

**Minutes of the Meeting of
Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District
Board of Governors
January 21, 2023
Quonochontaug Grange
(Downstairs)
5662 Post Road
Charlestown, RI 02813**

Members in attendance: Al Bartosic, Dede Consoli, Ellen Frost, Bob Frazier, Fred Newton, Charlie Freedgood and Maud Bailey

Members Absent: Mark Alperin, Ron Ruel, Mike Lewers

Also in attendance were **Caroline Gilpin** manager of Beach and Dunes as well as members of the public

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

Charlie called the meeting to order at 9AM. He thanked everyone for attending.

2. Approval of the Minutes. **Maud Bailey, Clerk**

No edits or comments were made to the October 22, 2022 BoG meeting minutes. A **motion** was made to approve the draft minutes as written. The **motion** was **seconded and passed** with Al Bartosic, Dede Consoli, Ellen Frost, Bob Frazier, and Fred (Fig) Newton, voting in favor Maud Bailey abstained (she didn't attend the 10/22/22 meeting) (the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie).

Discussion and action on 2023 BoG Calendar of meeting dates and rental spaces. After a brief discussion a **motion** was made to adopt the following dates: 1/21/23, 4/1/23, 5/20/23, 6/24/23, 7/22/23, 8/12/23, 8/26/23, 9/16/23 (after Annual Meeting), and 10/21/23. Ellen suggested that going forward it would be helpful to have chairs who cannot attend the BoG send a member of their committee—it wouldn't help achieve a quorum but the committee member could report. 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). These are all Saturdays and 9:00am is the scheduled start time.

It was noted that it is preferable for Chairs and Managers to meet in venues that are cost free, such as the Charlestown Police Station or the Cross Mills Library, before incurring rental charges at the Grange.

Maud led a brief discussion overviewing APRA and OMA, particularly rolling quorums and the importance of following regulatory procedures. She highlighted that if a Chair or Manager was unsure of how to proceed, they should reach out to her or Charlie for guidance before acting.

3. Treasurer's Report: **Al Bartosic for Mike Lewers, Treasurer**

Al noted that he distributed the final 2022 financial package. Finance and Special Events had reviewed and approved the package. He also reported that all the necessary financial reports were filed with the State of RI, so 2022 is complete.

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

Charlie briefly reported on current happenings with the District that will be discussed during this meeting highlighting the water project, conditions at the beach, merchandise sales off-season work and Long Range Planning work.

Charlie then re-introduced the Memorial issue that was introduced last year—namely, how to deal with memorials in the community. In a separate note, Roy Jacobson had suggested to him various criteria in order to better define the process; however, Charlie noted that Roy's recommendations were confined to "bespoke" memorials and Charlie felt the discussion should be broader, and thus it was premature to establish criteria applicable to only one kind of situation. Ellen added that there is a specific memorial request at the moment. Maud said she would collect ideas from people to use as a basis of a discussion during the next BoG Meeting. Dede did remind the Board to keep in mind what we would like the community to look like in the future in terms of memorials, so the any decision could have long-term implications.

Charlie then reported on the recent letter Dunn's Corner Fire Department had sent to the District. He understood that the same letter was sent to all Fire District served by Dunn's Corners) expressing concerns about several issues; including the need for prominent house numbers, adequate width of roads for passing emergency vehicles, properly marked speed bumps and encroaching trees to roadways. Certain of the recommendations will be addressed by the respective district committees, and others, such as clear house numbers, will be highlighted in a Qblast at the start of the season.

The next item discussed concerns a vote taken during the 10/22/22 BoG Executive session. Charlie disclosed that the vote was to approve an additional allocation not to exceed \$5,000 to Scott P. Rabideau's firm NRS The vote was had been unanimously approved by those Board of Governors in attendance. Scott's firm is assisting in the wetland remediation project at the District's well field.

Lastly, Charlie wanted to inform the BoG that Liz Pomeroy, web manager, is actively reviewing the District website with the objective of streamlining the site by reorganizing the content and removing superfluous and dated information.

