

Minutes of the Meeting of
Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District
Board of Governors
January 10, 2026
Charlestown police Station
Meeting Room
4901 Old Post Rd, Charlestown, RI 02813

Members in attendance: Al Bartosic, Renee Cohen, Bob Frazier, Julie Low, Bill Wilson, and Debbie Dupre.

Members Absent: Mark Alperin, Ray Martino, Barry Okun, and Ron Ruel.

1. Call to Order/Moderator's Opening Remarks

Moderator, Al Bartosic

Al called the meeting to order at 9:00 am. He thanked everyone for being there.

2. Approval of the Minutes

Clerk, Debbie Dupre

There were no edits or comments to the draft October 10, 2025 minutes. A **motion** was made to approve the minutes. The **motion** was **seconded and passed** with all in attendance voting in favor (except the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie).

3. Moderator's Report

Moderator, Al Bartosic

Al reported that several residents had asked about whether the District would take any action in response to the recently passed Rhode Island Non-Owner-Occupied Property Tax Act ("Taylor Swift tax"), which goes into effect July 1, 2026. He spoke with his counterpart at QEBA, who plans to send a notice stating that the law had been passed, give details and suggest that residents speak with their tax advisor or accountant if they have any questions. Discussion ensued. It was agreed that a similar communication should be e-blasted to the District and include a link to the law and a clarification that this additional tax will not affect District property tax.

Al then raised the current water monitoring system and the difficulty in pinpointing and addressing a leak or excessive water use, which raised three issues: no easy/quick method currently to isolate leaks; the water distribution system is aging; and there is no single complete database of resident contact details (directory, tax/voter rolls, website) available.

Monitoring – Al raised whether metering should be considered to assist with pinpointing leaks and excessive water use. It was pointed out that metering has been a divisive issue in the past, though Al noted that metering does not necessarily lead to changing how residents are charged for water. Renee mentioned that metering can now be done through WiFi and/or Bluetooth and costs around \$1K-\$1.5K per household or ~\$300K for the entire community. Renee suggested implementing a metering pilot program, and it was agreed that the issue should be added to the March agenda.

Distribution system - Bob clarified that parts of the distribution system are more than 50 years old and any repairs/upgrades have been done on an as-needed basis. Renee noted that addressing the water distribution system is one of the initial Long-Range Planning priorities and she would cover this in her report.

Database – Al noted that reviewing the current QCBFD databases, their overlap and efficacy should be part of a larger records retention project and should include scanning/digitizing older paper records and reviewing our current cloud storage provider.

Next Al updated the Board on the status of the possible repair and/or replacement of the QCBFD tennis courts. Mark McEnroe has received a bid through an RFP process for the repair work from Hinding Tennis LLC ("Hinding") for just under \$20,000. Mark recommends however that rather than repair the courts this year, QCBFD should instead save the cost of repair and move directly to replace the existing courts in 2027. Discussion ensued and it was agreed that Mark would present more detail on the question of repair or replace at the March meeting but in the interim Mark would make a deposit (10% of the total repair costs) to reserve space on Hinding's 2026 calendar should the BoG decide to repair the courts this year. A **motion** was made to authorize paying a deposit to secure calendar space with Hinding for the repair work and was **seconded and passed** with all in attendance voting in favor (except the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie).

Al reported that the current lease between QCBFD and the Quonochontaug Tennis Club (“QTC”) is set to expire September 30, 2026. Julie added detail about the club and asked about the costs to the District associated with the property. Al stated that the renewal between the District and QTC should be negotiated at arm’s length. He suggested given that several of the Governors are also members of QTC that a task force be formed to evaluate, negotiate, and make a recommendation to the BoG whether and on what terms QCBFD should renew the QTC lease. Discussion ensued. A **motion** was then made to stand up renewal task force, comprised of at least three non-QTC members to be appointed by the Moderator. The motion was **seconded and passed** with all in attendance voting in favor (except the Moderator, who under the District’s By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie).

4. Treasurer’s Report

Al Bartosic for the Treasurer, Ray Martino

Al reported that all 2025 tax payments have been collected. He added that an insurance rider would need to be procured for the the upgraded water system once operational and asked Bob to coordinate with Ray to provide the necessary details. The District’s RI tax exemption certificate expires April 2026, and Ray will continue to work on securing its replacement.

