

**Masons Island Fire District Meeting  
September 17, 2024 – 5:30 PM  
Masons Island Yacht Club  
Minutes of Meeting**

**1. Call to Order**

President Scott Parry called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Board members Jeff Miceli (Vice President), Ethan Tower (Treasurer), Ricardo Kleinbaum (Clerk), Audrey Brown, Catherine Deichmann, Kristin Foster, Thomas Giola, Fran Hoffman, Rufus Allyn (Roads Manager) and Bill Taylor (Tax Collector) were present. Also present were Louis Allyn (MICO Owner), Rod Cook (MIPOA Director), Bob Domurat (MIPOA Roads Committee rep), and Kit Hartford.

**2. Agenda Additions/Deletions/Changes**

None.

**3. Approval of Previous Minutes**

A motion was made and seconded to approve the Minutes from the Meeting for August 20, 2024, as presented by the Clerk. The motion passed.

**4. President's Report – Scott Parry**

None.

**5. Treasurer's Report – Ethan Tower**

Ethan reported on the repaving of the west side of Black Duck, a planned capital expenditure. With the additional work on Plover, year to date maintenance expenses for paving reached \$10,600. That amount includes the work on Plover as well as \$4,100 for yellow line repainting on roads throughout the District.

A brief discussion then followed on MIFD's cash management. Bill suggested we consider placing a portion of our liquid funds in short term CDs. Given the uncertain timing of future cash disbursements, Ethan

pointed out that it was more prudent to continue holding our cash in checking, savings or a money market account. Ethan added that the current money market return of 4.9% remains compelling. Scott suggested we monitor market rate trends and potentially consider CD investments in the future.

Ethan also reported that property tax collections reached 100% of billed amounts.

## **6. Committee Reports**

### **a. Fire & Safety Committee – Jeff Miceli**

Jeff reported that during August we had three events, consisting of one Emergency Medical Service call and two minor situations.

#### **i. MI Emergency Plan Update – Kit Hartford**

Kit provided an update on the joint MIPOA/MIFD initiative which would cover situations when public emergency services cannot reach the island.

Kit circulated a draft preparedness plan outlining the establishment of neighborhood captains and emergency committees, as well as on line management and response resources. Kit stated that Capt. Schneider (Town of Stonington, Emergency Management) has reviewed the draft notification and considers it satisfactory.

A discussion then followed on the steps needed to inform the residents of the Plan. Jeff and Kit agreed that another draft of the letter would be emailed to MIFD Board members for comment with the goal of distributing a letter to the community within a couple weeks informing them of the Stonington Emergency resources that are available, and the Masons Island Emergency Response Program under development to be rolled out later this year. An information session at the Yacht Club was also contemplated.

### **b. Tick Committee – Fran Hoffman**

Scott advised that Fran and David Ludwig have agreed to switch roles on the Tick Committee. Fran is now committee head and David Ludwig will continue to assist with contract work. Fran reported that Bio Tech has been signed up for the EcoVIA MT product. The final Seascape application took place on September 10.

**c. Shoreline Protection Committee**

**i. Update on Living Shoreline Plan – Kristin Foster**

Kristin updated the Board on recent interaction with the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (“DEEP”), the scope for further work with GZA engineer, and discussions with MICO regarding shore access.

1. In response to MIFD’s proposal to implement a phased pilot project involving the use of rock sills, known as Element 1, Kristin reported that DEEP sought clarification on three issues: i) the distance of the proposed sills from the shoreline, ii) the potential use of a storm drain, and iii) whether the local community has been vetted.
2. Kristin advised that the committee responded to DEEP on all 3 issues, providing a diagram of the proposed rock placement locations and advising that no storm drains were contemplated until there is evidence of erosion or sediment building in Phase 1. With regard to the community, Kristin advised DEEP on our District meeting minutes and recent informational sessions.
3. Kristin noted that she has to submit an annual financial report to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (“NFWF”) for our grant before September 30, 2024 which has a balance for permitting of \$41,000 to spend by end November 2025. The Town of Stonington’s Director of

Finance needs to sign off on the report, according to Kristin.

