

FINAL

Minutes of the Meeting of Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District Board of Governors held on Thursday, May 7, 2020 Via ZOOM Teleconference

Members in Attendance: Maud Bailey, Al Bartosic (for part), DeDe Consoli, Tom Farrell, Julie Low, Julia Mathews, Fred (Fig) Newton, Roberta Peet, Susan Wilson-Perez and Vinny Reppucci.

Also in attendance were; Elaine Heilemann, Co-Manager of Special Events; Sally Devin, Assistant Clerk; and members of the public.

1. Call to Order/Moderator's Report

Susan Wilson-Perez

The Moderator, Susan Wilson-Perez, called the meeting to order at approximately 11:00 a.m. Sue started this special meeting by thanking everyone for attending and for giving their time as volunteers. She especially acknowledged and thanked Tom Farrell for his long service to the Central Beach community on this his last meeting as a chairperson of Long Range Planning and member of the Board of Governors ("BoG"). All BoG members were present for the entire meeting, except Al Bartosic who joined near the end of the meeting.

2. Approval of Minutes/ Clerk's Motions

Maud Bailey

A **motion** was made to approve the draft minutes of the April 22, 2020 Special Meeting of the Board of Governors. Several small edits were made. The motion made, 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. Moderator's Report

Susan Wilson-Perez

The main purpose of this meeting was to update the BoG on the water situation; our ongoing discussions with the Board of Health ("DOH") about our water; to continue the BoG discussion and possibly take action concerning the water project including: financing the project; Community communications related to the project; Outside Counsel engagement and cost and finally a discussion on summer activities in light of the COVID 19 situation.

Sue updated the BoG on our current water situation and shared the recent communications from the DOH. Since our last meeting on April 22, the District has engaged the law firm of Adler Pollock & Sheenan and we are being represented by Patricia Rocha. We are now in active negotiations with the DOH. While we have done a tremendous amount of work on the well field and Wells, we continue to have positive hits for coliform in Well#1. The notice on 4/21 indicated that we have to chlorinate Well#1 and continue to work with our consultants on a backup water source to Well#2.

Now to the Budget—as of today the District has spent about 80% of the amount of money allocated to us by the community at the Annual Meeting to address the water issue. There are limited reserves available to spend on this issue—there is a line of credit that we could theoretically tap into. However, there were procedural steps that should have been taken to have enabled us to access the credit line with a BoG majority or unanimous vote. Since those actions were not taken, we need a special meeting and a community vote in order to properly access the credit line or increase the budget.

Unfortunately, our By-Laws mandate that our community meetings must be held in person, but under the current social distancing guidelines due to the COVID-19 crises, we cannot meet in person. Our Annual QCBFD Meetings, although they have to comply with the OMA guidelines in terms of notice, accessibility, etc., must meet the requirements set forth in our QCBFD's Charter and By-Laws and therefore must be in person with a quorum. Therefore, we get no relief from the Governor's special order allowing for virtually meetings. So, our position with the DOH is the following: we will comply with the DOH but we would like to split the overall project in two phases. Phase one is the chlorination, enhanced UV and monitoring of Well#1 And phase 2 is implementing a process to remove the iron from Well #2 or find a new water source (iron free) so it, as our back up water source, can also be chlorinated. We are currently negotiating with the DOH concerning the timeline of this project. We are waiting for the State to give us guidance on the community meeting issues.

4 Update on the water system; discussion and action on the following issues:

a) Discussion and possible action concerning the QCBFD dealings with the DOH on water issue.

Vinny gave the BoG background on the water issue. The lawyers asked him and Sue to sign an agreement as outline above. Breaking this work into these 2 phases allow us enough time to find the correct approach to solve the Well#2 iron issue. If we can follow the timeline to chlorinate Well #1, we would probably not be off boiled water until late summer at the earliest. Sue will keep the BoG informed.

b) Discussion and possible action on financing water project.

Since Al was not yet in the meeting Sue summarized the financing issues concerning funding the chlorination of Well #1(outlined above as Phase one). We have not yet received all the estimates for Phase one, but we believe will cost between 75k-100k inclusive. So, once we can have access to our line of credit, we can use the line to finance phase one. Then after budgeting and approval from QCBFD we can secure a more permanent source of financing for the whole project(Phase two) in the following year.

c) Community Communications discussion and possible action:

Given the complexity of the water situation and that much of the developments have occurred in the off season, the BoG recognizes the need for some type of virtual meeting to update, inform and educate the public about this issue. This type of informational virtual meeting is in compliance with the OMA, but we could not vote or consider it a special QCBFD meeting. Julie has agreed to hold mailing the summer community packet so we could add a notice about such a meeting. Dede asked that any informational meeting include notifying the community that Special Events has provided some funding for the water project. It will make the community happy to know the merchandise sales are supporting this project. Sue thank Special Events for its generous support.

d) Attorney engagement discussion and possible action.

In addition to the legal work being conducted by the newly retained attorneys on the DOH issue,,Sue informed the BoG that our regular attorney is also working on many issues related to us having to proceed virtually (meetings and voting) because of the Covid 19 emergency. Because of that, Sue asked that the BoG increase the amount (\$10,000) approved unanimously by the BoG at the 4.22.20 meeting to \$20,000.

The following **motion** was made, that the Moderator be allowed to expense the legal work required in representing the QCBFD in our dealings with DOH to review and assist the QCBDF in executing the corrective action plan (Including issues arising out of the Covid 19 State of Emergency) costs not to exceed \$20,000. The motion was seconded and **passed** unanimously (other than the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie).

5) Discussion of Summer Activities.

Based on the reopening plans published by the State there are still a large number of restrictions still in place and this will have a great impact on our summer activities. As of this meeting (5/7/20) safe boating within a household is ok. Tennis is going to open up and golfing is allowed. The BoG discussed that we cannot control if people knowingly violate the social distancing rules, but, we as a government body, cannot sponsor events that will violate the State's regulations. During the discussion that followed the BoG decided that we will follow the State's public beach regulations as it comes to beach parking lot capacities. We will ask those who are able to walk to the beach, so that those with mobility issues can have parking access.

The Bog also discussed parking within the community (outside of the beach parking lot) if non-resident's park looking for beach access. Sue suggested that the District should meet with the Charlestown Police to learn how they will handle the situation this summer. Julie has met with the Charlestown Police and will follow up. The BoG discussed keeping the tennis courts parking lot clear of parking because we will need extra space to help make the merchandise sale compliant under Covid-19 guidelines.

Since the QCBFD is going to follow the State's social distancing guidelines, we cannot sponsor events where expected attendance is over the guidelines. The BoG can certainly revisit the events if the State's guidelines change, but we have to communicate clearly to everyone that QCBFD is following the State's guidelines throughout the summer. Therefore, we are cancelling the opening picnic, the July 4th Fun Run, the baseball games, the donkey rides, July kids dance, July movie night and the August social. Elaine is hoping to keep some of the August events and will only cancel if we have to closer to the events' date.

The planners of this year's July 4th parade have organized the event to be a family car parade with no registration, no gathering point or ending point, but instead starting with a lead car, then everyone can join with their cars then parade over a predetermined route with spectators watching from their own lawns in a socially distance manner. There will be no theme so people can decorate as they wish. After the parade, participants can take a picture of their car e-mail it to social events and prizes will be awarded. A fun unique way to have a parade in a safe way. The BoG was very excited and supportive of the reimagined event. Al joined the meeting.

A Motion was made to adjourn the meeting at approximately noon. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Maud A. Bailey, Clerk
Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District