Committee Chair Reports

Finance and Budget:

Al Bartosic

Al's review of final 2022 financial results was done in the Treasurer's report section. Al also re-sent everyone the 2023 Budget to remind people of their respective budgets approved allocations.

Al then updated the BoG on the water system project financing— Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank ("RIIB") will not do anything until the project is approved by RIDOH. All the mechanisms are in place to apply for RIIB loan; however, the loan amount will not be known until the bidding process is complete. Al then went over expenses-to-date that have been self-financed by the district, some of which may be reimbursed through an RIIB financing. Al believes that approximately \$1.3 million remains under the water system project budget approved by the community. Bob Frazier spoke briefly on the status of the bidding process for the new system which is underway. If the bids are over the approved budget, we will need to have a special community meeting to approve any costs over the original community approved budget. The bidding process should be completed towards the end of February with a recommendation available for BoG consideration and approval at the April 1st BoG Meeting. Bob is moving the permitting process through the local steps such as the fire department and town building inspectors. He noted that the target date for project completion is fall 2023.

Charlie asked some question as to the RIIB approval process and the time that approval takes. Al noted that once RIDOH approves, then RIIB will commence a review of our financing application. Al also noted that were the RIIB loan put in place, RIIB tracks and pays the funds directly to the respective vendors, subject to prior approval by the district—RIIB does not release funds directly to the district

Al presented to the BoG a request to draw on line of credit from Washington Trust. Finance believes we will need to draw on our line of credit based on current cash balances as compared to budgeted and other expected expenses. This process is similar to last year when Finance asked for pre-authorization. Al noted that the approved amount was not fully used. Al recommended a pre-approved draw amount of \$150,000 representing potential cash expenses in excess of current cash balances prior to receiving any additional tax revenue late in the summer. The line of credit will be used to cover the negative cash balance during this period.. Discussion ensued.

Therefore, Al made a **motion** to authorize up to \$150,000 in aggregate draws on the line of credit for the payment of 2023 expenses, to be repaid with tax revenue collected later this year. The **motion** was **seconded and passed** with all members of the Board of Governors, Al Bartosic, Dede Consoli, Ellen Frost, Bob Frazier, Fred Newton, and Maud Bailey, in attendance voting in favor (other than the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie).

Al next led a discussion on the classification of summer casual labor (block and marina). In the past these workers were treated as casual laborers so they were paid a gross amount, but Al believes they are more appropriately classified as seasonal employees. Al did note that other districts treat such workers as employees. There will be an increase in expenses to the District due to payroll processing and other costs but the amount should not be substantial. Discussion ensued. It was noted that workers will receive lower net pay due to additional deductions such as FICA.

Al made a **motion** that going forward the District will treat those individuals who work as beach and dock monitors and any other workers helping Merchandise Sales with set up, etc., as employees of the District. They will have to submit a W-9 and will have all appropriate monies withheld. Further, Finance will work with our bookkeeper on creating the appropriate processes to ensure the District is processing employee pay appropriately and within State and Federal rules. The **motion** was **seconded and passed** with all members of the Board of Governors, Al Bartosic, Dede Consoli, Ellen

Frost, Bob Frazier, Fred Newton, and Maud Bailey, in attendance voting in favor (other than the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie).

Public Works:

Bob Frazier

Bob continued the discussion begun in the Finance section on the Water Treatment Plant upgrade project. He reviewed the design and bidding process and that final bids will be due on February 23. The request for bids was published in several newspapers as well as on the state website and Bob thought we were receiving a good response.

Bob then reported on the status of Frost / Mara services to provide water to their undeveloped lots.

Long Range Planning

Ellen Frost

Ellen updated the BoG on the ongoing work by the Long Range planning working group on the Comprehensive Plan. Ellen also updated the BoG on the QCC and the Charlestown Climate Resiliency Committee. The QCC has over 70 members working on various issues and the Charlestown Climate Resiliency Committee is looking for members to serve. The Climate Resiliency Committee is seeking grants to put forward to the State on issues on which it has focused.

