Speakers
- Christa Thorpe, Island Institute
- Heather Moran, Head of Archives Services, Maine State Archives
- Chris Johnson, Deputy Secretary of State for Information Services
- Adam Fisher, Director of Collections Development and Digital Initiatives for the Maine State Library
- Daisy Mueller, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) within the Department of Homeland Security.

Meeting Participants
Kendra Chubbuck, Isle au Haut, Co-Chair
Eva Murray, Matinicus
Beth Marchak, Long Island
Cheryl Crowley, Cliff Island
Jan Keiper, Frenchboro
Ingrid Gaither, Cranberries

Eric Best, Frenchboro
Robin Goodell, Long Island
Margaret Snell, Maine Seacoast Mission
Jim Buccheri, Monhegan
Catherine Haley, Vinalhaven
Laurie Farley, Swan's Island
Gwen May, Swan's Island
Victoria Wood, Chebeague
Mark Greene, Long Island
Carley Feibusch, Monhegan

Island Institute
Alex Zipparo
Kate Tagai
Zuzy Duffy
Olivia Jolley

Maine Legislators
Rep Valli Geiger- District 93

Congressional Delegation Staff
Kelly Cotiaux, District Rep, Collins
Zach Schmesser, District Rep, Golden
Sarah Lawrence, District Rep, Pingree

Introduction to MIC and Welcome from co-chair Kendra Chubbuck

Introductions of panelist members

Chris Johnson, Deputy Secretary of State for Information Services. Departments underneath the Secretary of State include the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, voter services, and Maine State Archives. Maintaining, acquiring, and customizing application services for the agencies they service. They develop a lot of it in-house, testing and customizing it to ensure it remains safe and secure for public trust. They use external experts to conduct penetration testing on the systems to make sure that hackers wouldn't have a way in and identify any vulnerabilities in the system for removal. This work is important given the sensitivity of the information that our agencies hold for people as well as the really important services that are needed to maintain public trust, like elections.

Daisy Mueller, Cyber Security and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) a subset of the Department of Homeland Security - work with all sectors of public infrastructure. They work with protecting critical infrastructure which is defined as anything that effects public health, safety, and the economy. There are both cyber and physical teams, emergency communications and protection teams. They travel around the state to give advice on how to keep critical infrastructure (cyber and physical) secure. Assessments, instant response plans, and anything that has to do with protecting networks and facilities. Resources are free to municipalities.

Adam Fisher, Director of Collections Development and Digital Initiatives for the Maine State Library. The state library has a number of services geared towards rural Maine including books by mail service and materials lending through Inter-Library Loan. We have a number of projects where we've loaned out equipment or had people coming to the scan lab to document historical materials including town records and reports, newspapers, and valuable historical documents. They work with towns, libraries, and historical societies. Collections can be found at digitalmaine.com where they keep the digital repository of items. Over 100 communities have something in the repository ranging from text materials to images and oral histories.

Heather Moran, Head of Archives Services, Maine State Library. Responsible for preserving and making accessible the records of Maine Government. Everything from the three branches of government and all the state agencies. There is a team of 6 archivists and several imaging specialists currently digitizing 62,000 boxes of materials. They work with towns to set records retention schedules- what needs to be kept and for how long. They don't do digitizing for communities, but are available to consult and advise on best practices for keeping records and digitizing.

Christa Thorpe, Community Development Officer for Broadband and Digital Equity at the Island Institute. Strengthening state and policy support and locally providing technical assistance and planning grants for community driven broadband infrastructure. We are a partner of the Maine Connectivity Authority as one of 13 regional broadband partners helping craft a statewide digital equity plan. The first ever digital equity plan was approved by NTIA in February as the first plan in the nation to be approved. The plan was developed by a broad statewide coalition and we are now looking for key ways to implement the plan. We started a series in the Maine Municipal Associations Magazine on what the digital equity plan means at the municipal level and how they can be involved in the process of closing the digital divide.

