

Minutes of the Meeting of
Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District
Board of Governors
August 11, 2023
Charlestown Police Station
Meeting Room
4901 Old Post Rd, Charlestown, RI 02813

Members in attendance: Mark Alperin, Al Bartosic, Dede Consoli, Charlie Freedgood, Bob Frazier, Mike Lewers, Ron Ruel, Fred Newton and Maud Bailey

Members Absent: None

Also in attendance were Chris Harris as well as members of the public.

1. Call to Order/Moderator's Opening Remarks

Moderator, Charlie Freedgood

Charlie called the meeting to order at 8:15am. He thanked everyone for their work as volunteers and commented on how our year was moving toward the close and our need to think about what we wanted to present at the annual meeting.

2. Approval of the Minutes.

Clerk, Maud Bailey

i. There were two edits to the July 22, 2023 minutes concerning the Tennis Court usage vote—namely, who proposed it and who voted. No additional edits or comments were made. A **motion** was made to approve the draft minutes as amended. 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).

Maud then reminded the Board that the Committee and Manager reports are due by August 15 in order to create the Annual Meeting Packet that pursuant to our bylaws needs to be distributed to the community prior to the Annual Meeting. She also explained that during the next two meetings the BoG will be voting on the issues it will present at the Annual Meeting for a community vote.

4. Moderator's Report:

Moderator, Charlie Freedgood

Charlie started his report by reiterating the need to move forward on issues that will be presented to the community at the Annual Meeting such as the budget, public works issues and golf cart regulation.

Charlie then introduced Renee Cohen to the Board for their approval (as per the By-Laws) of her appointment as Chair of Long-Range Planning Committee and voting Governor on the Board for the balance of the District year.

A **motion** was made to approve Renee Cohen as Chair of the Long-Range Planning Committee and as a voting Governor on the Board. The **motion** was **seconded and passed** with all in attendance voting in favor (other than the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie). Renee introduced herself and told the Board about her prior work on Long-Range Planning and on the Comprehensive Plan Working Group.

Next, Charlie reported to the Board that Sen. Whitehouse's office had informed him that the District's grant application for Congressionally Directed Spending assistance for the water upgrade project has advanced to the next stage and was still being considered. Sen. Whitehouse's office will let us know the results of the next stage, which is driven by the broader federal budget negotiations.

Charlie ended his Report with a brief discussion on the memorials issue. He indicated that Mark Alperin or a volunteer from the Community Property Committee will guide the discussion, with the first step to followup on the comments received by Maud this past winter.

Committee Chair Reports Treasurer's Report
Treasurer

Mike Lewers,

Mike reported on the 3rd quarter financial overview, the line of credit draw down (currently @\$81,000) and updated the BoG on the 2023 tax billing and collection process.

Finance and Budget:

Al Bartosic, Finance Chair

Al updated the BoG on the water system project financing and what issues there might be if the district might want to prepay the debt, noting that he expected the RIIB agreement to include pre-payment penalties which he believed they would waive.

Next Al led a discussion on the Finance Committee's proposed 2023 Budget. He specifically noted that projected tax collections for 2024 would be approx. \$522k and the allocations for trash collection and well-field remediation were budgeted to be \$100k each. After answering questions and listening to comments Al made a **Motion** that the 2023 Budget as proposed by the Finance Committee be approved by the BoG to be presented to the community for approval at the 2023 Annual Meeting. The **motion was seconded and passed** with all in attendance voting in favor (other than the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie)

Long-Range Planning

Renee Cohen, Chair

Renee started her report by acknowledging and thanking Ellen Frost for all of her hard work as chair over the last four years. Renee said the LRP Committee is currently evaluating the issues that have emerged from the community comprehensive planning process and is working on a list of priorities to work on that she will present to the BoG in October.

Public Works:

Bob Frazier, Chair

Bob began his report by updating the BoG on the status of the various permits required for the Water System Project. The District has received the CRMC assent allowing for construction within the wetlands' buffer. The District has also received the groundwater discharge permit from RI DEM. We are waiting on the approval of the project from RI DOH. Currently RIDOH is understaffed so they have given the engineering review of the project to an outside contractor. Bob said he has updated the outside engineering firm about where we are and our target of starting construction this fall. PW is meeting with the Fire Inspector to review plans and get their approval which is needed to get a town building permit.

