

**Maine Islands Coalition
May 9th, 2019
Lighthouse Museum**

MIC Members

Roger Berle, Cliff Island, co-chair
Donna Wiegler, Swan's Island, co-chair
Ingrid Gaither, Cranberry Isles
Kendra Chubbuck, Isle au Haut
Bill Robecheck, Great Diamond
Mark Greene, Long Island
Eva Murray, Matinicus
Beverly Roxby, Frenchboro
Jay Corson, Chebeague
Kathy Warren, Vinalhaven
Arch Gillies, Islesboro
Andy Dorr, Vinalhaven

Island Institute Staff

Rob Beams, Chief Operating Officer
Kate Tagai, Senior Community Development Officer
Christa Thorpe, Education Project Lead

Special Guests

Beth Marchak, Long Island Wellness Council
Marge Powers, President, Board of Directors, Peaks Island Health Center
Kitty Gilbert, FPN, Peaks Island Health Center
Peggy Akers, Nurse Practitioner, Cliff Island
Chuck Radis, D.O. Peaks Island Health Center Board of Directors
Dorie Henning, FNP, Islesboro Health Center
Beth Limerick, Long Island
Rebekah Paredes, New Hope for Women, Rockland
Dinah Moyer, Executive Director, Islands Community Medical Services, Vinalhaven
Jes Stevens, First Responder, Monhegan
Jim Wilber, Long Island
Katelyn Damon, Public Safety Coordinator, Cranberry Isles

Legislative Representatives

Chris Rector, Senator King
Pam Trinward, Congresswoman Pingree

MIC Business

All annual community assessments have been paid.
The MIC recognized the extensive community volunteer contributions of Lisa Louise Turner of Isle au Haut with a certificate. The Certificate of Recognition is a program created by the MIC to recognize

island residents who make a difference in their community through extensive volunteerism or public service.

An excerpt from the nomination letter:

“Lisa is the soul of Isle au Haut. Lisa is the organizer, the planner, the primary person everyone calls for help, support, or to be on the committee to get things done. She pays attention to detail and often it’s those details that make her kindness to others the most genuine. Lisa serves on the lighthouse and church boards. She is the town tax collector. She organizes Tuesday’s Table, makes the notices and cooks most of the dinner. She makes 14 dozen biscuits for the 4th of July strawberry shortcake fundraiser and she sets up the space for every community potluck or event. She knits costumes for the Sunbeam’s mascot and she is the go-to person for island history. On top of all this Lisa is the Ed Tech at our beloved school and has been doing an incredible job with the students for over 20 years.”

Island Institute Updates

There is an upcoming [I-LEAD for historical societies](#) being held in Portland on May 16th and 17th. The [Sea Level Rise "shore up" grants](#) are once again open with a rolling application deadline for communities who need matching funds or grant money to help with adaptation and infrastructure assessment and planning. The [North Haven School](#) is accepting new students into their magnet program so please spread the word.

Legislature Updates

Nothing new to report.

Feature Discussion Topic: Healthcare:

- **Swan's** - [Mill Pond Health Center](#)
 - Donna began the discussion by noting that some of the MIC islands have fully functioning health centers while others have nothing, so this meeting is a chance to share experience/needs/ideas.
 - Swan's -- has a medical doctor coming every other month and a PA every month (only 18 visits per year but it used to be only 6!); Dentist comes out intermittently.
 - Swan's health clinic -- \$34,000 budget doesn't go far. No money is exchanged in clinic - billing happens on the mainland through the hospital.
 - Telemedicine (by show of hands only a couple islands have telemedicine) -- limited success because many providers still don't meet patients via telemedicine. Those that do use it have had success, but one challenge is to make it more mainstream with more providers. Building relationships between provider and patient is important and needs to be done in person which can then be maintained via telemedicine.
 - Swan's Island has a scale, blood pressure cuff, pulse oximeter all wirelessly connected where patients who need regular check-in's can come into the clinic and do the testing themselves. The info gets transmitted to their primary care doctor and if something is off it triggers a phone call and follow up.
 - Substance abuse and mental health counseling are big needs that aren't being met very well by telemedicine on Swan's either but have the biggest potential for growth.
- **Vinalhaven** - [Island Community Medical Center](#)
 - Awarded federal grant in 2004 (base grant = \$918k) - No VH property taxes used.

