

**SELECT BOARD**  
KATELYN DAMON, BOARD CHAIR  
JANUARY BENNETT  
INGRID GAITHER

**ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**  
TO THE SELECT BOARD  
JAMES FORTUNE

**TOWN CLERK / TREASURER**  
BENJAMIN SUMNER

**PUBLIC SAFETY COORDINATOR**  
SHARON MORRELL

## **Town Manager Transition Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, January 13, 2026**

### **Attendance:**

Joe Connell, Chair  
Lauren Noether, Vice Chair  
Heather Spurling, Secretary  
George Dickson, Garth Hallberg, Jim Kehoe, Ingrid Gaither (Non-Voting) Committee Members.  
Absent: Nan Hadlock,

- I. Call to Order: 4:34pm by Chair Joe Connell**
- II. Approval of Minutes:**  
Motion to approve minutes from previous meeting was made by Lauren, Seconded by Garth. All in Favor.
- III. Follow up on Previous Action Items:**
  - a. Joe sent out the Committee's Interim Report to Kaitlyn for review.
  - b. Heather shared minutes with the town office and sent out action item reminders to committee members.
  - c. Joe figured out the town Zoom account- he may need to login under Ben's account info in the future.
  - d. Joe contacted Avery at Hancock County Planning Commission.

## **IV. New Business**

### **A. Engaging the Public**

- a. Avery from Hancock County Planning Commission agreed to act as an outside facilitator to moderate focus groups. She recommended that Committee work remain separate from the Comprehensive Plan process. A late May/early June timeline was determined upon in regards to working with her going forward. When the time comes, Avery will assist the Committee in presenting our research and discoveries to the general public, allowing time for feedback and discussion.
- b. Garth inquired: what are we trying to learn from focus groups that would factor into our report? Joe responded that transparency would be one goal, i.e., to dispel rumors, bring people up to speed on what we've been working on, and offer up information.
- c. Ingrid followed up with related questions: what's our goal with focus groups (to share data, or hear community concerns, etc)? What does this group need to know from the general public? What if our research findings reach resistance with community members? General discussion, including how to anticipate concerns that might arise regarding cost and change. The group agreed that having an outside facilitator will be key when it comes to presenting our findings to the public.
- d. Lauren suggested that we choose a name other than "Focus Group". Joe agreed. Later, Garth suggested "Community Input" as an alternative phrase.
- e. Joe reiterated that community engagement will be our necessary next step before continuing our research.
- f. Lauren suggested that we begin with an informational session to bring community members up to speed about available types of town government. Or perhaps someone from MMA could prepare a presentation about municipal government to be used across multiple towns.

### **B. Town Charter Consideration**

- a. Ingrid asked whether it would be worthwhile for this Committee to research having a town charter. Joe responded that town charter consideration would fall under the work of the Comprehensive Plan Committee.
- b. Garth responded by asking: is there a way of employing a town manager through charter rather than statute? Is that a meaningful distinction? General discussion.
- c. Joe advised that we as a Committee should understand the language around town charters in order to be informed and prepared to answer questions in open forums.
- d. Discussion regarding a town charter for the Cranberry Isles was tabled.

### **C. Next Steps**

- e. Financial research will be on deck for the Committee to focus on. Questions to be considered include: what financial questions do we need to ask? How might we go about acquiring financial information? What information do we need? (i.e., what is a feasible salary range for a town manager?)
- f. Joe mapped out our work for the next couple months: to define our goals and the work we are doing (i.e., what are we trying to solve), and to outline how much proposed changes might cost.
- g. Jim asked whether we should schedule interviews with town employees. General discussion.
- h. The Committee will come up with a more appropriate name than “focus groups”, and clarify our language for use when answering questions in said groups.
- i. The Committee will outline potential issues that may arise regarding potential change in the town’s government structure.
- j. The Committee will set up an interview system in order to gain information from current town employees.

### **V. Action Items for next meeting**

- k. Lauren will contact MMA regarding presenting information about municipal government in Maine.
- l. Jim will put together a list of questions to ask town employees during future interviews
- m. Joe will put a list together of people to talk to first (i.e. Selectboard members).

### **VI. Subsequent Meeting**

Was scheduled for Tuesday, January 27th at 4:30pm

### **VII. Adjournment: 5:25pm**

Motion to adjourn was made by Garth. Motion was seconded by Jim. All in favor.