Select Board Meeting Minutes
May 4, 2026 at 6:00PM
Town office

Attendees.

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

Others present: Brandon Leppanen, Irene Ames, Erin Dent, Ken Oelberger, Georg Haubs, Gary Plante, Christa Elwell, Susy Ellis, Greg Soutiea

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

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

Adjustments to Agenda. One announcement was added at the beginning of the discussion items.

Declaration of Conflicts of Interest. None.

Minutes from Last Meeting. With a motion from Ms. Willey and a second from Ms. Conrad, the minutes from the Select Board meeting on April 27th, 2026 were unanimously approved with two small changes to correct names.

Communications. None.

Warrant. The Treasurer's Warrant in the amount of $96,063.54 was approved by consensus.

Public Comments. None.

Discussion and Action Items.

Ms. Conrad announced that the annual report was dedicated to Ken Oelberger for his outstanding volunteer service with the Conservation Commission and previously the Budget Committee. Those present expressed their gratitude for all he has done for our town.

Action item: consider authorizing the Road Commissioner to send a letter regarding removal of hazard(s) in the right of way on Ripley Creek Rd (should the Board find that vehicle(s) left in the right of way pose such a hazard) pursuant to 23 M.R.S. 2701. Mr. Leppanen explained that the Town lawyer advised that the Select Board should decide whether a condition exists in a townway that creates a hazard, and if so, the Board should provide the road commissioner with written notice that he should take action. Mr. Leppanen clarified that it's likely not a hazard to

have one car parked on the road (which was the case as of the time of this meeting), but it becomes hazardous when cars are parked on both sides or when a vehicle stops to unload (which occurs at times).

Ms. Conrad stated that her interpretation of the Town lawyer's advice is that if the road commissioner or CEO brings evidence of a hazard to the Select Board, they can vote to take action, but they can't delegate the determination of a hazard to the road commissioner. Therefore, she believes the Select Board would need to have a special meeting at the time that a hazard is present to make that determination. The other Select Board members agreed with this interpretation.

Ms. Carr asked whether the letters from Mr. Brackett and Ms. Cunningham had been sent, as discussed at the last Select Board meeting. Mr. Leppanen confirmed that they had. She stated that the various violations and alleged violations on that property should be viewed as a whole, as well as the town's response to them collectively.

Since the Ripley Creek Rd situation isn't a hazard at this time, Ms. Conrad suggested that the Board could instead direct Mr. Leppanen to write a letter that a vehicle will be towed if it becomes a hazard.

Mr. Leppanen stated that this process makes sense to him. He added that he met with the property owner, and she's aware of the cars in the roadway and of the fact that the cars need to be moved over. He clarified that those cars alone would not prevent an emergency vehicle from driving down the road, but he believes it's fair to send a letter that says that there have been times when the road was blocked.

Ms. Carr moved that Mr. Leppanen send this letter, and Mr. Cartwright seconded the motion. Ms. Willey asked whether any of the cars parked along the road cause an issue with shoreland zoning. Mr. Leppanen responded that these specific cars do not constitute a junkyard issue, as people are allowed to have cars within the shoreland zone if they are registered, which these are. He clarified that this issue of cars in the road is not part of the junkyard issue. Ms. Willey commented that she had just witnessed the road being blocked because of another car parked on the side of the road. Mr. Leppanen clarified that even if he sends a letter requesting that the cars be moved off the road, they could comply by moving the cars just barely off the right of way, and there would still be a blocking issue if a car were parked on the other side of the road.

Action taken: All Select Board members voted in favor of the motion that Mr. Leppanen send a letter requesting that the cars be moved off the road.

Update on letters sent to property owner on Ripley Creek Rd. regarding unpermitted junkyard. Mr. Leppanen stated that, as discussed at the last Select Board meeting, Mr. Brackett sent a letter to the property owner stating that if the property isn't completely cleaned up by May 29th, a consent agreement will follow. Additionally, the property owner met with Mr. Leppanen, and she was also given a copy of the letter directly. Mr. Leppanen clarified that if the property is

brought into compliance, some things may still remain, such as rakes or other typical yard items. He commented that the property owner is aware of the issue and seems committed to getting it cleaned up.

