Select Board Meeting Minutes
May 18, 2026 at 6:00PM
Town office

Attendees.

All Select Board members were present: Jane Conrad, Steve Cartwright, Randy Elwell, Bryan Morse, and Tammy Willey

Others present: Brandon Leppanen, Irene Ames, Erin Dent, Katie Crandall

And via Zoom: Loreen Meyer, Jeanine O'Brien, Ken Oelberger, Dianne Oelberger

Regular Meeting. Ms. Conrad called the meeting to order at 6:00PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Adjustments to Agenda. An item was added to discuss whether to send a letter of support on behalf of the St. George Community Development Corporation for a grant they're applying for.

Declaration of Conflicts of Interest. None.

Minutes from Last Meeting. With a motion from Mr. Cartwright and a second from Mr. Morse, the minutes from the Select Board meeting on May 4th were unanimously approved as written by the four board members who were in attendance at that meeting (Ms. Conrad, Mr. Cartwright, Mr. Morse, and Ms. Willey).

Communications. Ms. Conrad received a question from Katie Crandall, who asked about the Town's health insurance. Ms. Conrad confirmed that it's obtained through the Maine Municipal Association. Additionally, Ms. Crandall expressed interest in serving on the Budget Committee. She also asked about the status of the Town's audit. Mr. Leppanen explained that Ms. Ames has been calling the auditor regularly to check on his progress, but he keeps saying it should be done soon. In December, the Town gave him all the materials he requested and a team of 4 auditors was here reviewing the Town's finances.

Mr. Cartwright received a communication from a resident who's handicapped that the ramp to Drift Inn Beach is too steep. Mr. Leppanen commented that it would require a major project to build a permanent, more accessible ramp, which could possibly be done in conjunction with repairing the Drift Inn Road culvert, if the Town decides to do that. Mr. Elwell and Ms. Conrad asked whether the Town owns the beach. Mr. Leppanen explained that the advice from the Town lawyer is that the Town has been operating as though it's Town property without complaint for so long that if there were a complaint in the future, the Town may have a good argument that it's Town property.

Mr. Elwell commented that he doesn't think it's worthwhile to put in a new ramp, especially since it's not yet decided what will be done with the culvert. Ms. Willey agreed and commented that it would cost too much. It was decided that Mr. Leppanen will revisit the possibility of a permanent, more accessible ramp when the Drift Inn Road culvert project is more certain.

Warrant. Ms. Ames explained that in the Treasurer's Warrant the check for Pacific Skiff Northwest is for the harbormaster's boat. This temporarily overdraws the reserve by $12,203.84, until the new fiscal year begins. The boat hasn't arrived yet, but it's ready a couple months earlier than expected. The Select Board agreed that this temporary overdraft was acceptable under these circumstances and approved the Treasurer's Disbursement Warrant in the amount of $254,040.69 was approved by consensus.

Public Comments. Katie Crandall commented that the Town should look for a new auditor since the audit is 3 years behind, which is a concern if the Town or school needs to borrow money. She explained that she's looked into the issue, since all audits submitted to the State are available online, and only 26% of town audits *are not* current. For towns that have audits submitted by the same auditor as St. George, only 35% *are* current. She stated that she understands the auditor's reasons for being behind, but she doesn't think it justifies it.

She commented that while she understands not wanting to disrupt the 2023 audit—especially since the Town may owe money for what's been completed so far—she feels as though we aren't going to get caught up with the current auditor, and if we wait much longer to look for another auditor, we won't be able to find someone, as the busy season for most auditors is the end of June. She made calls (without specifying the town she's from) to a few auditors who are bigger and more up-to-date on their clients and heard from them that they aren't having the same issues as St. George's current auditor, and they may have availability depending on the time of year.

