

MINUTES
of the
90th Annual Meeting
of
Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District
held on
September 14, 2019
at the Quonochontaug Grange
5662 Post Road (Route 1)
Charlestown, RI 02813

I. Call to Order and Opening Remarks

The Moderator, Randy Thornton, called the 2019 Annual Meeting of Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District (QCBFD) to order at approximately 10:00 a.m. The Clerk certified that a quorum was present or so represented by proxies and that timely notice of the meeting and the accompanying materials required by the by-laws had been sent to the Eligible Voters.

Randy then led the group in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

He then requested a moment of silence for the following residents who had passed away since the District's last annual meeting: Barbara Breck, Joan Harris, Greg Howie and Jean Mase. Ed Palmer, who was providing our rubbish collection for many years, also passed on and the community raised approximately \$7,000 to give to his family.

Randy invited any new residents in attendance to stand and introduce themselves. The following new residents introduced themselves and were welcomed with a round of applause: Peter Garvey who, with wife, Barbara Bell, purchased 15 Ninigret Avenue and Brian Murphy who, with his wife, Amy, purchased 16 Old West Beach Road.

Noting that the District relied heavily on volunteers, Randy expressed special thanks on behalf of the District to the following persons who were stepping down from positions of leadership: Brewster Blackall, Manager of the Marina; Tom Frost, retiring Board member; and Tom Wildman, Clerk, and retiring Board member. Randy made special note of Tom Wildman going above and beyond by serving an extra year.

II. Certification of Mailing & Approval of Minutes of 2018 Annual Meeting

Tom Wildman, Clerk, certified that notice of the meeting and accompanying materials did go out according to our By-Laws and also were posted on the website. The Clerk asked if there were any questions or comments on the draft minutes of the 2018 Annual Meeting of the District. There were none and a motion was made that they be accepted and approved as presented. The motion was seconded and passed by the combined vote of those in attendance or voting by proxy.

III. Moderator's Report

Randy stated that 2019 was indeed a memorable year and that we've all learned some new terms about our water system, probably more than most of us wanted to know: BWA - Boil Water Advisory, Level 2 RIDOH Assessment, shock chlorination, 4 Log disinfection, and GUDI - Ground Water Well Under Direct Influence of Surface Water. Noting that Vinny Reppucci, Chair of the Public Works Committee, couldn't be here today, Randy stated that he and his Committee performed beyond all expectations - engaging with professionals and the Board of Governors and communicating their conclusions via e-blast. He also said some of the problems with the water stem from a very wet summer that abnormally affected our shallow wells during peak usage/draw. There were also some early organizational/collaborative initiatives with QEBA/East Beach and Sunrise Acres with a total of 800 homes represented by all resident organizations on Quonnie Neck to identify possible future water sources north of Route 1.

Apart from the disturbance in our water situation, an even bigger impact on our 2019 budget came with the death of our refuse and recycling provider of many years, Ed Palmer. Julia Mathews performed above and beyond as she found a temporary replacement (EZ Waste) on very short notice. We did not skip a beat in service but there was a resulting \$60k/20+% shock from our original budget this year as compared to 2020. Randy expressed a special thank you with a round of applause to both Julia and Vinnie and well as the Public Works Committee who faced extremely difficult and unforeseeable circumstances. Randy also made special mention of the tireless, constructive and insightful contributions of the two Toms: Wildman and Frost. They both made themselves available anytime they were needed and gave generously of their time and talents.

IV. Reports of Managers

Randy noted that written reports of most of the Managers had been included in the packets sent to voters in advance of the meeting and were also posted on the QCBFD website. Randy then invited the Managers and members of the public to comment or ask questions.

In response to a question as to why some roads were not chip sealed this summer, Tom Frost of Public Works, said there was not enough time for the contractor to finish all the roads so he prioritized which needed it most and postponed those not done til next year, or later.

Brewster Blackall, Manager of the QCBFD Marina, apologized because he neglected to mention in his report those who assisted him with the twice-a-year dock dropping and lifting: George Prior, David Devin, Jack Mogielnicki, Jamie Marlor, and Will Blackall. He also had a big thank-you for Julia Mathews and Julie Low who helped distribute boat stickers.

