

Stockton Springs Select Board Minutes

January 20, 2025

Attendees:

Select Board Members Present	Elizabeth Lenharr Marsha Shute Betsy Bradley Loren Cole – Interim Town Manager
Select Board Members Absent	
Recording Secretary	Sarah Hardy
Community members	Approximately 14 community members were in attendance. Speaker names were captured in the notes as best as possible. No attendance list was captured.

Yellow Highlight indicates NEW or not-yet-completed action items.

Green Highlight indicates COMPLETED action items.

Blue Highlight indicates incomplete notes, based on in-person note taking where something was missed. Need to go to tape backup.

#	Agenda	Notes
1.	Roll Call: Call to Order	Liz Lenharr called meeting to order 6:01pm roll call – see attendance above
2.	Adjustments to the Agenda	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve minutes for meetings that haven't been approved yet 2. Updates on action items <p>Discuss these topics after executive session, if one is needed, otherwise it can be discussed in the public comment portion.</p>
3.	Review Harbor Master Job Description	<p>Loren provided the copy of the harbor master job description as it exists currently, to the Select people.</p> <p>Skeet Wyman – commented that as long as nothing has changed since the trash and lawn mowing was added to the description, then the harbor committee had seen it.</p> <p>There is a section about routine maintenance responsibilities being included.</p> <p>Q: Margaret Laing – who is responsible for sending out renewals for mooring fees? She doesn't have email and hadn't received any notification about bills being due, she would pay bill because they remembered it yearly. Except once when she felt she was accosted by the harbor master while at the grocery store. She made a complaint to Mac Smith as town manager about his behavior.</p>

		<p>A: Select board - The harbor master should send it via email. If someone doesn't have email, then presumably a letter would be mailed.</p> <p>Q: Angie Porter – is mowing part of the harbor master's responsibility?</p> <p>A: Yes, it is now. There was some general discussion about when that was added, and it was in the August 12 version of the job description. Per George Russell, there have been times where public works did the mowing. No one seems to be questioning its inclusion at this time, it will remain.</p> <p>Insert copy of the description as addendum to the minutes</p>
4.	Review Assistant Harbor Master Job Description	<p>Q Liz Lenharr - It is her understanding that this job has not been filled, can that be confirmed?</p> <p>A: Steve Clark - the candidate was chosen, but it isn't working out to complete the hire. Requested that job get reposted. Agreed by others in the crowd (Skeet Wyman) to have it posted.</p> <p>Q Angie Porter– can the description be read aloud.</p> <p>A: Betsy read the description (insert copy of the description as addendum to the minutes)</p> <p>Liz – select board will work on getting an ad placed. Assigned to Loren</p> <p>Question – who do we want to hire as harbor master? We can consider the recommendation of the harbor committee. Harbor Committee put forth the name David Estes, the current harbor master.</p> <p>Angie Porter noted that the previous town manager selected a different name.</p> <p>Q: Betsy – what does Loren suggest we do?</p> <p>A: Loren – he is not aware of any other candidates, so suggests going with the harbor master recommendation.</p> <p>Liz makes a motion to renew the contract of Dave Estes. Marsha seconded, all in favor.</p> <p>Loren to reach out to Dave to let him know.</p>
5.	Public Comment	<p>Public</p> <p><i>Abandoned Boat</i> – previously the town had tried to sell an abandoned boat. No takers, so it will be offered free for the taking.</p> <p>Q: George Russell– can he put the sign of “free” on the abandoned boat?</p> <p>A: per Skeet – asked not to spray paint it.</p> <p>George will put the boat near the gate, hoping that someone will just hook onto it and take it away. Questions may come into the town, or the public works folks.</p> <p>Q Betsy: if it is town property do we need to have a bill of sale for the person taking it?</p>

A: don't think so since it's for free

Purchase of Tally-Ho:

Kirsten Wyman – checked with Loren, an executive session is not required to discuss the transaction. She raised a request from the seller for an extension of the closing date to 3/3/25 because it's taking longer than planned to empty it, especially with the weather. Will aim for sooner than that.

