

Mason's Island Fire District Annual Meeting – May 25, 2019

President Jim McAuley called the meeting to order at 10:18 a.m. (MIYC Meeting ran late.) Jim thanked the Yacht Club Board for use of the building. Jim noted that this was his fifth time running the meeting, that the meeting would follow Roberts Rules of Order, and requested no sidebars while someone recognized by the chair was speaking. He asked that those wishing to speak raise their hand, stand when recognized by the chair, and state their name before speaking. Jim read the section of the MIFD Bylaws that set forth eligibility for voting and asked that qualifying members raise their hand. The Clerk confirmed that a quorum was present. Jim introduced the current slate of officers and Board members: David Krupp, Vice President (absent); Ethan Tower, Treasurer; Bill Taylor, Clerk; and Directors Robert Banas, Thomas Cooke, Kristin Foster (absent), John Parry and Lee Hisle. He thanked the Board for their service. The minutes of last year's Annual Meeting had been distributed by e-mail and copies were available at the meeting. M/S/P to waive the reading of the minutes and M/S/P to approve the minutes as written.

President's Report: A written President's Report was distributed prior to the meeting and Jim reviewed some of the highlights. The road repaving project is almost completed. All new water mains are in and all fire hydrants are installed and functioning. Homeowners should contact their insurance agents to see if their rates can be reduced based on the improved district rating. While our fire company was well rated by the Insurance Service Organization, lack of available water resulted in a 9 (low) rating for Masons Island. Due to the completion of hydrant installation, the rating has improved to 4. The guard shack was destroyed by a truck making a wide turn and exiting through the incoming lane on 10/10/18 but has now been rebuilt. Minor damage occurred when the shack was hit again a few weeks after restoration, and this damage has also been repaired. Emergency calls for the fiscal year through April were 21 versus the 25 allowance in our Fire Department contract.

Report of the Clerk: For the Fiscal Year 2018-2019, the MIFD Board of Directors met eight times and there was a quorum at all meetings. The meeting notice for the Annual Meeting was published per the Bylaws in The Day on Thursday, May 9th. The Agenda for this meeting was posted in the Town Clerk's office on May 15th. Agendas for future meetings and a schedule of future meetings will be filed with the Town Clerk's office.

Treasurer's Report: Ethan Tower noted that all required filings had been done on time and the annual review by the accounting firm Garvey & Associates has been completed. Ethan then reviewed the Financial Summary: Budgets & Actuals that was handed out at the meeting, comparing the first three columns: Actual 2017-2018, Projected Actual 2018-2019 (through

6/30/19), and Budget 2018-2019. The reverse side of the Summary showed the Road Maintenance: Budgets and Actuals with the first three columns with the same headings. The Projected Actual tax collections were \$215,653 which is down from the prior year due to the revaluation by the town last year that reduced MIFD's grand list. Miscellaneous income this year was \$80,025 which was paid by Connecticut Water Company because MIFD will provide the finish coat repaving in the areas where new water mains were installed this year. Total repaving costs for next fiscal year in the fall of 2019 are projected to be \$215,177.

The line item Fire Protection-CWC will increase from this year's \$13,925 to \$17,874 due to additional water line length and additional fire hydrants in service. Traffic Control and Safety will decline from \$18,000 this year to \$12,500 because this year's expenses included the one-time \$4,000 cost of installing traffic/security cameras and two more weeks of Traffic Control Officer duty. With the retirement of our volunteer tax collector, Lydia Herd, there is \$3,000 more in the budget for payment to the Town of Stonington. Utility costs will increase slightly because the Guard House was re-classified as a commercial use, rather than residential.

The Increase Reserve Fund for Roads amount was \$98,825 in FY 2017-18, and is projected to be \$114,891 in this FY. Capital Expenditures for this FY were \$130,008. The Reserve Fund for Roads is projected as \$236,310 and most of this will be spent this fall. Ethan then made a motion to move the Excess of Revenues over Expenses (approximately \$114,891) to the Reserve Fund for Roads. This motion was seconded and passed. A member asked whether the costs of repairing the guard house had been paid. Ethan replied that negotiations were ongoing and that he had booked the insurance company's offer of \$19,417 as a receivable and included the difference (approximately \$2,500) as a Miscellaneous expense for the current FY. A second questioner asked how many bids were obtained for the rebuilding of the Guard Shack to which Rufus Allyn replied that there was one as only one contractor was readily available. Jim noted that the security cameras paid off as they recorded the accident and identified the company that owned the truck.