Charlie indicated that there was one other open item, namely the execution of the construction contract with R.P. Iannuccillo & Sons. Bob indicated that he had executed the contract several months earlier, however he was not aware if the document included any of the comments proposed by the district or its counsel. A brief discussion followed. Fig then led a discussion as to the proposed criteria and procedures for residents to follow in seeking District approval for modifying, building or planting on adjacent District Property, in particular district roadways. Members requested that this procedure be reviewed by district counsel. Fig stated that these procedures do not grandfather any prior modifications, building or plantings and that the district retains all its rights to its owned property. Other comments included a section on timing of the PW/district response to any request so the homeowner can understand the theoretical wait time to move forward. Another comment concerned the criteria about emergency vehicle access—will emergency service providers be involved in this process? Fig said he would consider the comments in the next draft. Charlie reiterated that the District always has the right to determine what is either built or planted on District property so this is just a policy to help make that determination more transparent and avoid a misunderstanding with the homeowner, it is not a Rule or Regulation that needs community approval under the By-Laws.

Bob led a brief discussion on the make-up of his committee. Some members are leaving and he is planning to make the committee smaller in order to make achieving a quorum easier. It was suggested that a working group focused on performing maintenance functions at the direction of the Public Works Committee, but not members directly, might be an alternate approach.

Bob ended his report with an update on the CRMC wetlands restoration project. He updated the Board on the restoration plan and timetable going forward, noting that his plan was to have it complete by early November this year.

Community Property

Mark Alperin

Mark updated the BoG on the situation with our trash collector. He said that on August 1st Mr. Piccolo received a Notice of Default on our contract outlining the items causing the default. He has acknowledged that he has received the notice. Mark recommended that Mr. Piccolo to respond to the notice in writing and to include as many specifics as possible. Mr. Piccolo has 30 days in which to cure the various defaults, after which the district remedies would include termination.. Next Mark reported on Community Property's current landscaping and maintenance projects.

**Managers Reports
Merchandise Sales**

Dede Consoli, Manager

Dede reported that the POD container was removed in late July. Sales are tracking slightly behind last year, presumably due to weather impacts.. She will be releasing the grant application for community improvement grants during the last week of August.

The Police Liaison & Manager of Beach Gate Monitors:

Ron Ruel

Ron led a discussion on the new state laws concerning low speed vehicles, including golf carts, that are set to go into effect July 1, 2024. He noted that the new State law would create conflicts with the existing district rules and would be confusing for residents. At the end of the discussion, Ron made a **motion** that due to the enactment by the State of RI of comprehensive low speed vehicle laws. QCBFD's current rules and regulations regarding low speed vehicles/golf carts should expire on June 30, 2024. The **motion** was **seconded and passed** with all in attendance voting in favor (other than the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie) and will be presented to the community for approval at the 2023 Annual Meeting.

Tennis Courts:

Mark McEnroe

Mark was not present but Dede reported that he had agreed to add a "Tennis Only" signage at the Tennis Courts in response to an incident concerning some individuals playing soccer on the courts.

Executive Session

The BoG voted to enter into Executive Session pursuant to the relevant requirements of the R.I. General Laws 42-46-5 (a) regarding potential and or pending controversy regarding that certain contract between QCBFD and Steve Piccolo & Sons Rubbish Removal LLC dated as of May 18, 2022. The following members voted to go into Executive Session: Mark Alperin, Al Bartosic, Renee Cohen, Dede Consoli, Bob Frazier, Mike Lewers, Ron Ruel, Fred Newton and Maud Bailey (the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie).

The matter was discussed with no vote taken. A **motion** to reconvene to open session was made and **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). After reconvening into open session, a **motion** was made to vote to seal the minutes of the Executive Session. 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).

As stated above, other than the vote to reconvene into open session, no vote was taken during the Executive Session.

Adjournment

A **motion** was made to adjourn at approximately 10:55am. 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,
Maud Bailey, Clerk
Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District