

**APPROVED**

**Minutes of the Meeting of  
Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District  
Board of Governors  
held on Saturday, May 25, 2019  
at the Quonochontaug Grange  
5662 Post Road (Route 2)  
Charlestown RI 02813**

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

**Members Absent:** None

Also in attendance were Sally Devin, Assistant Clerk; DeDe Consoli, Manager of Merchandise Sales; Elaine Heilemann, Co-Manager of Special Events; Peter Rettig, Manager of Beach and Dunes; and a member of the public.

**1. Call to Order/Moderator's Remarks**

The Moderator, Randy Thornton, called the meeting to order at approximately 9:05 a.m.. He welcomed everyone to the start of a new Summer season and said that he and Kate planned to invite all members of the Board, Officers, Managers and their respective spouses to a social gathering on July 12 in recognition of the hard work of these individuals on behalf of the community. Randy also noted that he would need to appoint a nominating committee soon as a number of leadership positions would need to be filled at the end of this season with new volunteers and asked that anyone having suggestions for the nominating committee give them to him.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

A **motion** was made to approve the draft minutes of the October 6, 2018 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).

**3. Appointment to fill Board Vacancy and Committee Chair Position**

A **motion** was made to appoint Julia Mathews, in accordance with Article 4, Section 7 and Article 8, Section 1 of the By-laws, to fill until the next Annual Meeting of the District the vacancy on the Board of Governors resulting from the resignation of Jim Mara and also to serve as Chair of the Community Property Committee. 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).

#### **4. Proposal to Enhance Website Security**

Betty Wilson, QCBFD Webmaster, explained that the data on our website was not currently protected by encryption but that this could be accomplished by migrating to SSL Certification (SSL-https). Our website designer, Brave River Solutions, would handle this for us for \$450, plus a slight increase in our annual charges. After discussion, a **motion** was made, seconded and **passed** to proceed with this security enhancement for our website, 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).

#### **5. Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer, Roberta Peet, stated that she had nothing to report.

#### **6. Managers' Reports**

a. The Manager of Beach and Dunes, Peter Rettig, stated that a new railing for the board walk would be installed soon. The beach has been raked once and will be raked regularly starting before the July 4 weekend. There was some discussion about the large logs that wash up on the beach from time to time with differing opinions expressed as to whether or not they should regularly be removed or generally left alone.

b. The Manager of Merchandise Sales, DeDe Consoli, unveiled some of the new merchandise that would be on sale this year and received many positive comments from those present. In response to a question, DeDe said that she expected this year's sales and net proceeds to be roughly the same as or better than last year's. Randy noted projects approved by the Board last year for funding in whole or part out of the proceeds of merchandise sales.

c. The Manager of the Marina, Brewster Blackall, reported that this year's boat stickers are now available. Brewster reviewed the various improvements to the boating facilities that have been made or are in process. These include significant clearing, expansion and reorganization of storage areas and the possible acquisition of another picnic table. At Brewster's request, a **motion** was made, seconded and **passed** to authorize up to an additional \$1,000 for these improvements, 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).

d. The Police Liaison & Manager of Beach Gate Monitors, Julie Low, noted that the Spring mailing had gone out on a timely basis. She indicated that overall she had sufficient monitors for the "block" at the beach parking lot but that she hoped to find a few additional older monitors for weekends and other busy times.

e. One of the co-Managers of Special Events, Elaine Heilemann, reported that 11 different activities were planned for this season and that these would be the same as last season's, except that no closing picnic was planned.

## **7. Committee Chairs' Reports**

a. The chair of the Finance and Budget Committee, Al Bartosic, reminded Managers and committee chairs that they needed to begin thinking about next year's budget requests.

b. The Manager of Public Works, Vinny Reppucci, stated that chip sealing of QCBFD roads was planned for the second week of June and that some speed bumps would be adjusted as part of the process. A drain at the corner of Surfside and Spray will be cleaned out in an effort to reduce pooling at that location. Our water quality is good but East Beach has had some contamination problems. Because of changes in the State's monitoring policies, we are probably going to have to develop a more formal program for detecting and eliminating inter-connections between our system and private wells. Vinny concluded by noting that LED street lights had now been in place on West Beach Road and Sea Breeze Avenue for over a year and that we will need to decide at a future meeting whether to install LED lights on QCBFD roads.

