

**Masons Island Fire District Monthly Meeting
May 20, 2025 – 5:30 PM
Mason's Island Yacht Club**

1. Call to Order

- a. President Scott Parry called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm. Board members Jeff Miceli (Vice President), Ricardo Kleinbaum (Clerk), Ethan Tower (Treasurer), Bill Taylor (Tax Collector) Audrey Brown, Catherine Deichmann, Kristin Foster, Tom Giola, Fran Hoffman, and Bob Domurat (MIPOA Roads Committee rep) were present. Also attending was Gail Lane.

2. Agenda Additions/Deletions/Changes

- a. New Business – Ricardo requested a discussion on identifying a MIFD website back up.

3. Approval of Previous Minutes –

- a. A motion was made and seconded to approve the April 15 monthly meeting minutes with no changes. A motion was made and seconded to approve the May 13 special meeting minutes with no changes.

4. Treasurer's Report – Ethan Tower

- a. Ethan anticipates overall budget and road maintenance targets should be met, inclusive of the new speed bumps ordered by Rufus.
- b. Ethan also reported that the sloped rock revetement project is expected to total slightly over \$120K excluding the \$8K bond owed from the town, repayable within a year after project completion.

5. Committee Reports

a. Fire & Safety Committee – Jeff Miceli

- i. Jeff noted 3 total events in April and 45 for the past fiscal year of which 73% were EMS-related. In previous years, events ranged from 30 to 35.
- ii. Jeff provided an update on the MI Emergency Plan initiative. He summarized the key points of the emergency desktop drills led by Captain Schneider with teams at the Stonington Police station earlier this month.. Bob Domurat suggested that MIFD may want to have an on call tree repair person, and identify a location for equipment storage.

b. Tick Committee – Dan Ludwig, Fran Hoffman

- i. Dave recommended skipping the second of three Talstar (bifenthrin) treatments. A discussion followed on how to communicate the decision to taxpayers and whether households scheduled for a June bifenthrin treatment would be offered a cedar oil option.
- ii. Scott then introduced the following motion:

Move to cancel the summer Talstar (bifenthrin) tick treatment application, and move up the summer and fall TickKillz (cedar oil) treatments to May/June on the recommendation of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station's wildlife biologist.

The motion was seconded by Tom Giola and was carried with all Board members voting in favor.

A discussion followed on whether the Board should take a position on the anticipated motion from taxpayer Gail Lane to suspend the residential portion of the tick treatment program. Ethan noted that the widely circulated motion text included an erroneous reference to the mill rate.

Ethan then introduced the following motion:

Move to notify taxpayers that the Board of the Mason's Island Fire District (MIFD) does not support Gail Lane's anticipated motion on terminating the residential component of the tick treatment program because the mill rate of 0.27 related to the program, as specified in the motion, is incorrect.

The motion was seconded by Scott Parry and carried with six Board members voting in favor and three abstentions. The vote followed a discussion on the process of deriving the mill rate in each year's budget.

c. Living Shoreline Road Protection – Kristin Foster

- i. Kristin detailed the grant process, match funding levels and prospects for successful grant awards under the National Coastal Resiliency Fund application. She explained that the Town of Stonington submitted a pre-proposal grant for the National Coastal Resiliency Fund on May 6, and that by mid June it would be known whether there would be an invitation for a full proposal for the “rocks in the water” revised pilot project.
- ii. Kristin noted that the application would comprise a 25% match for the \$491K of total construction costs. She reminded the community that there is no certainty that the application would be accepted, though the likelihood of acceptance is enhanced for a “pipeline project” with two past grants.
- iii. In anticipation of the grant application prospect, Kristin recommended a rollover of the \$75K remaining from the \$195K funds approved by taxpayers for shoreline protection at the 2024 annual meeting, and approval from taxpayers to allocate an additional \$45K from the roads reserve to cover the potential match fund estimate of \$120K.

- iv. A discussion followed on whether the annual meeting budget vote should include shoreline projection funds. Board members considered whether it remained prudent to allocate funds in the 2025/26 budget for the pilot project, given Mason's Island Company's ("MICO") recent notification to withdraw permission for a living shoreline project. MICO has expressed reservations earlier this year about the project's potential, based on the indeterminate success of the Fenwick-Hepburn dune marsh restoration project, according to Bob.
- v. The Board considered the merits and uncertainties regarding the Living Shoreline Plan (risks of losing grant application momentum and future erosion), and also cited the deferral of road repairs, as voted at the April monthly meetings. Scott stated he would make the motion at the annual meeting after the Committee report to utilize up to \$120K from the roads reserve for the rocks in the water component. Ethan agreed to present the annual budget inclusive of the shoreline funding. If approved, road repairs and improvements of Hickory Ledge, Mallard and Yacht Club Road would be deferred to the following fiscal year.

d. Traffic Control - Catherine Deichmann

- i. Catherine noted the guards' return for the season, and installation of the port-a-potty sanitary station.
- ii. Scott asked for a \$500-\$600 budget allocation to install a removable cedar barrier around the port-a-potty, as promised to the owners across the street.
- iii. A discussion followed on the responsibility of distributing the new Enders Island stickers requested by Father Tom. The Board recommended that Father Tom, or someone on Enders Island, should hand them out.

e. Nominating Committee – Catherine Deichmann, Ethan Tower

- i. Catherine suggested inviting the nominated new Board members, Nancy Ross and Kevin Riley to the June meeting.
- ii. If elected, Nancy would train to assume the Treasurer function, according to Ethan.
- iii. A decision to recess the monthly meetings will be decided at the June meeting.

f. Facilities Committee – Tom Giola, Bob Domurat

- i. Scott reported that he is still waiting for a decision from the residents of East Forest Road regarding the future of the landmark, oak tree. (Refer to April monthly meeting minutes for details.) Bob noted that Eversource remained available to take down trees presenting risks to power lines at no cost.
- ii. Scott stated that after the presentation of the Facilities Report at the annual meeting, he would make two motions: 1) In conjunction with Rufus Allyn's retirement as Roads Manager, give the Board the ability to amend the 2023 Road and Recreational Facilities Maintenance Reimbursement Agreement with MIPOA to enable MIFD to appoint the Facilities Committee to act in the capacity of the Roads Manager and 2) Approve revisions to the Ordinance re Permits to Work or Excavate in or Under MIFD-Managed Roads.

g. Unfinished Business – Catherine Deichmann, Annual Meeting

- i. Catherine recommended printing paper ballots for the Shoreline and Tick Program motions.
- ii. A discussion followed on voting eligibility consistent with Robert Rules of Order and MIFD by-laws.

h. New Business – Ricardo, MIFD Website Management

- i.** Ricardo cited the need to identify a back up to Lou Allyn who currently posts MIFD meeting agendas and minutes. He agreed to meet with Lou to identify alternative resources. Bill suggested circulating a notice to the community, soliciting volunteers.

Next Meeting – June 17, 2025, 5:30 PM

Adjourn

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and approved, and the meeting accordingly adjourned at 7:46 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ricardo J. Kleinbaum – Clerk, Masons Island Fire District