

**Harpswell Board of Selectmen**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday April 23, 2026**  
**Harpswell Town Office**  
**APPROVED 5-21-26**

**5:00 PM:** The Select Board entered into Executive Session at 5:00PM Pursuant to 1 MRS 405(6)c with Town Attorney Re: Cable Franchise Negotiations.

This meeting was held in the Select Board Meeting room at the Town Office and was available remotely by Zoom. Instructions were included on the published agenda and on the Town's website. Links to a video recording of the meeting are also available on the Town's website.

**Selectmen Present:** Chairman Kevin E. Johnson; Selectman David I. Chipman; Selectman Matthew Gilley.

**Staff Present:** Kristi Eiane, Town Administrator; Terri Gaudet, Treasurer & Deputy Town Administrator; and Mike Drake, Fire Administrator.

**Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance:** Meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM.

1. **Adoption of Agenda:** The Select Board agreed to move the Harpswell Aging at Home (HAH) Memorandum of Understanding topic earlier in the agenda to accommodate an attending representative. This topic was originally listed as #7 and was moved to Item 5.5.
2. **Public Comment:** Don Miskill, Mitchell Field Steward, provided updates:
  - **Boat Launch:** Final work is complete; paving of the causeway is scheduled for Monday. The parking lot is largely finished. Loaming is underway.
  - **Administration Building:** An estimate for final finishing work has been submitted to staff and recommendations will follow.
  - **Master Plan Update:** The Committee has begun an extensive review of the original 2007 Master Plan, the 2019 Update, and supporting studies (natural resources, infrastructure, waterfront). Meetings were held with Town staff, fishermen, and representatives of the Mitchell Field Trust. Public meetings will be scheduled across Harpswell to gather input. A second round of public meetings will follow after revisions are made to original drafts. Minutes of all meetings are available.

Deputy Town Administrator Terri Gaudet asked what process would be followed to promote maximum input from the community. Given the importance of Mitchell Field as an asset to the community, it was important that the process be viewed as inclusive and open. Administrator Eiane suggested video recordings of the meetings be considered.

Mary Ann Nahf, Bailey Island, expressed concerns about accessibility to key Committee information and meeting documentation.

3. **Select Board Announcements:** Selectman Gilley warned residents that a fraudulent email targeting Planning Board applicants was going around. Residents were advised to verify any payment requests with the Town Office. Selectman Chipman reminded the public that the annual John Gilliam Roadside Cleanup was underway, with the main event on Saturday. Volunteers may pick up supplies at local stores and return for pizza at noon.

**4. Town Administrator's Report:** Administrator Eiane addressed the following topics:

- **Volunteer Appreciation Week:** Harpswell's multitude of volunteers were thanked, with specific call-outs to those involved with roadside cleanup, concession stand operations at Trufant-Summerton Field, and the Fire & Rescue services.

- **Hiring Updates:** 1) Garden Coordinator: Emily Bell-Hoerth was unanimously approved by the Select Board at \$22/hour (grant-funded); 2) Harbor Master: Applications were received for the open position and interviews will be conducted as part of a formal Board Meeting – since two members of the Select Board had expressed interest in participating in the interviews; 3) Recycling Center & Transfer Station: Year-round and seasonal positions remained open; 4) Town Lands Monitor: Applications have been received and interviews are forthcoming.

**5. Consent Agenda:** Selectman Gilley moved the Consent Agenda, including: a) approval of Select Board Meeting Minutes for 4-2-26 and 4-9-26; b) authorization of Accounts Payable Warrant 17 totaling \$312,889.01; c) authorization of Payroll Warrant PR16 totaling \$33,422.75. Motion was seconded by Selectman Chipman and unanimously approved 3-0.

**5.5 Memorandum of Understanding with Harpswell Aging at Home:** Mike Drake, Fire Administrator, asked the Select Board to review and approve a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Harpswell Aging at Home regarding the Town's durable medical equipment program. The Town has been working with HAH to make donated medical equipment available to residents who need it. The Town takes possession of equipment (ie. wheel chairs) and stores it pending placement in the community. HAH volunteers assist in distribution and inventory management. The process is intentionally low-barrier and often times the equipment is not returned. Under the updated MOU, a simplified receipt from the resident will replace the old loan agreement. Selectman Chipman made a Motion to approve the MOU. Selectman Gilley seconded. Motion was approved unanimously 3-0.

