

**Minutes of the Meeting of  
Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District  
Board of Governors  
held on Saturday, July 28, 2018  
at the Quonochontaug Grange  
5662 Post Road  
Charlestown RI 02813**

**Members in Attendance:** Brewster Blackall, Tom Farrell, Charlie Freedgood, Tom Frost, Julie Low, Jim Mara, Roberta Peet, Vinny Reppucci, Randy Thornton and Tom Wildman

**Members Absent:** None

Also in attendance were Julia Mathews, Assistant Treasurer; Sally Devin, Assistant Clerk; Katherine Huntington, Manager of Special Events; Peter Rettig, Manager of Beach and Dunes; Kate Thornton, E-Blast Coordinator, and a member of the public.

**I. Call to Order/Moderator's Remarks**

The Moderator, Randy Thornton, called the meeting to order at approximately 9:00 a.m.. On behalf of the community, he thanked the many volunteers who work on District projects and activities. He gave a special "shout out" to DeDe Consoli for managing the acquisition and installation of the new shed next to the tennis courts; to Jim Mara for managing the acquisition of new stone and other clean up efforts in the adjacent parking area as well as upgraded street signs; to Dave Devin for making and donating the new bulletin board on the shed; and to Peter Rettig for his masterful maintenance and oversight of the beach.

**II. Approval of Minutes**

A **motion** was made to approve the draft minutes of the June 30, 2018 meeting of the Board of Governors. The motion was seconded and **passed**, with all members of the Board of Governors in attendance voting in favor of the motion (other than the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie).

**III. Clerk's Report/ Proposals**

Tom Wildman recalled that the Board discussed at its two prior meetings a proposal to recommend to the voters that the District's by-laws be amended so that the only required standing committee would be a Finance and Budget Committee rather than the four committees currently mandated (Finance & Budget, Long Range Planning, Public Works and Community Property). Tom stated that if the Board wished to proceed with

this proposal this year it needed to act either at this meeting or at its next meeting. A lengthy discussion ensued in which arguments for and against the proposed change were discussed. There was agreement that if any change is proposed it should be only to eliminate the requirement for Community Property and Public Works Committees and not the Long Range Planning Committee as well. Some who had previously indicated support for the proposed change to our by-laws now suggested that, in view of the concerns of others, the Board should not recommend any change at this time. No action was taken.

#### **IV. Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer, Roberta Peet, reported that invoices for the 2018 District property taxes are scheduled to go out sometime during the week of August 6.

#### **V. Managers' Reports**

Katherine Huntington, Manager of Special Events, reported on the success of the various events held so far this year and mentioned others still to come. She expressed special thanks to Kate Gilpin for managing the Clam Jam and to the Peets for donating, opening and serving oysters at the event.

Julie Low, Manager of Beach Gate Monitors, noted that the hours during which monitors are on duty at the beach gate block have been extended to 7:00 p.m. and that monitors are now at the pond marina for 6 hours each day of the week. If these increases are continued for the rest of the season, the projected total cost for monitors in 2018 will exceed budget by approximately \$3,000. After discussion, a **motion** was made to approve the increase in monitor hours for the remainder of the season and evaluate results for 2019 planning. The motion was seconded and **passed**, with all members of the Board of Governors in attendance voting in favor of the motion (other than the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie).

Peter Rettig, Manager of Beach & Dunes, reported that the service provider who we have used in the past is again raking our beach on a weekly basis this year; however, he has given some indication that he may not be willing to continue beyond the current year. In the meantime, Peter has had preliminary discussions with an alternative service provider about both raking and sifting the beach sand.

Brewster Blackall, Manager of Boating, stated that all but 10 or 11 of approximately 120 craft stored at the marina now have current boat stickers. He added that parking at the marina has not been a problem.

## **VI. Committee Chairs' Reports**

Finance and Budget. The committee chair, Charlie Freedgood, reviewed a draft of a proposed 2019 budget, pointing out various comparisons to the 2018 budget and currently estimated final results. Charlie noted that our payments to Dunn's Corner Fire Department for fire protection are by far our largest expense and are subject to adjustment mid-year. Jim Mara stated that current indications are that we will not experience significant unexpected adjustments. All told, it appears that the final 2019 budget will result in the need for an approximately 4% tax increase. Charlie finished by noting that cash reserves have steadily increased over the last 5 years and that we are in a stronger financial position as a result.

Public Works. The committee chair, Vinny Reppucci, noted that the Board had previously discussed a proposal to change street lights in the District to LED lights in conjunction with Charlestown making the same change but had decided to wait until Charlestown had done so and the LED lights could be seen. This has now been done and Vinny asked for guidance on how to proceed. Randy suggested that people make a point of comparing the LED lights on Charlestown roads with the current District lights prior to the next Board meeting and that Vinny be prepared to discuss the conversion cost and resulting savings at that meeting.

The current plan is to seal District roads this fall with the expectation that it will then not be necessary to chip coat them for at least 3 years. The committee continues to consider whether and how to replace our existing speed bumps (including one abrupt bump ) with broader speed humps.

Long Range Planning. Tom Farrell, the committee chair, stated that the committee anticipates presenting to the Board at its next meeting a proposed survey of property owners to help determine the matters or topics on which the committee should focus.

## **VII. Defibrillators**

Julia Mathews reported that one of the two defibrillators purchased by QCBFD is now on the beach parking lot block during periods when monitors are on duty and the other defibrillator will soon be placed inside the tennis courts. Julie also stated that she is studying a code-accessible locked box device that we might wish to consider in the future to better secure one or both defibrillators.

## **VIII. Benefits to which Owners of Sliver Lots Entitled**

Tom Frost reported that Weekapaug decided at its recent annual meeting to require a minimum payment of \$450 (including district property taxes) in 2019 from property

owners who wish to use the district facilities, including beach facilities, in order to address the perceived unfairness that results from the owners of lots on which a house cannot be built using these facilities while paying very low district property taxes. We understand that Shelter Harbor may institute a similar policy on a trial basis. We intend to watch to see what reaction there is to these steps taken by the other two fire districts.

Tom also summarized briefly the steps that are being taken, after consultation with counsel, to rectify a situation involving the receipt of QCBFD water by a house outside the District.

### **IX. Adjournment**

A **motion** was made to adjourn the meeting at approximately 11:28 a.m.. The motion was seconded and **passed** unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Thomas R. Wildman, Clerk  
Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District