

SELECT BOARD

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Town Manager Transition Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 24, 2026

Attendance:

Joe Connell, Chair

Lauren Noether, Vice Chair

Heather Spurling, Secretary

Garth Hallberg, George Dickson, Committee Members.

I. Call to Order

A. The meeting was called to order at 4:34pm by Chair Joe Connell.

II. Approval of Minutes

A. Motion to approve minutes was made by Lauren and seconded by Garth.
All in favor.

III. Follow up on Action Items

- A. Joe was able to narrow down some interview questions to use as a rubric for interviewing community members. Jim K. was able to assist, with edits.
- B. Jim K. created and shared a hypothetical budget spreadsheet with the Committee. Further discussion on this information was tabled until later in today's meeting.
- C. Lauren was unable to follow up with MMA, but intends to do so as a future action item.

IV. Next Steps

A. Finalizing plans for Interviews

- a. The Committee began to review the drafted list of interview questions. Potential questions included:
 - i. Do you have an understanding of how our town is managed at this point, and what the options are for managing differently?
 - ii. If not, may I clarify?
 - iii. As a whole, how well (or not) do you think the town is functioning to meet the needs of our community?
 - iv. Do you have any thoughts as to whether shifting to a Town Manager system would help or hinder the ability of the town to meet the needs of the community?
 - v. Do you have any other thoughts or experiences you'd like to share? (Suggestion Box)
- b. Joe reminded the Committee that the aforementioned drafted questions should be used as guidelines, while personal relationships should remain at the forefront during interviews.
- c. Garth added a tip from his experience interviewing other towns during prior Committee work. He mentioned that it was helpful to conduct interviews on a personal basis, while using the "list of questions" as a reference at the end of the conversation.
- d. General discussion ensued, centering around the term "executive". The Committee agreed that it will be important to clarify this term for broader use within a community setting. For example, a Town Manager might "execute" the will of the people as delineated at town meeting. A Town Manager would also have "executive management" capabilities in relation to the Selectboard. A Town Manager would possess the power to "execute" an agenda set by the Selectboard. The Town Manager would not exist as an "executive" with independent power. In essence, "executive" authority would empower a Town Manager to operate with authority under the guidance of the Selectboard, within the budget approved at Town Meeting. The Town Manager would also have oversight of town employees, and would be able to manage and administer in an "executive" fashion. In the interest of dispelling misinformation, the Committee agreed that the use of the word "executive" should be considered carefully.
- e. Lauren referred to Title 30-A Chapter 123 of the Maine Legislative Statutes, regarding powers and duties of a Town Manager.
<https://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/30-a/title30-Asec2636.html>
General Discussion.
- f. The Committee circled back to the initial list of proposed interview questions, agreeing that they should be sufficient. An added "cheat sheet" of talking points will be useful, and an action item was created for Joe to come up with a list in that regard.
- g. The Committee agreed upon a timeline within which to conduct interviews, setting a goal to conclude interviews by Tuesday, April 7th. :

B. Financial research

- a. Financial discussion centered around the hypothetical budget spreadsheet shared with the Committee by Jim Kehoe. Numbers on said spreadsheet included known and postulated/proposed salaries of town employees as they relate to the Committee's work. The spreadsheet demonstrated salaries as they relate to the overall town budget, percentage-wise.
- b. General discussion ensued, primarily regarding whether salaries also included benefits, and which variables could be "played around with" to arrive at a scenario that would support a Town Manager's salary.
The Committee also postulated that if a full time Town Manager were to be hired, that position would alleviate many duties currently shouldered by the Selectboard. As such, the salaries of Selectpersons might change in order to adjust for the shuffling of duties.
- c. Lauren queried about the benefits of employee evaluations, HR, and due diligence in order to avoid potential liability as a town. The Cranberry Isles doesn't currently employ a position that handles these areas. General discussion.
- d. The Committee agreed that when conducting interviews or hosting info-sessions within the community, a "deep-dive" into finances should not be the focus. Instead, these communications should revolve around preliminary information gathering and listening to opinions within the community, as opposed to presenting the numbers.
- e. The Committee briefly considered what a potential budget line might be for the salary of a Town Manager recruited from outside the Cranberry Isles, and what the cost for said recruitment might entail.
- f. The Committee agreed that it will worthwhile to use variables laid out in Jim K's spreadsheet, while focusing specifically on the salaries of the Administrative Assistant to the Selectboard, the Selectboard, and the salary of a potential Town Manager. Salaries of Treasurer, Harbormaster, and other personnel need not be considered in regards to the Committee's current work. These considerations will aid the Committee in narrowing down what a financial map to hiring a Town Manager might resemble.

III. Action Items for Next Meeting

- a. Lauren will contact MMA regarding presenting information about municipal government in Maine and possible contracts for Town Manager.
- b. Joe will create and share a "cheat sheet" to aid the Committee with talking points when conducting upcoming interviews.
- c. Heather will send out a list of interviewers and interviewees (Committee members and Community members).

IV. Subsequent Meeting

Will take place on Tuesday, March 10th 2026 at 4:30pm via Zoom.

V. Adjournment: 5:40pm

George motioned to adjourn, Lauren seconded the motion. All in Favor.