**6. Vision Appraisal Revaluation Update: Steve Whalen, Vision Appraisal, provided a comprehensive update on the Town's revaluation project:**

- **Inspection Progress:** 96%-97% of all residential properties were now listed, meaning they had all been visited at least once. Second-call letters were being mailed in phases to the "3 fingers" of Harpswell to homeowners where interior inspections had not occurred. The expectation was that approximately 25% of these letters would generate response. A third mailing would then go out. In addition, approximately 700 building permits remained to be reviewed, along with 180 island properties not previously available during winter months. Selectman Gilley offered boat services to Vision representatives to help expedite access to the islands.

- **Timeline:** New values will be delivered to the Assessing Agent by June 17, followed by mailings to residents. The letters will inform residents of their right to 'contest' the new figures via a hearing in the next 30 days. These hearings can be done either by phone or in person at the Town Office. Historically, Vision typically experiences about a 50% split between phone and in-person requests. The hearings would be completed by late July, resulting in final values by the end of that month.

- **Discussion:** Debbie Turner, Assessing Agent, asked why the new values would not be ready until June 17 when by contract they were due by June 1. Whalen indicated that his reading of the contract identified June 17, but that his team could certainly expedite matters to hit the June 1 date.

Administrator Eiane emphasized how important it would be to hit all deadlines, and asked if there were any concern about hitting the late July completion date. Whalen expressed confidence that they could meet the dates and that they were looking to place additional staff in place to do so. When asked how

many residents he expected to set up appointments for hearings on their new valuations, he indicated that typically they experience 5% of the total.

Selectman Chipman asked what the residents' letters would look like, and suggested that they see both the old and new valuations side by side. Whalen said that he would supply some examples of letters used in neighboring communities and was happy to accommodate the side-by-side comparison of values.

When asked what valuations might look like in general, Whalen indicated that most properties would see increases in valuation purely due to the direction that real estate values had changed across New England. Only properties with demolitions or major losses may decrease.

Assessing Agent Turner asked about progress with commercial property owners. Whalen indicated that they had received very low response to an 'income-expense' survey mailed to these taxpayers. Vision had augmented their information on accounts by sourcing data from publicly available sources on the internet.

- 8. Recommendation Re: Short Term Disability Insurance Policy:** Deputy Administrator & Treasurer, Terri Gaudet, asked the Select Board to consider canceling the Town's Short Term Disability insurance policy effective on May 1. Maine's Paid Family & Medical Leave (PFML) is opening up for benefits as of that date, providing up to 12 weeks of paid leave, including intermittent leave. Short Term Disability would only now apply if PFML time was fully exhausted and another qualifying event were to occur. The historical usage of STD was extremely low to begin with. Selectman Chipman made a Motion to cancel the Town of Harpswell's Short Term Disability policy effective May 1. Selectman Gilley seconded. Motion was approved unanimously 3-0.
- 9. Place Town Vehicle up for Bid:** Deputy Administrator Gaudet asked the Select Board to place one of the Town's vehicles up for Bid and to establish a minimum bid. The vehicle has been used by the Assessing office in the past, but will require significant repair work. The Bid would be published with a statement of these issues. The Select Board and Staff discussed bid pricing done in the past on vehicles to help arrive at a figure for the current vehicle. Selectman Gilley made a Motion to place the vehicle up for sale with a minimum bid of \$6,000. Selectman Chipman seconded. The Motion was approved unanimously 3-0.
- 10. Orr's Island Bridge Wharf Leases & Policy:** Deputy Administrator Gaudet asked the Select Board to clarify its standards and procedures for vetting applicants for leases of the two wharfs at the Orr's Island Bridge. Selectman Gilley emphasized the importance of ensuring that only individuals/entities involved in a Marine-related commercial business should be considered and that priority be placed first on Harpswell residents. There was general concern that the current policy placed the 'cart before the horse' by only asking applicants to show proof of marine-related business after their application was approved. After further discussion, the Select Board unanimously agreed to make changes to the current policy that would establish the following: Applicants would: a) pay a \$10 fee with their application; b) provide proof of a commercial marine-related business prior to consideration; c) acknowledge responsibility for working with the current leaseholders regarding existing wharf infrastructure – in the event of their winning the lease lottery; d) be informed that the lottery process would be conducted so as to prioritize applications from Harpswell residents first, then proceeding to those non-resident applicants with historical affiliation to the Town.
- 11. Committee Appointments:** Deputy Administrator Gaudet presented the Select Board with a slate of volunteers for appointment or re-appointment to existing *Town Committees*. The Select Board unanimously approved the slate, which is included in the **attached file**.

