

Bonnet Shores Fire District

Monthly Meeting Minutes

September 20, 2023

7:30 PM

130 Bonnet Shores Road, Narragansett, RI 02882

Zoom

Call To Order

Chair Carol O'Donnell called the meeting to order at 7:38pm

Council members in attendance included: Anthony DeAngelis, Caroyln DiLeo, Vice Chair Marlene Bellini, Steve Danuszar and Bill DelGizzo, Treasurer Laurie McCarthy, and Clerk Stephanie Caldwell.

Pledge of Allegiance/ Moment of silence

The Assembly recited the Pledge of Allegiance and held a moment of silence.

Urgent Business

None.

Announcements:

Clarification: All BSFD official district information is available at www.bonnetshores.org

The entrance sign & masonry replacement is in process. The delays have been due to the permit process.

314 Bonnet Point Road at the corner of Dunes Road has had an issue of flooding. There is work in progress to clear the area for the flow of water.

Deb Panullo is working on organizing a community holiday party. All interested are asked to reach out to Deb. Dave Kauffman suggested that Deb send out an Evite via e-blast to record replies.

Approval of Minutes:

July 19, 2023 – A motion to approve the minutes is made by Marlene Bellini, seconded by Carolyn, motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer: Updated Financial Report

Laurie McCarthy shared her report. Tax payments are being batch processed several times per week. Tax payments made online are automatic. Checks are not automatically processed, due to the vacant tax collector position. Laurie addressed questions of the 3% online processing fee. This fee is from the processing/ hosting company, Municipay.

There is a discussion on the topic of hiring a professional company to perform tier 3 FD quarterly & annual reporting. Laurie requests that the council invest in a company to perform the required services for the district's annual reporting. A motion to search for an outside company for tier reporting is made by Bill, seconded by Carolyn, and passed unanimously.

Motion to approve one quarter of the tax collector payments be awarded to Laurie for her work collecting and processing the 3rd quarter taxes is made by Carolyn, seconded by Bill, motion passed unanimously.

Carolyn asked about the 2nd quarter financial report and there is a discussion about the financials that have been reported so far.

There is a discussion about the option of a lockbox for the check collection process in the future when the tax collector position is filled.

Tax Collector:

John Chereskin addressed the room to express his interest to fill the vacant tax collector position. His experience includes accounting with Verizon Wireless for 32 years, and has a history here in Bonnet with his wife.

John asked the Council for the job roles and responsibilities, there is a discussion about that, as well as the logistical issues to be addressed in the future.

A motion to appoint John Chereskin to the position of Tax Collector is made by Marlene, seconded by Carolyn, motion passes unanimously.

Thank you for helping our community, John!

Land Trust: Report

Terrence Betty of 14 Leonard Bodwell introduced himself as the new Land Trust Chair. They are looking into the process of renewing and/or reapplying for their 501 c3 Status. There has been an issue regarding two property owners, Land Trust Property and encroachment, which is in the process to reach an agreement.

Dave Kauffman gave a presentation on the Land Trust. He began by explaining the history of the Land Trust tax exemption status and the purpose of the Land Trust (to acquire open land with the express intent to remain open). He explained the logistics and challenges faced to reinstate the Land Trust's tax-exempt status. Dave explains in detail his proposal to sign an agreement with the Foundation Group to being the formal process to reestablish the Land Trust's tax-exempt status. There is a discussion among the Council about specifics.

There is a brief discussion of the independent nature of the Land Trust under the BSFD.

Marlene asks if any land acquisitions occurred after the expiration of the tax-exemption status in 2017, the answer is yes. There is a discussion about who would possibly be exposed for liability in the case of those donations.

Bill comments that the BSFD Land Trust is the only elected Land Trust in the State of Rhode Island.

Thank you for all of your work and the presentation tonight, Dave!

Communication Committee: Report

Steve Danuszar shared his report. At the last meeting on August 5th the Communication Committee would like to begin managing the e-blasts.

There is a discussion about the official status of the Communications Committee. It is in fact a currently registered subsequent public body of the BSFD, while still advisory in nature.

Carolyn expresses her dissent over the idea of the Communications Committee having a more formal role in the communication of the neighborhood. She discussed the serious nature of having the BSFD's official communication remain opinion free. She commented on her concerns of certain members of the committee and their roles in unofficial BSFD social media accounts, and how that may possibly impact the tone and/or accuracy of the e-blast content.

