

APPROVED

**Minutes of the Meeting of
Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District
Board of Governors
held on Saturday, August 10, 2019
at the Charlestown Police Station Community Room
4901 Old Post Road, Charlestown RI 02813**

Members in Attendance: Brewster Blackall, Tom Farrell, Tom Frost, Julie Low, Julia Mathews, Roberta Peet, Vinny Reppucci, Randy Thornton and Tom Wildman

Members Absent: Al Bartosic

Also in attendance were DeDe Consoli, Manager of Merchandise Sales; Peter Rettig, Manager of Beach and Dunes; Susan Wales, Manager of Tennis; Kate Thornton, Email Blast Coordinator; Tina Cassidy, Co-Manager of Special Events; Diane McEnroe, Chair of the Nominating Committee; Sally Devin, Assistant Clerk; and members of the public.

1. Call to Order/Moderator's Remarks

The Moderator, Randy Thornton, called the meeting to order at approximately 9:00 a.m. He remarked that many volunteers in various capacities contribute a great deal to the community. Among those whose recent efforts he wanted to mention were Julia Mathews (who has worked tirelessly dealing with the sudden and unanticipated need to arrange for a new trash and recycling contractor); Al Bartosic and Roberta Peet (whose careful contingency planning helped us absorb the shock of the \$35K hit to our budget resulting from the move to the new trash & recycling contractor); Peter Rettig (for fabricating and installing the new handrail for the beach boardwalk and also installing new signs in the beach parking lot designating handicap parking areas); Brewster Blackall (for managing significant improvements and general clean-up in the boat landing area); Vinny Reppucci (for dealing with numerous matters, including most recently problems relating to our water system and addressing needed changes to the lighting on QCBFD roads); Tom Frost and the Clerk (for assisting with the resolution of long-standing issues relating to the water service provided to the Thomsen property on Dowd Drive); Ed Mellick (for managing and paying for repair/ refurbishment of our basketball hoops); and DeDe Consoli (for expertly managing merchandise sales).

2. Approval of Minutes/ Clerk's Motions

A **motion** was made to approve the draft minutes of the July 20, 2019 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).

A further **motion** was made to recommend to the voters at the 2019 Annual Meeting adoption of the following resolution (consistent with the practice in past years):

Resolved, that each and all of the resolutions, acts and proceedings of the District Officers, Committee Chairmen 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 Central Beach Fire District.

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).

3. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer, Roberta Peet, reported that the 2019 District property tax bills would be sent out on Monday or Tuesday of the following week and that the taxes would be due on September 13.

4. Managers' Reports

- a. The Manager of Beach and Dunes, Peter Rettig, stated that our new contractor for raking the beach has been effectively dealing with increasing amounts of seaweed and is generally performing well.
- b. The Manager of Merchandise Sales, DeDe Consoli, indicated that sales continue to be going well and, at this point, she predicts that the final results will significantly surpass last year's. DeDe also commented favorably on the number of volunteers, including many new residents, who have helped with sales.
- c. The Police Liaison & Manager of Beach Gate Monitors, Julie Low, stated that we continue to have problems with (i) outsiders parking at the tennis courts or along the side of construction sites and then walking to the beach and (ii) people (especially renters) eating and drinking on the beach in violation of District rules. Julie remarked that when challenged, offenders sometimes became hostile and that in any case our block monitors could not effectively deal with these problems while remaining on the block. Julie reported that she has received a suggestion that we hire a professional uniformed guard to help alleviate these problems during busy times. Such a person could check for unauthorized parking and help enforce beach rules by periodically walking the beach. Julie has explored with different security companies the cost of retaining such a person and summarized for the Board her findings. A lengthy discussion ensued in which various concerns were expressed, including how residents would react to uniformed guards patrolling the beach and the need to be sensitive to both the public's right to be on the beach and the rights of abutting property owners. Julie agreed to formulate a specific proposal for consideration at a future meeting for a trial period using a professional guard during part of next season.

It was noted that based on the cost numbers Julie has received, a reasonable trial might require a budget increase of about \$3,000.

d. The Manager of Tennis, Susan Wales, reported that use of the courts continues to run smoothly.

e. One of the Co-Managers of Special Events, Tina Cassidy, reported that we had record attendance (230) at the Quonnie Social and that attendance at movie night had also been good.

