Minutes of the
Mason's Island Fire District
Annual Meeting
Saturday, May 23, 2025 at 10:00 am
Mason's Island Yacht Club

I. Call to Order

The Annual Meeting of the Masons Island Fire District ("MIFD") was called to order at 10:05 am. Scott Parry stated that the meeting would be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order and reviewed portions of the rules applicable to participation in the meeting and the protocol for voting: voice, show of hands, paper ballot options.

II. Reminder of Eligibility to Vote

Scott also explained the rules for determining eligibility to vote.

III. Establish a Quorum

Scott asked eligible voters to raise their hands. Clerk Ricardo Kleinbaum determined that a quorum of voters was present.

IV. Opening Remarks

Scott introduced the other officers of the Fire District, including Kevin Riley, Vice President (1st year), Ethan Tower, Treasurer, (13th year), Ricardo Kleinbaum, Clerk, (3rd year). He also introduced MIFD's Directors: Jeff Miceli (4th year), Catherine Deichmann (5th year), Kristin Foster (12th year), Nancy Taylor Ross (1st year), Tax Collector, Bill Taylor (15th year), and David Ludwig (Tick Committee). Tom Giola was absent.

Scott proceeded to describe the agenda of the meeting and asked for any questions concerning the agenda. No questions were asked.

V. Approval of the Minutes of the 2024 Annual Meeting

Scott stated that the Minutes of the 2025 Annual Meeting held on May 23, 2025 had been posted on the Masons Island Property Owners Association/Masons Island Fire District website (the "MIPOA/MIFD Website").

A motion was made and seconded to accept the 2025 Annual Meeting Minutes with no corrections. The motion passed with no discussion.

VI. Report of the President

Scott noted that his report had previously been posted on the MIPOA/MIFD Website. He summarized the report.

(Refer to the document posted on the MIFD website.)

VII. Report of the Secretary

The Report of the Secretary was previously posted on the MIPOA/MIFD Website. He summarized the report.

A motion to accept the Report of the Secretary was made and seconded. The motion passed with no discussion.

VIII. By Law Change

Ricardo discussed recent Board discussions regarding the need for remote meeting access for Board members. He summarized the key statutory and regulatory requirements in this area, and the Board's motion at the April 2026 monthly meeting to modify MIFD by laws to allow the following option as cited in Robert's Rules of Order Section 97-99.

C. A speakerphone in the meeting room to allow members who are not physically present to participate by telephone.

Ricardo then made a motion to amend the "Meetings" section of the MIFD by laws as follows:

Meetings of the Board shall be conducted in person, and may provide for Directors outside of the physical quorum to participate through use of telephonic equipment or internet.

A short discussion followed on the rationale for the measure, with two attendees Teri and Robert Van Winkle, recommending that MIFD enable participation in all scheduled public meetings via zoom to the general public.

The motion was seconded and carried.

IX. Report of the Treasurer

Ethan Tower presented the Report of the Treasurer and referred to a document which included a Financial Summary of Budgets & Accounts and Covered Facilities Budgets & Actuals.

Ethan identified the key results from the 2025/26 financials as circulated during the meeting. Tax revenues were slightly ahead of budget reflecting the increased Grand List, above trend returns on money market investments, and the contribution from the Mason's Island Homestead Association. Roads maintenance numbers were in line with expectations, while tick control outlays were lower due to the deferral of one of the applications to November 2026 in the upcoming fiscal year. Traffic control and Safety should come in slightly under budget, according to Ethan.

Ethan explained that as a result of higher than expected revenues and outlays, MIFD will post a $138K surplus of which $13K will be allocated to the reserve fund for catastrophe and the remainder to the reserve fund for roads bringing it up to roughly $245K. The goal is to build up the catastrophe fund to $100K, according to Ethan.

Scott made a motion to accept the report of the Treasurer and a second motion to move $12,819 of the surplus from the current fiscal year to the Reserve Fund for Catastrophe, and to move the remaining surplus to the Reserve Fund for Roads.

Both motions were seconded and carried with no discussion.

X. Report of the Fire & Safety Committee

Jeff Miceli described the updates in the fire services contract. He explained the process of negotiating a new agreement and the rationale for extending the contract from five to ten years. He also mentioned impact of changes in fire department staffing (decline in volunteers and need for four fire people) on the service agreement. (Details reported in earlier monthly meeting reports.)

Jeff summarized the incident report for the past fiscal year: 44 total incidents of which 60% were related to emergency services. Non emergency calls (false alarms, fire works monitoring) accounted for 28% of the period incidents.

Jeff then provided an update on the Mason's Island Emergency Preparedness initiative. He described the improved communications protocol with the Mystic Fire Dept. He urged all residents to sign up to Stonington Alerts.

XI. Report of the Shoreline Road Protection Task Force

Kristin Foster presented the final report of the Shoreline Road Protection Task Force, as posted on the MIFD website. She announced the dissolution of the Task Force after six years of coordination with the Town of Stonington and grant providers. She explained that the "rocks in the water" component of the program terminated largely as a result of MICO's decision to no longer grant access to its property as an access point for program execution.

XII. Report of the Tick Committee

The Report of the Tick Committee was posted on the MIPOA/MIFD Website. David Ludwig presented the report on behalf of the Committee.

David summarized the program schedule and reported an increased incidence of tick bites during the early Spring, especially affecting canines. Scott noted that the second fall synthetic treatment has been changed from a granular application to a liquid spray. It will be applied later this year, in November, in order to minimize impact on pollinators, according to Scott.

XIII. Report of the Traffic Committee

The Report of the Traffic Committee was posted on the MIPOA/MIFD website.

