

Minutes of the Meeting of
Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District
Board of Governors
August 7, 2025
Charlestown Police Department
Meeting Room
4901 Old Post Rd, Charlestown, RI 02813

Members in attendance: Mark Alperin, Renee Cohen, Bob Frazier, Charlie Freedgood, Julie Low, Ray Martino, Barry Okun, Ron Ruel, Bill Wilson and Debbie Dupre

Also in attendance were Al Bartosic, Roy Jacobsen, Chris Licht and Liz Pomeroy.

1. Call to Order/Moderator's Opening Remarks: **Moderator, Charlie Freedgood**

Charlie called the meeting to order at 8:18am and thanked everyone for attending.

2. Approval of the Minutes: **Clerk, Debbie Dupre**

There were no edits or comments to the July 17, 2025 draft minutes. A **motion** was made to approve the draft minutes as written. The **motion** was **seconded and passed** with all in attendance voting in favor (the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie).

Debbie reminded all chairs and managers to get their annual meeting reports to her by August 11, 2024 for inclusion in the annual meeting packet, which must be distributed to the community prior to the Annual Meeting in accordance with the bylaws. Charlie added that during the next two meetings, the BoG will be asked to vote on issues to be presented to the community at the Annual Meeting.

Next item discussed was the timeline for receiving proxies for voting at the Annual Meeting. Following a brief discussion, a **motion** was made to allow the clerk to receive proxies up to 7:00 am on September 13, 2024, the day of the Annual Meeting by mail, email, or physical delivery. The **motion** was **seconded and passed** with all in attendance voting in favor (the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie).

3. Moderator's Report: **Moderator, Charlie Freedgood**

Charlie stated that he did not have anything to report other than to focus on preparation for this year's Annual Meeting.

4. District Website: **Webmaster, Liz Pomeroy**

Liz reminded the Board that our current website host is going dark on December 1, 2025 and a replacement needs to be found. She reported that our current provider's platform is proprietary, out-of-date and not as secure as it should be. She suggested that we move to a standard platform such as Wordpress to give the District better access to the latest technology and greater flexibility to change providers in the future. She also pointed out that once a provider is selected, the transition should only take a few weeks. Charlie added that the District is not required to have a website, so going dark does not violate any rules, it is just inconvenient. He also pointed out that given that the cost of this process will be in excess of \$5000, an RFP process is required. Liz has agreed to lead the website host search, including preparing and publishing the RFP as necessary. A **motion** was then made that Liz put together an RFP, publish it as required and bring a recommendation to the Board for an alternative website host. The **motion** was **seconded and passed** with all in attendance voting in favor (the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie).

5. Treasurer's Report: **Treasurer, Ray Martino**

Ray reported that the tax bills (including for the sliver lots) went out earlier this week and are due September 4, 2025. He pointed out that the 10-year contract for the tennis club is in its final year and will need to be renewed next year. There are no outstanding tax bills; however there remain a couple of road impact fee invoices outstanding. He added that liquidity for the District is good and there is enough available cash to carry QCBFD through 2025 tax collection.

6. Committee Chairs' Reports:

Finance and Budget:

Barry Okun, Chair

Barry updated the Board on the financing of the water upgrade project, particularly focusing on the order of drawing down between the District's two funding sources, stating that the \$1M EPA grant will be tapped first (requiring funding for the additional 25% community equity piece), then the RIIB loan will be used. Barry clarified that the mechanics of how this will work are being refined and noted that the RIIB loan was specifically permitted to be used to fund the District's equity tied to the grant. Ray asked if the bi-annual RIIB repayment amounts will be recalculated to reflect the actual principal amount at each due date. Currently no, but Barry believes the amortization schedule may be revisited in the future, possibly post completion. Discussion ensued. Barry also noted that a Single Audit by an independent accounting firm of our water upgrade expenditures may be triggered by the possible spending of \$1M in federal funds. The Board recognized Barry and his committee's great work in achieving such a positive outcome on the financing of the project.

Next Barry led a discussion on the Finance and Budget Committee's recommended proposed 2026 budget. He noted the budget is calculated from the bottom-up based on what each committee/manager needs plus the water upgrade financing debt service. He added that the projected tax collections for 2025 would be approximately \$567k to cover the budgeted expenses, which is a tax increase of approximately 4%.

