

Minutes of the Meeting of
Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District
Board of Governors
August 23, 2025
Charlestown Police Department
Meeting Room
4901 Old Post Rd, Charlestown, RI 02813

Members in attendance: Renee Cohen, Charlie Freedgood, Julie Low, Barry Okun, Ray Martino, Ron Ruel, Bill Wilson and Debbie Dupre

Members Absent: Mark Alperin and Bob Frazier

Also in attendance were Al Barstoic, Liz Pomeroy, Paul Mathews, Julia Mathews and a member of the public.

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

Charlie called the meeting to order at 8:15am. He thanked everyone for serving on the BoG and acknowledged that service is a heavy lift. He added his appreciation for their help and insight.

2. Approval of the Minutes: **Clerk, Debbie Dupre**

There were no edits or comments to the August 7, 2025 draft minutes. A **motion** was made to approve the draft minutes as written. The **motion** was **seconded and passed** with all in attendance voting in favor (the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie).

Debbie next requested any edits or comments to the draft 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes, which will be presented to the community at the annual meeting. Several typos were pointed out. She also asked for any edits or comments to the draft 2025 Annual Meeting agenda. No suggestions were made.

She then explained the proposed legal resolution that will be presented to the community, which approves and adopts all actions taken and documents executed on behalf of the District by the BoG. A **motion** was made to approve and put forth the below legal resolution as written to a vote at the annual meeting.

Resolved, that all prior actions of the Board of Governors and Officers of the Fire District taken prior hereto in the operation of the Fire District's business or in furtherance thereof are hereby ratified and confirmed and all documents executed on behalf of and in the name of the Fire District are hereby adopted and consented to by a majority vote of the electors voting at the 2025 Annual Meeting.

The **motion** was **seconded and passed** with all in attendance voting in favor (the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie).

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

Charlie stated that he did not have anything to report other than to focus on preparation for this year's annual meeting.

4. Nominating Committee Report **Chair, Paul Mathews**

Paul reported on the proposed 2025-26 QCBCFD slate. He announced several remaining vacancies and agreed to mark the slate to reflect the openings. Paul thanked the members of his committee, Julie Low, Roberta Peet, and Sue Wilson Perez and reminded the group that the Nominating Committee works throughout the year to find needed volunteers. The Board of Governors thanked Paul and his committee.

5. Treasurer's Report: **Treasurer, Ray Martino**

Ray reported that the community is officially in tax season and that tax bills were mailed several weeks ago.

Ray added that in order to streamline the tax billing/payment process, we might want to consider an electronic payment option, whereby the billing information could be accessed through a link on the district website to a third-party platform that accepts payment on behalf of QCBFD. Barry inquired whether an electronic payment is necessary, and Ray assured him that it would smooth out the process from an ease of payment and collection standpoint and added that our bookkeeper is in favor. It was suggested that an electronic payment option be considered as part of the website host platform project.

Ray continued that given the district's current cash on hand plus the predicted surplus from logo sales, he believes there should be sufficient cash available to pay the equity portion of the project's total cost as required under the EPA grant. Barry added that RIIB has agreed to permit the use of the loan for this purpose and thus it was likely the cash on hand would not be required.

6. Committee Chairs' Reports:

Finance and Budget:

Chair, Barry Okun

Barry led the discussion through several proposed resolutions, all to be approved by the BoG and then presented to the community at the annual meeting. He explained the first resolution (below) approves the adoption of the 2026 budget.

Resolved, that the 2026 budget as presented at the District Meeting on September 13th, 2025, including an approximate \$566,275 in Tax Revenue (4.3% above 2025), as approved by the Board of Governors, be adopted.

A **motion** was made to approve the resolution as written. Renee suggested that the community be given the context around the proposed 4.3% increase in tax revenue. After further discussion, the **motion** was **seconded and passed** with all in attendance voting in favor (the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie).

Next Barry introduced the below resolution ordering the assessment and collection of tax on the ratable property within the District.

