

**TOWN OF BREMEN
SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES
VIA ZOOM AND IN-PERSON
October 16, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.**

Selectmen present: Tom Papell, and Wendy Pieh

Town Representatives: Melanie Pendleton, Town Clerk, Keena Cates, Deputy Town Clerk, Eric Teele and Ann Nesslage, BCC

Public present: Hal D'Alby, Susan Davis, Juanita Roushdy, Steve Barnes, Rebecca Norton, Naomi Martin, Mary Renzi, Martha Frink, David Light, Tony Ferrara, Cheryl Ferrara, Christina Wallace from LCN and Nancy Terrell Hall and Tom Wilson via ZOOM.

The meeting was called to order at 5:02 pm.

Hunting on town property was discussed, Naomi Martin verified that there is a sign on the kiosk at the Hilton O'Connor property advising the walkers to wear orange. It is the responsibility of hunters to know the distance to the trails and to maintain that required distance while hunting.

Steve Barnes presented a memorandum as to information and suggestion as to management of the Hay Property, this has been attached.

On a motion made by Selectman Papell, seconded by Chair Pieh, to accept the mowing bid of \$1200.00 from Ricky Parlin for the Hay, Town Center and behind the Fire Station properties. So voted 2-0

Ann Nesslage, BCC will put on the agenda for the next meeting the items that Steve Barnes brought up at this meeting to be discussed.

The previously tabled item of the Fireworks Ordinance, Steve Barnes:

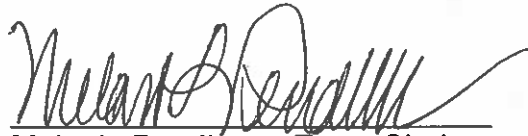
Fire Chief, Eric Teele, is to be in touch with the State Fire Marshall Office/Forestry as per requested by Selectman Marsh to see how to handle permitting and possible gps location if any available. There is no update on this item at this time.

Next item Steve discussed is the Bremen Bounders and would revisit this item when Isobel Curtis was back in town and he had time to discuss further with her.


On a motion made by Selectman Papell, seconded by Chair Pieh, to accept the warrant October 10, 2025. So voted 2-0

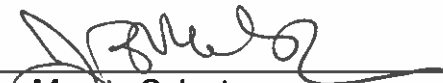
On a motion made by Selectman Papell, seconded by Chair Pieh, to accept the minutes October 2, 2025. So voted 2-0

On a motion made by Selectman Papell, seconded by Chair Pieh to adjourn at 5:54pm.


Melanie Pendleton, Town Clerk

BREMEN BOARD OF SELECTMEN


Wendy Pieh, Chair


John Marsh, Selectman


Thomas Papell, Selectman

Memorandum

Date: 13 October 25
To: Bremen Board of Selectmen
Bremen Conservation Committee
From: Stephen E. Barnes
Re: Management of the "Hay Field"

It is my opinion, that the present management of the "Hay Field" is misguided and inappropriate. I reach this determination based on historical knowledge, experience and observation.

History

Here are the results of a deed search of the digitized deed transfers available at the Lincoln County Registry of Deeds:

McLain/Anderson/Hay Field Deed Transfers:

- 05/17/1915 Marius McLain to Albert T. McLain
- 06/08/1967 Heirs-at-Law and Children to Catherine McLain (Albert McLain died in 1956)
- 06/25/1969 Catherine McLain to George Anderson 25/27ths
- 06/25/1969 Robert McLain, guardian of Astor McLain to George Anderson 2/27ths
- 08/15/1969 George Anderson to George Anderson and Edna Anderson
- 04/01/1991 George Anderson to Edna Anderson
- 01/24/1996 Edna Anderson to John and Kristi Hay
- 01/29/1996 John and Kristi Hay to Charles Hay
- 05/03/2013 Charles Hay to Town of Bremen (with restrictions)

Referring to these records, the McLain family owned the field for ~54 years, the Anderson family owned the field for ~27 years, and Hay family owned the field for ~17 years. The deeded record of ownership can be completed by a manual search at the Registry of Deeds. This worthy activity is suitable for either the Historical Society or the Conservation Commission because it provides a window into the lives of the people who created Bremen. The record could be memorialized within Town's documentation and a memorial plaque located somewhere on the field.