- Enabled island to have 2 dentists, 1 hygienist, 2 full-time medical providers, counseling and physical therapy, and a basic lab. The medical center employs 26 -- Needed to buy a building to be able to house staff.
- Limited license pharmacy (40 meds)
- Sliding scale patient payment system based on federal guidelines.
- They will take anyone as a patient regardless of their ability to pay.
- Their grand funding comes through a three-year competitive grant with an extensive application (200 pages); though lots of paperwork and strings attached, the grant allows for a fully functioning health center for the island.
- They are listed as a Federally Qualified Health Center which allows them access to grant money.
- **Islesboro** – [Islesboro Health Center](#) with 24/7 coverage
 - Small satellite pharmacy can distribute basic prescriptions
 - Lab draws once a week that are processed through Pen Bay
 - Two full time Physician's Assistants and a Nurse Practitioner on call 24-7. Physical therapist and counselor once a week
 - Housing has been an issue - previously all lived on island; now 2 providers are off island but town office built two apartments
 - Islesboro is a Federally Qualified Health Center look-alike (in that they meet the requirements of a HRSA Health Center Program but do not receive health center program funding)
- **Cliff** - Clinic every Monday
 - Idea started from Seacoast Mission meeting (every fall about bringing healthcare to islands and especially addressing aging in place)
 - Peggy is a nurse practitioner but doesn't serve as a PCP for Cliff islanders, rather as a volunteer provider at clinic helping bridge relationship with island residents and their providers back on mainland; She lives in Portland and can assist by driving islanders to mainland appointments; she sees her role as an advocate
 - [Portland Needle Exchange Program](#)- will come out to islands to provide education on Harm Reduction or Overdose Response trainings (For training information call: 207-756-8024)
 - Funds approved currently supporting broadband infrastructure - fiber build out by Axiom -- and health center build-out -- plan to have telemedicine by fall
- **Peaks** - Maine Med funding everything - very successful with lots of islander participation
 - Initially the providers only serving Maine Med patients, but now serving everyone (sliding scale payments) including summer residents
 - Notes about teaming with big hospital -- Don't underestimate ability of your island to have value to a hospital and ability to partner: Islands have a good payer mix; there's also good possibility of write-offs for the hospitals; good marketing/story-telling potential with island health centers
 - Kitty Gilbert is the on-island provider (nurse practitioner) with 700 regular full-time patients from island -- growing mix of families - age 2 to 102! Unusual for Maine Med, she can do home visits.
 - Question: Who from Maine Med would another Casco Bay island contact about similar partnerships? Contact the administrative office at 207-661-2000
 - Question: How do you handle the summer demand? Short answer - work harder! Staffing does not increase with the increased summer demand. But, as part of the

Maine Med system, they can fax back and forth with medical providers all over the country.

