

Minutes of the Meeting of
Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District
Board of Governors
October 19, 2024
Quonochontaug Grange
Meeting Room
5662 Post Road, Charlestown RI 02813

Members in attendance: Renee Cohen, Charlie Freedgood, Bob Frazier, Julie Low, Ray Martino, Barry Okun, Mark Alperin.

Members Absent: Ron Ruel, Bill Wilson and Debbie Dupre.

Also in attendance was Chris Harris, Assistant Clerk, Kathy Alperin and Roy Jacobsen.

1.Call to Order/Moderator’s Opening Remarks

Moderator, Charlie Freedgood

Charlie called the meeting to order at 9:01AM.

2.Approval of the Minutes

Asst. Clerk, Chris Harris

There were no edits or comments to the September 14th, 2024 minutes. A **motion** was made to approve the minutes as drafted. 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).

Chris reviewed the possible dates for next year’s Board of Governors meeting that were discussed at the previous meeting. A **motion** was made to set the BOG 2025 meetings on Jan 11, March 8, May 24th, June 14, July 19, August 9, August 23, September 13, and October 18th. 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, Charlie Freedgood

Charlie addressed the issue regarding summer construction that was br by a member of the community at the annual meeting. He reached out to counsel to discuss ability to assess penalties and enforcement and is waiting to hear back. Discussion ensued and it was suggested that a subgroup be formed to explore the matter and to make a recommendation to the board. Charlie asked if anyone on the board was interested in leading/joining. Renee and Julie expressed interest and will reach out to members of the community to get a few others to explore once we have heard back from counsel.

4. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer, Ray Martino

Ray made a recommendation to change the structure of the bank accounts at Washington Trust. Currently there are checking accounts and money market accounts which earn very little interest. He suggested using an automatic sweep account (zero balance account) which currently earns 4% interest and sweeps funds daily in both directions resulting in a checking account balance of \$0 each day. As we have considerable balances in the money market account it is anticipated that the interest earned would be material with no additional risk. The board members agreed that this made good financial sense and as this decision falls under the purview of the treasurer a vote was deemed not necessary.

Ray updated the board that Vision Government Solutions, our current vendor for annual tax assessment services, including accessing grand list data and organizing distribution of tax invoices, has sold its tax service business to Quality Data Services (QDS), the firm which prints and mails Charlestown's tax bills. Ray has reached out to QDS but has yet to hear back. Ray is seeking other vendors which provide this service and will come back to the board with a recommendation.

Ray indicated that our bookkeeper has been spending a considerable amount of time following up on uncashed checks issued to summer employees and wondered if it would be possible to require direct deposit. It was discussed and agreed that since many of our young people do not maintain checking accounts, direct deposit would be challenging. Ray will check with Ron to see if they could come up with a solution.

4. Committee Chairs' Reports:

A. Long Range Planning

Chair, Renee Cohen

Renee updated the group on the work being done by the various project teams. Diane McEnroe, who leads the Governance project, sent emails to Committee Chairs with questions around ad hoc support and governance. Renee requested that all Chairs that haven't responded to take a few minutes to look it over and get back to the Diane. Work on the Environmental project is ongoing, focusing on QCC and other organizations. Paul Mathews, who leads the Water Quality/Quantity project had intended to present today but agreed to postpone until the Spring more Board of Governors members would be available. Renee is eager to distribute the Comprehensive Plan which first will be reviewed by the Moderator and then the Board. Since the final report from Paul Mathews on Water Quality/Quantity is complete, an executive summary will be included in the Plan. A discussion followed and it was determined that, if the water executive summary could be included by January, it would be beneficial to wait to distribute to the Board for review at that time.

B. Finance and Budget

Chair, Barry Okun

Barry reported that the fire district financials are in good shape and we are ahead of budget largely due to the delay in the start of the water upgrade project. We have updated

quotes from the construction contractor and are pulling together the rest of the paperwork to be able to close on the RIIB financing and application for the Federal EPA grant in connection with the water project. He is currently searching for an individual with grant experience to help manage the administration process

C. Public Works

Chair, Bob Frazier

Bob updated the group on the water upgrade project and reported that the contractor has issued new construction documents and quotes. Building permit is pending with Town of Charlestown with an anticipated start date of Nov 1, subject to closing the RIIB financing. Subject to the Nov. start date and favorable weather conditions, Contractor estimates work to be completed by June but the contract provides for up to one-year. Charlie asked that the Chairs of Public Works and Finance as well as the treasurer, work closely together to make sure that work dates, billing systems and financing are coordinated.

D. Community Property

Chair, Mark Alperin

Mark updated the board on the ongoing projects of tree timing, maintenance on bulletin boards and plan to re-gravel the beach parking lot in the spring. He contacted RI Energy Forestry Division to alert them to the 12 utility poles covered in vines and ask them to remove. Mark discussed the findings in the Playground Equipment Report completed by John LaRue in which a safety inspection was conducted. The chains on the swing needed an immediate correction and as such the swings have been taken down until the safety concerns can be remedied. Additional recommendations included addressing chips, rust, and painting, as well as implementing ongoing preventative maintenance. The inspector noted that the equipment is expected to last 5 to 10 years more. Mark suggested that the community consider starting to accrue for replacement equipment and noted that the current replacement cost is estimated at \$27,000.

Manager's Report

Merchandise Sales

Julie Low

Julie reported that a post-season audit of Logo merchandise inventory was conducted by a member of finance and showed a cost basis of \$28,600, which is higher than prior years. Julie suggested that were a grant consultant required, perhaps a grant request could be made for this purpose. A discussion of grants ensued, noting the magnitude of funds available, only limited demand and the convergence of uses with ordinary district needs. Charlie will revisit this topic at a future meeting to assess the appropriate governance of the separate approval and decision-making framework for the grant process.

Adjournment

A **Motion** was made to adjourn at approximately 10:46am. 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 Districts By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie.)

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Harris Assistant Clerk
Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District