support. American Red Cross receives no state or federal funding for their services.
23 They responded to 10 disaster events in Hancock County in 2020, none of which were in
24 the Town of Mount Desert. Blood and blood product donations totaled over 1000 pints in
25 Hancock County. Antibody testing for Covid-19 is underway. Covid convalescent
26 plasma is collected, as it appears to be beneficial to those with severe cases of Covid-19.

27 **Bar Harbor Food Pantry**: Requesting \$3500.00 - Bar Harbor Food Pantry serves all of
28 Hancock County. The number of people being served has increased over the year. 48
29 Mount Desert households have been served. All funding received goes to food.

30 **Community Health and Counseling Services**: No representatives were in attendance.

31 **Downeast Community Partners**: Downeast Community Partners provides services to
32 help low-income families meet basic needs. Their request this year is lower than the
33 previous year. Their requests are a percentage based on services provided. This past
34 year fewer services were necessary for Mount Desert. Addressing food insecurity has
35 played a large role this past year.

36 **Downeast Horizons, Inc.**: Downeast Horizons serves adults and children with
37 developmental challenges. 45 individuals from Mount Desert are served.

38 **Eastern Area Agency on Aging**: Eastern Area Agency on Aging serves Penobscot,
39 Piscataquis, Hancock and Washington Counties. Eastern Area Agency on Aging assists
40 with the Meals on Wheels program and other age-related issues and challenges.

41 **Emmaus Homeless Shelter**: The Emmaus Homeless Shelter is also a food pantry and
42 offers a holiday gift program. Major interior and exterior repairs were required in the
43 past year to keep the building up and running. Emmaus has been successful keeping all
44 within the program healthy in the face of Covid.

45 **Families First Community Center**: Families First Community Center serves homeless
46 families with minor children in Hancock County. They have recently obtained their

1 occupancy and their building has six apartments ready for use. The first two families will
2 hopefully be moving in within the next two weeks.

3 **Great Harbor Maritime Museum:** Sidney Roberts Rockefeller noted that the museum
4 asked for \$5,000.00 last year for the restrooms at the museum. The request was turned
5 down due to Covid.

6 **Health Equity Alliance:** No representatives were in attendance. Town Clerk Woolfolk
7 reported that they emailed to let her know they were having trouble connecting to the
8 Zoom meeting.

9 **Hospice Volunteers of Hancock County:** Requesting \$1500.00 - Hospice Volunteers
10 provides patient care, caregiver support, bereavement support services and community
11 education and outreach. Hospice does not charge for their services or receive any
12 reimbursements from insurance. All towns in Hancock County are asked for support.

13 **Island Connections:** Requesting \$2500.00 - Island Connections is a volunteer
14 organization providing transportation services for seniors and people with physical and
15 developmental challenges. Island Connections provides the transportation for the Meals
16 on Wheels program on MDI. Over 3600 rides were provided in 2020, as well as a
17 grocery shopping program. 54 Mount Desert residents benefitted from these services in
18 2020. There is no charge for services.

19 **Island Housing Trust:** Island Housing Trust is requesting help with the Home
20 Ownership Assistance Program which provides bridge funding to year-round homebuyers
21 who are qualified for the mortgage but may not have the full downpayment.

22 **Lifelight Foundation:** Requesting \$1,000.00 - Lifelight cares for all patients
23 regardless of their ability to pay. The average cost of transport is approximately
24 \$17,000.00. 11 Mount Desert residents were transported in 2020.

25 **MDI Campfire Coalition:** Mr. Hart noted that the MDI Campfire Coalition emailed the
26 Town requesting to attend the next meeting at which 3rd party requests would be
27 discussed. Clerk Woolfolk confirmed this request was received by the Town.

28 **Mt. Desert Chamber of Commerce:** Funds requested will go towards management and
29 operation of the Town's visitor center. This past year, the Chamber worked hard with
30 other groups to assist the Town's businesses affected by the Covid-19 pandemic in a
31 variety of ways. Additionally, the Chamber became part of the Covid-19 Downeast Task
32 Force. The Chamber worked hard to ensure all business owners, employees, and visitors
33 were kept up to date on all information relating to Covid-19 and kept safe. During this
34 time the visitor center was open and received over 5,000 visitors in 2020. The
35 organization grew by 27 members this year. 92% of Mount Desert business owners are
36 members of the Chamber. Membership has expanded outside of Mount Desert, due to
37 the work the Chamber has done beyond the Town. Chamber data anticipates an increase
38 in visitors this year.