Growing crops and raising animals in Bremen was, and remains, incredibly hard work. The "Hay Field" should stand in testament to this fact and serve as a daily reminder of Bremen's citizens' many productive efforts. Based on the oral transmission of McClain family members: Hilda Parlin and Celia Ramsdell, the field was actively cultivated during their childhoods. Both of these women recalled the onerous task of picking rocks from the field and slowly filling the gully on its southern edge. If this rock pile still exists, it should also be memorialized to encourage people to think about the hard work their ancestors did to enable our modern ease.

We first saw the Anderson field fifty-five years ago after crossing the Turner Road from the Biscay Road. At that time, the Turner Road was entirely dirt and its adjoining woodlots just beginning to show third-growth timber. Upon reaching the end of the Turner Road, there was a glimpse of Broad Cove. Turning north, toward Waldoboro, the view immediately opened to the glory of Broad Cove as viewed across the Anderson field. The field was well tended, and commemorated the hard work of good field maintenance. This panorama was one of Bremen's most "iconic" views.

To the best of my knowledge, there are only three people still alive who mowed the entire field: Ricky Parlin, Lee Johnston, and Stephen Barnes. I (with my father Edward) first mowed the field in 1982 and

continued to do so until around 1984 when Lee Johnston, a dairy farmer from Jefferson, Maine took over the mowing for a couple of years. Both Lee and I mowed the field for the hay crop. After Lee stopped mowing the field, I resumed mowing it around 1988 and continued to do so until the early 2000's. Mowing the field for hay was not economically justified. I continued to do so out of the romance associated with field's incredible view. For me, fields are important. The Anderson field, together with its view, embodies many things about Bremen's past: farming, homesteading, clamming in Broad Cove, fishing out in the Narrows and living close to Nature; these things I still care about.

I think that the Town should maintain the field, *as it was prior to 2013*, to show respect for both the people who made the field, those who maintained the field and to honor the Townspeople's historic endeavors and lifestyle.

Purchase by the Town in 2013

When John Hay purchased the field, he intended to place protective covenants on the field. He reversed his intentions almost immediately. While walking in the field after his purchase, he was overpowered by the polystyrene vapors emitted by the adjacent fiberglass boat company, Maine Cat (now defunct). We spoke about his experience before I mowed the field that year. John, a naturalist, found Maine Cat's pollution deeply disturbing and offensive. He determined placing of protective covenants on the field would no longer serve a useful purpose, therefore, he left the field open for future development.

When Hank Nevins proposed the Town purchase the field, several Town meetings were held for discussion. The proposal for the Town's purchase included four main elements:

1. Preserving the field would maintain one of Bremen's "iconic" views in perpetuity.
2. Preventing housing development and increased property tax burden.
3. The property would provide an access point to the clam-flats and salt water.
4. The property would provide a general recreational area for walking, hiking, sledding, skiing and picnicking.

Despite some contention, the purchase motion passed during a well attended Special Town Meeting. One of the purchase deed restrictions was that it be named the "Hay Field". Irony?

The "Hay Field", at present, is maintained, as an invasive plant beta site. This does not fulfill all the promises given during the Town's purchase discussions. The field is not a general recreation area and no longer reminds one of a well maintained field's intrinsic beauty. For those who love the agrarian countryside, the field now stands mute testament to the neglect and apathy underlying the rapid loss of Maine's arable land.¹ Similar testaments are commonplace throughout Maine.

To many, the "Hay Field" has become an eyesore. At a minimum, the Town should attempt to meet the standards set by its impoverished farmers, clam-diggers and fishermen.