- Telemedicine still evolving
- **Long Island**
 - Started from almost nothing 2 years ago (EMTs and highspeed rescue boat) but recently under dedicated passion of Amy Tierney, they have opened a Wellness Center staffed by Maine Health two Mondays a month and it's been overwhelming - huge numbers of islanders have been using the service.
 - Started Aug. 21st and by end of November, most popular remote health site
 - See 10-12 people every other Monday morning
 - Island residents pick up and return the Nurse Practitioner to the boat
 - **Specific Community Successes:** Winter Soup Lunch twice a month fills a huge need - able to get people out that have been locked in all winter; Started a pizza night with a great salad bar; Trivia night with tacos.
 - **Wellness Center:** in the basement of library/school; Just received \$88,000 to renovate the rest of the basement - emergency shelter; Tele-health (Maine Health says Long is not considered rural so they can't come out there; project on hold -- more updates coming this summer)
 - Officially became 501(C)3 recently
 - Long asked Casco Bay Line to put a waiting room on the main floor at ferry terminal - got legislators, citizens/petitioners involved and plans moving forward.
- **Islesford/Great Cranberry** – Have an EMS service but no full time, dedicated health professionals practicing on island. Behavioral health appointments and counseling happening via telehealth, but it is an underused service.
- **Monhegan** - Basic service set up for 911 emergencies is through the volunteer fire department and volunteers with basic first aid/wilderness first aid training. These volunteer bridge the gap until LifeFlight personnel or some other off-island resource can arrive. There is worry about aging population and how to take baby steps toward planning; Potential for telemedicine (hook-up is there, but nothing happening at this time); Biggest issues with getting any year-round healthcare are structures available -- health center or housing and seasonal changes in the ferry schedule that make it hard for anyone to commute.
- **Discussion of Housing for Med Staff:**
 - Vinalhaven - being able to offer housing and competitive salary both continue to be the biggest challenges in attracting healthcare providers.
 - Frenchboro is an example of having no healthcare / medical providers and a very limited to nonexistent EMT/EMS service.
 - Isle au Haut also has nothing, but the Acadia park rangers from May – October are EMT trained and will respond to calls across the island, not just in the park.
 - Medical doctors (MDs) are often not the best option for providers on islands because of various reasons, so NPs and PAs might be better; nurses are a very valuable asset
 - Be careful about the burn-out of providers, especially in the summer or if they are on call 24/7 with the Emergency Services crew.
- **Other Issues/Ideas:**
 - EMTs – licensing
 - It isn't just about getting the access to health care but also about providing services to support the access and the social repercussions- if people have to go off for periods of time, what are systems that can help reduce their work (especially for the elderly) when they return, and that will incentivize a trip into the doctors?

- University of New England is educating students in rural health. Stuart Damon has been working with Vinalhaven and is helping to start a clinic on Peaks.
 - Try starting with bringing providers out to do blood draws and routine work that folks would otherwise have to go into the mainland to get. Build with word of mouth. Very valuable for the elderly, but may need help with transportation even around the island.
 - To get started with setting up Telehealth, Long Island asked Maine Health -, “Who are the doctors who have patients on Long Island?” Since patient info is confidential, they went directly to the doctors to work with them to set up schedules for telehealth on island.
 - **Frontier Status** - Vinalhaven was able to apply for this - other islands should look into it
 - **Understanding the needs of the community** -- Swan's, Isle au Haut, and Cliff have all done surveys and community outreach (also North Haven - [Aging in Place video](#)); Maine Seacoast Mission - in the past couple decades lots of surveys have been put out but they tend not to work for the smallest islands (everyone is an outlier)
 - Long Island used Island Institute data for demographic/population data from Waypoints to make their case
 - Action -- Send any example surveys or community engagement ideas to Jess on Monhegan
 - **Getting community to participate:**
 - Make it more than about health care: Mill Pond on Swan's has info sessions, video workout classes, coffee hours. Long has potlucks and food nights to get people together.
 - Word of mouth is a powerful tool. Dental visits example from Long Island -- first, get a few people who you know will go to the first few appointments offered, then let it spread word of mouth (through Facebook for example)
- **TELEMEDICINE:**
- Why so long in coming? --> Legislative hold up
 - According to experts where telemedicine is more prevalent - Telehealth is really good for routine monitoring of conditions -- can dramatically cut down on number of mainland visits but isn't a replacement for emergency medicine
 - In-home monitoring systems where patients can have a link to the local health center or distant clinic.
 - Technology can be cumbersome and less efficient especially for private practice or if end users don't have comfort with technology.
 - Big challenge for smallest islands --mainland providers need to be on board and that has been one of the biggest challenges causing services to be underutilized.
 - Sunbeam is out for repairs.
 - Action: Cranberry Isles and others served by the Sunbeam should talk to MDI hospital about sending provider
 - Telemedicine will soon be on peoples' phones --
 - Peaks is now able to get Home Health service -- advances in tech probably help with that
 - Advances in technology and adaptation will help support aging in place
 - However, older folks struggle more with the technology and so need greater help to use the advantages it can provide.