Ms. Conrad commented that she doesn't think it's in the taxpayers' best interests to find a new auditor for 2023 if the current auditor is mostly done and we would owe Mr. Brewer for the work already completed. A crew of 4 from his office spent days in the Town office in December. Mr. Morse asked how far along the auditor is on 2023 and whether the 2024 audit can begin before 2023 is completed. Ms. Ames stated that she believes he is mostly done with 2023, and Mr. Leppanen stated that he thinks 2023 needs to be completed before beginning 2024. Mr. Leppanen clarified that the Town put out a request for proposals from auditors several years ago, and the current auditor was the only one who submitted a proposal. All Board members agreed that a certified letter would be sent to the auditor requesting an update on his progress. The Board also directed Mr. Leppanen to proceed with issuing an RFP for the next audit (2024 assuming 2023 is soon completed).

Additionally, Mr. Oelberger commented on behalf of another resident (not in attendance) that at the sharp turn on Snows Point Road they have almost had an accident twice because of a lack of visibility of oncoming traffic. The resident is concerned that it may get worse once there is more traffic to Snow's Point Lodge, and they're wondering if anything can be done. Mr.

Leppanen stated that the foliage there has already been cut back as much as possible, and Mr. Elwell added that doing so was already a controversy with the landowner. Ms. Conrad asked whether a mirror could be installed to help see oncoming traffic, but Mr. Leppanen and Mr. Elwell commented that they don't think that would help. Mr. Leppanen will look into whether anything else can be done.

Discussion and Action Items.

Action item: Election of Select Board Chair and Vice Chair. With a motion from Ms. Willey and a second from Mr. Elwell, all voted in favor of electing Ms. Conrad as chair of the Select Board and Mr. Cartwright as vice chair.

Action item: Decide on committee liaison assignments. With Ms. Carr's departure from the Select Board, the Planning Board, Resilience Committee, Scholarship Committee, and Board of Appeals need new Select Board liaisons. Mr. Elwell stated that he likely wouldn't be able to attend all of the Resilience Committee meetings—since they've been more frequent with the two major projects they're working on—but he could do the Planning Board and the Scholarship Committee. Ms. Conrad volunteered to take on the Board of Appeals and the Resilience Committee. Ms. Conrad will send the list of committee members and chairs to all Select Board members, which will likely need to be updated after July 1st, when several committee members' terms expire. Mr. Elwell will serve as liaison to the Planning Board and the Scholarship Committee and Ms. Conrad to the Board of Appeals and the Resilience Committee. Mr. Morse will serve as liaison to the Emergency Services Committee; all other liaisons remain the same.

Action item: Approve updated Select Board expenditure warrant authorizations. Ms. Conrad explained that disbursement warrants for municipal education costs, state fees, and payroll each need to be signed by only one Select Board member—more than one can sign them, but only one is needed. She stated that she believes that all of the current Select Board members could be authorized to sign any of those three warrants alone except that Mr. Elwell cannot sign the warrant for municipal education costs alone since he works for the school, which could present a conflict of interest.

Ms. Conrad and Mr. Leppanen further explained that previously the Select Board had been approving monthly school disbursements of a flat one-twelfth of the yearly cost. However, last year they realized that by law the Select Board is supposed to review warrants of actual expenditures from the school and approve only monies needed to cover those expenditures, which is the process that will be followed beginning July 1. Mr. Leppanen clarified that the School Board approves the school's expenditures and the Select Board may rely on their approval so long as it comports with what voters approved in the budget; the Select Board is then asked to approve disbursements of tax dollars to the school.

With a motion from Mr. Morse and a second from Mr. Cartwright, all voted in favor of the following: any Select Board member is authorized to alone sign disbursement warrants for state fees and for payroll; any Select Board member except Mr. Elwell is authorized to alone sign

disbursement warrants for municipal education costs. Mr. Elwell may still sign a disbursement warrant for municipal education costs at Select Board meetings where other members review and approve the disbursement.

Action item: Annual appointment of town manager roles (town clerk, road commissioner, etc.) With a motion from Mr. Cartwright and a second from Ms. Willey, all voted to approve the following appointments of town manager roles to Mr. Leppanen: town manager, road commissioner, treasurer, clerk, local health officer, and deputy registrar of voters. The appointment papers were not yet ready to sign, so Select Board members will come into the office later in the week to sign them.