5. Committee Chairs' Reports

a. The Chair of the Community Property Committee, Julia Mathews, reported that she is actively soliciting bids for trash and recycling pickups after this year. Although she is continuing to negotiate for lower costs, next year's budgeted cost could be 3 times this year's—going from \$30,000 to \$90,000.

b. In the absence of Al Bartosic, the Chair of the Finance and Budget Committee, the Treasurer redistributed for review the preliminary 2020 budget presented to the Board at its last meeting. This budget includes a 23% increase in total expenses over 2019 budgeted amounts, primarily attributable to projected increases in the cost of trash and recycling pickups. Roberta indicated that further adjustments may be necessary if the cost of beach monitoring is increased as discussed above or if other expense items are approved. A final proposed budget and 2020 tax assessment will be presented to the Board for consideration at its next meeting before presentation to the residents at our Annual Meeting.

c. The Chair of the Public Works Committee, Vinny Reppucci, reported that he has withheld approximately \$10,000 from payment to the contractor for the recent road chip sealing pending completion of additional work. The Committee also continues to evaluate areas where the addition of French drains or taking other measures could alleviate significant pooling problems and also places where it would be appropriate to add additional speed bumps/humps or adjust existing ones.

Vinny next addressed decisions that need to be made concerning street lights for which the District currently has responsibility. There are 17 such lights, 15 on District roads and 2 on Town of Charlestown property along Sea Breeze Avenue. Vinny said he favored turning responsibility for the 2 lights on Sea Breeze Avenue back to the Town. As a practical matter, we must switch the other 15 lights to LED lights which we can do either all at once (at a total cost of approximately \$6,000) or on an individual basis.

After some discussion, Vinny made a **motion** to turn over to the Town of Charlestown the 2 lights on Sea Breeze Avenue. 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). Vinny then made a **motion** to switch the other 15 lights to LED next year. 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).

Vinny indicated that with the help of Tom Frost, he is working on communications to residents about two other topics that come up from time to time: (1) residents' landscaping (including the placement of large rocks or other barriers) in the unpaved portion of the District roadway abutting their property and (2) the failure of some to honor the provisions in the deeds for many of the lots in the District that prohibit trees and bushes that impair line of sight for safe traffic as well as the water views of others.

Vinny ended his report by advising the Board of two other matters on which he is currently working. The first of these is dealing with potential problems resulting from a decision by the Town of Charlestown to require a test of the water to a dwelling undergoing construction before issuing a certificate of occupancy for the dwelling. When these tests are not done properly they can incorrectly indicate a water problem that could then require the District needlessly to incur expense and experience disruption. The other problem is the frequent triggering of the circuit breakers for one of our two wells. NWSI believes, but has not yet confirmed, that this problem may be attributable to surges in the power supplied by National Grid.

d. The Chair of the Long Range Planning Committee, Tom Farrell, reported that based on the responses to the survey of residents conducted by the Committee last Fall, the Committee has identified 3 topics which it proposes to study in the coming months: (i) the burial of utility lines, (ii) the possible metering of water usage, and (iii) re-assessment of efforts to ameliorate phragmites in Fresh Pond. The Committee prioritizes the 3 topics in the order listed but proposes clearing now and maintaining a path from the beach parking lot to Fresh Pond. Julia Mathews indicated that as part of Community Property's regular maintenance, the path from the beach parking lot to Fresh Pond is cleared from time to time but that phragmites always again quickly obstruct it. No vote was taken on the Committee's plans but there appeared to be no objection to the Committee proceeding as proposed.

6. Report of Nominating Committee

The Chair of the Nominating Committee, Diane McEnroe, gave those present a preliminary report of the Committee's work. She indicated that the Committee still needed to make nominations for some non-Board positions and might have additional committee recommendations. Diane said that she expected that the Committee would be able to deliver its final report to the Clerk in time for all the Committee's nominations and recommendations to be included in the packets mailed to the voters prior to the Annual Meeting.

7. Adjournment.

A **Motion** was made to adjourn the meeting at approximately 11:05 a.m. The motion was seconded and **passed** unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas R. Wildman, Clerk
Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District