Resolved, that the electors of the Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District qualified to vote at the District Meeting legally assembled on September 13th, 2025, hereby order the assessment and collection of a tax on ratable property of said District in the sum of no less than \$564,000 nor greater than \$567,000. Said tax is for ordinary expenses and charges for the interest and indebtedness in whole or in part of said District and for purposes authorized by law.

The Assessors of Taxes shall assess and apportion said tax on the inhabitants and ratable property of said District as of the 30th day of June 2026 at 12:00 noon based upon December 31st, 2025 assessed values as computed by the town of Charlestown, according to the law, and shall on the completion of the said assessment date, certify and sign the same and deliver the same to the Collector of Taxes on or about the 1st day of August 2026. The Collector of Taxes, on receipt of said assessment, is hereby commanded to proceed and collect said tax on the persons and estates liable therefor. Said tax shall be due and payable on or before the 30th day after the date of certification by the Assessors of Taxes and all remaining unpaid balances after such due date shall carry interest until collected at a penalty rate of 12% per annum upon such unpaid taxes.

A **motion** was made to approve the resolution as written. Following a brief discussion, the **motion** was **seconded and passed** with all in attendance voting in favor (the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie).

Public Works:

Charlie Freedgood for Bob Frazier

Charlie reported that construction on the Water Upgrade Project is ongoing. The project is slightly behind schedule, though not materially. He added that he is not aware of any outstanding issues.

Long-Range Planning:

Renee Cohen, Chair

Renee reviewed the process LRP used to socialize the draft QCBFD Comprehensive Plan with the community, including circulating the draft, holding two information sessions, and making minor modifications to the draft based on feedback. She said the main topic raised by residents involved the water system. Charlie asked whether LRP had approved the draft. Renee indicated they had with the three minor changes redlined in the draft before the Board of Governors. Charlie added that the new language around possible future action in connection with phragmites might be divisive for the community and suggested striking that language. Discussion ensued. Renee agreed to strike the language and confirmed that nothing in the Comprehensive Plan prohibits future action should the thinking evolve around the issue. She reiterated that the point of the Plan is to identify the priorities for the community at this moment and provide basic guidelines. The Plan is meant as a living document. Debbie suggested that a link to the QCBFD Comprehensive Plan be included in the electronic distribution of the Annual Meeting Packet and added that a voice-over of the intent of the Plan should be given at the Annual Meeting. Renee agreed to provide this.

A **motion** was made to approve and put forth the following resolution as written provided the language around future action in connection with phragmites is struck from the Plan. Following a brief discussion, the **motion** was **seconded and passed** with all in attendance voting in favor (the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie).

Resolved, that the Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District Comprehensive Plan as delivered to the Eligible Voters on or before August 31, 2025, and presented at the District Meeting on September 13th, 2025, and as approved by the Board of Governors, be adopted.

7. Managers Reports:

Merchandise Sales:

Julie Low, Manager

Julie reported that the 2025 Special Events Merchandise Sales Grant process will be extended and that the selected projects will be presented for approval at the October BoG meeting.

Police Liaison & Manager of Beach Gate Monitors:

Ron reported on recent occurrences of minor vandalism involving the district bulletin boards and signage, particularly the signage near the beach. He then raised the issue of possibly installing cameras or otherwise using resident security camera footage for surveillance purposes. Charlie added that the question was complicated as privacy/notification concerns were relevant as were data retention, protection, and disclosure issues. Discussion ensued and it was agreed that more research is needed including speaking with legal counsel.

Liz Pomeroy gave a brief update on the upcoming website host platform search and transition, stating that the RFP was ready but that a third option of using a university intern and the Square Space platform had been raised. Discussion ensued around whether the new website host platform could accommodate electronic district tax billing and payment as well as a document retention feature. Barry added that using a less expensive option should be balanced against the resulting increase in volunteer hours and recommended we opt for more professional support despite the higher cost. Liz continued that she would do additional research and return to the BoG at the September meeting with a recommendation.

A **motion** was made to adjourn at approximately 9:41 am. 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).

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Dupré, Clerk
Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District