Action item: Approve the Select Board meeting calendar for upcoming fiscal year. Action taken: All Select Board members agreed that they will continue meeting every other week for 2 hours per meeting. They will skip the holidays of Labor Day, Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples' Day, and Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The meeting dates will be posted on the Town website.

Action item: Nomination of Christa Elwell to serve on Cemetery Committee. Because Mr. Elwell is no longer able to serve on the Cemetery Committee due to his election to the Select Board, the Cemetery Committee has an open seat. With a motion from Ms. Willey and a second from Mr. Cartwright, all voted in favor of appointing Derek Jay (currently an alternate) to be a full member of the Cemetery and appointing Christa Elwell to be an alternate. The committee still needs one more alternate.

Action item: Nomination of Rebecca Huetner to full member on the Emergency Services Committee. Ms. Huetner is currently an alternate, but as Alane Kennedy recently resigned from the committee, a full member seat is open. With a motion from Ms. Conrad and a second from Mr. Morse, all voted in favor of appointing Rebecca Huetner to be a full member of the Emergency Services Committee.

Action item: consider providing the Conservation Commission with a letter in support of an application for a grant to develop trails on the former scouting property near the transfer station. Mr. Oelberger explained that the Conservation Commission is applying for a grant from the Maine Trails Program. Part of the application requests letters of support for the project, and the Commission would like a letter from the Select Board in addition to letters from the school, the CDC, Blueberry Cove, and others.

Ms. Conrad asked whether the Commission ever received information from the Tenants Harbor Water District about whether they could put trails on their land. Mr. Oelberger responded that they have not, and the water district has said for more than a year that they can't give an answer until they finish their master plan. The Commission recently sent another request for information from the water district because they could receive more points in the grant's scoring rubric if the trail connects the scouting property to the transfer station. There has been no response yet.

All Board members voted in favor of sending a letter of support for the Conservation Commission's application for a grant from the Maine Trails Program. Ms. Conrad will draft the letter.

Action item: Decide whether to send a letter of support on behalf of the St. George Community Development Corporation for a grant. Ms. Conrad explained that the CDC is applying for a community development grant from the Machias Savings Bank that would support the CDC's community cupboard and resource navigation services. All voted in favor in sending a letter of support. Ms. Conrad will draft and send the letter.

Discussion item: Update on Spectrum Generations services in St. George & letter re funding denial. Ms. Conrad explained that since the town meeting, at which Spectrum Generations's request for funding from the Town was voted down, she has reviewed the funding request letter that they sent. The letter included estimates of how many St. George residents they provided services to.

To attempt to obtain accurate information on Spectrum's services in St. George, Ms. Conrad reached out to Making Community Happen (which runs Meals on Wheels in this area), Peta vanVuuren (of Rockland District Nursing), and Sandra Roak (who delivers for Meals on Wheels) and Mike Felton. They clarified that yes, Meals on Wheels is delivering to some St. George residents, as Spectrum Generations stated, but if St. George had authorized the proposed funding to Spectrum Generations, none of that money would funnel through to pay for the local Meals on Wheels. While Spectrum does provide respite grants for caregivers, and Ms. Conrad talked to a St. George resident who received one of those grants, that grant application was handled by talking to a Spectrum representative in Augusta, not locally.

Ms. Conrad stated that she thinks it's accurate to say that Spectrum Generations provides services for very few people in town. She added that this is a significant issue because State and Federal funds for seniors are spent through Area Agencies on Aging like Spectrum and the area agencies in other parts of Maine do provide significant services. St. George and Knox County seniors are not receiving the services they should be under this federal program.

Ms. Conrad suggested that the Board send a letter explaining that the town rejected their funding request and why. The Board agreed and Ms. Conrad will send such a letter.

Upcoming events:

- Memorial Day Parade, 9 a.m. - starts at TH Baptist Church; ceremony follows at American Legion Hall / post office parking lot

The Board decided that they would walk together in the parade, except those members who are already walking with other organizations or driving emergency vehicles in the parade.

