

**Minutes of the
Masons Island Fire District
Annual Meeting
Saturday, May 28, 2022 at 10:00 am
Masons Island Yacht Club**

The Annual Meeting of the Masons Island Fire District ("MIFD") was called to order at 10:04 am by President Ethan Tower. In attendance were Officers Ethan Tower (President), William Taylor (Treasurer), Thomas Cooke (Clerk), and Board members Catherine Deichmann, Kristin Foster, David Krupp, John Parry, and Scott Parry. Roads Manager Rufus Allyn was also present. Board Member Bart Chamberlain and Tax Collector Liaison Alex Ellison were not present.

Mr. Tower thanked Commodore Halsey and the Trustees of Masons Island Yacht Club for the use of the club for the meeting. He 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. Mr. Tower also noted that voting on motions would be done by voice, with voters saying "aye" when in favor of a motion and "nay" when opposed to the motion. If the result of voting is uncertain, a vote will be taken by a show of hands with tellers Dave Krupp and Catherine Deichmann counting the votes.

Clerk Tom Cooke determined that a quorum of voters was present.

Opening Remarks

Mr. Tower introduced MIFD's current Officers and Directors. He proceeded to describe the agenda of the meeting and asked for any questions concerning the agenda. No questions were asked.

Approval of the Minutes of the 2021 Annual Meeting

Mr. Tower stated that the Minutes of the 2021 Annual Meeting held on May 29, 2021 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 dispense with the reading of the 2021 Annual Meeting Minutes. The motion passed.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the 2021 Annual Meeting Minutes. The motion passed.

Report of the President

Mr. Tower stated that his report had previously been posted on the MIPOA/MIFD Website. He highlighted several important issues facing the Fire District, including:

- Adoption of revisions to MIFD's ordinance requiring property owners to submit permits for building driveways and setting technical standards for driveway work, bringing the ordinance in line with the Town of Stonington's comparable ordinance;

- Proposed drainage improvements at the bottom of Yacht Club Road; and
- Recommendations from GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc. (“GZA”) endorsed by the Shoreline/Road Protection Task Force to address shoreline erosion along Chippechaug Trail just north of the Allyn’s Alley dock, including creation of a “living shoreline” to protect the road.

Report of the Secretary

Mr. Cooke reported that the MIFD board met eleven times and that there was a quorum at all meetings. All required filings were made in a timely fashion, including notice for this Annual Meeting which was published in accordance with the By-Laws in The Day on May 5, 2022. Mr. Cooke stated that Agendas for MIFD are posted by the Town of Stonington’s Clerk’s Office, and that agendas and a schedule for future meetings will continue to be filed with the Town Clerk. Minutes of meetings are posted on the MIPOA/MIFD Website.

Mr. Tower asked for a motion to accept the report of the Secretary. A motion was made, seconded, and passed.

Report of the Treasurer

Mr. Taylor’s report was posted on the MIPOA/MIFD Website. He reported that the financial statements for 2020-2021 have been reviewed by Garvey Steele, MIFD’s independent accountants. Copies of the review are available upon request. Mr. Taylor provided an overview of MIFD’s finances, noting that MIFD is projected to have an excess of \$46,562 at the end of the fiscal year. The Board is recommending that \$10,000 of the excess be added to the Reserve Fund for Catastrophe and that the remaining balance be added to the Reserve Fund for Roads. Taking this action would result in a Reserve Fund for Catastrophe of \$44,681, and a Reserve Fund for Roads balance of \$89,405.

Mr. Tower asked for a motion to accept the report of the Treasurer. A motion was made, seconded, and passed.

Mr. Tower next asked for a motion to move \$10,000 of the Excess Funds from the current fiscal year to the Reserve Fund for Catastrophe, and to move the remaining Excess Funds to the Reserve Fund for Roads. A motion was made, seconded, and passed. Upon questioning, the Board reported that its goal for the Reserve Fund for Catastrophe is a balance of \$100,000.