Catherine Deichmann noted more than 64,000 vehicles came through the traffic control booth from mid May until Columbus Day, an approximate 8,000 increase over the 2024 season. About half the vehicles consisted of vehicles with green stickers; 26% of vehicles were en route to Enders Island, according to Catherine. She also requested that all decal requests be completed by the applicants from the online form.

XIV. Report of the Facilities (Roads) Committee

In Tom Giola's absence, Bob Domurat (retiring MIPOA Roads Committee rep.) provided a summary of the Facilities Committee report on line with the following points:

- No significant changes in overall road conditions following the annual assessment.
- Six right of way permit applications remain active.
- Completed Construction of a storage facility for traffic cones and other road related materials.
- Painted crosswalk lines and added five new stop signs.
- Solicited competitive pricing for tree removal.
- In 2026/27, half the District's catch basins need to be cleaned and assessed at a cost of $5,000 to keep water off roads.
- Soliciting bids from alternative snow retrieval contractors.

Scott made a motion to use $74,200 from the Reserve Fund for roads to Resurface Hickory Ledge Mallard Rd, and the west side of Osprey.

The motion was seconded and approved after addressing a question from Fran Hoffman to widen the road. Bob noted that no structural changes were intended to the roads, only asphalt replacement.

XV. Report of the Nominating Committee

The Report of the Nominating Committee was posted on the MIPOA/MIFD Website.

Kevin Riley presented the Report of the MIFD Nominating Committee for 2026. The Committee included Kristin Foster from the MIFD Board, and as required by the Bylaws, three non-Board members: Amy Estabrook, Gail Lane, and Tory Christian.

Name	Position	Term Ending
Kevin Riley (2nd year)	President	2028
Anne Navin (1st year)	Vice President	2029
Nancy Taylor Ross (2nd year)	Treasurer	2028
Ricardo Kleinbaum (4th year)	Clerk	2027
Scott Parry (7th year)	Director	2027
Kristin Foster (12th year)	Director	2027
Catherine Deichmann (5th year)	Director	2028
Ethan Tower (13th year)	Director	2029
Adam Duczynski (1st year)	Director	2029
Bill Taylor (15th year)	Tax Collector	2027 (a one-year term)

Kevin noted the following changes:

- Three Board members terms expire at the end of June 2025.
- Jeff Miceli will be retiring after three years of service.
- Tom Giola will be retiring after two years of service.
- Kevin Riley has agreed to serve as President for the remaining two years of his first term.
- Nancy Taylor-Ross has agreed to serve as Treasurer for the remaining two years of her first term.
- Scott Parry has agreed to serve out Tom Giola's term ending in 2027.
- Ethan Tower has agreed to serve on the Facilities Committee for a three year term ending in 2029.
- Ricardo Kleinbaum has agreed to continue as Secretary/Clerk, term ending in 2027.
- Kristin Foster has agreed to continue serving as Director, term ending in 2027.

- Catherine Deichmann has agreed to continue serving as Director, term ending in 2028.
- Anne Navin has agreed to join the Board as Vice President for a three year term ending in 2029.
- Adam Duczynski has agreed to join the Board for a three year term ending in 2029.
- Bill Taylor has agreed to continue to serve as Tax Collector, for a renewed one year term ending in 2027.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the report of the Nominating Committee and to elect the persons so nominated to those positions. The motion passed with no discussion.

XVI. Approval of the Annual Budget

Ethan provided a review of the upcoming 2026/27 budget which was circulated to the meeting attendees. He noted that the mill rate would remain constant, projecting $710K of revenues though the expansion of the grand list could result in higher receipts, aside from a contribution from the Mason Homestead Homeowners' Association for ticks and traffic.

Ethan expects a $41K increase in the roads budget to cover higher payments for snowplowing, $5K for cleaning half the catch basins, and $24K to hire a roads manager. Payments to the Mystic Fire Dept will increase 9% to $414K, while tick program and traffic control outlays will fall somewhat, according to Ethan.

Ethan anticipates a $51K surplus, a significant decrease over previous years. While this will result in a smaller allocation to the roads reserve, Ethan believes it will remain adequate at approximately $250K. Inflation and other contract costs could prompt a 1/10th point increase in the mill rate next year.

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A motion was made and seconded to approve the budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026 as presented and to keep the mil rate at 3.4.

The motion was made and seconded with no discussion.

XVII. Unfinished Business - None

XVIII. New Business -

Rufus asked MIFD directors whether any Board member directed Deborah Morrisey to remove the placement of floral arrangements at the MICO-owned traffic control booth. It was agreed that Deborah should continue with her generous contributions.

Robert Vanwinkle of Nauyaug Road* made a motion to allow MIFD members to attend meetings remotely. The motion was seconded.

A discussion then followed on the utility and practicality of making zoom presentations available to the public. Teri Van Winkle described the possible technology to allow remote participation from the general public. Ricardo noted that the Board had considered multiple options for introducing electronic communications to monthly meetings. He stated that utilizing zoom type equipment poses challenges to the Board in carrying out a successful meeting where the Secretary is required to identify all participants. Kevin added that the Board would investigate expanded remote access in the future in view of the logistical challenges at this time. A taxpayer noted that motions need to be presented at least 21 days in advance to taxpayers before a formal vote.

The motion was deemed null and void and tabled until the next annual meeting.

** To the extent that the individual making a motion is neither liable to the Mason's Island Fire District for taxes, nor a registered voter living in the Mason's Island Fire District, s/he is ineligible to make motions or vote at MIFD meetings per Robert's Rules of Order. MIFD by laws stipulate compliance with Robert's Rules of Order.*

XIX. <u>Next Annual Meeting</u>

Scott reported that the next Annual Meeting will take place on Saturday May 26, 2027 at 10:00 am.

Adjourn

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and approved, and the meeting accordingly adjourned at 11:59 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Ricardo Kleinbaum – Clerk, Mason's Island Fire District