Town Manager's Report. Mr. Leppanen reported that Scholarship Committee meetings are about to take place to review scholarship applications. Additionally, an organizational meeting

for the Board of Appeals is in the process of being scheduled—they'll need to elect a new chair, as they do every July. Additionally, the term of the current chair, Steve Miller, expires this July.

Town staff are preparing for the summer season. Trash barrels are out, porta potties will be out soon, and the ramp is in at the beach.

Mr. Cartwright asked whether the public parking sign for the town office parking lot has been ordered yet. Mr. Leppanen responded that it hasn't, but he will do that.

Ms. Conrad asked when the kiosk will be put up at the Port Clyde landing. Mr. Leppanen replied that it will be put up sometime this spring.

Mr. Morse asked whether there's a public parking sign at the Port Clyde landing. Mr. Leppanen replied that there isn't one currently, but he'll order one for there, too. He added that he's hesitant to put up signs so as to not disrupt the natural appeal of the area or make signs less effective, but he's happy to put up signs if it solves a problem. Mr. Morse commented that he doesn't think the landing necessarily needs a sign, he's just concerned that people may not know it's a public lot. Mr. Cartwright commented that he's in favor of a sign at the Port Clyde landing. Mr. Leppanen agreed to put one up.

Mr. Elwell asked whether the town website states where all the public parking lots are. Mr. Leppanen responded that it doesn't currently, but he will add a public parking page to the Discover St. George page.

Additionally, Mr. Leppanen explained that the St. George fire department responded to the lumber mill fire in Searsmont. All who responded attended a crisis debrief where they reviewed the operations and were able to talk to counselors. Mr. Elwell added that having continuing access to such opportunities is important.

Ms. Oelberger commented that she wonders if first responders could be paid for the time they spend seeking such support after an incident. Mr. Leppanen and Mr. Elwell clarified that they do get paid for the debrief after an incident, but they aren't sure whether they paid for time spent attending additional support services. Ms. Conrad thanked Ms. Oelberger for raising this suggestion.

Committee Reports.

The Cemetery Committee met on May 6th. They're looking into putting in a new flagpole at Seaside Cemetery and painting the Seaside Cemetery sign. The sign is aluminum, which is tricky to paint, so they will start by polishing the sign and painting the gates. They're also looking into options for nicer gates, but in the meantime they will improve the existing ones.

The Emergency Services Committee met on May 5th. Ms. Conrad shared that Peta vanVuuren from the Rockland District Nursing Association came and talked about the joint effort of RDNA

and the St. George Community Paramedicine Program to figure out how to connect with each other such that patients can receive services longer than they are now. For example, after an operation patients may be prescribed follow-up care from the community paramedicine program or RDNA, but they often need more visits than insurance will cover. This collaboration between RDNA and community paramedicine is not likely to cost the town anything additional. RDNA provides services to patients in their homes as long as they need it for a very reasonable out-of-pocket fee. This collaboration would be a great benefit to residents needing home nursing visits for longer than insurance would cover them.

The Committee also discussed mental health support for first responders following traumatic incidents. This has been discussed for EMTs, but has not yet been discussed with respect to fire fighters. Currently, first responders have such support sessions available to them after an incident, but it's not automatic, and during the Committee meeting Dr. Lowry pointed out that people are often hesitant to admit they need help. EMS Chief Katie Jacob looked into various options, some of which involve a contract with a company to provide counseling/debrief sessions and some of which involve getting training for local people who would then do it going forward. This is estimated to cost around $5000-7000 per year. If the Committee decides to pursue this, Ms. Jacob will put together a recommendation sheet for next year's budget process. Mr. Elwell agreed that this is a good idea and that responders are more likely to avail themselves of these services if they are required after each such incident and the responder does not have to ask for them.

Ms. Willey added that there will be a Historical Society program on May 21st about Eliza Jane Steele, who started the Rockland District Nursing Association.

