

Bonnet Shores Fire District

Monthly Meeting Minutes

October 18, 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

Council members in attendance included: Anthony DeAngelis, Caroyln DiLeo, Vice Chair Marlene Bellini, Steve Danuszar and Bill DelGizzo. Additional present included District Manager Mark Gillooly, Tax Collector John Chereskin, 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 BSGD official district information is available at www.bonnetshores.org

1. Please view the proposed Wesquage Pond Watershed Plan on our website.
2. Dr. King presentation will be held on October 25, 2023 and 6:30pm. Zoom link to follow.

Approval of Minutes:

September 20, 2023 – A motion to approve the minutes as amended is made by Carolyn, seconded by Steve. Motion passed unanimously.

Steve asks that a few corrections are made. Please update public comment #6 and include in the comments of the Communication Committee that the Committee has been following the OMA regulations for committees.

Treasurer: Updated Financial Report

Anthony read the Treasure's report. The comments included:

- The district is in good financial shape with over \$400,000.00 in tax revenue.
- Bill payments are on schedule.
- Fiscal Year 2024 1st Quarter report is on the website.
- The council received two reports last week

Tax Collector: Update

John shared his report. He has collected a total of \$415,440.28 in tax payments (92%), with \$37,618.17 remaining. Of the payments collected, 85% were mailed in, 10% were paid via credit card and 5% were paid via eCheck. He has had 12 mailings returned, down from initial 50. There is a discussion of sending out late notices next week, and using word of mouth to try and reach past due accounts.

Land Trust: Report

Terrence Beatty discussed the Land Trust meeting that was held yesterday. Topics included:

1. The Wesquage Watershed Plan
2. The need for By Laws added to the Land Trust's charter,
3. The next regular monthly meeting will be on October 24, 2023.
4. A zoom like will be provided for Dr. King's presentation.

Social Committee: Update

Deb Panullo shared the following updates:

1. Halloween event has been cancelled due to the low response rate of less than 10 RSVPs.
2. BSFD Community Center Holiday Tree Lighting will be on Friday December 1st at 5:00pm.
3. There is a discussion of holding an informal holiday gathering on either December 8th, 9th or 10th. Some ideas for venues include Two Ten Oyster Bar, The Chop House, etc. Ideas are welcomed.
4. Bonnet Days Event, tentative for June 2024. Volunteers for this committee and planning are asked for.

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

Mark discussed his report, topics included:

1. The solar powered speed signs. Issues with these signs include the vandalism of the speed sign on Bonnet Point Road on the Causeway, where the wires and solar panels themselves were damaged beyond repair, and the shaded area of the speed sign on Bonnet Shores Road. There is a discussion about the speed sign on Bonnet Point Road, and if it is worth pursuing replacement.
2. The idea of removable speedbumps was presented to the Narragansett DPW and rejected.
3. The town DPW has no records of a mirror on Bonnet Point Road.
4. The security camera system put in place is functioning very well. There is a discussion about the need and cost of continuing the cloud service supporting the camera system, and if it would be necessary to continue the service once the trial period ends.
5. The yard waste dumpster schedule is being maintained for the fall.
6. CRMC has provided the maintenance assent for Bonnet Point Road and Dunes Road. This allows for the removal of debris from the existing drainage area. This task should be completed by mid-November.

New Business:

1. Camp 2023 Update
 - a. Discussion – Mark shared that he feels the District Manager should be present during camp operational hours for several reasons, all pertaining to safety and security. There is a discussion about the necessity for quality adult participation and supervision. It's commented that the required age limit for campers is that all campers are 5 years of age by May 1st. There is a discussion about accepting Venmo payments, and if it would be possible for next year.
2. Solitude Lake Management –
 - a. Contract
 - b. Discussion – There is a discussion about removing phragmites in areas of the pond, and a reference to the necessity of managing invasive species mentioned in the proposed Wesquage Watershed Plan. There is a discussion about a fall maintenance of the breechway. Comments include looking into if a biannual clearing is possible through CRMC, and if waiting until after hurricane season is a possibility.
3. E-Blast Discussion
 - a. Correction – There is a discussion to clarify how the council would like to proceed with the E-Blast procedure. There is a suggestion of sending an E-Blast once a month. There is a discussion about what everyone agreed on at the last meeting, for how to proceed currently, and confirming that the plan is for the Communications Committee to present their ideas for how they propose to manage E-Blasts. In the meantime, the current process of collecting notes from all involved persons, and emailing once a month will be maintained.
4. Attorney Dickenson
 - a. There is a discussion of an email exchange between Attorney Dickenson and Carolyn DiLeo, and if an edited version or the full version should be shared on the website.
 - b. There is a discussion on the interpretations of Mr. Dickenson's responses to the questions asked by Carolyn regarding the voting rights lawsuit consent order. All agree that there has been no additional clarity, or forward progress in defining qualified voters to be included in the next

proposed Charter revisions. There is a discussion about the desire for establishing prior case law opinions for the Charter Commission to proceed.

- c. Anthony suggests if the BSFD could go back to the ruling judge for further clarification. There is a discussion that it would be necessary to have the original Attorney present in the case (Attorney Dickenson), to return to the judge with the questions for additional clarity. There is a discussion about which side's attorney should be responsible, and therefore who would be liable for the fees incurred. Carolyn comments that she sees there is only one question that needs to be asked, and that is what definition of voter will be voting on the Charter amendments after it passes legislation.

5. Charter Commission Update

- a. Carolyn discussed the meeting held earlier tonight. She explains that the Charter Commission is proposing that the definition of qualified voters mirror the town and state requirements, that all persons who reside in the BSFD and that are registered voters in the town of Narragansett, will be the only qualified voters in the BSFD.
- b. Marlene raises the issue that the proposal outlined would dramatically change the BSFD charter, by eliminating taxpayers and reducing the scope of qualified voters, rather than maintaining the current definition and adding verified residents to the pool of qualified voters.
- c. Carol comments at the end of the discussion, that this is part of the question that should be presented to the judge.

6. Wesquage Pond Watershed Plan

- a. Discussion – Everyone is pleased with the proposed Watershed Plan drafted by Dr. David Hills Black and Jake Peterson of the DEM. There is a discussion about how to begin moving forward with submission to the town.
- b. Motion to accept the drafted Wesquage Watershed plan and proceed with submitting to the town of Narragansett is made by Bill, seconded by Carolyn, and 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. Mark Michaelson – Comments that the “end game” of the voting rights arguments is to have an annual meeting and election in the summer of 2024. He comments on the new qualified voter proposal, of registered voters only, and that this definition represents only 30% of the current voter roster.
2. Faith LaSalle – Comments that the vote earlier in the evening at the Charter Commission to propose the new qualified voter list be limited to registered voters only, was 4-1. She commented further on the
3. Deb Panullo – Comment on how awful the talk and attitudes of certain parties involved in the community, and how deeply, negatively impactful these people are to the overall social health of the community overall.
4. Stephanie Caldwell – Suggested that the council look into the idea of using Care.com to search for camp counselors for the 2024 season.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Carol at 9:05pm. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
Stephanie Caldwell
Bonnet Shores Fire District Clerk