

**Town of Blue Hill
Select Board Meeting
Monday, July 14, 2025
Minutes**

Call to Order: 5:31 PM.

Attendance/Quorum

E. Best (Chair), S. Miller, B. Adams, J. Wootten, A. Woog, D. Goettler (Minute Taker).

Approval of Minutes

S. Miller moved to approve the minutes of July 7, 2025, and July 10, 2025, pending D. Goettler's receipt of executive session and adjournment details. A. Woog seconded; vote passed 3/0 with two abstentions.

Public Comment

B. Sherwell updated the Board and public about his effort to open a recreational cannabis dispensary within Blue Hill. He has received a State license contingent upon the Town's adoption of an ordinance permitting such businesses; he has also obtained approximately half of the signatures he needs on his petition to bring such an ordinance before a Town Meeting.

T. Horton asked about the plans to involve the South Blue Hill Wharf in R. Florian's moving of the finger floats. E. Best explained that the Board voted to grant permission on July 10, 2025, subject to several conditions.

R. Boulet asked if Blaze has responded to the noise complaints they have been getting; due to a transitional period in State licensing systems, the Board has not yet found out whether or not Blaze has the appropriate Special Amusement Permit.

Business

1. Proposed Industrial-Scale Aquaculture Moratorium

B. Bowden, representing the Protect Maine's Fishing Heritage Foundation, distributed a model ordinance instituting a moratorium on new industrial-scale aquaculture farms in Blue Hill's waters. He also distributed Drummond Woodsum's legal opinion on its defensibility; they have offered to defend it pro bono as long as their language is not changed. There was discussion regarding the Marine Resource Committee's and the Planning Board's opinions on the matter, including a potential revision to ban only fin-fish net-pen farms, not filter-feeding mollusk farms. B. Bowden expressed the belief that Drummond Woodsum would still defend such a moratorium as long as they could review it first.

2. GSA Property Purchase Status

The Board explained to A. Claire that the real estate deal is contingent upon a public hearing and vote at a Town Meeting. The Board has received comments from George Stevens Academy's attorney, and is formulating a response.

3. Barncastle Special Amusement Permit

S. Miller moved to schedule Barncastle's Special Amusement Permit hearing for July 21, 2025, at 5:45 PM. B. Adams seconded; vote passed 5/0.

4. Town Office Closure

The Board announced the closure of Town Hall on Tuesday, August 26, 2025, and Wednesday, August 27, 2025, for clerk training.

5. School Revolving Renovation Fund Resolution

S. Miller moved to approve the resolution as distributed and have the Town Clerk file an attested copy with the minutes. B. Adams seconded. The Board explained that the loan in question is for an HVAC system upgrade at the Consolidated School; the loan bears no interest and 30% will be forgiven. Vote passed 5/0.

6. Town Property Sign Policy/Enforcement

A. Woog examined the existing policy on Town Hall lawn signage and found that it may not have been formally adopted and is not on the Town website. The Board agreed to hold a public hearing during the Select Board meeting of July 21, 2025, to discuss a new policy, which S. Miller will draft on July 15, 2025. There was discussion about the best manner of enforcement with input from one of the frequent protestors. J. Chapman expressed concerns about a policy accidentally prohibiting fixed signs posted on Town property by appropriate representatives of the facilities in question.

7. Poverty Abatement Policy

S. Miller sought to consider alternatives to poverty and hardship abatements, which completely forgive real estate tax debt. E. Best explained a State program under which the State pays real estate tax to the Town and places a lien on the property, which ripens upon the property's transfer; S. Miller suggested instituting a similar program at the municipal level for those who do not qualify for the State program.

8. Telephone System Upgrade

S. Miller received the final expected proposal and distributed a comparison of the four potential plans. He is in favor of Consolidated Communications's proposal, which will approximately halve the Town's monthly telephone expenditures after the initial installation cost; the break-even point is within one year. A member of the public expressed concern about the Town's communications being dependent upon an Internet connection. The Board authorized him to proceed with Consolidated Communications for all four municipal buildings provided that the upfront cost will be under \$6,000 and the monthly cost under \$600.

9. Marine Resources – Floats/Wharf Resilience

The new finger floats were installed on July 7, 2025, and must be inspected by a representative of the Small Harbor Improvement Program before the 50% reimbursement grant will be disbursed. S. Miller submitted the wharf resilience survey on July 13, 2025. T. Horton asked why the public dock at the Town Wharf was closed; the Board will investigate.

10. Select Board Areas of Responsibility

S. Miller summarized his proposed areas of responsibility and listed those still waiting to be claimed. The Board clarified that the School Committee serves as the Town's liaison with the School Union.

Executive Session

Moved and seconded to enter executive session per 1 M.R.S. §405(6)(D) - Real Estate at 7:10 PM. ; vote passed 5/0. Executive session ended at 7:33 PM.

Moved and seconded to authorize Ellen Best to make counteroffer as discussed in executive session to extend all contract times by additional week provided an affirmative reply is received no later than July 18, by 5:00 PM; motion passed 5/0.

Moved and seconded to enter executive session per 1 M.R.S. §405(6)(A) - Personnel at 7:35 PM. vote passed 5/0. Executive session ended at 8:10 PM.

Moved and seconded to appoint Dana Goettler as Town Clerk at \$27 per hour, effective on July 18; motion passed 5/0.

Moved and seconded to offer employment to Zoey Pulitzer for 5 to 10 hours per week, at \$15/hour; motion passed 5/0.

Adjournment

Moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 PM subject to signing Disbursement Warrants. vote passed 5/0.

The Disbursement Warrants were signed.