

Minutes of the Meeting of
Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District
Board of Governors
August 27, 2026
Charlestown Police Station
Meeting Room
4901 Old Post Rd, Charlestown, RI 02813

Members in attendance: Mark Alperin, Al Bartosic, Renee Cohen, Julie Low, Barry Okun, Bill Wilson and Debbie Dupre.

Members Absent: Ron Ruel and Ray Martino.

Also, in attendance Dede Consoli.

1. Call to Order/Moderator's Opening Remarks

Moderator, Al Bartosic

Al called the meeting to order at 8:15 am. He thanked everyone for being there.

2. Administrative Matters

Clerk, Debbie Dupre

There were no edits or comments to the July 23, 2026 draft minutes. A **motion** was made to approve the draft minutes. 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).

There were no comments to the draft 2025 Annual Meeting Minutes to be presented for approval to the community at this year's Annual Meeting. She also asked for any edits or comments to the draft 2026 Annual Meeting agenda. No suggestions were made.

Debbie then **moved** the following resolution authorizing Ron Ruel to act as AND on behalf of the District in the hiring of beach gate monitors including the execution of all required paperwork, which was 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 Ron Ruel in his capacity as Police Liaison and Beach Gate Monitor Manager is hereby authorized to act as and on behalf of the District in the hiring of the beach gate monitors for the 2026 season and execute on behalf of the District all required documentation including RI work permits, and state and federal tax forms including the USCIS I-9 form.

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, Al Bartosic

Al updated the group on the potential hiring of an administrative assistant, the cost of which has been included in the draft 2027 budget. Debbie added that the role will include assisting with the administrative duties of the proposed Purchasing Agent role to be considered and designated at the September BoG meeting.

AI updated the Board on the possible visit from Senator Whitehouse and asked for suggestions for a point person to help develop the run-of-show and guest list by next meeting. It was suggested that Rusty Rueff could help with this. AI agreed to reach out to Rusty to see if he would be willing to coordinate the visit.

4. Nominating

Acting Chair, AI Bartosic

AI turned to the draft 2026-2027 QCBFD Slate to be presented to the community for approval at the Annual Meeting. Discussion ensued regarding some openings, procedurally how to fill those between now and the Annual Meeting and a clarification around the role of Assistant Tax Assessor. A **motion** was made to approve the draft 2026-2027 QCBFD Slate subject to confirmation around the Assistant Tax Assessor candidate. 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).

Next AI updated the group on an upcoming talent/interest survey being prepared by Nominating to help match community talent and interest with volunteer roles. AI also mentioned that the family welcoming process would now be handled through the Nominating Committee. Discussion ensued regarding updating the various data bases with new community members details.

5. Treasurer's Report

AI Bartosic on behalf of the Treasurer

AI gave an update on the lease renewal process between the District and the Quonochontaug Tennis Club ("QTC") set to expire on September 30, 2026, stating that drafts had been circulated for review but there remains one outstanding issue regarding QTC using part of a District shed for storage. Our District counsel is preparing draft language to address the issue.

He then reported that the annual tax invoices had been mailed on August 14th with the standard 30-day due date. There is one remaining tax issue with QEBA of a de minimus amount that needs to be resolved.

AI confirmed that the insurance policy renewal process has been completed including the issuance of a rider to cover the upgraded water system. A **motion** was made to approve the addition of an insurance rider to cover the upgraded water system at a cost of approximately \$7600 annually. 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).

AI stated that the District's Line of Credit from Washington Trust has been renewed and remains evergreen until either party cancels. The only requirement is that banking resolutions authorizing District officers to act, gain access to accounts, security deposit boxes and sign on behalf of the District must be passed annually following officer elections at each Annual Meeting.

5. Committee Chairs' Reports

Community Property

Chair, Mark Alperin

Mark updated the group on ongoing maintenance of community property, including trimming back vegetation that is overgrown into the public right of way, replacing the failing gate at the beach after the season and removing the arborvitae around the tennis courts and replanting it next fall after the 2027 summer season.