Discussion regarding possible budget amendments from the floor at the May 12 town meeting as a result of higher fuel costs due to war in the Middle East and recent increase in County service fee for dispatch services. At the last Select Board meeting, there was discussion about proposing an increase to the software line in the budget, since it appeared that software cost significantly more than anticipated this past year. At this meeting, Mr. Leppanen reported that software did not actually cost more than budgeted—rather, there was a discrepancy with how it was tracked. This past year, the annual website fee was tracked under "software", but in the new, proposed budget it's tracked under "internet." Therefore, no increase to the software line is needed.

However, Mr. Leppanen explained that there are other potential amendments that could be made on the floor at the town meeting, as discussed at the last meeting. The fuel budget lines need to be adjusted because of the increase in fuel prices since the budget was created. For example, diesel cost around $4 per gallon when the budget was developed, but it now costs around $6 per gallon. Mr. Leppanen proposed a 50% increase in the fuel line for each department. Ms. Conrad asked whether 50% was enough of an increase. Mr. Soutiea asked whether all town vehicles use diesel and what the total increase in the budget would be with a 50% increase. Mr. Leppanen responded that some vehicles use gas, but most use diesel, and the total increase would be $13,500. He added that reimbursed mileage is calculated at a fixed rate, so that isn't affected.

Ms. Ellis commented that she's comfortable with a 50% increase. Mr. Cartwright agreed and added that if fuel does end up costing more, the town might manage that by reducing spending in other lines. Mr. Soutiea also agreed, adding that it's a relatively small portion of the budget. There was general agreement among the Select Board members that they were comfortable with 50%.

Ms. Conrad commented that it needs to be decided who will propose the amendments from the floor, and she asked whether supporting materials should be handed out. Mr. Leppanen encouraged that Budget Committee members propose and explain the amendments, and he stated that it should be proposed like any other floor amendment, without supporting materials, because it will still be open for discussion. He added that the amendments will have to be proposed individually for each affected department. Decision: The Budget Committee members and the Select Board members agreed on this overall approach.

Mr. Leppanen added that an increase to county dispatch fees also needs to be proposed since there is a new number in the draft county budget. These fees are split between two departments (fire and EMS), so an amendment will need to be proposed for each department. This proposed amendment would change the dispatch line from $45,500 to $68,411 in each department, resulting in an overall increase from $91,000 to $135,822.

Mr. Haubs commented that the county's budget committee is not voting on their proposed budget until two days after the St. George town meeting. Ms. Conrad asked whether there was any reason to believe that it wouldn't pass with the new numbers that Mr. Leppanen described. Mr. Haubs responded that these proposed numbers are based on the actuals from last year plus 6%.

Decision: There was agreement among the Select Board and Budget Committee members that the amendments to the county dispatch fee lines will be proposed in the same manner as the amendments to the fuel lines.

Since amendments to the paving line are not being proposed but the cost of paving may also be higher than expected, Ms. Ellis asked whether less paving would be done in the next year if it does cost too much. Mr. Leppanen confirmed that this is the case. He added that he has reached out to contractors, and the increase does not seem as high as he was previously concerned about.

Discussion & Action deferred: The Select Board did not discuss bids on tax-acquired properties because bids are still coming in. Mr. Morse asked how long the Board would wait for additional bids and commented that it seems like it could go on indefinitely. Mr. Leppanen responded that if offers continue to go up, we would continue to wait, but realistically he doesn't see that happening. He added that we cannot legally set a deadline point because we are required to obtain the highest possible value for the previous owner, but the real estate agent is tracking interest in the properties, and eventually there will be a point when interest dies down and we should decide among available bids.