Digital equity is about increasing access to an affordable, high speed internet connection and access to affordable devices, and access to skills to use both things. Maine Connectivity Authority is responsible for deploying over $300 Million in broadband infrastructure funds over the next five years and a lot of that has already gone to communities so now they are motivated to make sure we can take advantage of that infrastructure. One of the key roles we see for municipalities is that the town office is the place that everyone in town goes and they may know who in town may fit into one of the populations most likely to be left behind and can benefit the most of the resources that will be coming out related to the plan. According to the National Digital Inclusion Alliance 89% of Mainers identify as one of the populations more likely to be left behind when it comes to affordable internet connections, devices, or skills. Those populations include older adults, folks with disabilities, incarcerated or formally incarcerated individuals, and a number of other important populations. Municipal staff themselves may feel overwhelmed trying to keep up with the rapid pace of technology and the skills needed for that as well, so the plan addresses the ways that digital skills will be improved in Maine over the next five years.

Maine Municipal Articles on Digital Equity:
https://www.memun.org/DesktopModules/Bring2mind/DMX/API/Entries/Download?Command=Core_Download&EntryId=5987&language=en-US&PortalId=0&TabId=38#page=33

Maine Digital Equity Plan:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cMU4pGpHKQjCyvhq9mgcksE_ck88WdLU/view

Maine State Library https://archives.maine.gov/
First steps for digitizing records
1. Assess what you have in terms of physical records and make sure they are being cared for and stored properly.
2. Understand if you want to digitize yourself or if you will be hiring someone to do the work.
3. Get in touch with Heather Moran, Head of Archives or Felicia Kennedy who oversees the records management division
    a. They don't do the digitizing but they advise towns
    b. They are on the Maine Historical Records Advisory Board and have access to some federal funding resources for acquiring archival preservation items
    c. They have a scan lab and lending library of tools that municipalities can access
    d. They understand and can walk through best practices and resources and give you things to think about regarding standards and procedures.
    e. They are a repository of last resort for some records: https://digitalmaine.com/
4. Create a records retention schedule so you know what is the most important thing to start with and what doesn't need to be digitized.
One point to remember - digitization is not preservation. Certainly digitize for broader access, but the original documents must be retained by the town. You cannot scan and toss them to make space.

In the Digital Maine system, towns can upload content on their own. That content can be integrated with the town website, if that is something they choose to do. We have towns using the system as the home for all their meeting minutes so at the end of a board of selectmen meeting they can upload it directly to the repository and it's there.

Does the Maine State Archive provide free storage for digital data?
> The Archives pays for its own storage with the IT department, so we do not offer free storage to communities (it would overwhelm the state system). However, MSA or Chris Johnson can certainly advise on secure cloud storage for digital data.
> there is also funding available through this link (which is dependent on annual federal funding)
> https://www.maine.gov/sos/arc/organizations/grants.html

Question: What are some common features in a town website and a town's internal computer systems that are particularly vulnerable to cyber attacks?

Chris: State systems like rapid renewal that can be found on town websites are linked to the state system and the protections of those systems.

Daisy: The most common types of attacks on an island system would be a ransomware attack which is where the system is locked and a ransom is asked for to unlock the computer or a distributed denial of services attack (Ddos) where the system is flooded with requests that lock the system down. The ransomware attack encrypts your system through malware, and these come from infected machines.

The user is often the weakest part of the computer system when they click on an infected link that allows unauthorized use of the computer or their credentials get stolen. Once they have the password, they have access to your systems and can do nefarious things.

When you get a phishing e-mail and you click that link, it downloads malware onto your system. That malware could either be a ransomware variant or it could be a botnet variant, either way, it allows an external user to access your computer. You can also have an infected computer through an unpatched software through things called zero day exploits. These are holes in the software that we don't know about until the day that they start exploiting them and start attacking computers.