5. Committee Chairs’ Reports

Long-Range Planning

Chair, Renee Cohen

Renee updated the BoG on the status of the five initial priority projects, reported on upcoming projects and asked for suggestions for future projects for 2026 and beyond. As part of the continuing work on the five priorities the LRP committee plans to launch an inventorying of the existing water distribution system - identifying each component, its life span, cost to replace and when to begin the required capital buildup to cover replacement. She recommended that a subcommittee be set up to do this work, comprised of committee members from LRP, Public Works and Finance and asked for prospect names. Bob offered to provide a copy of the plan for the existing system and a few names from the Public Works committee.

The committee also plans to put out a request for volunteers with a communications background to help launch the fifth priority project involving reviewing and modernizing the community-wide communication systems. Renee indicated that her committee would also assess the current cloud storage provider, its efficacy, cost and ability to scale; benchmark what other Fire Districts use; and make recommendations for next steps. She asked to be connected to RI counsel in order to begin the benchmarking work.

Finance and Budget

Al Bartosic for Chair, Barry Okun

Al reported that that the current financial condition of the District is strong, with over \$800K in cash on hand, which should carry QCBFD through until 2026 tax collection. There are however outstanding invoices both for the District road impact fees associated with pulling a building permit and construction deposits. Discussion ensued around improving collection but also about the efficacy of the current fee and deposit system in promoting project completion and remedying any impact arising from construction projects. Bob noted that the threshold amount that triggers the road impact fee might need to be adjusted upward in response to increased construction costs.

Al updated the group on the status of the two sources of financing for the water upgrade project – stating that the District has drawn down around \$160K of the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank (RIIB) loan and ~\$700K from the EPA grant with roughly \$400K remaining to be spent to complete the project. Barry believes that a portion of the RIIB loan has/will be paid down from the grant monies and hopes to get the repayment amount set and the amortization schedule adjusted to reflect the lower than anticipated outstanding balance under the loan. Discussion arose around whether the untapped capacity under the RIIB loan could be repurposed to cover the costs of updating the water distribution system. Barry will provide more insight at a future BoG meeting on whether this is possible.

Public Works

Bob Frazier

Bob reported that the water upgrade project is continuing to progress. The pump house exterior structure is up and much of the equipment has been installed but is not yet operational. He believes that the start up of the system could be as soon as the end of February.

Community Property

Al Bartosic for Mark Alperin

AI reported that the current landscaping contract with GLC expired on December 31, 2025, and Mark Alperin has received through an RFP process a bid for a three-year landscaping/mowing contract from (John Pruitt) and another service provider. Discussion ensued and it was agreed to add the landscaping contract to the March BoG agenda when more detail about each bid could be provided.

6. Managers' Report

Merchandise Sales

Julie Low

Julie requested permission to install a temporary storage POD on community property in the same location as last year next to the storage shed near the tennis courts. A **motion** was made to grant permission to allow a POD storage unit to be delivered and installed adjacent to the shed on May 20th and removed by the beginning of August 2026.

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

Beaches and Dunes

Debbie Dupre for June Cairns and Cindy Rice Kirkland

Debbie reported that the snow fencing at the beach has been damaged. Larham Landscape Construction Company submitted a bid of \$3530 to do the repair. She noted that Finance has confirmed that the amount is available within the 2025-26 budget. A **motion** was made to authorize the repair of the snow fencing along the QCB in an amount up to \$3530, and for the Moderator or his designee to execute the contract and if necessary, move the required funds from the Contingency account into the Beaches and Dunes account. Bill noted that the work had already been completed and wondered why the Board needed to approve the repair given that the funds were available and the amount was below \$5,000. Discussion ensued and Debbie agreed to review with RI counsel whether executing new contracts outside the normal course on behalf of the District required Board approval on amounts less than \$5000. The **motion** was then **seconded and passed** with all in attendance voting in favor (except the Moderator, who under the District's By-laws only votes in the case of a tie).

7. District Website

Debbie Dupre for Liz Pomeroy, Webmaster

Debbie reported that the new website is live with only the migration of the directory left to be completed. No significant downtime is expected, though it may be necessary for residents to change their passwords post migration.

8. Adjournment

A **motion** was made to adjourn at approximately 10:44 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 Dupre, Clerk
Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District