

Mason's Island Fire District BOD Meeting – May 2, 2019

Attending: Jim McAuley, David Krupp, Bill Taylor, Ethan Tower, Kristin Foster, Bob Banas, Tom Cooke and Lee Hisle. Rufus Allyn also attended. Not in attendance: John Parry and Tax Collector, Lydia Herd. President Jim McAuley called the meeting to order at 5:34 pm. A quorum was present.

Clerk's Report: M/S/P approving the minutes from previous meeting, April 11, 2019.

President's Report: There were no emergency calls in April so the total remains at 21 for the fiscal year. Connecticut Water has completed their water pipe installation for the year. It recently paid MIFD \$80,000 for completing the pavement finish work.

Treasurer's Report: (1) Ethan Tower e-mailed updated Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual and Balance Sheet reports (both dated 4/30/19) and an updated draft of the 2019-2020 Budget and Road Maintenance Budget prior to the meeting. The electric company is sticking with their classification of the guard house as commercial, or \$46/month plus usage, so the Utilities line item has been increased to \$800. (Ethan is still trying to get this reversed.) Tax Collection will be \$3,000 to cover the \$2,000 annual Stonington fee and a one time fee of \$800 to QDF, the town's contractor, to enter last year's data. Traffic Control will be \$4,000 less than last year since last year's budget covered the one time cost of buying traffic cameras and there will be two fewer weeks of traffic control duty this year. Drainage has been increased by \$4,000 because annual costs have been running higher than the budgeted \$4,000. Capital Improvements will be \$215,177 to cover paving East Forest, Yacht Club and Schoolhouse roads. Paving will occur in late Sept./early Oct. (French will replace two drainage pipes on Schoolhouse prior to the paving in mid-June. The cost is covered in this year's budget.) After the projected expense of paving, there should be about \$28,000 in the Road Reserve at the end of the next fiscal year, plus another \$10,000 if the Unplanned Expenses are not consumed. MIFD's current cash flow and cash position has been hurt by the cost of rebuilding the guard house. The insurance company is still gathering information. The draft budget includes two motions at the bottom to move the Excess for 2018-2019 to the Reserve Fund for Roads and to approve next year's budget, including paving costs. (A third motion will be added to approve discontinuing car tax collection.) There was discussion regarding adding \$10,000 to the current \$25,000 Catastrophe Reserve Fund by increasing the mil rate for the coming year, with an eventual goal of raising this reserve to \$100,000. (Ethan subsequently e-mailed that increasing the mil rate to 1.70 would do this.) With the car tax collection eliminated and a reduction in the Grand List, the increased mil rate will bring tax collections closer to prior levels. Although we will need to reinstate Crack Seal work for the roads, this will be done by paying for this from

the Road Maintenance Budget rather than by a separate budget line item. M/S/P to approve the Treasurer's report.

Tax Collector's Report: In Lydia Herd's absence, Ethan reported that there are only six bills outstanding with a total balance of about \$150.

Mason Island Company: Rufus Allyn raised the question of who will purchase about 49 acres mid-island which are subject to a development restriction running in favor of The Nature Conservancy.

Nominating Committee Report: The Nominating Committee is working on the revised job description for the Tax Collector (the name in the bylaws, but really more of a tax coordinator once the town starts collecting taxes.) One issue is whether to include collection of the Tick Tax as part of the ongoing duties. The Board asked Mary McAuley to join the discussion given her long experience in this area. There seem to be three options. (1) Send out e-mails about the program requesting sign up and payment by check made out to MIFD. The payments would still be on MIFD's books and deposited in MIFD's bank account with payment to the vendors by MIFD. This has the advantage of better tracking of participation (better than a survey) and the vendors prefer getting one prepaid check, offering a small discount in return. The experience this year was that many people ignored the request for payment and the Tick Program coordinator and the Tax Collector were required to pursue payment. (2) Solicit participation and sign up by e-mail, but merely forward the information to the vendors. Individual owners would contract directly with the vendors who would bill the owners for separate payment. The Tax Collector would not be involved in this option. The vendors could provide a list of participants. (3) Urge participation, but leave the rest of the process to the property owners and the vendors. Mary will follow up with Jean. It could be that prospective candidates for Tax Collector would be willing to collect the Tick Tax, so discussions with candidates will pursue this as an option.

New Business: None

MIFD Meeting Calendar:

The next meeting, which is primarily social, is scheduled for June 13, 5:30 pm at 18 Money Point Road.

Meeting Adjourned – 7:13 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Taylor