Q: for the extension paperwork, will need signatures from the select board. Gary will e-sign it, Kirsten will bring it into the office and the board members can sign it ad hoc, or it can be signed in the next meeting.

Q: Angie Porter– does it need to be signed in an official meeting?

A: per Loren, it can be signed at the next meeting on 1/27/25.

Motion by Liz to accept the extension to 3/3/23, seconded by Marsha, all in favor

Town brush pile:

George – the town garage can once again accept brush at the town garage. Absolutely no construction materials allowed, or DEP will shut it down. He will add a note on the town website and do other notifications.

Select Board

No announcements

Town Manager/Including Routine Updates

No need for executive session

Town Manager advertisement

Q: Loren has seen the ad copy for the town manager, do the select board want that posted in newspapers and MMA?

A: Betsy – we had previously decided to wait till the interim manager, but do we want to wait that long? The select board agreed not to wait. **Loren to post**

Liz raised the possibility of using the \$500 package to help with the hiring and the select board agreed. **Loren to work with Rich Cromwell on that.**

Q: Sarah Hardy - who was picked as interim town manager?

A: John Belino was selected as the interim town manager.

GEI update – payment for breakwater study. Total for the design project was \$45,000. An invoice for \$8,538.40 has not yet paid. The town doesn't have the money yet, but the previous town manager did request a request for reimbursement from the state for grant money. Once that comes in, there will be enough money to pay the bill, and will pay back what the town fronted for bills previously paid from the general fund.

Betsy asked for clarification – had that request to the state been made for every invoice? Yes, that was the understanding that a request for approximately \$35,000 was requested. Loren went through with the bookkeeper and only this one bill remained. Mike provided clarification: The contract was \$40,000, \$35,000 from grant and the town was to pay \$5,000 for in-kind contributions.

Q: Margaret Laing - asked how the select board didn't know about the bills, who was responsible?

A: Per the select board, it was the town manager

Q: Pat Curley – shouldn't the select board know about this, since they see bills paid?

A: The select board sees what has come in front of them, but if it didn't come in front of them then they don't know.

Skeet Wyman– comment, that there is a lot that didn't come in front of the select board by the town manager, including potentially millions that was not pursued.

Q: Scott Pace – with a bill being so far in arrears, are there any late fees.

A: Loren Cole – there are no late fees yet, he will let the company know the payment is coming so that none are accrued.

Internet Service for the town

The police department needs internet to upload reports. The speed of Spectrum is not sufficient, the same was seen from Ambulance service. They upgraded to a high speed 5G service in the ambulances. The state paid for the ambulance via a grant (seems specific to EMS for the grant so can't use for Police).

If the select board thinks it's appropriate, can Loren begin searching for a new service for the police department – Daren was looking into T-Mobile. The select board agreed it was important. **Action item assigned to Loren**

Question to George – how about the garage? Per George, the internet at the town garage is terrible.

Looking at the town office, garage, police (because they work out of the town building), harbor to get onto new service.

Q: Angie – when is the big broadband project the town is paying for going to make it useable for the town?

A: Liz- into 2026.

Q: George – is it going to be Fidium fiberoptic? He thinks it's terrible, it's down all the time at his house.

A: Liz- Direct Communications said it's supposed to be better than Fidium fiber.

There was general conversation about Starlink's quality/cost/portability.

Correspondence

Two letters to the select board were dropped off at the town office:

- January 1st letter – request to reconsider Mac Smith’s dismissal
- Letter conveying dismay about Mac Smith’s dismissal, asking the select board to reconsider.

Vehicle Maintenance needs

George Russell – work on the truck emissions was \$13800, \$4000 was put into it the week before. About \$20,000 put into the truck lately, but hopefully it’s now good to go. It’s a 2015 model with barely 20,000 miles on it. It’s the plow truck Bruce drives; Max Force motor doesn’t seem to be well made – has gotten vehicles with Cummins motors since then.

Select board requests he notify them if the truck is at end of life.

Tally Ho closing – Loren provided Kirsten the proof of funds as was requested at last meeting.