Managers Reports

Beach and Dunes

Caroline Gilpin

Carrie reported on the work done by Gina Fuller from Southern RI Conservation District and her team, including Jane Hopkins (USDA) and Wenley Ferguson (Save the Bay) concerning the current condition of the beach and beach erosion. The team conducted a site visit on October 18, 2022, and in December presented via Zoom its notes to all site-visit attendees. Gina's team was pleased with the decades-long work to preserve Central Beach's beach and dunes, and provided a list of resources Central Beach can follow up on to plan for mitigating future risk of coastal flooding, rising tides, and increased severity and frequency of storms.

Carrie then reported on the December, 2022 storms, which further buried the existing boardwalk so that 25 feet on the oceanside was buried under 1-1 1/2 feet of sand. The boardwalk was designed to stay in place year round and not be removed for winter storage or for emergency storm prep. Based on Jane Hopkin's report and the October, 2022 Charlestown Resiliency Program summary findings, Carrie recommended a new boardwalk that allows for sections or the entire boardwalk to be easily, quickly, and cost-effectively removed in advance of storms and for winter storage. This sectional boardwalk would also allow for the sections toward the ocean end installed on a sloping ramp of sand each spring to improve access for residents and guests using walkers or wheelchairs.

Carrie shared her research on replacement boardwalks designed using Trek or ethically sourced Ipe, a more durable and less expensive alternative. The cost of a sectional boardwalk with reinforcements for added stability that matches the same boardwalk footprint is \$9,558.45 for Ipe (Trek is \$14,487.94). After discussion, a **motion** was made to allocate an amount less than \$10,000 to acquire a sectional Ipe boardwalk.

The **motion** was **seconded and passed** with the following members of the Board of Governors, Al Bartosic, Ellen Frost, Bob Frazier, Fred Newton, and Maud Bailey, in attendance voting in favor and Dede Consoli abstaining (the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie). Carrie was made aware that if the costs of the construction project exceeded \$10,000 she would have to comply with the competitive bidding process.

Carrie then reported on her plan to apply to CRMC for maintenance permits for annual boardwalk removal and installation, and a second permit for maintenance of the grasses adjacent to the boardwalk and district rights-of-way.

Executive Session

A **motion** was made and seconded to enter into Executive Session pursuant to the relevant requirements of the R.I. General Laws 42-46-5(a)(2) potential and/or pending litigation regarding the following matter CRMC Notice of Violation; 66 Seabreeze Drive, Charlestown; Violation File No: 22- 0010. The seconded **motion** passed with all members of the Board of Governors in attendance, Al Bartosic, Dede Consoli, Ellen Frost, Bob Frazier, Fred Newton, and Maud Bailey, voting in favor (other than the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie).

Then the matter was reviewed and discussed with only vote to approve the executive sessions meeting minutes of 10/22/22 taken. A **motion** was made to approve the draft minutes as written. The **motion** was **seconded and passed**

with Al Bartosic, Dede Consoli, Ellen Frost, Bob Frazier, and Fred Newton, voting in favor Maud Bailey abstained (she didn't attend the 10/22/22 meeting) (the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie)

A **motion** to vote to reconvene into open session was made and **seconded** and **passed** with all members of the Board of Governors, Al Bartosic, Dede Consoli, Ellen Frost, Bob Frazier, Fred Newton, and Maud Bailey, in attendance voting in favor (other than the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie).

After reconvening into open session, a **Motion** was made to vote to seal the minutes of the Executive Session. The **motion** was seconded and **passed** with all members of the Board of Governors, Al Bartosic, Dede Consoli, Ellen Frost, Bob Frazier, Fred Newton, and Maud Bailey, in attendance voting in favor (other than the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie).

Adjournment

A **motion** was made to adjourn. The **motion** was seconded and **passed** with all members of the Board of Governors, Al Bartosic, Dede Consoli, Ellen Frost, Bob Frazier, Fred Newton, and Maud Bailey, 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

Maud Bailey, Clerk

Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District