

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, April 7, 2026**

### **Attendance:**

Joe Connell, Chair  
Lauren Noether, Vice Chair  
Heather Spurling, Secretary  
Garth Hallberg, George Dickson, Jim Kehoe Committee Members.

### **I. Call to Order**

A. The meeting was called to order at 4:41pm by Chair Joe Connell.

### **II. Approval of Minutes**

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

### **III. Follow up on Action Items**

- A. An update was given regarding communication with Hancock County Planning Commission. Joe was able to chat with Avery, who suggested setting up a round of public meetings in early June. Avery will also assist at public meetings in late April for the Comprehensive Plan.
- B. Joe was asked to do an informal presentation to the Selectboard, and gave a report of how that went to the Committee.
- C. Interviews were held by several Committee Members.
- D. Financial Research- Garth was able to do some digging. Google search generated an average salary of \$110k for a Town Manager. He also looked into Standish as a comparative example (George also researched this town). Standish pays their town manager \$115k, and has 10k residents. He was able to narrow down some numbers based on municipality size.

#### IV. Interview Reports

- A. The Committee was reminded that the content of the interviews will remain confidential (regarding which interviewees offered which information).
- B. Joe was able to conduct two of three interviews. One was with a person deeply involved in town functions, the other not at all involved. Both held very similar opinions, though from different perspectives. Both stressed the importance of making sure that we are not confusing a structural problem with a personnel problem. A change in the structure doesn't necessarily mean that things would get better. If you have a personnel problem you don't want to fix it with a structural solution. Some input advised the Committee to avoid being "black and white" when it comes to our final recommendation. Whatever the Committee ends up advising, it will be important to work on addressing current issues whether or not a structural change is made.

One interviewee said: "Why not have a Town Manager? It would increase the power of our executive team to get more done."

A relevant question emerged: How strong is the fear of change within our community?

One person acknowledged the risk involved in having too much decision power in one person. They felt that our current system is direct and transparent. It works, it's just limited.

One idea came up: the Committee's recommendation could be for a two-year step with the understanding that if things don't improve, a change to a Town Manager might be appropriate.

- C. Garth talked to two community members.

One thing that came up in both interviews was that projects weren't being completed in a timely fashion. An example used was the repaving project for the GCI parking lot.

One interviewee wasn't interested in what form of town government was best, and felt that a lot of things come down to the personnel of the Selectboard.

In Garth's second interview, the interviewee felt that the current form of government is at its purest form and was not in favor of having a Town Manager. They felt that personnel rather than structure should be the focus. This person was a former Selectboard member. Their primary concern with having a Town Manager regarded autonomy with hiring and firing.

- D. Heather interviewed two community members.

One began the interview by admitting that they have a slant, and have always been in favor of having a Town Manager. Some pros for having a Town Manager that they brought to the table included:

1. A Town Manager would have a singular focus as a full time employee, compared with Selectboard members who also hold other jobs
2. They would bring expertise, training, and knowledge pertaining to the job.
3. A single point of contact would be created, as well as a hierarchy.
4. They would have the ability to stay on task, working self-started every day
5. They could take initiative in areas where the Assistant to the Selectboard wouldn't have the authority to do so.
6. They would relieve many duties currently held by the Selectboard.

The next interviewee did not have a strong opinion for or against having a Town Manager. They felt that on the whole the town isn't dysfunctional, but admitted that things could be accomplished more quickly and efficiently. They felt that management of facilities was the area that needed the most attention, regarding follow-up and getting things done. While they held some frustrations with certain areas needing improvement, they didn't feel like the Selectboard was to blame. This interviewee wasn't aware that the Committee existed, or that the Cranberry Isles was researching having a Town Manager. The Committee agreed that in our public meetings, we will need to seriously address (and apologize for) that lack of transparency.

- E. Jim was able to line up one of two interviews.
- F. George and Lauren weren't able to conduct interviews.

**V. General Discussion:**

- A. Lauren brought up the idea of initiating a probationary period for a potential Town Manager, citing the importance of having a way to assess whether they are a good fit. She suggested that the Town Manager should also be evaluated on a semi-regular basis. Garth added that it might be worth including an employee review that was conducted by the Selectboard.
- B. Some recurring themes included the importance of avoiding "finger pointing" and how to address HR limitations.
- C. Lauren asked whether there was currently any management of personnel, or an employee handbook, or an ethics statement. The consensus was that the town doesn't currently have many guidelines or policies regarding how we do things.
- D. Recent rapid turnover on the Selectboard was brought up as a concern. The Committee considered how to get out of the loop of having a high turnover. One thought was that if there were a strong Town Manager, the Selectboard could vary from year to year without shaking things up too much.

**VI. Subsequent Agenda Items**

- a. Discussion around financial research will be continued.
- b. The Committee will continue to review findings from interviews with community members.

**VII. Action Items for Next Meeting**

- a. Committee members will continue to conduct interviews.
- b. Committee members will continue preliminary research regarding financial figures.

**VIII. Subsequent Meeting**

Will take place on Tuesday, April 21st 2026 at 4:30pm via Zoom.

**IX. Adjournment: 5:40pm**

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