EMA antenna

Since the new roof was put on the town building, the EMA antenna has not been reinstalled. Tom Moore provided an estimate for \$1800 to reinstall and they don’t have money for that.

Betsy mentioned that the cable to the antennae was cut when the roof was put on, but they didn’t really need to cut it. She mentioned the Ham radio antenna and wire needs to be better installed properly since it’s hanging low since the roof install. She made note that the original installation of the EMA antennae didn’t cost as much as the bill. **Betsy to take the action item to find a solution for the install, she’ll check RCM and her brother that does these types of installs.** Suggestions to attach to the side of the building instead. May use volunteer labor to lessen the cost.

There was some conversation about why it’s on the town building, the radios are in the building, because it’s the warming center etc. in case of emergency.

Q George – why do we need a ham radio?

A: Betsy and Keith – in the case when cell phones are not available, also it’s the tried/true method for communications in emergency.

Suggestion – Dale Crowley may be able to help, maybe donate equipment.

Minutes approvals

December 9th minutes are missing, the select board has printed copies, will bring them in for approval at another meeting.

Loren mentioned some freedom of information requests have come in and can’t provide them until they are approved.

Liz makes a motion to accept minutes as amended from 12/30/24, 1/2/25, 1/6/25, 1/7/25, 1/8/25 and 1/13/25.

Marsha seconded, all approved.

Q: Margaret Lange asked if they would be posted
A: As soon as Sarah sends the updated notes to Loren

Expanding the select board to five people

It is possible to do, it must be approved 90 days before a town meeting. It's up to the select board, if they want it done then Loren can get the process started.

Q: George – since we can't vote to increase the number and vote for board members, it seems it can't be done at once.

A: need 2.5-3 months. For the June election the papers need to be available and completed by April. Diane figured out the exact dates, will give them to Loren. It would be possible to approve it at a meeting then hold another meeting to vote people in. **We'd like the exact dates for the notes.**

Q: Angie – does Betsy need to submit a resignation letter because she's leaving a year early.

A: Betsy - yes, she does and she'll prepare that.

Decision about going to a five member board – Liz is a Yes. Betsy feels she should abstain; Marsha is concerned about being a small town and still may be an issue of incidental groupings of three people. But yes, she is in favor of 5.

The select board is OK with funding a special town meeting for this purpose. Funding additional stipends would also need to go into the town budget for the year, if it's not approved the money would go back into the general fund.

Q: George – what happens if we don't get candidates to run to make 5 members.

A: The board could function with four people.

Q: Margaret – why increase the number to 5?

A: Betsy – because with just 3 select board members, any time 2 people are together, it's considered a quorum. Because select people are active in the community, they accidentally do come together for different purposes.

Q: Susan Henkel– why isn't community builders as strong as other boards?

A: It's not a town committee per se. It's just a group of residents who volunteer their time.

Statement from Margaret – she loves the community builders; she appreciates their work such as valentines for seniors.

Statement from Pat Curley – there is a perception that the community builders get special treatment because the select members are involved. But stated her support for the community builders.

Kirsten Wyman stated, she started the community builders and at no time is town business discussed at community builders, they are