39
40 Clerk Woolfolk was praised for her work in organizing the third-party requests.

41
42 *B. Ambulance Service discussion*

43 Ambulance Service Director Basil Mahaney noted the Ambulance Service was started in
44 1938.

1 Manager Lunt noted it would be hard to picture the Town without the Ambulance
2 Service. He thanked the Service for providing ample notice of their intentions.

3
4 Director Mahaney announced the Ambulance Service will end emergency medical
5 response and care for the Town. Changeover of service to the Town is expected to occur
6 January 1, 2023. Over the next two years of transition, the Ambulance Service intends to
7 continue to provide service to the Town and Cranberry Isles. The Service will work with
8 the Town to ensure the transition is smooth.

9
10 The Service started as a volunteer service with the intent to provide free ambulance
11 service to Mount Desert. Over the years requirements and qualifications have increased,
12 resulting in paid personnel. The biggest changes have occurred over the last 10 years.
13 There is now a lack of year-round responders. Board positions are difficult to fill. The
14 numbers of people in the Ambulance Service have diminished to the point that losing
15 even one key person could result in serious problems. People are unable to volunteer like
16 they used to, particularly in the face of increased EMS licensing and training
17 requirements. Increased administrative requirements and Medicare requirements have
18 added to the burden. Ambulance Service pay has increased to this year's total of over
19 \$300,000.00 for two people on duty 24/7, 365 days a year. Director Mahaney feels the
20 difficulty in finding staff will only increase.

21
22 Exacerbating the problem is the fact that costs to maintain the Ambulance Service are
23 going up, while calls are decreasing. The Ambulance Services answers on average 300
24 calls a year. 2020 received fewer calls than the average. This equates to lower revenues,
25 despite increasing costs.

26
27 Historically private donors have been funding the Service, allowing the Ambulance
28 Service to forego asking the Town for funding. Requests for funding from the Town
29 began two years ago.

30
31 Director Mahaney noted that the Ambulance Service Attendants have stepped up in
32 trying times, including providing 24/7 attendance. They all have jobs in the community
33 in addition to their service.

34
35 A variety of alternatives have been explored, such as consolidation with another local
36 Ambulance Service. It was deemed the Town of Mount Desert has the best resources to
37 continue the service.

38
39 Of course, the possibility of a new Fire Department building and the possibility of hiring
40 additional full-time firefighters are part of the discussions. It these changes made it the
41 right time to discuss an Ambulance Service transition. It was deemed wiser to begin
42 planning now, rather than wait till the further loss of personnel creates a critical situation
43 requiring immediate response from the Town. The Ambulance Service is in good
44 standing currently, but the situation will likely deteriorate before too much more time
45 passes. By setting a "finish line" to work towards, the Ambulance Service can work
46 toward providing continued good service for the time involved. This also allows the

1 Town to set up a solid plan. The Ambulance Service has many resources and experience
2 they can provide the Town during the transition.

3
4 Ambulance Service Board of Directors President Scamp Gray agreed with Director
5 Mahaney's assessment. Mr. Gray noted there are a few key people keeping the service
6 going – Director Mahaney is one of those key people. Losing any of these key people
7 would put the Ambulance Service at a great disadvantage. The goal was to keep
8 providing good ambulance service to the Town. This is the only way to ensure the
9 Service's continued work.

10
11 Chair Macauley hoped the Ambulance Service would work on providing assistance as a
12 transition moves forward. Director Mahaney assured the Chair they would do so.

13
14 MOTION: Ms. Dudman moved, with Mr. Hart seconding, directing Town Manager
15 Lunt, Fire Chief Bender, and Police Chief Willis to begin discussions with the Northeast
16 Harbor Ambulance Service concerning the transfer of emergency medical response and
17 care to the Town of Mount Desert by January 1, 2023.

18 Motion approved 5-0.

19
20 *C. Mount Desert Regional High School Scholarship & Stipend Recommendations*
21 Manager Lunt noted this was the annual scholarship award and the same amount of
22 money as awarded in past years.

23
24 MOTION: Mr. Wood moved, with Mr. Hart seconding, to transfer the amounts listed for
25 the Mount Desert Regional High School Scholarship and Stipend, as presented.