Public Works

Acting Chair, AI Bartosic

AI reported that the upgraded water system is operational. Security fencing has been installed and that gate to the water facility is now under lock. There remains some outstanding permitting that must be issued before the final sign-off is given under the EPA grant and RIIB loan.

AI raised the proposed District roads plan approved by Public Works to improve drainage, reduce or reshape speed bumps and chip and seal District roads. The work will cost approximately \$100k and has included in the proposed 2027 budget, though the formal bidding process has not yet occurred. Questions were asked about the speed bumps and the number identified to be removed and reshaped. AI added that the issue of the number and size of the speed bumps came up both in the Dunn's Corner Fire Department ride-through as well as in connection with drainage issues.

Discussion ensued. A **motion** was made to approve the road plan as recommended by Public Works, including the removing of certain identified speed bumps and feathering those that remain. The group was reminded that the BoG had approved the chip and seal portion of the District road plan earlier in the summer. The **motion** was then **seconded and passed** with all in attendance voting in favor except Julie Low, who voted against the motion (as well as the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie).

Al then reported that the current drought level has improved slightly and that the red flag has been lowered. He then turned to the emergency contact/water shut-off valve survey, stating that there only a few residents who have failed to respond. Discussion ensued about the current water pressure and the taste of the water.

Next Al turned to the water monitoring system project ("Water Monitoring System"), which includes the installation of in-line meters within each home and monitoring of those meters remotely by the District. The current estimate of the cost of the project is approximately \$200k. Financing of the project is potentially feasible, including through the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank. Discussion ensued. Based upon the recommendations from the Long-Range Planning, Public Works, and Finance and Budget Committees, the following **motions** were made together:

That protecting access to fresh water and minimizing unintended loss through better leak detection and monitoring is of the utmost importance to the District;

That the District desires to authorize a project consisting of the purchase and installation of a home water monitoring system, including, but not limited to, the installation of inline meters and remote cellular monitoring at a cost no greater than \$250,000;

That the District intends to finance these costs through a loan or loans with lenders yet to be identified, which lenders may include the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank;

Resolved as follows:

A home water monitoring system, including, but not limited to, the purchase and installation of inline meters and remote cellular monitoring at a cost no greater than \$250,000 is hereby approved by the District with the Board of Governors having authority to modify the plans as necessary.

The financing not to exceed \$250,000 is hereby approved by the District with the Board of Governors having authority to modify the plans as necessary. Final financing terms and lender(s) (including but not limited to the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank) shall be subject to the approval of a further resolution of the majority of the Board of Governors. The Board of Governors may delegate the authority to negotiate and execute such loans to the person or person(s) approved by the majority of the Board of Governors.

Discussion ensued. Al added that under our charter the District cannot separately charge for water whether metered or otherwise. The **motions** were considered together and 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).

Long-Range Planning

Chair, Renee Cohen

Renee updated the group on the saltwater intrusion project. The committee is waiting for a project proposal from the University of Rhode Island, which will be brought to the BoG for their approval at a future meeting.

For the Water Distribution Inventory project, Renee reminded everyone that the goal of the project is to identify the various components of the water distribution system, their lifespan, replacement cost, and develop an updating and maintenance plan. Northeast Water Systems, who is on the state MPA (Master Price Agreement) list, has provided a proposal to inventory and map the existing distribution system. Discussion ensued and Renee agreed to bring the issue to the BoG for approval at the next meeting.

There was limited progress on the document management and cloud storage project.

Finance and Budget

Chair, Barry Okun

Barry led a discussion on the proposed 2027 budget. A **motion** was made to approve the proposed 2027 budget and further to approve the following proposed resolutions, which will be voted on by the District at the Annual Meeting:

Resolved, that the 2027 budget as presented at the District Meeting on September 19th, 2026, including an approximate \$620,275 in Tax Revenue (9.5% above 2026), as approved by the Board of Governors, be adopted.

Resolved, that the electors of the Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District qualified to vote at the District Meeting legally assembled on September 19th, 2026, hereby order the assessment and collection of a tax on ratable property of said District in the sum of no less than \$620,000 nor greater than \$623,000. 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 2027 at 12:00 noon based upon December 31st, 2026 assessed values as computed by the town of Charlestown, according to the law and District Charter, 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 2027. 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 dates shall carry interest until collected at a penalty rate of 12% per annum upon such unpaid taxes.

