

*Deer Isle Stonington Shellfish Committee Meeting Minutes 04/09/2025*

*Committee Members in Attendance:*

Crystal Gove – Chair, Ex-Commercial Digger  
Bill Gove Sr. - Commercial Digger  
Phelps Brown – Vice Chair, Mariner's Park  
Ben Hardie – Commercial Digger  
Kayne Irvine – Commercial Digger  
Emaly Piecuch – Secretary, Micro Biologist  
Kurt Ciomei – Commercial Digger  
Dick Eaton – Commercial Digger

2 Selectmen, 21 Guests,

Meeting started at 6:07 pm

1. Reading & Approval of Minutes 6:17 pm

*Report from Chair:*

- a. Ben Whale is the new supervisor for DMR's Nearshore Marine Resource Program. This is who Hannah Annis works under, and he is taking over where Mereldith White left off. They started doing research last year, similar to the Downeast Institute off the Sunshine Bar. They look at the water temperatures, species of sea life, predators, and shellfish alike.
- b. July 4th Fundraiser Meeting to Discuss Event Details, Weds. May 7th 6 PM meeting possibly at the Deer Isle Town Hall. Want to figure out what places we can get donations from and who is going to be bringing what. Check out the Shellfish Facebook Group and Page for the details on exact location. Will get Conservation Time for attending meeting. Island Advantages - it will be posted in the Events section, within a week or so.
- c. Crystal asks the group for suggestions on survey sites for Friday April 25<sup>th</sup>, May 3<sup>rd</sup> and suggestions for flat roughing for June 2nd. Mariners Park, Webb Cove, Long Cove, Southeast Hills, Percy's, Cat Cove, Spofford's Cove, Deer Isle Stonington Bridge and Causeway.
- e. Question to Evelyn and John about what Island Advantages reported on Stonington Selectboard not wanting to ask taxpayers for money for the Shellfish Committee in 2026 and Donna Brewer's statement about discontinuing the program if the Island's Shellfish program continues to run in the red. It was actually said the Selectboard doesn't want to ask taxpayers for more than they have already asked for. If the Committee receives 11k income from License sales, the Selectboard can match, still won't cover Shellfish Warden though. What the Selectboard has done, is cut the Shellfish Warden's time and mileage in half. If we get more people buying licenses, we will get more money to give her some hours back. The way things are going, as far as the Warden's salary is concerned, what Stonington has in reserve will eat the whole debt up. We will have to go to the town and ask for 30k, so there is some disconnect and that is too much to ask taxpayers. Bill stated, three meetings ago, in December, it was said by Evelyn that if the Committee did their part in trying to make an effort to come up with more funding, the Selectboard would do their part in asking the taxpayers to make up the difference. The Committee voted based on that statement. \$10k was asked of Stonington for this year. If there are 3 Selectboard members at any meeting where the Shellfish Warden, money or taxes are discussed, it is considered a Selectboard Meeting. Crystal did not realize the Shellfish Warden's hours or the Shellfish Committee's future was going to be a topic at

the last Selectboard Meeting, or else she would have been there. Evelyn reported to the Selectboard the raise of Commercial License sales, along with the fundraising event and the attempt to get more diverse streams of income for the Shellfish Committee. Donna wanted to have the specific numbers and did the math with the number of clambers and calculated that this will still be an issue of the Committee being in the red, but possibly shouldn't have said the towns would get rid of the program. The only other option is finding someone who can do the Shellfish Warden job for less money. Raelene was asked directly if she would take less time, but refused. The next Monday, at the Selectboard meeting in Stonington, they cut her time right in half. The Committee feels that a deficit in the budget each year at the possibility of \$22,000 per town, even with Commercial License price increases and fundraising because of the current cost of a Shellfish Warden is not sustainable. Crystal will go to the Deer Isle Selectboard to plead the Committee's case since the Stonington Selectboard already made a decision on it. The town Selectboards take into consideration what we say but at the end of the day it is the Selectboard that make any final decisions. It seems there is a slight disconnect between the two towns, we need to get on the same page so that we can get a plan together.

*Other Topics of Discussion:*

- a. Many Committee members felt pressured and rushed in voting for the Downeast Institute to continue their work in Deer Isle and Stonington. A re-vote on them coming to do work here was asked to be taken. Crystal motioned for a revote, seconded, All in favor – 8, Opposed 0, 2 Committee Members absent from Meeting.
- b. Emaly with type a Letter of Rescindment to Downeast Institute taking back permissions for them to continue research in Deer Isle and Stonington.

*Next Meeting: May 14<sup>th</sup> Stonington Town Hall 2<sup>nd</sup> flr. 6 pm*

*Meeting Adjourned - 7:12 PM*

*Crystal Gave*

*Don Act*

*Billy J. Bone*

*Thelma Brown*

*Chuck E. Eto*

*Kent Coomes*