Service level agreements are important when working with 3rd party vendors to understand liability. The state can't recommend specific vendors but they can recommend what to look for when choosing a vendor.

a. One of the things to look for is that if the third party vendor is compromised for some reason, is there a breach notification timeline? Do they have to notify you within 24 hours or at all because that can be a conduit into your system as well.

b. Do they hold any liability if they are breached and your data is exfiltrated or compromised?

Safety Measures to take:
1. Have an incident response plan saved and printed out so it can be accessed even if the computer/system can't be accessed.
2. Develop a call roster- if you have a cyber attack- who are the first 10 people you are going to call?
3. Make sure the system is backing up regularly to which ever method you've chosen
   a. Backups- onsite, offsite, in the cloud have different vulnerabilities and strengths.
4. Use a .gov domain for official town sites
5. Know if you have cyber insurance and who your IT person is so you can contact them.

Critical infrastructure or operational technology systems have different threats.

1. Easier and safer to offer information on a website where the systems are held by someone else (i.e. Rapid Renewal is managed by BMV and the system security is their responsibility).
2. Enable multifactor authentication where there is a back-end login. That way you are aware if someone is trying to get access to the system.
3. Don't let someone get at your computer systems in the office- if they have physical access and you are already logged in, it gives them access.
4. Accepting a USB drive can introduce malware to the system.
5. If you offer public access to WiFi in the office, make sure the workstations and servers in your office is on a different server. So people can't get at data or disrupt services through the public WiFi.

For small communities, it's probably not worth standing up a set of firewalls, web filters, and servers to host something that's going to get a lot of use and have transactions that are accepting customer personally identifiable information that you have to protect under laws. It's a lot easier and safer to offer information on a website and direct people to services someone else has liability for maintaining. Otherwise, getting an IT consultant that can help you with an appropriate secure design and limiting dynamic aspects of the website that someone else can exploit is easier.

There is a lot pressure on election systems in particular to create distrust which can make small communities targets of disruption.

Data can get corrupted, so it is important to keep the original records. Digitize but keep the originals.

Daisy: our recommendation if you do get ransom ware is to not pay the money.

There is no guarantee that they won't resell the information they gathered, or that they will unlock your system even if you pay the money.

If they unlock the system and give it back, they may have made a copy of that information to sell on the web.

Proper back-ups and incidence response plan allows you to take a measured approach in a crisis- wipe the system and reup it using the backup.

Question: Can you share some resources that are out there for town officials to tune up their digital literacy or how they can increase their skills with some of the software they regularly use?
The state has used [Know Be 4](https://www.knowbe4.com/) to train staff to be more aware of how they can be fooled and the tricks that people use to get access to your systems. https://www.knowbe4.com/

The State of Maine has a video series with engaging stories you'd want to watch anyway but they are revealing the techniques and things to be aware of around cybersecurity and data protection.

The Department of Homeland Security has a slew of trainings including de-escalation training and active shooter training, incident response planning and cyber hygiene training that people can take.

Christa: Beth Marchek from Long Island really set us down this path of better understanding how towns digitize their services and the things they need to think about as they do as part of the process Long Island is going through while implementing their comprehensive plan which specifically mentioned things around the need to modernize the town's IT systems.

Some of the strategies in the Digital Equity Plan call out making government resources more accessible online from making portals easier to access on phones and tablets to building the digital skills of Mainers.

National Digital Equity Center founded by Susan Corbett have free trainings across digital skills topics. All classes are online with live instructors. https://digitalequitycenter.org/classes/
1. Classes can be done through partnerships with libraries so there can be a local in-person component and someone to run the tech for those whose digital literacy is low.
2. Digital navigator training can train a local person who can then help connect people to NDEC resources and trainings.

Currently trying to assess what are the most needed skills at the municipal level so we can build a resource that includes standards of practice, skills, etc.

1. In Searsport and Orland there are classes being offered at the Town Office from NDEC that are relevant to the specific needs of the community. The instructor is on Zoom but there is a facilitator volunteer in the room helping guide participates through a class.
2. Internet Safety is one of their really important classes. It talks through phishing schemes and how to set good passwords and a lot of information on the broad topic of internet safety.
3. Currently building trainings for municipalities on how to run effective zoom and hybrid meetings, and have the right policies in place to allow committees to be meeting on zoom.