Report of the Roads Committee

Mr. John Parry described the contents and purpose of the ordinances with respect to Permits to Work or Excavate in or Under MIFD-Managed Roads. He also described the accompanying Technical Standards and Permit Applications ordinance. Mr. Parry noted that the Town of Stonington had adopted a version of these ordinances in 1987 and that the Town adopted revisions to these the ordinances last year, primarily to update insurance requirements. Mr.

Parry explained that the purpose of the proposed revisions to MIFD's ordinance is to bring MIFD's ordinance in line with the revised Stonington ordinances.

Mr. Tower asked for a motion to approve the revised ordinance regarding Permits to Work or Excavate In or Under MIFD-Managed Roads and the accompanying Technical Standards and Permit Applications.

A motion was made, seconded, and approved.

Discussion ensued concerning improvements to the drainage system at the bottom of Yacht Club Road. While a new drain was installed last year, water continues to pool at the bottom of the road as a result of the pitch of the road. Roads Manager Rufus Allyn secured an estimate of \$17,500 to crown the road so that water will be directed to the drain.

A motion was made to use \$17,500 from the Reserve Fund for Roads for improvements to the drainage system at the bottom of Yacht Club Road. The motion was seconded and approved.

Report of the Shoreline/Road Protection Task Force

The Report of the Task Force was posted on the MIPOA/MIFD Website.

On behalf of the Task Force, Ms. Foster provided history on the erosion of the marsh next to Chippechaug Trail over the years, noting that the erosion was significant, and that road flooding is of real concern. She explained that \$30,000 in funding was approved last year to conduct a study to determine what steps could be taken to reduce degradation. GZA was hired to conduct the study which came in under budget and recommended a nature-based, "living shoreline" approach which would use plants, sand, and rocks to stabilize the area in question. Next steps include preparation of a final design plan and permitting at an approximate cost of \$35,000 for the design plan and \$50,000 for permitting. Ms. Foster described collaborative efforts with the Town of Stonington to obtain grants from the Emergency Coastal Resiliency Fund and the Long Island Sound Futures Fund (which includes a 25% match provision) to cover the cost of the final plan design and permitting. The Task Force recommends that \$35,000 from the Reserve Fund for Roads be approved to commission an engineering study to develop a permit-ready plan to address the shoreline erosion problem

Ms. Foster reported that volunteers had helped to plant switchgrass on the site. She also reported that a "floating biomass" would be installed with the goal of mitigating wave and tidal flood impacts. She noted that the possibility of installing a berm to protect Chippechaug Trail had been considered by the Town of Stonington's Planning and Zoning staff and was found to be financially infeasible. Ms. Foster noted that available grants focus on shoreline erosion, and not on strengthening road resiliency.

A motion was made to use \$35,000 from the Reserve Fund for Roads, less any grant money received, to commission an engineering study to develop a permit-ready plan to address the shoreline erosion problem along Chippechaug Trail. The motion was seconded and approved.

Report of the Tick Committee

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

Jean Anderson presented the report on behalf of the Tick Committee. She noted that last year's decision to include the cost of tick treatments in MIFD's 2021-2022 budget resulted in a significant increase in tick program participants (an increase of 31% over the previous year). She stated that higher levels of tick prevention would result in higher levels of protection for all residents. The survey for 2021 resulted in two reported human cases of tick transmitted disease. One dog was reported with Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever.

Report of the Nominating Committee

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

The Report of the Nominating Committee was presented by Scott Parry. Members on the Committee included Mr. Parry and Ms. Foster (Directors and Co-chairs of the Committee), and three non-Board members including Fred Lebel, Margot Larkin, and Tommy Thomason. He reported that the terms for Board members Bill Taylor, John Parry, and David Krupp expire at the end of June 22. Mr. Taylor is willing to serve for another term. Former Board member Tom Flaherty moved out of the district in October 2021 and the Board appointed Catherine Deichmann to complete his term.