Committee Reports:

- 1. Security Report:** Bob Banas reported that the Traffic Control Officers will be on duty from the beginning of May to the end of September. The week of July 4th they will be on duty every day. Bob said that those with a red MI sticker can slowly pass the shack without stopping. Additional stickers were available at the meeting from Betsy Lebel. Bob asked that anyone with comments about the Traffic Control Officers or any security matters should call him. Barry Saluk asked whether there had been any request from Stonington Police for help in gathering evidence of speeders as he had a disturbing incident of someone taking pictures of his cars. Eugene Winchester (Nauyaug Point

Road) said that his home was buzzed by a drone. He questioned whether or not there were any rules/regulations regarding the use on Masons Island. The MIFD board will research the subject of drone usage and send out an e-mail to all residents of our findings.

2. **Tick Report:** Jean Anderson described this year's efforts to coordinate spraying for ticks. The MIPOA list was e-mailed twice and individual efforts were made for non-respondents. One hundred seventeen properties participated in the property tax program for tick abatement and twenty property owners also do individual tick abatement. The total 137 properties controlling for ticks represented a 69% total participation rate, an increase over last year's of 64%. Two people and no pets contracted tick disease in the district last year. Mary McAuley continues to run the four-poster deer feeding/treatment program. Jean noted there were changes in the program this year. Participants were asked to send their check along with the sign-up sheet. This was not entirely successful, and Lydia Herd was very helpful in making follow-up contact. Jean noted the MIPOA/MIFD web site has the 2018 Report which will be updated for 2019 soon. Jean thanked Mary McAuley, Lydia Herd and Jean Hamilton for their help this year.
3. **Pond Committee Report:** Tom Cooke read Lou Allyn's written report in Lou's absence. The company that treats the pond, Solitude Lake Management Company was sold to Rentokil North America, Inc. and we have been assigned a new technician, Michael Didier. Algae was treated twice in this calendar year, somewhat less than last year which reached the maximum permitted treatment amount. The treatment is with Sonar One Captain XTR, a chelated copper compound which destroys plants but has no effect on fish and animals. This season may again reach the maximum. The \$200,000 cost of removing muck at the bottom of the pond was deemed too expensive. A question was asked about why the pond was so low. The answer was that water is drained in an attempt to reduce the phosphorous levels in the pond.
4. **Traffic Report:** John Parry noted that at last year's meeting a motion was passed asking that a committee be formed to look into traffic speeds and control on the island. The committee consisted of himself, Lee Hisle, Jeff Walker, Rufus Allyn and Scott Parry. Speeds and car counts are currently being tracked with a monitor installed in the same location and at the same time as five years ago. Monitoring will conclude this weekend and the results will be available to the Committee in several weeks. The monitor will have been in place for six weeks, with the first two in stealth mode, recording speeds but not displaying anything. So far, results are very similar to five years ago for volume and patterns of traffic. Average speed is slightly higher at 24 mph vs 23 mph. Five years ago, most of the traffic was on weekdays, with an average of 584/day vs. 375/day on weekends. Speeds during the week then were 23.2 mph for stealth mode and 21.8 mph

for active mode. Weekends were 23 mph for both modes. Eighty five percent of speed readings were at 27 mph or less. The Committee will make its recommendations to the MIFD and MIPOA Boards and the final report will be published in the MIFD/MIPOA shared web site. Scott Parry has also prepared a report on what other towns do to control speeding and that report will also be posted.

5. **Roads Committee:** (1) Excavation Ordinance – Rufus Allyn stressed that the new Excavation Ordinance requires a permit and cash bond before any excavation occurs in the roads or adjacent rights of way. This includes driveway work adjacent to the roads. The ordinance was modeled after Stonington’s ordinance. Materials are on the MIFD/MIPOA web site. (2) Fall Repaving – French will be repaving roads this fall. (3) Suggestions & Questions – If anyone has suggestions for road improvements, they should contact Rufus and he will convey them to the Board. After being apprised of any issues, he will either handle it if it is an emergency or will report to the Board for budget considerations. A question was asked as to whether there was any list of scheduled improvements. Rufus answered that right now the only projects planned are the fall paving and some drainage pipe work on Schoolhouse Road that needs to be completed before the repaving. Rufus is also compiling a list of roads that were not repaved as part of the water main project and that need work.
6. **Nominating Committee Report:** Lee Hisle delivered this report. The Committee consisted of Kristin Foster and Lee Hisle from the MIFD Board, and, as required by the Bylaws, three non-Board members, Jeff Walker, Suzie Canning, and Betsy Lebel. Three Board members’ terms expire at the end of June, Bill Taylor, David Krupp and John Parry. All three were willing to serve for another term. As approved in last year’s annual meeting, the Town of Stonington will be the new tax collector. On behalf of the Nominating Committee, Lee presented the following slate of Officers for the fiscal year 2019-2020 and the following members of the Board (new terms in bold):