Question: What are your thoughts about safe, smart off site storage?

Chris: There is no single answer to that but a few tips:
1. Talk with IT vendors, there are a number of solutions that meet the bar and you have to decide based on who you have in house to provide technical services and implement whatever system you choose.
2. Look for vendors that also offer cloud services and manage the backup to the cloud
3. Make sure that it is getting backed up off site in case of fire.
4. Having Broadband matters when backing up to the cloud.
5. What goes into the cloud needs to be encrypted in transit and in storage
6. What goes into the cloud should be immutable (what goes into the cloud is on a different access point or credentials than other systems so it is safe from ransomware attack. But you don't want someone who gets control of your server that's running its backups to be able to go out and encrypt what's in the cloud as well with their own keys so that you have nothing good to restore from if malware strikes.)

The system and the software is the most expensive part until you get into truly immense amounts of storage. So it can be cost effective, especially if you don't need constant access.

Daisy: Think about when you are doing backups- cloud based, offsite backups require internet. Please consider looking at it from an all-hazards point of view, not just from nefarious actors but think about fire, floods, etc. Disasters are man-made, technological, or natural and can impact data storage. So if you have a building on the other side of town and you make a back up weekly and bring it over there, it's locked and secure but then you have a fire. Will the fire destroy the disk? Is it in a fire proof safe? If you have a sprinkler system that goes off will it destroy the backup? In Emergency Management we look at all possible hazards.

Question/Comment: On some government sites the password is updated or needs to be changed every 30 days but when you only do your taxes quarterly, it can cause frustration and become a huge time sink and that makes people vulnerable. It is especially bad on Government websites which makes it hard for contractors to work with the National Park. It is impossible.
        Kelly: Can you send an email outlining those challenges?

Chris: If you are signed up with SAM you've gotten notices about renewing listing there and scammers target those update emails to get people to click through on their link or offer to pay for services people can get for free. The new NIST recommendations are that people use passphrases like a favorite lyric, line from a movie, statement or something that's memorable to you and you change one character in it or leave a word out. It is memorable because it is meaningful. They are also moving from changing it every 30 days to every 90 days because they studied the issue and found that actual practices people used were safer with 90 day changes than with 30.

Question: Does the online work of Treasurers pose a particular set of security issues that requires any special attention?

Daisy: We have an assessment called the Cyber Performance Goals where they will meet and talk about the systems in place and after the hour long assessment, they will provide a document with recommendations and options for consideration. If there are things that tie back to government grants, we will try to highlight where those opportunities are as well.

Peggi: I think you should also call another town. Other towns are figuring out. We can't file paper anymore with the government. To call another town and talk to them about how they do it can be helpful.

Kelly: What about Maine Municipal Association?

Eva: The Maine Town and City Clerks association has a list-serv thing where clerks can ask each other "how do you do something ?" Getting to ask peers questions is great for the tiny towns. MMA has an upcoming conference on this topic! Link :

https://www.memun.org/Training/Conferences-Conventions/Technology

Question: "Talk to vendors" to a small town like Frenchboro is not as helpful as "here is a really great/competent/trustworthy IT consultant who could come in and for a reasonable price in reasonable time assess the real Frenchboro needs in order of priority. Is such a person known already by anyone here?

Christa: I shared this with Eric on recommendation from Bremen's town clerk (https://www.harrislocalgov.com/company/about-us/), but yes, I welcome direct follow-up with any of you on this since I too am learning as I go!

Ingrid: A couple of non-profits on Great Cranberry have worked with Matt McFarland at Downeast IT. I think he's in Ellsworth.

Island Updates

Long Island: Town Meeting is tomorrow, May 4th. Bursting at the seams with infrastructure needs. Shifting from all volunteer to trying to pay people stipends. Implementing new revaluation numbers and $.40 rate increase. Voting on LD2003- two different bills- one accepting as is and one regulating rentals. Voting on implementing $25 parking at municipal

office and golf cart ordinances. FEMA has been out, storm damage recovery and repair is ongoing.