Discussion ensued. Then the **motions** were considered together and 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).

6. Summer Construction

Julie Low for the Eligible Voter Motion

Julie presented the eligible voter motion which will be presented to the community for approval at the Annual Meeting. It was noted that the motion was timely submitted as required under Article 3, Section 5 of the District bylaws. Al clarified that under that section, the motion can be presented to the BoG, who can 1) approve endorsing the motion and recommend it to the community for approval, 2) reject endorsing the motion with or without specifying the reasons, or 3) decline to vote on endorsing the motion. Discussion ensued around whether the motion should be considered by the BoG and more particularly on the recommended changes to the Rules and Regulations expanding the activities covered under the summer construction moratorium. Following the discussion, the following **motion** was made:

Resolved, that the Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District Rules and Regulations be amended to clarify the intent of the community is to prohibit all non-emergency construction projects and home improvement activities within the District between July 1st and Labor Day, and further that the following new construction Rules and Regulations presented at the District Meeting on September 19th, 2026, and as approved by the Board of Governors, be adopted.

The proposed new construction Rules and Regulations:

Section 1: Seasonal Restrictions

Summer Moratorium: Prohibit all elective or non-emergency construction projects and home improvement activities (including demolition and site preparation), between July 1st and Labor Day.

- Suspend any uncompleted, elective or non-emergency construction projects and home improvement activities by no later than June 30th.
- Secure the property for the period between July 1st and Labor Day.
- Ensure that dumpsters are emptied and removed.
- Remove temporary toilets from your property.
- Permit the start or resumption of elective and non-emergency construction projects and home improvement activities only after Labor Day.
- For verified emergency repairs to homes, hours and noise restrictions below would also apply.

Section 2: Hours of Construction

Permitted Hours: Restrict all authorized construction work and emergency repairs year-round to the hours between 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM.

Section 3: Site Management and Parking

- Vehicle Parking: Prohibit construction vehicles from parking on QCBFD roads or adjacent properties.

- Noise Control: Require workers to maintain low radio and voice volumes at all times.
- Site Cleanliness: Mandate that yards be kept clean and dumpsters be emptied on a regular basis.

Section 4: Responsibility

Homeowner Liability: Hold homeowners strictly responsible for informing all contractors and subcontractors of these restrictions.

The **motion** was then **seconded and rejected** with all in attendance voting against endorsing it, except Julie Low who recused herself from the vote (as well as the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie). The BoG then took up detailing the reasons behind the failure of the motion to be endorsed as feedback for the eligible voter group who proposed the motion. The main reason given was that the BoG was not convinced that the new rules served the purpose intended or improved upon the existing rules.

7. Managers' Report

Merchandise Sales

Julie Low/Dede Consoli

Dede reported that Merchandise Sales will finish the year achieving a similar level of success as last year. She then turned to the 2026 Merchandise Sales grant program and stated that applications are due September 4th. She has received several from AI on behalf of the District for ongoing projects and is expecting at least one other request before the deadline. The grant selection committee will review the applications and make recommendations to the BoG for their approval at the next meeting.

Police Liaison/Manager of Beach Gate Monitors

AI Bartosic for Ron Ruel

AI reported on ongoing safety concerns in connection with the intersection at West Beach Road and Sunset/Sea Breeze. He then read a report provided by Ron on the recent EMS response aided by the new beach entrance identification numbering system to an incident at the District beach.

AI reported that monitoring at the beach gate has continued through the end of the season without the potential gap in coverage without having to rely on the services of the outside security company. Ron asked that anyone leaving the beach after the monitors leave for the day, to please close the gate.

Ballfield and Playground

BoG for Matt DeFusco

Discussion ensued about maintenance work required at the ballfield, which it was estimated would be in excess of \$10k. A question was raised about applying for a Merchandise Sales grant to subsidize this expense. Barry clarified that there are sufficient funds in the reserves under the proposed 2027 budget to repurpose to Ballfield and Playground to cover the expense.

7. 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