- It has been especially useful for behavioral/mental health
- **ISLAND UPDATES**
 - **General Announcements:**
 - Next Meetings: September 12th** Topic: pesticides/herbicides
 - November 14th** Topic: Broadband
 - **New Hope For Women:** Rebekah Paredes = new Executive Director for New Hope for Women which covers: Isle au Haut, Monhegan, Matinicus, North Haven, Islesboro, Vinalhaven
 - In 2019 have served 8 island residents; over last few years have served 31 islanders
 - Trying to strengthen their service and partnership with islands recognizing that many unique challenges exist.
 - Action: Rebekah may be reaching out to MIC members in her region for introductions to those working on or interested in domestic violence prevention and support.
 - **Islesboro:**
 - Arch has a ferry rates meeting this afternoon. The ferry rates is an ongoing issue.
 - Tick problems -- health center is tracking and educating
 - Optimism on Ferry Issues: Governor Mills and Commissioner of Transportation Van Knowe seem on board to help solve the ferry service issues and find a fair rate system. Commissioner visited Islesboro for meeting/listening tour - 150 attendees came. He plans to visit other Pen Bay islands as well. He acknowledged that "Tariff 8" will not continue and the problem will be fixed.
 - The Healthcare needs are mostly for the growing older population. Elder residents home has 8 beds and works closely with Wellness Center.
 - **Chebeague:**
 - Spring is coming: Route 1 parking lot is half full
 - Winter weekly soup lunches ended in April
 - Town Meeting coming up:
 - Article for Broadband - authorizing \$250k town investment into a grant-raising fund. People are concerned about rising taxes. The original ask was for \$700k over 2 years from town; Broadband Committee is working with Axiom; If the vote doesn't pass, the committee will probably be reconstituted
 - Wireless Partners, LLC is presenting on June 26th about a possible wireless option for internet service
 - Looking at building new wharf or fixing existing wharf -- build new wharf = \$10million; Fix existing wharf = \$1-\$6million (note: new \$1.6 million school raised taxes by \$75 per \$100k prop value)
 - Peoples' Petition is circulating to keep the site for the wharf permanently undeveloped and publicly accessible
 - **Vinalhaven:**
 - Tick meeting - 20-30 people; lots of information coming through Health Center - big problem on island so they're trying to understand the most problematic areas better (tick drag)
 - Ferry issues
 - EMS service -- now at paramedic level - looking at offering more
 - Harbor Ordinance -- if there's a mooring fee, people will probably vote No