After answering questions about appropriate levels and use of reserves (particularly calling out allocations to contingency fund and and tennis, the latter to accrue for replacement of tennis court surfaces) and clearer communication around what the community taxes cover this year, Barry made a **motion** to approve the 2026 budget as proposed by the Finance and Budget Committee for presentation to the community for approval at the 2025 Annual Meeting. The **motion** was **seconded and passed** with all in attendance voting in favor (the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie).

Public Works:

Bob Frazier, Chair

Bob reported that water upgrade project continues to progress. He is hopeful that the roof will be on the pump house by the end of August, the mechanical and electrical work will be finished by the end of September and the entire project completed by the end of the year. Bob mentioned that water usage over the July 4th weekend was high and for a period of time exceeded the ability of the pumps to replace draw down from the tank. Discussion ensued about possible solutions to ease usage over July 4th, the season's single highest day of usage. Bob added that Public Works will be taking up the conversation around RI state PFAS requirements and possible recommendations at future committee meetings.

Community Property:

Mark reported that a path was created between the beach and the QEBA access road, leaving an unsightly mess. He will wait a couple of weeks and if the site is not cleaned up, Community Property may need to step in to remedy the situation.

Mark then updated the Board on the plan to repair the tennis courts in late spring 2026 (post winter wear and tear). Given the repair proposal exceeds \$5000 an RFP for the repair work will be required. He or Mark McEnroe (manager for Tennis) will report back to the Board with a recommendation and to get approval to move forward on the repair work. Mark agreed to update Mark McEnroe.

Long-Range Planning:

Renee Cohen, Chair

Renee reported on the success of the draft Comprehensive Plan roll-out to the community and solicitation of input in anticipation of seeking approval at this year's Annual Meeting. She pointed out that key questions being raised are around specific concerns to which she clarified that the Plan does not set policy for specific items but instead provides a framework for a long-term view on some key issues.

Next Renee reported on the draft Governance Policy Report, which recommends that our current fire district governance structure remains the best approach for the community. Renee clarified that the recommendation is meant to reflect the facts and circumstances at this time and extend for ten years but could be revisited if conditions change. Discussion ensued. A **motion** was made to approve the draft Governance Policy Report as written. The **motion** was **seconded and passed** with all in attendance voting in favor (the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie).

7. Summer Construction

Chris Licht for the Summer Construction Task Force

Chris reported that he spoke with Peter Rettig about pursuing a summer construction ban through the Charlestown building permitting system and it was unclear whether this could be a viable option. Chris proposed that he continue to look into the viability of this option. Bill asked whether the concern about summer construction is an issue for more than a few residents. Discussion ensued. The Board agreed that the community should be updated on the findings of the summer construction task force and subsequent Board discussions at the Annual Meeting.

8. Managers Reports:

Police Liaison & Manager of Beach Gate Monitors:

Ron Ruel

Ron reported that a beach gate monitor has been hired who can work until the end of the summer giving adequate coverage through the entire summer season.

Merchandise Sales:

Julie Low

Julie reported that merchandise sales have been brisk this season and on track to repeat the 2024 sales totals. She announced the kick-off of the 2025 Special Events Merchandise Sales Grant program, which offers proceeds from merchandise sales to fund community projects. Interested community members should apply by completing the grant form by 9am August 25th. The grant task force will review the proposals and present the selected projects to the BoG for approval at the September meeting. The grant forms are available from Dede. Charlie asked whether the grant form could be distributed to the community via the district eblast. Barry asked whether the process should be amended to consider larger/more expensive community expenditures such as the replacement of the tennis courts. Discussion ensued and it was agreed that the issue would be revisited at the October meeting.

Julie updated the Board on the Charlestown's permitting of door-to-door salespeople, reporting that installing no-solicitation signs at all entrances to the community put solicitors on notice not to proceed. Ron clarified that the police often give a warning in response to a first no-solicitation violation but cannot revoke a permit as it is issued by the town. Julie proposed that no-solicitation signs be installed at each entrance to QCBFD. She presented material samples for the signs, all of which could be fabricated for under \$150. The Board selected one of the samples. A **motion** was made to have no-solicitation signs produced from the selected material and installed at each of the six entrances to the District. The **motion** was **seconded and passed** with all in attendance voting in favor (the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie).

7. Adjournment:

A **motion** was made to adjourn at approximately 10:28am. The **motion** was **seconded and passed** with all members of the Board of Governors in attendance voting in favor (other than the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie).

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Dupré, Clerk
Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District