

**Minutes of the Meeting of Quonochontaug Central
Beach Fire District Board of Governors held on
Wednesday, April 22, 2020 Via ZOOM Teleconference**

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

Members Absent: Tom Farrell

1. Call to Order/Moderator's Report

Susan Wilson-Perez

The Moderator, Susan Wilson-Perez, called the meeting to order at approximately 9:00 a.m. Sue started this special meeting by thanking everyone for attending and for giving their time as volunteers. The main purpose of this meeting was to update the Board of Governors ("BoG") on the water situation; our ongoing discussions with the Board of Health ("DOH") about our water; our budget as it relates to the water issue and the hiring of an attorney to help us navigate our proceedings with the DOH.

Sue updated the BOG on our current water situation and shared the recent communications from the DOH received on 4/21/20. 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 back up to Well#1.

Now to the Budget—as of today the District has spent 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. There are procedural issues that must be addressed before we can use the credit line.

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 QCBCFD Meetings, although they have to comply with the OMA guidelines in terms of notice, accessibility, etc., must meet the guidelines set forth in our QCBCFD's Charter and By-laws and therefore must be in person with a quorum so cannot be conducted remotely. We need to follow up with our Attorney to determine potential solutions. So currently we cannot just call a special meeting of the QCBCFD to be held virtually to vote on some of these issues.

Sue stated that during this meeting we will discuss the need to hire a lawyer to review anything we might sign with the DOH. It is Sue's and our lawyer's recommendation that we need special counsel with experience in these issues and dealing with the DOH.

2 Public Works

Vinnie Reppucci

a) Update on problems with District water system; discussion and possible action with respect to same.

Vinnie reiterated what occurred during the meeting held with the DOH on Tuesday, April 21 and at the most recent Public Works Committee meeting concerning the water issue. Vinnie told the BoG that Sue has done a great job on the legal work concerning the water issues and the dealings with the DOH and on how to proceed forward. Vinny gave the BoG background on the water issue. He discussed the fact

that we have two Wells, (Well#1 and Well#2). Well #1 is our principle water source with Well#2 as a backup source. Well#2 also has a high iron content so historically we have used water from Well #2 as only about 10% of the time. Vinny went over the events of last summer concerning the wells that has brought us to where we are today with the DOH.

Our current water operator is Northeast Water (“NEW”) and we have hired a second engineer from CNE Engineering who also consulted on our system in 2008 when we added the storage tank. We also hired a third consultant, WSP based out of Conn. We have taken many steps to remove the source of bacteria in the wellfield but unfortunately the DOH is mandating chlorination as the only 4 log viable treatment.

Much of the issues with chlorinating our water has to do with the high iron content present in our back up well, Well #2. Vinnie went over the three different plans being considered to deal with the iron issue.1) NEW is proposing we use a Green Sands Filter that removes the iron; 2) CNE Engineering is proposing a membrane system to filter out the iron, it is similar to the Green Sands method, but you can recycle the water more efficiently, creating less waste water. This system also filters out additional materials;3) WSP, our third consultant’s proposal, centers on finding a new low iron additional water source (well) so we can just avoid the iron issue. We have asked for a RFPs on these plans which is taking some time because the proposals are complicated.

RFPs will come back to us in a few months. They will have a variance in the costs estimates because we do not have all the information to know the exact price. DOH has acknowledged that finding the best treatment plan for dealing with the iron will take time and so they have agreed to have us only implement a system to chlorinate Well#1. If we need to use Well #2 we can, but the community will be put on a boil water alert until we can switch back to water exclusively from Well #1. Since historically we only draw on Well #2 during extreme use days (like July 4th weekend), if as a community, we can conserve during those days we will not have to use Well#2 and avoid a boil water alert.

Following this was a question and answer period covering ideas such as buying a larger holding tank; when will the boil water advisory end— DOH gave us steps going forward. The DOH would like us to sign an agreement by the end of month and move forward with chlorination sometime during the summer. We are currently still under a boiled water advisory until we have the chlorination system in place.

B) Discussion and possible action on water issues budget and line of credit

Sue started this discussion by stating that currently we have used the money budgeted and approved by the community to deal with this water issue. We will have an expense to chlorinate and improve our existing UV System in Well #1. That expense is currently believed to be somewhere between \$75K and 100k and it is unbudgeted.

Al continued leading the discussion concerning our current budget situation and possible solutions. At the last Annual Meeting the community allocated 35K for exploring and fixing the water situation and to use the reserves to supplement that number if needed. We have used those monies approved (approx. 110K) and now need to secure additional funds to continue the work to correct the water issue. The District does have an available line of credit and we are currently exploring with our attorney what are the appropriate steps we need to take to access it. At present, the BoG do not have authority from the District to use the line of credit and may have to convene a special District meeting. How to structure a special meeting that is valid with our Charter and Bylaws and the COVID 19 state of emergency guidelines is still an open question.

Al asked Dede to determine if Special Events could contribute any funds.

Once the BOG agrees on a RFP on how to deal with the iron problem in Well#2 and other possible expenses related to the water issue that proposal will be presented to the District for a vote. The expense of that proposal and the funding of it will also be presented for approval by the District. Al is investigating if we might be able to get some financing from the Rhode Island Infrastructure fund of up to 100K. That loan is potentially forgivable.

Sue summarized the above and agreed with Vinnie and Public Works that we need some form of informational public meeting that is in line with OMA guidelines to inform and educate the public on this issue and the steps we are taking to correct it.

c. Discussion and possible action on retaining legal counsel in regards to water issues

Sue reiterated that we will have to incur additional legal expenses concerning the water issue and the DOH and that we need specialized legal support in this area.

The following motion was made, that the Moderator be allowed to hire an Attorney to represent the QCBFD in our dealings with DOH (to review and assist the QCBDF in executing the corrective action plan) costs not to exceed \$10,000. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

There was additional discussion concerning a review of all committee budgets and that giving the current situation that there will be no funds available for discretionary purchases. Additional meetings will probably have to be called. We will follow the OMA guideline but also post to our website.

Vinny answered some additional questions concerning the water situation

A Motion was made to adjourn the meeting at approximately 10:00 a.m. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Maud A. Bailey, Clerk
Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District