

## Bonnet Shores Fire District

Bonnet Shores Fire District Council Monthly Meeting  
Wednesday, November 20, 2024  
7:30 pm

### Meeting Minutes

#### Call to Order

Council Chair Carol O'Donnell called the meeting to order at 7:33 pm and asked for a Moment of Silence for deceased members of the community Lee Listro and Rita Santilli. In attendance were council members Leslie McKnight, Jane Duran and Faith LaSalle. Also in attendance were District Manager Mark Gillooly, Treasurer Laurie McCarthy and Tax Collector Helen Patience. Council members Steve Danuszar, John Chereskin and Tony Girardi were absent.

L. McKnight recognized deceased community member John O'Neill. L. McKnight and Nancy Cordy both recognized the contributions of deceased community member and Bonnet "historian" Lee Listro.

#### Urgent Business

None.

#### Announcements

C. O'Donnell announced that the meeting was accessible via Zoom, but that there would be no participation via Zoom. She also announced that Janice McClanaghan will attend next month's meeting and share her experience as the Clerk at the 2024 Annual Meeting.

#### Approval of Minutes

L. McKnight **moved**, seconded by J. Duran, to approve the October 16, 2024 council meeting minutes. The motion was **approved**, 3-0, with F. LaSalle abstaining.

#### Committee Reports

*Treasurer (L. McCarthy):* Currently, the Fire District has \$403,000 across all accounts. The reimbursement process for the FEMA grant is underway.

*Tax Collector (H. Patience):* Ninety-two percent (92%) of the Fire District taxes have been collected.

*Land Trust (J. Fandetti):* Joan Fandetti reported that the Land Trust withdrew/tabled the prior year's request at the Annual Meeting for an additional \$7,000.00. She reported that the Land Trust was looking for six volunteers to maintain the walking trail. The next Land Trust meeting will be held on January 13, 2025 at 6:30 pm.

*Harbor (M. Gillooly):* Rowboats and dinghies on Little Beach will be removed by December 1, 2024.

*District Manager (M. Gillooly):* Submitted written report. Rose Hill was switching out its scales recently, which slowed down trash pick-up in the Fire District.

*Social:* The Christmas Tree Lighting will take place at the Community Center on Sunday, December 1, 2024 at 5:00 pm. The annual Christmas Party will be held at Twin Willows on December 15, 2024 at 6:00 pm.

### New and Ongoing Business

#### *Website*

- C. O'Donnell announced that this item would be tabled.

#### *Ocean State Rhode Race*

- L. McKnight **moved**, seconded by J. Duran, to approve the October 27, 2025 date for the Ocean State Rhode Race. The motion was **approved** unanimously.

#### *Open Meetings Act (OMA) and Access to Public Records Act (APRA) Training*

- L. McKnight announced that she had acquired a training link for online training regarding compliance with these statutes.

#### *Ethics Commission requirements*

- L. McKnight shared the process for complying with the Ethics Commission's filing requirements.

#### *Dissolution of committees and formation of working groups*

- L. McKnight explained the need for fewer committees and the creation of informal working groups to replace some committees. L. McKnight **moved**, seconded by F. LaSalle to dissolve the Communications Committee and replace it with the Communications Working Group, to dissolve the Procedure Manuals Committee, to dissolve the Search & Screen Committee, to dissolve the Historical Committee and replace it with the Preservation-of-Bonnet Working Group and to dissolve the Social Committee and replace it with the Social Events Working Group. The motion was **approved** unanimously.

#### *Reconstitution of the Charter Commission/Committee*

- L. McKnight addressed the problem of taking away the voting rights of groups of voters without including those groups of voters on the Commission/Committee. J. Duran stressed the need to support any charter changes with data. F. LaSalle stated that the existing Charter Commission was put together based on the Consent Order from a prior lawsuit which gave the District Council the authority to appoint members. There is now a new council and a new government that wants to move forward, get the voting issue over and restore peace in the community. She stated that the Commission was not an independent committee from the District and that the council should reconstitute it to be

more inclusive. C. O'Donnell **moved**, seconded by L. McKnight, to reconstitute the Charter Commission. The motion was **approved** unanimously.

*The Prior Land Trust's 501(c)(3) application*

- F. LaSalle expressed her concern about the prior Land Trust's application to the IRS for 501(c)(3) status without first obtaining approval from the Fire District Council. C. O'Donnell agreed, stating that the council never approved that application. F. LaSalle also indicated that the Fire District Treasurer was mistakenly described as the Land Trust Treasurer in that application. F. LaSalle **moved**, seconded by J. Duran, to explore/research whether the Land Trust should seek 501(c)(3) status. The motion was **approved** unanimously.

*Hiring an attorney to advise the council re: the Land Trust's tax-exempt status and the 501(c)(3) issues*

- F. LaSalle **moved**, seconded by L. McKnight, to retain an attorney or tax advisor re: tax-exempt status for the Land Trust and the 501(c)(3) issue for no more than \$2,000.00. The motion was **approved** unanimously.

*Land Trust Rules and Regulations*

- The Land Trust had developed rules and regulations that were never approved, but appear on the Fire District website. C. O'Donnell **moved**, seconded by L. McKnight, to refer these draft rules and regulations to the newly elected Land Trust for review. The motion was **approved** unanimously.

Public Comment

- Nancy Cordy addressed the council regarding the number of agenda items and the 501(c)(3) issue.
- Bob Patterson addressed the council regarding the consent judgment and the charter committee.

Adjournment:

J. Duran **moved**, seconded by L. McKnight, to adjourn the meeting. The motion was **approved** unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/Matthew M. Mannix  
Bonnet Shores Fire District Clerk

\*Ratified on December 18, 2024\*