George Prior, on behalf of Vinny Reppucci and the Public Works Committee, thanked the members of the community for their understanding and patience in dealing with the water system issues.

Christine O'Sullivan thanked Peter Rettig, Manager of Beach and Dunes for the fabulous boardwalk railing, 99% of which he did singlehandedly.

V. Reports and Proposals of Standing Committees

Randy noted reports of all QCBFD standing Committee Chairs were included in the packets sent to voters in advance of the Annual Meeting. During this portion of the meeting, Committee Chairs or their representatives responded to questions, and motions were introduced.

Community Property: Julia Mathews, Chair of Community Property Committee, said she is still negotiating with rubbish haulers and hoping to get a long-term contract by our October 12th Board of Governors meeting. When she has more information she will use the e-blast system to notify residents. The last pick up for 2019 will be December 2nd.

Long Range Planning:

Tom Farrell, Chair of Long Range Planning Committee, thanked the community for filling out the surveys and said he and his Committee will work to address the most pressing issues.

Public Works:

Randy talked to Vinny before the meeting and Vinny said a camera inspection revealed defects in well walls/screens allowing roots/biomass contamination. These are correctible and if we have found the source it may go a long way to mitigate the 4 Log disinfection State of Rhode Island mandate. We are proceeding to remove vegetation and Public Works will explore 4 Log disinfection options as a possibility if and when the State mandates it. Our cross connection control program is still ongoing and he asked that each member of the community cooperate.

Tom Frost noted how valuable our e-blast system is and that Vinny has done a great job in keeping the community informed. He also said the video scoping was the last item the state had us complete as part of the Level 2 assessment. This gives us a target and a cause we can address. Right now we are optimistic that we have a correctable situation and hopefully we can prevail upon the State to lift the boil water advisory.

A discussion followed and then Tom and George Prior answered questions from members of the public.

Finance and Budget: Al Bartosic, Chair of Finance and Budget said that Finance, under Charlie Freedgood did a good job anticipating reserves. Last year we budgeted a \$50,000 operating surplus but unfortunately \$35,000 got eaten up in the great refuse/recycling issue, which no one could anticipate. We did have reserves for the roads and in this year's budget we are allocating \$8,000/yr for 8 years to pave the roads. Al thanked his Committee members and Treasurer Roberta Peet. As the water situation has unfolded, Al explained the current reserves and believes they are adequate to meet most any contingency. He reminded us that we have a \$500,000 line of credit at Washington Trust and therefore have about \$700,000-\$800,000 to bring to bear on this issue and hopefully we won't need that much. A resident then asked about our previous indebtedness for our water situation addressed a few years ago. Al said that debt is \$81,000 through the end of this year in principal, pays off through 2026 so that leaves \$70,000 at end of 2020 in principal and that number is baked into the budget.

Proposed Motions:

Al then moved, one at a time, the following two resolutions, each of which was seconded and passed by the combined vote of those in attendance or voting by proxy.

[Budget] **Resolved**, that the 2020 budget, including an approximate \$367,900 in Tax Revenue (20.2% above 2019), as approved by the Board of Governors, be adopted and approved.

[Tax] **Resolved**, that the electors of the Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District qualified to vote in the District Meeting legally assembled on September 14, 2019 hereby order the assessment and collection of a tax on ratable property of said District in the sum of no less than \$366,900 nor greater than \$368,900. Said tax is for ordinary expenses and charges for the interest and indebtedness in whole or part of said District and for the purposes authorized by law. The Assessors of Taxes shall assess and apportion said tax on the inhabitants and ratable property of said District as of the 30th day of June 2020 at 12:00 noon, according to the law, and shall on the completion of the said assessment date, certify and sign the same and deliver the same to the Collector of Taxes on or about the 1st day of August 2020. The Collector of Taxes, on receipt of said assessment, is hereby commanded to proceed and collect said tax on the persons and estates liable therefor. Said tax shall be due and payable on or before the 30th day after the date of certification by the Assessor of Taxes, and all remaining unpaid balances after such due date shall carry interest until collected at a penalty rate of 12% per annum upon such unpaid taxes.