		Term Ending
President	James McAuley	2020
Vice President	David Krupp	2022
Treasurer	Ethan Tower	2020
Clerk	William Taylor	2022
Director	Robert Banas	2020
Director	Lee Hisle	2021
Director	Kristin Foster	2021
Director	Thomas Cooke	2021
Director	John Parry	2022
Tax Collector	Town of Stonington	

Jim McAuley asked if there were other nominations from the floor. Hearing no other nominations, Jim moved to close the nominations and accept the report of the

Committee. M/S/P to accept the slate of Officers and elect as Directors Bill Taylor, David Krupp and John Parry to three-year terms and appoint the Town of Stonington as Tax Collector.

Presentation of Annual Budget: Ethan Tower presented the Budget for 2019-2020 that was set forth in column four of the Budgets & Actuals discussed above. Tax revenue is projected as \$221,000 based on an increase in the mil rate from 1.63 mils to 1.70 mils. The increase is based on the need to increase our current \$25,000 Reserve for Catastrophes to \$100,000 over time by adding \$10,000 per year. The \$221,000 is also reflective of discontinuing collection of motor vehicle taxes. The town can bill for car taxes but does not identify MIFD car owners on its aggregate tax lists. As such, we recommend discontinuing car tax collection as the amount collected is only about \$3,600. Road Maintenance will increase by \$4,600, \$4,000 of which is an increase in the Drainage Budget from \$4,000 to \$8,000 as we have been running over the \$4,000 budget in recent years. Otherwise Road Maintenance, Plowing, Clearing Brush and Paving/Patching remain the same. We have eliminated Crack Seal and future sealing needs will be paid for from the Road Reserve. There is no increase in Fire Protection for the Mystic Fire Department this year. The Connecticut Water Company increase for adding the final water main lineage and hydrants is estimated. Traffic Control has been reduced by \$5,500 due to the reduced schedule for traffic control officers and one-time camera installation expense. Excess for the year is projected to be \$15,825 but may be more if Unplanned Storm Cleanup costs are not incurred. Of the \$15,825, \$10,000 will be applied to increase the Reserve Fund for Catastrophe and \$5,825 will be added to the Reserve Fund for Roads. Total costs for the multi-year repaving costs are approaching \$600,000. After completion of this year's work, we will need to add to reserves in the range of \$20,000 per year to fund those costs in the future. Road work in the coming FY will cost \$215,177 and will largely deplete the Reserve Fund for Roads which is expected to be \$26,959 after the work is paid for. Ethan made two motions: (1) To discontinue collecting motor vehicle taxes, and (2) To approve the 2019-20 budget as presented which includes taking \$215,177 from the Roads Reserve for repaving East Forest, Yacht Club and Schoolhouse roads (Heron to end). The Motions were seconded and passed by voice vote. Ethan then made an additional motion to increase the mil rate from 1.67 mils to 1.70 mils, which was also seconded and passed.

Bob Martin, on behalf of MIPOA and Jim McAuley, on behalf of MIFD, recognized Lou Allyn and Lydia Herd for their years of service as Pond Committee chair and tax collector respectively, and the two organizations will jointly make donations in their honor to a charity chosen individually by Lou and Lydia.

New Business: None

Mason Island Company Presentation: Rufus Allyn had asked to speak at the end of the annual meeting on the topic of the sale of the Mason Island Company and all its holdings. He expressed his hope that MIFD and MIPOA would form a committee to consider the impact of this sale, and particularly the ownership of 49 acres mid-island which are subject to a development restriction running in favor of The Nature Conservancy. There are also another 17.5 acres which are not subject to the restriction. Ownership of the restricted property will affect who can use the preserve which is currently restricted to MI residents. MIC is also selling its beaches and docks either as part of the company or separately, and certain riparian rights which were retained when the company sold the roads to MIPOA. Jim McAuley also noted that the MIC owns the pond.

Annual Meeting 2020:

The next Annual Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, May 23, 2020, 10:00 am at the Masons Island Yacht Club.

M/S/P to Adjourn the Meeting at 11:45 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Taylor