

**Town of Blue Hill
Select Board Meeting
Monday, May 5, 2025
Minutes**

Call to Order: 5:30 PM.

Attendance/Quorum

E. Best (Chair), S. Miller, J. Wootten, A. Woog, J. Atwell (Town Administrator), D. Goettler (Minute Taker).

Approval of Minutes

S. Miller moved to approve the minutes of April 28, 2025, as submitted. J. Wootten seconded; vote passed 4/0.

Public Comment

Joyce Ferris asked for information regarding the personal property tax declaration letters that were sent to all known Blue Hill business owners. E. Best explained the purpose of the tax.

Ben Wootten provided an update regarding a recent meeting regarding the land under the Consolidated School.

Business

1. Olver Associates – Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade

Three representatives from Olver Associates gave an overview of the project, reporting on current areas of concern, the current functionality of the plant, and next steps, including a funding timeline. They are seeking written clarification about what happens if grant funds are not entirely spent by the provided deadlines, though they expressed confidence that the deadlines will be met.

2. Supplemental – Map 32 Lot 10

The sale of part of the lot reduced the total acreage below the minimum ten acres required to be in tree growth, resulting in a withdrawal penalty of approximately \$13,502 as calculated by the Blue Hill assessor's agents. S. Miller moved to approve the supplemental tax bill as recommended. J. Wootten seconded; vote passed 4/0.

3. Abatement – Map 5 Lot 12

The Blue Hill assessor's agents reported an error that resulted in the property owners being taxed on water frontage that does not belong to them. They suggested an abatement of around \$1,500 for each of the past three years, resulting in a total abatement of approximately \$4,500. S. Miller moved to approve the abatement as recommended for all three years. J. Wootten seconded; vote passed 4/0.

4. CDARS

On May 15, 2025, a \$2,000,000 CDAR will expire and roll into the Town's operating checking account. J. Atwell suggested allowing the rollover to occur at least until 2025 taxes are committed in order to have more liquid cash on hand; the matter was tabled pending further research into interest rates.

5. Liquor License Request – Hills Market (5/11/25)

S. Miller moved to approve the liquor license request as submitted; J. Wootten seconded. S. Miller suggested establishing a policy, including penalty fees, dictating how far in advance of the event a liquor license request must be submitted. Vote passed 4/0.

6. Truck Update

The truck was purchased for \$80,000, including some free spare equipment; it is currently being serviced in Ellsworth.

7. Crosswalks

The American Legion Hall would like red, white, and blue color blocks added to its crosswalk at the Town's expense; J. Wootten agreed to find out the cost. S. Miller suggested establishing a policy to prevent excessive requests for custom crosswalks; A. Woog volunteered to draft one.

8. SeaLoft Repairs

A contractor has submitted a \$31,800 bid to perform restoration work primarily centered on the windows and rot within the walls. The Board and A. Houghton agreed that the work should be done in early 2026 before inventory is moved into the building.

9. Mold Issue

The simple remediation of the black mold found in the basement of the Town Hall was quoted at just under \$13,000, not including temporary storage for the documents held in the basement or dumpster rentals. The more long-term solution, which includes laying a vapor barrier upon which a concrete floor could later be poured, was quoted around \$44,000. That exceeds the specific budget authorized for Town Hall maintenance at the recent Town Meeting, though the Board agreed that it is an acceptable use of the funds authorized for emergency and unexpected expenditures. A. Woog moved to approve the second, more long-term bid. S. Miller seconded; vote passed 4/0.

10. Conflict of Interest Policy

The Maine Municipal Association recommends that towns adopt policies relating to officers recusing themselves from decisions in case of conflicts of interest. A. Woog volunteered to seek example policies from other towns.

11. Park Lights

If the Board installs a Versant light at the park, it will be treated like any other streetlight and subject to a fixed monthly fee.

Other Business

A. Woog invited the other Select Board members to join her during her weekly office hours and summarized a conversation she had with a resident on Tuesday, April 29, 2025, who had questioned why the town was planting and preserving trees known to be unable to cope with the peninsula's shifting climate.

S. Miller suggested adding "Town Administrator Report" as a standing weekly agenda item.

S. Miller moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:27 PM subject to signing Disbursement Warrants. There was no second.

The Marine Resources Committee has advocated for a draft ordinance prohibiting industrial-scale aquaculture in Blue Hill waters. It is unclear whether such an ordinance is legal at the state level, but a law firm has agreed to defend it pro bono if it is challenged. S. Miller suggested having the law firm draft the moratorium themselves.

S. Miller moved to authorize J. Atwell to sign the discussed contract with Eastern Mold. J. Wootten seconded; vote passed 4/0.

Blue Hill is able to appoint three members to the Hancock County Planning Commission; A. Woog will ask around for interest. She also agreed to follow up on the school land discussion.

Adjournment

S. Miller moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:41 PM subject to signing Disbursement Warrants. J. Wootten seconded; vote passed 4/0.

The Disbursement Warrants were signed.