26 Motion approved 5-0.

27
28 *D. As described in Public Works Director Tony Smith's February 11, 2021 memo to*
29 *Town Manager Durlin Lunt, consideration of Director Smith's request to purchase a*
30 *Honda commercial grade snow blower from Greenway Equipment Sales in Ellsworth*
31 *at a cost of \$3,059 using funds from the Public Works Equipment Reserve account*
32 *number 4050100-24500 with an unencumbered balance of \$286,005 leaving a*
33 *balance of \$282,946 remaining in the account if the snow blower purchase is*
34 *approved*

35 Manager Lunt noted this purchase would help clear sidewalks too narrow for the
36 sidewalk plow, and too large for hand shoveling.

37
38 John Adams noted that he lives year-round on Rock End Road. The sidewalks there are
39 not plowed the full length of the sidewalk. He was wondering if perhaps the sidewalk
40 could be plowed further down the length of that road. There are year-round residents
41 living in that area. Public Works Director Smith agreed to do so.

42
43 MOTION: Mr. Wood moved, with Ms. Littlefield seconding, approval of Director
44 Smith's request to purchase a Honda commercial grade snow blower from Greenway
45 Equipment Sales in Ellsworth at a cost of \$3,059 using funds from the Public Works
46 Equipment Reserve account number 4050100-24500 with an unencumbered balance of

1 \$286,005 leaving a balance of \$282,946 remaining in the account if the snow blower
2 purchase is approved, as presented.
3 Motion approved 5-0.

4
5 *E. Consideration of including an article in the 2021 town meeting warrant asking the*
6 *voters to authorize the costs associated with professional engineering services for*
7 *design through bidding, IT and communications needs in the amount of \$357,500.00*
8 *for development of a new public safety building to house fire department and EMS*
9 *personnel and equipment as described in Fire Chief Mike Bender's memo to Town*
10 *Manager Durlin Lunt dated February 10, 2021*

11 Manager Lunt noted that a line item of the amount was inadvertently left out, Item D, for
12 the amount of \$25,000.00 for contingency. This brings the total cost to the stated
13 \$357,500.00.

14
15 Chair Macauley asked if the cost included project management. Director Smith
16 explained that the price was for design through bidding services only, in order to
17 determine an actual construction cost. There was no project management included in this
18 cost. Project Management would be added when any project goes to Town Meeting, a
19 year from now, to approve construction of the design.

20
21 Mr. Wood asked if the changes presented by the Ambulance Service would affect the
22 needs of the building. Fire Chief Bender thought there might be some subtle change to
23 floorplans but the size of the building would not change. If the Ambulance and Fire
24 combine into one service, there is the possibility of eliminating office space.

25
26 Director Mahaney noted that through his discussion of the building with Fire Chief
27 Bender, he was aware there was a possibility that the Ambulance Service might change.
28 His requests were generic requests applicable and necessary to the service, regardless of
29 how it was managed moving forward.

30
31 Ms. Dudman noted that in past discussions Board members have reported hearing of
32 reservations about the new building from residents. There seem to be a number of
33 residents not in favor of a new fire station. The only way forward is to put the issue on
34 the Warrant and let the voters decide.

35
36 It was clarified that this year only building design and engineering was being proposed.
37 Building construction was not being voted on at this year's Town Meeting.

38
39 Mr. Adams opined that the Town should be determining if the voters want the building
40 before spending money on a design. There may be lower numbers in attendance at the
41 Town Meeting due to Covid. Mr. Adams noted summer residents have complained to
42 him. He questioned whether this was the year to begin such a project and felt discussion
43 should be delayed.

44
45 Fire Chief Bender believed that if the issue is allowed to proceed to the voters at the
46 Town Meeting for discussion, that is when it will be determined whether the building is

1 wanted or not. If the design and engineering study is voted down, the project is
2 essentially dead. Regarding timing, Chief Bender noted he had been working on this
3 issue for 17 months. The project, if it moves forward, will not be completed for two
4 years. Additionally, the Ambulance Service as it now stands is ending in two years.
5 Delaying the process could impact the services provided to the Town.

6
7 Ms. Dudman felt for these reasons it should be on the Warrant so the voters can decide.