Invasive Plant Species

Given the present concerns about invasive plant species, it is strange that the Conservation Committee chooses to maintain a major public property as an invasive plant beta site. Invasive plant species are spread through a wide range of mechanisms such as lateral root systems, rhizomes, wind-borne seeds,

¹Maine has lost roughly 210,000 acres of farmland in the last twenty years. The rate of loss will increase dramatically in the next few decades as elderly farmers pass without replacement. This trend and concerns of rising "food insecurity" seem diametrically opposed. Intelligent agricultural policy is needed especially if climate diaspora happens as expected.

and seeds scarified by birds and animals. Bremen's "Hay Field" is now a massive reservoir of obnoxious plants ready to invade surrounding properties. Rather than growing invasive species, en masse, a wiser course would be to demonstrate good property maintenance and, perhaps, offer meaningful educational seminars/workshops on preventing the spread to of invasive species or even teaching how to generate fertility in clay-bound soil.

The long-term effects of the Town's invasive plant beta site should not be underestimated. The presence of the multi-floral rose in Broad Cove exists because the US Department of Agriculture introduced this plant for use as a "living" fence. Nancy Crowell, who loved the rose's springtime fragrance, acquired the plant from the USDA after WWII and planted it in her south yard. She allowed it to grow unmolested for many decades. I eliminated this planting around 1985 by first crushing the 20+ foot high bushes, grinding them with a brush hog and burning the remains. By then it was far too late. This single planting originates most of the endless multi-flora control efforts residents of Broad Cove constantly engage in. Given what this small intentional planting of an invasive plant accomplished, Bremen's intentional maintenance of a large field of invasive plants is inexplicable.

Toxicity

Two of us, Ricky Parlin and Stephen Barnes, have over a century of experience working in the fields. Both of us have noticed an increase of invasive plant toxicity. Ricky often mows weedy fields and finds it necessary to have a tractor cab with an air filtration system. My own fields are native grasses and sedges. By timing mowing to coincide with the dawn, the meadow bird fledglings, weather and dew, I can still mow without a cab. However, if ever I mow a weedy area, I suffer respiratory attacks similar as those described by Ricky.

Bremen's "Hay Field" is highly toxic and dangerous to mow without proper equipment to prevent contamination by toxic aerosols or by contact with its plants. The plant's toxicity is at its height in the fall of the year. Mowing in late fall spreads the ripened seeds and releases toxic vapor. Recently, when my bare arm brushed up against a toxic plant its skin rapidly blistered. Undoubtedly, the "Hay Field" is now a tick haven.² Would anyone willingly walk through the unmown "Hay Field" in shorts and a halter top?

Negligence can be construed as grounds for liability. The Town should consider making a good faith effort to eliminate the field's toxic plants and minimize its tick population simply by mowing it regularly. A thoughtful mowing schedule would restore the field to its former beauty in under five years and grant more extensive use of this public property to the public.

My Recommendation for the Future

When I supported purchasing the field, I did so based on the vision sold to the voters regarding the field's future use. This vision included maintaining the field's "iconic view" by an appropriate mowing schedule, developing a clam-flat/saltwater access point and providing a general recreational facility for the Townspeople. One could romantically envision families spreading blankets on the field's knoll for a picnic or taking their children sledding on bright winter's day. I recommend that this original vision be reinvigorated for public's use by careful management. One of life's greatest pleasures is walking freely in a newly mown field of hay. More people should experience it.

²Based on experience, it generally takes rough three years of mowing maintenance to lower tick populations significantly in heavily weed or brushed areas.

There are other possible avenues for the “Hay Field’s future. At a bare minimum, a written plan should be drawn up for the field’s potential usage and presented to the Townspeople for discussion. Once a proposal is on the table, several general meetings can be held to review its options, their costs and benefits, allow others to propose alternatives and modifications to the plan.