- School is looking at a new leadership structure; hired new Superintendent and principal and promoted 2 teachers to assistant principal to help with transition
- 5% increase in Mill Rate
- Broadband and Sea Level Rise - technical assistance grants
- **Cliff:**
 - Axiom is currently stringing fiber throughout island -- broadband will be available by next month
 - Lost a couple of veteran fishermen which has been hard on the community
 - Good news - new baby on the island! Hard news: the mother had a stroke and is at Maine Med
 - 2 kids in the school
- **Isle au Haut**
 - Current teacher retiring - 40 applications for new teacher and excited to have found a good fit (w/husband and kindergarten daughter - Spanish speaking!)
 - 2 new babies born this year!
 - Broadband was a big discussion - Broadband Committee wanted \$20,000 - grant-raising starter
 - Article warrant asked for \$20,000, voted and approved at \$10,000
- **Long Island:**
 - Town meeting in 2 days -- One petition for \$20,000 for the new cemetery
 - A lot of aquaculture lease activity in Casco Bay
 - Casco Bay Lines - though the new ferry is still controversial, there's a decent process in place and CBL is putting effort and money into facilitating meetings
 - Control Burn last week working with the forest service - Burned 15 acres
 - Deer and ticks are a huge problem -- State has given plenty of permission/tools to deal with the deer (hunting allowance, etc.) but they only took 11 last year and there are 50-60 deer on island
- **Matinicus:**
 - Healthcare: everyone wants to talk about the emergencies/life-flight, etc. but we also need to be talking about the long-term care
 - New assessor -- RN, Young mother, married an island fisherman --> seems to be a good balance
 - Little baby boom on island
 - Still no students in the school, no commitments enrollment in the school yet so future planning is uncertain.
 - After a discussion of school closure, the Selectmen investigated and discovered that closing the school could also mean the closure of the plantation and so the school will remain open.
 - With the whale rules and bait shortage, lobstermen are facing a lot of uncertainty this fishing season.
- **Frenchboro:**
 - Featured in Our Town section of midcoast region
 - Rachel = new school board member - island rep to MDI - islander, great person for the job, former teacher (and currently serving as sub/interim teacher though no students on island)
 - About to hire a new teacher (who has been a teacher on another MIC island)
 - Much less trouble this year with fuel access

- Need to stop recycling paper because it's piling up too fast
- Island Fellow - Natalie is hoping to stay on but an upcoming meeting will help determine her role
- Aquaculture Business Development program - 6 Frenchboro residents participating
 - Maine Coast Heritage Trust seems to be working well
- New MCM boat Moonbeam (36' lobster-style boat) -- transportation boat for Sharon/Maine Seacoast Mission (as Sunbeam is out for repairs for about 6 months)
- Town Meeting - 3rd week of June
- **Great Diamond Island:**
 - 1/4 of island is public (part of city of Portland); rest is private
 - Island is discussing seceding from Portland, but there are issues from the tightening of restrictions since Long Island left. Reasons for wanting to secede:
 - People feel the city is not paying attending: e.g. West side of island is eroding away
 - Broadband -- city doesn't want to invest in infrastructure on island
 - There are about 75 year round residents now (20 in cottage area and 50 in condo area) -> increase in population owed to retiring communities
 - Healthcare related -- 2-3 AEDs on island (recommends other islands make sure to have them too)
 - To the Liability question -- Good Samaritan law-->immune from liability if you jump in to help with medical-related emergency
- **Swan's**
 - Ferries: meeting with DOT commissioner in June and feeling hopeful; Ferry-advisory board members wrote a letter saying they thought all the islands should pay the same rate
 - Lighthouse under restoration - raised lots of grant money
 - Broadband: former committee faltered then folded; now much more energized committee hoping for a restart to the process
 - Fire Dept: Lots of young men joining
 - 3 new First Responders, able to help the 5 EMTs
 - Twins born last week! Axle and Cooper
 - New vehicle inspection officer on island
- **Cranberries**
 - 5 islands - 2 year-round communities -- but local newspaper only published Islesford news! Caused some grumbling - school kids are writing a letter to the editor
 - Selectmen are considering a moratorium on new private docks after 3 new constructions in one year (seasonal residents)
 - March town meeting - everything passed; \$350k for new fire truck
 - Decided to dissolve the Municipal Advisory Commission.
 - School doing well -- one teacher retiring; need to find housing for whoever the new teacher is (they had lots of good applicants)
 - Broadband = success! Easy to say that now, but it was years of controversy -- required a lot of education in the town about the reasons and benefits. It was essential to have the selectmen on board.
- **Peak's**
 - Parking in Portland has become a big political issue
 - New ferry discussions still in process

- Healthcare: sometimes challenging to convince people to leave the island for serious medical issues.
- Chuck Radis has written a book about island medicine from his years of work as practitioner in Casco Bay - "Go By Boat"
- **Possible Providers:**
 - UNE or other educational programs have upper year students/residents who might be interested in serving on islands