Bill comments that the Communication Committee should be recognized as an acting Committee, and no longer advisory in nature, for the purpose of transparency via OMA protocols.

There is a discussion about improving the e-blast format, formalizing a process, and who should be responsible for sending them. There is a discussion that the Communications Committee should take on these tasks and return suggestions to the Council.

There is a discussion about formalizing the Communications Committee.

Social Committee: No Report.

District Manager: Report submitted to the Council and shared on the website.

New Business:

1. There is a discussion about installing a convex mirror on the causeway where one was previously. The council is in agreement for the need of mirrors for safety, and to ask Mark to research the purchase of one or more mirrors for this area.
 - a. A motion for Mark to research the cost and process for installing mirrors on the causeway is made by Marlene, seconded by Bill, motion passed unanimously.
2. Camp 2023 Update – Tabled
3. There is a discussion about the desire for speeding control via removable speed bumps.
 - a. A motion to request Mark research the possibility of a removable speed bump program for the BSFD is made by Carol, seconded by Bill, motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment:

All speakers need to come to the microphone to speak, identify themselves by giving their name and address, speak once, and keep comments to three minutes.

Speakers on zoom must request to comment, have both their microphone and video on, identify themselves by giving their name and address, speak once, and keep comments to three minutes.

1. Nancy Cordy of Bonnet Point Road – Comments that the speed detectors are not working. There is a discussion about the vandalism issue with the speed detectors this year.
2. Carol Fortin – Asks Steve Danuszar when the next Communications Committee meeting is, and if the notice will be included in the next e-blast.
3. Paula Childs – Reads a prepared statement regarding the lack of an annual election, and raises questions about the BSFD lawyer fees.
4. Bob Patterson – Discusses his distrust and disdain for the content of the last two e-blasts, and that the e-blasts should remain neutral in nature. Anthony suggests ending the e-blast program until a formal process is created. Bill argues against ending the e-blast at this point.
5. Joan Fandetti – Comments on the helpful nature of Steve Ryder, and the community acknowledges his many years of volunteer service (and continued help as well!). Thank you so much Steve!!!
6. Richard Mercier – Comments on the arguments directed at Laurie earlier regarding the tax collecting process, and the history that the tax collector position has faced with these issues, and the
7. Kathy Daley – Asks Dave Kauffman if there is an update on the status of the Community Center for the use by the BSBC. There is a discussion about the unclear nature of this answer, and currently an implementation plan is under way.
8. Faith LaSalle – Comments she felt the past two e-blasts that were under scrutiny earlier by Bob, were informative. She comments on the negative nature of the Bonnet Shores Neighborhood Association Facebook group.
9. Matt Mannix – Comments on the public body nature of the Land Trust regarding whether it is a subsequent public body of the BSFD and reads from the Land Trust charter.
10. Carolyn DiLeo – Comments on a meeting in August where members from the Council and the Charter Commission to discuss how best to proceed. Carolyn has posed three key questions regarding legal definitions to Attny Dickenson, in order to resolve the charter revision, and has not received any

responses. Carolyn asks Carol if she will speak to Attny Dickenson, Carol responds that she will make continuous effort to do so,

11. Marlene Bellini read a prepared public comment:

I was truly disturbed this week by the actions of people in our community. I am not allowed to be on one of the Bonnet Shores Facebook page, I have been banned. But a friend wanted to share something that was said...

It was in reference to some people in the community and on the council I am not going to call the person out, because the person that posted it and the people that liked it will know who they are..

It was comparing people in our community to that of Hitler and his propaganda.... This past week is the highest of Jewish holidays and to see that my neighbors were even mentioned in the same sentence as Hitler was not only appalling but vulgar. Maybe the person that posted it is not aware that Hitler actually killed 6 Million Jews. Maybe that same person doesn't realize that their statement can actually be looked at as a Hate Crime.

I am hoping that other people were as bothered by the post and if I could get on to Facebook and that page I would have reported it to Facebook as just that a Hate Crime when mentioning Hitler in any way... The person that posted and the people that liked it, have all shown your true colors.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Carol at 9:24pm, motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
Stephanie Caldwell
Bonnet Shores Fire District Clerk