		<p>too busy for that. She has read select board notes and only sees reference to community builders making announcements. The select board mentioned that the previous town manager asked the select board/community builder members to announce events at the meetings so it can be included in the newsletter.</p> <p>Statement from Skeet Wyman – we need more people involved, thinks we need 5 people board and a town manager from away that can run the town like a business.</p> <p>Betsy was able to find the 12/9/24 notes in email, they will be considered for approval at the next meeting</p> <p>No motion needed to go forward with the proposal for a 5-member board, but it will be a warrant for the town meeting Loren to take as an action item.</p> <p><i>Regarding town banking accounts –</i> Loren has researched via phone with Bangor Savings, and we are insured at 105% of our balance. It's not the same as the FDIC insurance because government accounts are handled differently. The money is invested in government securities. The money moves into and out of those securities in very liquid fashioned, the money is "swept" from the security back into the checking account on a daily basis. We were getting 1.2% on the account, Bangor savings increasing it to 2.5% as of 1/21/2025 because Loren asked about it. The balance is approximately 3 million. The interest rate is subject to change. *There was clapping and kudos from the crowd for Loren getting this done so quickly*</p> <p><i>Paying for the new ambulance</i> Bond for the new ambulance that was voted at the last town meeting – Loren hadn't started that, had any select person? Betsy was told by the previous town manager, the minutes of the meeting was needed to be given to the lawyer, and Amy Drinkwater needed to do something. Loren indicated we need to make a payment to Autotronics for the graphics. Last week he pulled the requirements to submit the bond. The lawyer Tim Pease was at the meeting and should have the next steps – Loren to reach out to him.</p>
6.	Executive session pursuant to 1MRSA ss 405(6)(A) Personnel Matters	None today
7.	Adjourn	7:55 motion to adjourn by Liz, Marsha seconded, all in favor.

Action item list:

Date raised	Action	Assignment	Status
1/13/25	<p>Related to unpaid portion of the Harbor breakwater design.</p> <p>a. check balance to make sure it gets paid.</p> <p>b. Place on future agenda for follow-up</p>	<p>a. Loren Cole</p> <p>b. Betsy Bradley</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>1/20/25</p>
1/13/25	<p>Related to the increase of select board members from 3 members to 5 members. As raised during public comment by Sarah Hardy</p> <p>a. Talk to MMA and get guidance on how this could be done, before the next select board meeting.</p>	<p>a. Loren Cole</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>1/20/25</p>
1/13/25	<p>Related to the Town's bank account which was raised originally in October 2024 during public comment by Sarah Hardy, and again on this date. Need to get the majority of town funds into high interest accounts, and to make sure we have no money that is not properly protected by FDIC.</p> <p>a. Loren is taking this as an action item.</p>	<p>a. Loren Cole</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>1/20/25</p>
1/13/25	<p>Related to the Tally-Ho purchase contract, Jerry Huntoon asked for details about stipulations that might have been in the contract. Loren mentioned there was a Freedom of Information Act request for the contract</p> <p>a. In accordance with MMA guidance, the contract will be released (or not), after which it can be discussed at a select board meeting.</p>	<p>a. Loren Cole</p>	<p>This has been released.</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>1/20/25</p>
1/13/25	<p>Regarding the buy-out of the existing solar panels on the town garage. Per Linda Meadows, who has examined the contract and raised her findings in public comment, if we are to initiate the purchase we must indicate our intent before February 7, 2025 or we will have to wait another year.</p> <p>a. The select board decided to initiate the negotiations.</p> <p>b. Per Betsy – it would have to be raised as a budget item on the budget, thinks we should initiate the negotiations. No motion is needed</p> <p>c. Skeet – is this sundog solar? Danny Piper (gave his number to Loren) is a neighbor and</p>	<p>a. Loren Cole</p>	

	thinks they'd work with the town, and thinks he'd be sure to come to a good deal.		
1/13/25	In public comment Tom Moore mentioned an emergency communication antenna which hasn't been mounted since the new roof. It couldn't be reattached because it would require puncture of the new roof. Betsy asked for the paperwork on what needs to be done, it had previously been provided to Mac. Tom will provide the estimate. The company is Atlantic Communications. a. Select board to decide on how to handle the antennae installation	a. Betsy Bradley	
1/20/25	Notify David Estes about his renewed contract for Harbor Master	Loren Cole	
1/20/25	Place ad for Assistant Harbor Master	Loren Cole	
1/20/25	Place ad for Town Manager	Loren Cole	
1/20/25	Contact Rich Cromwell for assistance on hiring Town Manager	Loren Cole	
1/20/25	Research new high-speed internet for Town facilities – town office, town garage, harbor master building	Loren Cole	
1/20/25	Create the warrant for a 5 member select board for the next town meeting	Loren Cole	
1/20/25	Contact Tim Pease (town lawyer) for next steps in acquiring funds and paying for the ambulance approved at the 12/30/24 town meeting	Loren Cole	