

**Interpretive Statement -- Warrant M14 - Brooksville Town Meeting, March 2021  
Brooksville Sea Level Rise and Climate Change Committee, February 3, 2021**

**Warrant M14**

M14. Shall the Town establish a continuing account for the Sea Level Rise and Climate Change Committee and raise the sum of \$10,000.00 to fund this account. Monies would go toward engineering study of Brooksville's coastal infrastructure & vulnerability to the changes in the rising tides and climate. *With \$10,000.00 from Property Tax Commitment.*



Coastal Road at Breezemere Road, October 1, 2019 Photo: William McHenry  
11.3' high tide

**Background**

In October 2020, the Selectmen organized a committee to help the Town “address the problems we may face as a result of climate change.” They tasked the Sea Level Rise and Climate Change Committee to do the following:

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1. “study and identify areas susceptible to the effects of rising tides and climate change,”
2. “recommend possible solutions to limiting flooding, erosion and/or damage to those areas,” and
3. “look into grant options and pursue funding which may be available to Maine’s coastal communities in addressing these issues.”

The committee is working on each task and will expand its activities as other vulnerabilities are identified.

To verify observations of sea level rise and the impacts of flooding events on Brooksville’s low-lying coastal roads, to develop practical solutions, and to qualify for grants and loans from various funding sources, professional engineering studies are needed. The committee will interview firms and will seek competitive bids for work described below. The cost of flood-risk studies will need to be staged over the next several years.

The committee is identifying various grant options for funding vulnerability studies and climate adaptation plans. Grants and loans are currently available from county, regional, state, federal and non-profit entities. They are offered at various points during the year. Most grants are awarded on a competitive basis. Funders typically give higher scores to municipalities that have demonstrated strong grassroots support for climate resilience. Many funders require applicants to pre-pay certain start-up costs. Some funders require a potential grantee to fund a portion of the total cost of a study or project, for example, 25% in the case of federal hazard mitigation grants (“local share”). The committee has developed a calendar showing grant-application deadlines throughout the year for funding that may be available to Maine’s coastal communities in addressing sea level rise and climate change issues.

### **Purpose of Warrant M14**

Approval of Warrant M14 will enable the Town of Brooksville to establish a continuing account that (a) funds an initial diagnostic study in 2021 and (b) begins to build a dedicated source of funds that the Town can use as the “local share” when funding options become available in 2022 and future years for detailed research, planning and mitigation projects, such as repairing roads and culvert upgrades. Multi-year allocations to the continuing account from future Town warrants will enable Brooksville to spread the cost of climate adaptation across several years.

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Bakeman Beach, noon, January 30, 2021. Photo: Hannah Van der Eb  
11.5' high tide, the highest annual tide for Castine in 2018 was 12.8'.

### **Elaboration**

Pending approval of Warrant M14, the committee will recommend that the Selectmen contract for professional services to document Brooksville's flood resilience and assess its vulnerability to rising tides and other effects of climate change. Those two parts of a diagnostic study are described below.

The **Maine Flood Resilience Checklist** was developed by the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF) in 2017 as "a self-assessment tool for Maine's coastal communities to evaluate vulnerability to flood hazards and increase resilience." In addition, the checklist incorporates elements of the National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System that encourages communities to implement flood risk reduction activities in order to reduce insurance premiums.

This evaluation is a preliminary step in identifying which public and private infrastructure in Brooksville is at greatest risk. The evaluation will guide next steps for mitigation and adaptation strategies. The committee has begun gathering information for the checklist. The committee now requires professional assistance to complete the evaluation.

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A comprehensive **vulnerability assessment** that builds upon the data from the Flood Resilience Checklist will be used to identify and study the likely future effects of rising tides and climate change on the town's economic, social, and environmental resources. The scope of this assessment will be defined in large part by the results of the flood resilience evaluation in addition to local, county, and professional advice received from the committee's consultation with experienced experts. This assessment will be conducted by an engineering firm utilizing a range of data including available geographic data and maps, FEMA flood maps, public records, and ground-truth data collected by the committee. The report created by this more in-depth assessment will include, the following items: likely future flooding scenarios, mitigation and adaptation strategies for vulnerable assets, and guidance for town policies such as the comprehensive plan and emergency management plan.

### **Consultation Network**

Committee members have sought and received information and advice from Town, county and state resources including : Brooksville's road commissioner and fire chief, regarding roadway and emergency-response issues; Maine's Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, regarding coastal-community grants; the Maine Department of Transportation, regarding roadway issues; Maine's Department of Environmental Protection, regarding potential state funding; the Hancock County Emergency Management Agency, regarding hazard mitigation and the National Flood Insurance Program; the Hancock County Planning Commission and Town of Brooksville Comprehensive Plan Committee, regarding overall planning; the Hancock County Soil and Water Conservation District, regarding water-quality integrity; the Island Institute, regarding its technical assistance grant program; the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's New England Environmental Finance Center, regarding the availability of federal funding; and, the Blue Hill Sea Level Rise Task Force, regarding its funding-option research results. The committee will continue consulting these and other sources of advice on sea level rise and climate adaptation.

### **Selectmen's Appointments to Sea Level Rise and Climate Change Committee**

Don Condon, Doug Cowan, Vicki Devlin, Tony Ferrara, Robert ("Bud") Fisher, John Gray (Chair, Board of Selectmen), Annie Guppy (Committee Co-Chair), Allen Kratz, Jackie Pike, Bob Poole, Anna Trowbridge, Hal Snow (Selectman), Hannah Van der Eb (Committee Co-Chair)