8
9 Chief Bender noted that at this time, the only expense requested to be on the Warrant was
10 the cost of the design and engineering studies. Chair Macauley clarified that the study
11 must be done in order to ascertain the cost of construction which can then be put before
12 the Town.

13
14 MOTION: Ms. Dudman moved, with Ms. Littlefield seconding, to include an article in
15 the 2021 town meeting warrant asking the voters to authorize the costs associated with
16 professional engineering services for design through bidding, IT and communications
17 needs in the amount of \$357,500.00 for development of a new public safety building to
18 house fire department and EMS personnel and equipment as described in Fire Chief Mike
19 Bender's memo to Town Manager Durlin Lunt dated February 10, 2021, as presented.

20
21 Firefighter Chapin McFarland noted how disheartening it was to hear so much criticism
22 for this project. The Town approved the cost of the Main Street improvements, which
23 had nothing to do with public safety. He did not understand why there was so much
24 concern about improvements proposed for public safety.

25
26 Ms. Dudman hoped her words didn't sound like a lack of support. A number of Board
27 Members have had residents approach them with concerns over the building and the cost.
28 As elected officials, the Board must consider and put forward the feelings and concerns
29 of the residents. Public Safety is important to all. She felt Chief Bender can put forward
30 a good argument at Town Meeting.

31
32 Mr. Wood strongly recommended that when the proposal is presented at Town Meeting,
33 the arguments in favor of the project are well put together.

34
35 Ms. Littlefield assured Mr. McFarland that she was in full support of public safety in the
36 Town.

37
38 Mr. Hart felt this was exactly why the discussion needs to be brought to Town Meeting.
39 While attendance may not be high at Town Meeting due to Covid, in reality, attendance
40 is never high at Town Meeting. People should be attending Selectboard meetings to hear
41 these discussions as well. Mr. Hart was supportive of putting the item on the Warrant for
42 Town Meeting.

43
44 Motion approved 5-0.

1 **VIII. Other Business**

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

3 There was no other business.

4
5 **IX. Treasurer's Warrants**

6 A. *Approve & Sign Treasurer's Warrant AP2146 in the amount of \$113,247.35*

7 MOTION: Mr. Wood moved, with Ms. Dudman seconding, approval and signature of
8 Warrant AP2146 in the amount of \$113,247.35, as presented.

9 VOTE:

10 Geoff Wood: Aye

11 Martha Dudman: Aye

12 Matt Hart: Aye

13 Wendy Littlefield: Aye

14 Chair John Macauley: Aye

15 Motion approved 5-0.

16
17 B. *Approve Signed Treasurer's Payroll, State Fees, & PR Benefit Warrants AP2144,*
18 *AP2145, PR2106 and PR2119 in the amounts of \$4,005.57, \$11,048.14, \$120,522.79*
19 *and \$104,086.84, respectively*

20 MOTION: Ms. Dudman moved, with Mr. Wood seconding approval of signed
21 Treasurer's Payroll, State Fees, & PR Benefit Warrants AP2144, AP2145, PR2106 and
22 PR2119 in the amounts of \$4,005.57, \$11,048.14, \$120,522.79 and \$104,086.84,
23 respectively, as presented.

24 VOTE:

25 Martha Dudman: Aye

26 Geoff Wood: Aye

27 Matt Hart: Aye

28 Wendy Littlefield: Abstains

29 Chair John Macauley: Aye

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

31
32 C. *Acknowledge Treasurer's School Board AP/Payroll Warrants 09 and 17 in the*
33 *amounts of \$22,499.47 and \$83,651.83, respectively.*

34 MOTION: Mr. Wood moved, with Ms. Littlefield seconding, acknowledgement of
35 Treasurer's School Board AP/Payroll Warrants 09 and 17 in the amounts of \$22,499.47
36 and \$83,651.83, respectively, as presented.

37 VOTE:

38 Geoff Wood: Aye

39 Wendy Littlefield: Aye

40 Martha Dudman: Aye

41 Matt Hart: Aye

42 Chair John Macauley: Aye

43 Motion approved 5-0.

44
45 **X. Adjournment**

46 MOTION: Ms. Littlefield moved, with Ms. Dudman seconding, adjournment.

*Town of Mount Desert Selectboard
Minutes of February 16, 2021*

10

1 Motion approved 5-0.

2

3 Meeting adjourned at 8:37PM.

4

5 Respectfully Submitted,

6

7

8

9 Wendy Littlefield