The Parks & Recreation Committee met on May 12th. They talked about creating a sports scholarship to send kids to sports camps in the summer. They plan to call it the Billy Stuart Scholarship Foundation because Mr. Stuart gave seed money a few years ago.

The seniors' puffin cruise is on June 16th. People can sign up by calling the town office.

The Committee is hoping to replace the basketball hoops at Collins Park now that it's paved.

There are still some issues with Oceanside Little League, who aren't communicating enough with the Parks & Rec director, Ashley Geel. Mr. Leppanen explained that he and Ms. Geel met with OSLL before the season started and felt good about the progress on the issues, but since then they have not felt that this progress has lasted. OSLL would prefer that the St. George kids be pooled in with all of the other kids in the league instead of having our own team. Mr. Morse added that St. George did try that in the past, but it was very difficult for St. George parents to travel off the peninsula for practices and for non-St. George kids to travel to St. George. Parks & Rec is looking into alternative little leagues.

Finally, the Committee is looking for new members as terms end in July, though it's not yet known how many of the current members plan to stay.

The Resilience Committee met on May 6th and discussed the order of the list of vulnerable roads that was decided in the Sebago Technics study completed in 2024. They want to propose moving Drift Inn Road down the list, but Ms. Conrad feels that the Select Board should wait to discuss this until after the June 25th public meeting about Cold Storage Rd and Factory Rd, since this meeting will bring more public attention and understanding to the resilience challenges surrounding town roads. There was general agreement on this among the Board members.

Additionally, for context Ms. Conrad explained that at a previous Select Board meeting it was discussed that the Select Board has more statutory responsibility to make decisions about roads than previously thought, and they can't defer all decisions to the road commissioner, Mr. Leppanen. Mr. Leppanen stated that this isn't necessarily how he interpreted the statute, and he asked whether there are additional road matters that the Select Board should be voting on beyond deeming something a hazard. Ms. Conrad stated that her understanding of the statute is that deeming something a hazard is just one type of roads-related responsibility that the Select Board has, but they should seek clarification on this from the Town attorney. Mr. Cartwright commented that he would think that day-to-day road operations are the responsibility of the road commissioner, but any major projects, such as rebuilding a road, would need to go before the Select Board. Ms. Conrad stated that she would review and share relevant portions of the MMA manual on roads.

The Open Space Committee discussed the survey. There are several responses already, and paper copies are available around town, including at the town office, the library, both post offices, and the CDC. The survey is also available online: https://forms.gle/JMsrZV8tMioyD3No9

Executive Session. Ms. Conrad made a motion to enter into an Executive Session to consider and act on the following tax-acquired properties pursuant to 1 M.R.S. 405 (C) since premature disclosure of competitive bids might prejudice the town's bargaining position:

- House & real property located at 47 Ridge Rd
- Lot 10 Ridge Rd from property above
- 50 Cline Rd house and property

Mr. Cartwright seconded the motion and all were in favor. The regular meeting adjourned at 7:25PM. The board entered into an Executive Session.

At 8:20 the Select Board concluded its executive session and returned to open session.

Actions taken regarding tax acquired properties: Ms. Conrad moved that the board accept the highest offer on the 47 Ridge Rd property as written and to authorize Mr. Leppanen to sign the contract on behalf of the Town. Mr. Elwell seconded the motion, which passed 5 – 0.

Ms. Conrad moved that the board submit a counteroffer on the only offer to Map 208-Lot 10 Ridge Road striking the last three sentences of paragraph 5, removing the obligation of the Town to spend money to fix any possible title defect, as recommended by the town's attorney,

and if the buyer accepts this modification of the terms, that Mr. Leppanen be authorized to sign the contract on behalf of the Town. Mr. Morse seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Morse moved that the Town reject the only offer on the property on 50 Cline Rd in the amount of $60,000 and to have our realtor reduce the listing price. Mr. Elwell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Adjournment. Mr. Elwell moved that the meeting be adjourned. Mr. Morse seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.