

# **Bonnet Shores Fire District**

*Special Meeting*

*June 30, 2022*

*5:00pm*

*Bonnet Shores Community Center – 130 Bonnet Shores Road Narragansett, RI*

*Zoom*

## **Call To Order**

Chair Carol O'Donnell called the meeting to order at 5:00pm. Council members in attendance included: Chair Carol O'Donnell, Vice Chair Marlene Bellini, Carolyn DiLeo, Bill DelGizzo, and Steve Danuszar.

## **Urgent Business**

A comment from the chair – posted notices at the Community Center seem to be disappearing.

Sale of Fire District equipment – Backhoe and buckets. Received 3 offers, the first reneged, the 2<sup>nd</sup> was for \$5,000, the 3<sup>rd</sup> was for \$6,250.00. Carolyn DiLeo makes a motion to sell the equipment for \$6,250.00, seconded by Marleen, motion passes unanimously.

## **Appeal of Harbor Master ruling RE Walter Manning**

Walter Manning III informs the council that he was informed by the police that he was under a no contact order for the BSFD harbor for the summer, and did not receive a certified letter for this purpose.

Carol clarifies there is no public comment for this meeting. Any concerns for the council may be addressed in a future agenda.

## **Joe Blezenski reports:**

He was called on June 17<sup>th</sup> for someone cutting the lock on the gate for the ramp, because they were trying to launch their boat. Walter said his key got stuck in the lock, and he wanted to launch his boat. Joe said he told Walter he shouldn't have had a key, and that because he damaged the lock he was not allowed to launch his boat there that day, and he should go to Wickford instead, stating Walter doesn't have a launch ramp permit or a mooring permit. Joe left to call the police and in that time Walter attempted to launch his boat but was unable to do so due to the low tide. When Joe returned words were exchanged before Walter left. Joe accuses Walter of destruction of property, neglect and refusal to obey the Harbor Master, and failure to adhere to BSFD rules and regulations. Joe says the boat had NC registration numbers, and that Walter sent him his Rhode Island boater registration, but said the owner address and registration address did not match, and DEM boating registration was contacted. Joe reports he sent a letter to Walter reporting the incident, and that his launch ramp and mooring access privileges were being revoked under BSFD Charter Ordinance 10, section 16, subsection B.

## **Walter Manning of 35 Alagash Trail reports:**

Admits to cutting the lock, and doing so was wrong, and apologizes for that. He explains he brought the old lock, a new lock, and a check to pay for the old one. He explains that while his boat does not have a Bonnet sticker, it is registered with the state. It was purchased in NC. He explains he has had difficulty meeting the new harbor regulations because of the limited availability of the 3 mooring inspection services. He reports his version of the events of June 17<sup>th</sup>, that he had attempted to unlock the gate with his key, which broke in the lock, and then Joe arrived. He explained Joe was there with him for about 5 minutes before leaving. He explains he then fully removed the broken lock to avoid any problems with other users, with the intention of replacing with the combo lock and sharing the code. He explains he tested his engine in the water; Joe returned to photograph him and explain he would be arrested for vandalism; words were exchanged; and to avoid further complication at that point Walter left. Walter then explains his concern for Joe's behavior that day, and that he made an attempt to reconcile after the fact which was unfruitful. Walter explains his lifelong history in the

neighborhood and as a boater in the community, and asks for his removal from the harbor to be reconsidered. Additionally he asks the council to reconsider Joe's appointment as Harbor Master.

Carol interjects that this meeting's purpose is to address the issue on June 17<sup>th</sup> only.

Joe explains his three issues: destruction of property, failure to adhere to BSFD rules and regulations, and neglect and refusal to adhere to the Harbor Master.

Walter responds; he did not launch the boat, but did cut the lock.

Bill DelGizzo comments, that the water pump could be check in the yard, and he did in fact cut the lock.

No comment from Marlene.

Carolyn DiLeo comments on the attempts to cut the lock and replace it with a combination lock, and sharing the combination in an email, and the liability exposure it would present to the district. She explains her concern for how his actions may have affected the large community with much at stake. She explains her dissatisfaction and unease with Walter's explanation of his life in the community as a reason to overlook the actions taken, and risks to the community associated with them. She explains that the council has made efforts to enforce rules to better the community and does not like the attitude presented that they do not apply to everyone.

Steve Danuszar comments that he feels civil conversation would have been effective. He acknowledges Walter's remorse for his actions, and also agrees with Carolyn's concerns over liability.

Carol comments that Walter did in fact make mistakes, bringing the boat down when it was not properly registered with the district being one of them. She also expressed understanding that the situation escalated. She comments that it was not up to Walter to deal with the matter of the lock in the ways he did. It should be up to the voters, on an agenda, to be discussed as a community.

Carolyn asks Walter how he would respond to the situation as a council member, he replies that he understands her comments about the liability, and also that he just had the combo lock with him, and it was not a predetermined goal to replace the lock, just an afterthought in the moment.

Bill acknowledges his remorse, and also the need for some form of penalty, and suggests mooring restriction until August 1<sup>st</sup> as long as all required paperwork is submitted. He acknowledges the severity of the offenses, and the need for rule compliance.

Joe comments that he would consider repealing the revoked launch ramp and mooring privileges from indefinitely to one year.

Bill suggests one month restriction because this is his first offense.

Carol comments she doesn't feel the one year suspension is the best fit for the offense, and also one month was too long as he has been punished for over two weeks already, and suggests July 15<sup>th</sup>.

Marleen agrees that one year is excessive, and one month seems adequate.

Steve feels one month is too long, given how long Walter's boat use has already been restricted due to the circumstances and agrees with Carol's suggestion of July 15<sup>th</sup>.

Marleen comments on the need for an appropriate penalty, and the community feedback she has been getting about harbor issues in the community.

Bill made a motion that Walter cannot use the BSFD launch ramp, mooring and harbor facility until August 1, 2022, pending all required documents and inspections are submitted to the Harbor Master by that time. Seconded by Marlene, Carol O'Donnell and Steve Danuszar responded nay; motion passes 3-2.

Carolyn comments that before community members bring complaints about the Harbor rules and regulations to the council, that they read all of the rules first.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Caldwell  
Bonnet Shores Fire District Clerk