Vinalhaven: Lots of damage from the storms, repairing bridge work. Struggling with ferry service to be reliable. Down to one ferry boat servicing the island.

Cliff Island: Everyone is getting ready for summer season, road work material and machinery and construction. Humming bird sighting this morning. Main wharf transferred ownership from Portland to State of Maine. State has been out to review the wharf damage from the storms. Uncertain of the future of the wharf, don't have a voice connection with the state to advocate for island resources. Looking for recommendations on how to connect with the state. Eva recommends Paul Merrill who can direct messages to the right person if he isn't it.

Frenchboro: Waiting on dredging project that has been funded but not yet started. Planning shoreline code revision and update. Want to highlight the connection between economic development and the ferry. Is there more we can do together to raise the issue of ferry service in a state that has as many islands as it has and the potential for economic growth?

>Representative Geiger: The House Chair of Transportation, Lydia Croft, used to live on Vinalhaven, but most of them are thinking about highways and they aren't thinking about ferries like roads. We wouldn't ask people commuting on I95 to pay $50. Recently wrote a letter highlighting this issue. Representatives are here for 4 terms at most which loses a lot of institutional memory so they just restarted a coastal representative coalition to better represent the coast.
>Jan: I've been the alternate on the ferry advisory board and they do listen, but I'm not sure they fully understand. MDOT tells us Frenchboro will never have its own ferry because it isn't cost effective.
>Eric: The ferry is the key issue against what everything else is measured – the economy, the connectivity. This is the thing. BTW, Maine's tidal coastline is about 3500 miles and state roads are about 16,500, which means the "ferry as roads" is about 20 percent of the transportation challenge, if you want to think of it that way…

Matinicus: Matinicus and Vinalhaven were sharing the Libby. Hopefully the new boat will be online in the next month, but it has less vehicle space than the Libby. It will carry fewer vehicles to Matinicus. Critical people resigned positions so they are in a rebuilding phase. Eva got 3.5 cups of Maple Syrup from her backyard trees in her first year sugaring. Hummingbirds are back.

Isle au Haut: New family moved to the island with 3 dogs and 2 kids making 7 mailboat trips to get everything to the island. Five kids in the school. Uneventful town meeting on Tuesday. Peggi retired after 9 years as selectwoman. Four baby lambs born and the same farm has ducks and goats, too. Roads are crumbling. We need to band together as MIC to advocate so the Government will listen in a positive way.

Swan's Island: FEMA visit May 4th. Agree with supporting a collective voice for the ferry. After 50 years of town service, Sonny Sprague retired.

Cranberries: The Cranberries has a private ferry service and one of their challenges is finding qualified captains. Sutton Island is a summer only island within the town. The municipal dock was destroyed in a winter storm and the ferry hasn't been able to land at all. It's caretaking and cleanup season so the workmen haven't been able to get out there to prepare for the season. The store is not yet open after the fire 1.5 years ago, but perhaps by Memorial Day.

Monhegan: Storm damage recovery has been tricky.

A few more digital inclusion resources from Christa Thorpe cthorpe@islandinstitute.org :
- **Island Institute/Maine Municipal Association Blog Series:** https://www.islandinstitute.org/2024/04/26/municipal-digital-capacity-a-dirigo-moment-for-maine/
- **NDEC free digital literacy classes:** https://digitalequitycenter.org/classes/
- **Give IT Get IT --** Affordable technology devices for low-income Mainers: https://giveitgetit.org/
- **Remote Work for ME:**
    o Free online *Remote Work Essentials for Professionals* training through Washington County Community College: https://wccc.me.edu/professional-development/pathways-in-computer-science-information-technology/remote-work-essentials-for-professionals/
    o Live trainings this month, including at Island Institute: https://alfondcenter.mccs.me.edu/remote-events-spring24