4. Kristin reported on the challenges of securing a written contract with MICO that would give MIPOA the right to access the shoreline through MICO-owned property in order to position rock sills offshore. MICO has recently presented a limited Littoral Rights and Access Agreement to MIFD/MIPOA with an updated sales price of \$10,000 plus legal costs, according to Scott and Kristin.
5. In response to Ethan's question about the timeline for DEEP to respond to the revised proposal, Kristin indicated that it would take several months. She reminded the Board that all documentation for the design plan needs to be submitted to NFWF by November 25, 2025 and that our \$116,966 grantor funds will not be available after February 2026.

**ii. Update on Underground Barrier (“Riprap”) Plan - Tom Giola**

1. Tom reported that MFID has signed a contract with CLA Engineers, Inc. to design a liner erosion control barrier on a portion of Chippechaug Trail. This concept would attempt to keep all the construction in MIPOA's right of way, and would not require DEEP permitting, according to Tom.
2. Tom also updated the Board on CLA's progress in developing a design for the project. To date, CLA has completed a soil analysis, performed field work aimed at identifying the right of way boundary limits, and created multiple design concepts for the Committee's consideration, according to Tom. MIFD/MIPOA will meet the last week of September to discuss design direction.

3. Scott added that once a design concept is produced, a public information meeting can be scheduled.
4. Tom anticipates requesting Town of Stonington permitting by November 24, assuming the project plan is satisfactory.

**d. Traffic Control Committee – Catherine Deichmann**

- i. Catherine circulated June, July and August Traffic reports which revealed a consistent daily average of roughly 475 vehicles. The port-a-potty will be removed on October 17, according to Catherine.
- ii. Ricardo raised the issue of the ongoing failure of drivers to obey the stop sign on the southbound side of Chippechaug Rd (after passing the guard house). A short discussion then ensued on possible remedies including better shrub control in the area, placement of a “pedestrian zone” sign or some form of notification from the guard house.

**e. Facilities Committee – Tom Giola**

- i. Tom delivered a comprehensive presentation of the Committee’s work for calendar years 2024 and 2025, covering snow removal, tree and vegetation maintenance, road maintenance, drainage maintenance, and driveway permit applications.
- ii. Scott identified the high hourly cost for snow removal given climate change and related reduced snowfall activity. A discussion then ensued on the feasibility of soliciting alternative bids. Rufus noted that MICO has already agreed to an annual fee of \$17,975 for three years. He also indicated that alternative vendors would be smaller operations, and thus not reliable.

- iii. Tom reported on the paving of an apron on Great Marsh Road which is being covered by the owner, and regrading of Andrews Road resulting from ongoing erosion, which was covered under the road maintenance budget.
- iv. Tom advised that Black Duck West was repaved as planned, and that there were issues with the recent Plover Lane overlay related to billing and backfilling of edges. Tom emphasized the importance of better communication with Rufus and all Road Committee members with regard to project negotiations, planning and execution.
- v. Tom also reported that the property owner of 3 Mallard Road requested a widening and/or lengthening of the top of the road in order to enlarge the vehicle turn around area from the owner's driveway. Tom stated that the roads committee would consider this proposal if the owner produced a plan and agreed to cover the project cost, if executable. Rufus indicated that it would not be constructive to consider this project, given the road conditions, shallow water lines, and the potential need for re-subdivision of the plot.
- vi. Further discussion ensued on finding a solution for a longstanding drainage issue at #21 Money Point Rd. Tom noted that the Facilities committee plans to investigate further, and aim to secure a cost effective solution.
- vii. Tom reported on new driveway permits for #4 and #6 Allyn's Alley. He will reach out to the residents to ensure they conform with in-place requirements set by MIFD.
- viii. Tom raised the value of having MIFD more formally involved in reviewing the impact to MIPOA roads and drainage before and during the construction of new driveway aprons and homes. Scott was concerned with potential constraints to this idea, notably human resources and costs. The Board will consider this topic in the future.

**f. Nominating Committee – Ethan Tower/Catherine Deichmann.**

- i. Catherine noted that the process of identifying prospective Board nominees will begin later this year, contingent on the plans of any Board members with expiring terms.

**6. Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 15, 2024 at 5:30PM**

**7. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ricardo J. Kleinbaum – Clerk, Masons Island Fire District