VI. New Business:

Randy described a Forbearance Agreement entered into with the Thomsen Family Limited Partnership (“Thomsen”) to settle issues and concerns related to supplying QCBFD water to a house outside the District owned by Thomsen. The Board of Governors has been determined to find a solution to this issue and with the advice of lawyers, Peter Ruggiero and Matt Thomsen, and a great deal of effort on the part of Tom Wildman and Tom Frost they reached an agreement this past July. The key terms are (1) the Thomsen family will pay a market rate for water, same as all QCBFD taxpayers, and (2) with the appropriate approval of residents at this meeting both parties agree to take the necessary steps for the property to be annexed by QCBFD. Randy and the Board of Governors feel this Forbearance Agreement effectively and finally resolves the matter on a fair and equitable basis.

After some questions and discussion, Tom moved the following resolution, which was seconded and passed by a majority of the combined vote of those in attendance or by proxy, with 12 voting against.

Proposed motion:

Resolved, that in order for the provisions of Section 3 of the Forbearance agreement dated on

or about July 19, 2019 between the District and the Thomsen Family Limited Partnership to become effective in accordance with their terms, as recommended by the Board of Governors, such provisions, reading as follows, be accepted and approved: “..Thomsen and QCBFD agree to take all the steps that are reasonably necessary for the Property to become part of QCBFD. So Thomsen shall immediately petition the DCFD to agree to convey its jurisdiction over the Property to the QCBFD and Thomsen shall take all reasonable steps necessary to make that conveyance happen, at Thomsen’s expense. Thomsen agrees to pay for a Rhode Island licensed surveyor to describe the legal perimeter of the Property and also agrees to pay for a Rhode Island attorney to draft the legislation necessary to effect this change. Similarly, QCBFD shall take all the steps reasonably necessary to acquire the Property, contingent on the DCFD conveyance of the Property to QCBFD. Both parties agree to work together with their fire districts, the Town of Charlestown (and their local representatives), and their representatives to the State of Rhode Island. Both parties shall make every reasonable effort to effect this transfer by the end of Rhode Island’s 2020 Legislative Session. Should the transfer not take place in 2020, Thomsen and QCBFD agree to make every reasonable effort to achieve this goal in each year of this Agreement. The parties shall always make a reasonable effort to make this conveyance happen and that shall be the standard that each party shall be held to.”

VII. Legal Resolution:

Tom Wildman moved the following resolution which was seconded and passed with the combined vote of those in attendance or by proxy.

Proposed Motion:

Resolved, that each and all of the resolutions, acts and proceedings of the District Officers, Committee Chairman and Managers, as shown by their respective records in carrying out and promoting the purposes, objectives and interests of the Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District, be and the same are approved, ratified and hereby made the acts and deeds of the Quonochontaug Fire District.

VIII. Report of Nominating Committee and Election of Officers, Tax Assessors and Board of Governors

The Nominating Committee nominated the following persons to serve on the Board of Governors for 2019-2020 and recommends their election by the voters:

Moderator: Sue Wilson-Perez
Clerk: Maud Bailey
Treasurer: Roberta Peet
Al Bartosic
Dede DePatie Consoli
Tom Farrell
Julie Low

Julia Mathews
Fred Newton
Vincent Reppucci
Tax Assessors: Will Carpenter
Eric Schultheis
Assistant Clerk: Sally Devin
Ass. Treasurer for Kathy Alperin
Merchan. Sales

Kate Thornton, speaking on behalf of Diane McEnroe, Chair of the Nominating Committee, moved the following resolution which was seconded and passed with the combined vote of those in attendance or by proxy.

Resolved, that the slate of Officers, Tax Assessors and members of the Board of Governors for the 2019-2020 year proposed by the Nominating Committee be elected.

IX. Other Business:

Sue Wilson, our new Moderator, thanked Randy for his service and presented him with a gift as the Community gave him a round of applause.

Christine O’Sullivan mentioned that the life preserver at the boardwalk was needed to rescue a swimmer who got caught in a riptide and the rope broke. She suggested we replace that rope every year.

Jeff Matthews said his little red house is not going to be a little grey house; the grey is only the primer.

Jim Blair informed us that the Town of Charlestown has made available to us the ability to have our taxes automatically deducted from our checking account. If you are interested you can call Jo Anne Santos at 364-1234.

X. Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and passed, and the Moderator adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:51 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sally Devin, Assistant Clerk
Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District