Upcoming events:

- School & Select Board elections May 11, polls open 8 – 8; absentee ballots available now
- Annual town meeting/vote on town budget May 12, 7 p.m. school auditorium
- May 14, 7 pm presentation at town hall re Emerald Ash Borer & proposal to inoculate some trees along Fort Point Trail. Two members from the University of Maine Department of Forestry to give information, and the Conservation Commission will give an update on their efforts to develop a potential plan for inoculation.
- May 30th - Walk at Fort Point Trail for residents to see which trees are being marked for inoculation or to be cut down. [see attachment]

Mr. Leppanen asked whether the Conservation Commission has started cutting down ash trees along the Fort Point Trail. Mr. Oelberger replied that they have, as trees near the trail that are not inoculated against the emerald ash borer will eventually need to be cut down because they become a hazard after infestation. Mr. Leppanen asked whether it's possible that the trees are being cut down several years earlier than needed. Mr. Oelberger responded that this isn't likely,

based on how close to St. George the emerald ash borer has been found. He added that eventually the cut down trees will be replanted with other types of trees.

Additionally, the Memorial Day parade will occur as usual with a ceremony afterwards in the Tenants Harbor post office parking lot. Anyone interested in being in the parade can reach out to Mr. Leppanen, who will connect them with the parade organizer.

Town Manager's Report. Mr. Leppanen reported that floats went in on May 1st at both the Port Clyde and Tenants Harbor town landings.

Committee Reports.

The Planning Board met on April 28th. They accepted an application for the Dip Net food truck in Port Clyde. It's moving 4.5 feet towards the Squid Ink building, so there will be a narrower alleyway. This is being done because Colby is doing work on the docks behind the food truck.

The Harbor Committee met on April 30th. They welcomed Scott Lord as the newest member. They're still looking for a chair. Most of the meeting was spent discussing a request from the Tenants Harbor Boat Yard regarding the mooring ordinance, which currently allows 5 moorings per group or individual with more allowed up to the harbormaster's discretion. The Committee decided that it wasn't appropriate to amend the ordinance at this time, but they decided there should be some guidance for the harbormaster's discretion. The compromise for now (until a harbor plan is developed) is that any group or individual over the 5 mooring cap can get on a second waiting list. After the harbormaster calls everyone on the primary waiting list, he will call people on the second waiting list, and they'll be offered the option to lease the mooring on a non-renewing, yearlong basis. After that year, it will go back through the lists. Mr. Leppanen and Mr. Cline are going to type up the policy and put it on the town website. It will not result in any increased liability for the town.

Mr. Leppanen clarified that a harbor plan is not yet in development, but the Committee is interested, and it is being looked into, including potential grants. The goal would be to assess the amount of space in the harbors and how many moorings can fit. Some towns incorporate resilience considerations into their harbor plans, but in St. George this is already largely being covered in the resilience plan.

A subgroup of the Resilience Committee met on April 29th with some members of the South Thomaston resilience committee. This subgroup is now in the next stage of the resilience plan: investigating options for actions. They considered and will continue to consider potential actions, benefits, general timeframes and costs, possible funding sources, and who would need to be involved.

Additionally, there will be a public meeting on June 25th, 5:30-7:30PM at the town office regarding the 4 design alternatives proposed by Sebago Technics for Factory Rd and Cold Storage Rd.

The Open Space Committee has not met, but their survey is out in the post offices, the general store, the library, the CDC, and the town front office. They will also have a table on election day, St. George Days, and various other events throughout the summer.

The Select Board thanked Ms. Carr for her service to the Select Board.

Adjournment. Mr. Cartwright moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Morse. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 6:59PM.

HERRING GUT
COASTAL SCIENCE CENTER

TOWN OF ST. GEORGE
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Emerald Ash Borer Prevention in St. George

Saturday, May 30th @10AM
Fort Point Trail
947 River Rd, St. George



Join Herring Gut Coastal Science Center and the St. George Conservation Commission for a hands-on opportunity to learn about the important conservation efforts at Fort Point Trail! The Conservation Commission has been working hard to prevent the spread of the invasive Emerald Ash Borer beetle to preserve the trees along the trail.

Learn how to identify ash trees on your property, look for signs of infestation, and how to protect against the spread of invasive insects!

Colleen Teerling, an **entomologist with the Maine Forest Service** (MFS)**,** will be joining us to answer your questions. She has worked for the MFS for 17 years with much of her work focused on invasive insects, with biological control playing a central role.

Register for this FREE program at herringgut.org