Audrey Brown and Fran Hoffman were nominated to the Board to fill the two Board vacancies beginning on July 1, 2022. Alex Ellison agreed to serve another one-year term as Tax Collector. The current Officers have all agreed to serve in their current roles for another one-year term. Mr. Parry presented for approval the following slate of officers for fiscal year 2022-2023:

Name	Position	Status	Term Ending
Officers			
Ethan Tower	President		2023
Scott Parry	Vice-President		2023
William Taylor	Treasurer	Renewing 3-year term	2025
Thomas Cooke	Clerk		2024
Board Members			
Audrey Brown	Director	First term	2025
Fran Hoffman	Director	First term	2025
Bart Chamberlain	Director		2024
Kristin Foster	Director		2024
Catherine Deichmann	Director	Replaced T. Flaherty	2023
Other Appointment			
Alex Ellison	Tax Collector Liaison		2023

A motion was made to accept the report of the Nominating Committee and to elect the persons so nominated to these positions was made, seconded, and approved.

Approval of the Annual Budget

Mr. Taylor presented the proposed budget for fiscal year 2022-2023 noting that overall budget expenditures are expected to be little changed from fiscal year 2020-2021. The budget presented does anticipate a potentially substantial increase in capital costs associated with drainage work on Yacht Club Road and consulting fees in connection with drainage work and consulting fees incurred in connection with the shoreline erosion mitigation along Chippechaug Trail. To address these issues, the proposed budget includes an increase in the mil rate from 2.065 mils in FY 2020-2021 to 2.4 mils in FY 2021-2022, representing an increase of approximately 15%.

Mr. Taylor reviewed two documents – Masons Island Fire District Road Maintenance: Budgets & Actuals dated Saturday, May 28, 2022, and Masons Island Fire District Financial Summary: Budgets and Actuals dated Saturday, May 28, 2022 – calling attention to differences in the actual budget for FY 2020-2021 and the proposed budget for FY 2021-2022 and answered questions about the proposed budget from those present at the meeting.

A motion was made to approve the budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2022 as presented and to set the mil rate at 2.4. The motion was seconded and approved.

New Business

Mr. Tower stated that MIFD is now using green car stickers and explained how residents can obtain them. Scott Parry also had forms for stickers available at the end of the meeting.

Several new issues were raised by residents:

- Jeff Brown asked that speed bumps at the guardhouse be removed.
- Rufus Allyn provided information about the status of Masons Island Company. He stated that there were two parcels on School House Road that must be transferred to a new party. He discussed other property that might be sold to MIPOA such as the pond. He added that he is taking the first steps towards phasing out Masons Island Company. He discussed the status of the parcel next to the dock on Chippechaug Trail and stated that the sale of 17 acres on the north side of the island has not yet been sold.
- Peter Keppel asked that MIFD address drainage issues on Andrews Road.
- Suzie Attwood stated that she has been trimming MIPOA property at the end of Skiff Lane and asked that MIFD take responsibility for the trimming in the future.
- Jay Kiszkiel asked that contractors not park on roadways making access and egress difficult for property owners.
- Frank Marco asked that additional gravel be added to Crossover.

Mr. Tower stated that there was insufficient time to address the issues raised, noted that none of the issues required immediate action, and further stated that he will refer the issues raised to the Board for discussion during their regular business meetings.

Next Annual Meeting

Mr. Tower offered his thanks to David Krupp and John Parry for their many years of service on the Board. He noted that, consistent with tradition, the Board will make \$100 donations to their respective charities of choice. He also thanked Jean Anderson who is stepping down as chair of the Tick Committee after five years for her work to make the tick program successful. David Ludwig will be taking on her role on the Tick Committee.

Mr. Tower concluded by announcing that the next Annual Meeting of the Masons Island Fire District will be held on Saturday, May 27, 2023 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 11:23 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas F. Cooke - Clerk