c. The chair of the Long Range Planning Committee, Tom Farrell, noted that a summary of the results of the community survey conducted last fall had been given to Board members and commented that overall, based on the more than 150 responses received, the residents of the District appeared to be pretty happy. The Board discussed how best to communicate the results of the survey to the community. Without taking any formal action, the consensus of all was that the results should be posted on the website and/or sent out as an E-Blast. The Committee will make recommendations to the Board based on the survey results at future meetings.

d. The Chair of the Community Property Committee, Julia Mathews, updated the Board on various Fall and Winter cleanup and maintenance activities. We may need to remind residents of the community's desire that trees and shrubbery not obstruct the views of others and also of the vote taken by the residents several years ago that no major construction take place during July and August. Julia noted concerns about parking on the grass knoll at the playground and said possible solutions are prohibiting parking at the playground or modifying the knoll to better accommodate parking. Without taking any formal action, the consensus of all was to post no parking signs at the knoll. Julia next noted some concerns that had been expressed about our trash and recycling pickup. She has discussed these with our service provider. Included in the Spring mailing was a sheet explaining recycling rules which are important for us to follow.

## **8. Potential Litigation**

A **motion** was made to move into closed session in accordance with RI Gen. Statutes §42-46-4 to discuss, consider and take a possible vote on a matter authorized for discussion in closed session by R.I. Gen. Statutes §42-46-5(a)(2), to wit possible litigation relating to supply of water from District water system to one or more dwellings outside of District via piping running through "sliver lot" within District, located between 53 and 57 Surfside Avenue, and owned by the owners of such dwelling(s). The motion was seconded and **passed** by the unanimous vote of all members of the Board, other than the Moderator, who under the District by-laws only votes in

the case of a tie (specifically, voting “yes” were Al Bartosic, Brewster Blackall, Tom Farrell, Tom Frost, Julie Low, Julia Mathews, Roberta Peet, Vinny Reppucci, and Tom Wildman; none voted “no” and there were no abstentions.)

The Board reviewed the history of the supply of District water to the house at 29 Dowd Drive, currently owned by the Thomsen Family Limited Partnership. Water service to this location is generally understood to have begun as the result of some sort of “deal” made by Howard Thorp and has continued for more than 65 years. Recently, concerns have been expressed by some QCBFD residents about the propriety of QCBFD providing water service to a house outside the District and also about the small amount being paid by the property owners for the water service they are receiving (less than \$100 in property taxes on the “sliver” lot through which the current connection runs).

Randy, Tom Frost and Tom Wildman reviewed this situation with our counsel, Peter Ruggiero. Randy then sent a letter to Rich Thomsen suggesting that the Thomsen Family should find an alternative source of water, and Randy and Tom Frost met with Rich Thomsen and his sister, Nancy Cullum, to discuss the matter. The Thomsen Family and their attorney assert that they have a right to District water service, apparently relying primarily on the length of time that this service has been provided and Article 17 of our by-laws. We have told the Thomsen Family that we do not agree but, in order to reduce the chance of litigation while addressing the concern about the low payment being made for the service received, Randy authorized Peter to discuss with Matt Thomsen, the Thomsen Family’s attorney, a possible forbearance arrangement, running for an initial term of 5 years, under which we would not take any action to terminate service so long as the property owners paid to QCBFD a fee equal to (a) the QCBFD taxes they would be required to pay if the house in question were actually within the District less (b) the taxes the owners pay Dunns Corner Fire Department for fire protection. Based on 2018 numbers, this fee would be slightly less than \$1,800.

After discussion, a **motion** was made to authorize the Moderator (with the assistance of such other members of the Board as he may call on) and District counsel to attempt to negotiate with the Thomsen Family a form of forbearance agreement, along the lines discussed, for submission to the Board of Governors for review and possible approval. The motion was seconded and **passed** by the unanimous vote of all members of the Board, other than the Moderator, who under the District by-laws only votes in the case of a tie (specifically, voting “yes” were Al Bartosic, Brewster Blackall, Tom Farrell, Tom Frost, Julie Low, Julia Mathews, Roberta Peet, Vinny Reppucci, and Tom Wildman; none voted “no” and there were no abstentions.)

The Board then returned to open session and announced the vote taken.

The Board did not vote to seal the minutes of the closed session, and they are included above.

9. A **Motion** was made to adjourn the meeting at approximately 11:35 a.m.. The motion was seconded and **passed** unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Thomas R. Wildman, Clerk  
Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District