The Select Board also unanimously approved a Mission Statement for the *Emergency Services Building Committee*, as well as a slate of individuals to serve on the Committee for the coming year. The members

will include: Kevin Johnson, Select Board Chair; Chief David Mercier, Harpswell Neck; Chief Benjamin Wallace, Cundy's Harbor and Orr's/Bailey Islands FD; Nelson Barter, Harpswell Neck Fire Department Volunteer/Representative; Aaron Despres, Cundy's Harbor Fire Department Volunteer/Representative; Mason Smith, Orr's/Bailey Islands, Volunteer/Representative.

**12. Sign June 9, 2026 Warrant:** Administrator Eiane asked the Select Board to approve and sign a Warrant for a Special Town Meeting called for Harpswell, Maine on June 9, 2026. Selectman Gilley made a Motion to approve the Warrant. Selectman Chipman seconded. The Warrant was unanimously approved and signed by the Select Board members; for notice and posting to Town of Harpswell residents qualified to vote. A Public Hearing regarding the Warrant was scheduled for May 7 during the regularly scheduled Select Board Meeting.

**13. 2026 Salary & Wage Adjustments:** Administrator Eiane asked the Select Board to approve recommended salary adjustments for Town Staff. The increases for specific individuals started with an across-the-board 2.8% hike. Additional raises were earmarked for job roles identified in a market salary survey as being compensated below area standards. Finally, additional raises were targeted to individuals with over five years of service to the community. The aggregate increases are in line with what voters approved at Town Meeting. If approved, the raises would be retroactive to January 1, the start of the Town's fiscal year. Selectman Chipman made a Motion to approve the recommendations of Town Staff. Selectman Gilley seconded. Motion was approved unanimously.

**14. 2026 Lease Rates for Pammy's Ice Cream Parlor:** The lease renewal for Pamy's Ice Cream Parlor was discussed. The draft agreement presented by Town Staff proposed an increase in the monthly fee of 2.7%. Selectman Gilley proposed a Motion holding the fee in line with the present rate. Chairman Johnson seconded. The Motion to hold the rate the same was unanimously approved.

**15. Appointment of Officials:** The following *Official Appointments* were approved unanimously for the term May 1, 2026 through April 30, 2027: Timothy R. Clark of Harpswell, Addressing Officer; Michael Drake of Bath, Emergency Management Agent & Fire Warden; James F. Bebarski of Harpswell, Animal Control Officer; Timothy J. Vail of Harpswell, Tree Warden; David S. Mercier of Harpswell, Fire Chief – Harpswell Neck; Benjamin A. Wallace Jr. of Harpswell, Fire Chief Cundy's Harbor & Fire Chief Orr's/Bailey Island; Kristi K. Eiane of Harpswell, General Assistance Administrator; Katie Neal of Harpswell, General Assistance Administrator; Greg Coyne of Harpswell, Deputy Harbormaster; Marc Yankowsky, Shellfish Conservation Warden; Todd McGee, Shellfish Conservation Warden; Ronald Ponziani of Harpswell, Road Commissioner; Frank Hilton of Harpswell, Deputy Fire Warden.

**16. Other Business:** Administrator Eiane reminded the public that the annual Drug Take-Back Day at the Town Offices was occurring on April 25<sup>th</sup> from 10AM to 2 PM.

**17. Adjournment:** Meeting was adjourned at 7:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brian Hubbard  
Recording Secretary  
w/AI assistance

Attachments: 2026-2027 Town Committee Appointments  
[Attachments are available at the Town Clerk's Office or by email at [harpswell@town.harpswell.me.us](mailto:harpswell@town.harpswell.me.us)]