

BONNET SHORES FIRE DISTRICT

BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING AND VOTE

JULY 9, 2022

130 BONNET SHORES ROAD, NARRAGANSETT RI 02882 & ZOOM

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Carol O'Donnell called the meeting to order at 0836. Council members in attendance included: Chair Carol O'Donnell, Vice-Chair Marlene Bellini, Anthony DeAngelis, Bill DelGizzo, Carolyn DiLeo, and Steve Danuszar. Additional present were Harbor Master Joe Bleczynski, Tax Collector Michelle Travis, and Treasurer Laurie McCarthy

Budget discussion

1. Motion to approve previous budget work sessions
 - a. Working operating budget minutes = approved
 - b. Working capital budget minutes = approved
2. Review of complete proposed budget
 - a. Bill DelGizzo suggested the council ask questions
 - b. Steve Danuszar asked if there are any major changes they should discuss
3. Tax Roll from Town of Narragansett:
 - a. Anthony DeAngelis informed the council the town had not yet submitted the tax roll to the Fire District
 - b. Michelle Travis shared the town's explanation: they are using a new system and are working out the glitches
4. Discussion of major changes in operating budget since working sessions:
 - a. Payroll taxes
 - b. Legal settlement fee of \$40K
 - c. Adding a new legal fee line especially for special legal matters such as the Charter Committee
 - d. Little Beach cleanup
 - e. Sanitation price increase
5. Manager's salary
 - a. Discussion on annual salary and benefits
6. Change descriptive category names in accounting software QuickBooks
7. Discussion on the duties and responsibilities of the bookkeeper, treasurer, and tax collector
8. Public comment:
 - a. Paul Luba Colonel John Gardner
 - i. Was pleased with both budget workshops
 - ii. Expressed the council did a good job despite rising costs and the lawsuit settlement
 - iii. Requested asking the town for the year over year tax levy increases
 - iv. Disappointed in town for not providing the tax roll on time

- v. Also discussed the URI study; has not seen a practical application for it and has only heard vague information
- vi. We should be sure we know what we are getting for our money and how deep we must go to get it

9. Capital budget discussion

- a. Discussion on the several bank accounts in the FD's name
- b. Suggestion to consolidate all accounts in the bank and keep track of them in QuickBooks

10. Discussion of capital items needed:

- a. URI Match, harbor security cameras, ramp at little beach, playground upgrades, CC TV/communications equipment, CC roof, bathrooms, floor, parking lot, external repairs, and pilings for dock.
- b. Council decided on a set amount of \$19,500 to be able to address these items as needed and in order of urgency

11. The use of savings account money to contribute to the budget costs of maintenance and repairs: mainly playground, Community Center, and Battery

12. Public comment:

- a. Faith LaSalle Colonel John Gardner
 - i. Discussion of URI match and will it give us the answers we are looking for and how many phases will this include
 - ii. Discussion of whether this is a good year to put aside \$17K when we have a liability of a \$40k lawsuit settlement.
 - iii. Possibility of major costs for future studies as a result of this one; should we invest money in a study without knowing the end game
 - iv. Discussion of FEMA, Dr. King and Sheldon Whitehouse grants and request for copies of these
 - v. Possibility of the Land trust being self-funding; should the grant money come from the Land Trust to be voted on in an annual meeting
 - vi. Improve communication will all the residents in the FD; suggestion to hold a public meeting on Little Beach
- b. Joe Thomas What Cheer Road
 - i. Discussions on why the harbor pilings need to be changed since they were installed two years ago and the previous pilings lasted thirty years.
- c. Council feedback:
 - i. Harbor wants to keep up with maintenance rather than emergency repairs: discussion on proper installation of pilings
 - ii. Council discussed the advantage the URI study may bring to the topic of the dock and pilings
 - iii. Suggestion to wait until the study is complete before spending the money on replacement pilings; the money is earmarked for this expense
 - iv. Since the money for the harbor is funded by boaters, there should be a discussion with the boaters to decide
 - v. Discussion the pilings were installed incorrectly; suggestion to bring in a few experts to evaluate

13. Motion to approve capital budget
 - a. Motion to pass the budget as written
 - b. URI grant money remains – using money from the reserve and not increasing tax revenue
 - c. Clarification of motion: motion to pass the budget except for the harbor expense pending investigation for the pilings
 - d. Motion passed

Harbor discussion

1. Public comments:
 - a. Carl Napolitano Onondaga Road
 - i. Reviewed chapter and summary on little beach and harbor
 - ii. Has suggestions on a harbor committee, mooring use, mooring wait list
 - iii. Requested plans on removing seaweed from little beach
 - iv. Discussed the decision of the council asking the harbor master to set and enforce rules
 - v. Requesting better communication about rules and regulations to help things go more smoothly
 - vi. Mooring inspection companies are very unreliable
 - vii. Allow mooring holders to do whatever they want as long as it meets safety requirements
 - viii. Allow harbor master to enforce regulations, but not make them
 - ix. Harbor committee would be helpful
 - b. Jim Daley Bayberry Road
 - i. Question about the cost of little beach and Kelly beach clean up and when it will begin
 - c. Bruce Fournier Bonnet Point Road
 - i. Recommends a harbor committee
 - ii. Harbor community needs consensus on decision making to lessen the strife
 - iii. Past committees have not had any issues following OMA rules
 - d. Roger Larson What Cheer Road
 - i. Difficult time hiring a company to maintain moorings
 - ii. Wants the ability to inspect his own mooring as he has in the past
 - iii. Wants to make it clear boaters have additional expenses other than the mooring fee: equipment purchases, maintenance, etc.
 - iv. Bill DelGizzo suggested hiring one mooring inspection company to inspect all moorings
 - v. Benefit if it works out but down side is you will have less options and may cost more
 - e. Bob Stebenne Lake Road
 - i. States the FD truly needs a harbor committee
 - ii. Not fair for the harbor master to do on his own; he is doing a good job, but the boaters need a committee.

- f. Walter Manning Camden Road
 - i. Wants the harbor to be a seamless effort but the harbor master's sweeping changes have been difficult to handle
 - ii. Issues are centered around moorings
 - iii. To be a mooring inspector you need to be bonded and it is so difficult to schedule a mooring inspector to come to the harbor
 - iv. Would prefer to do the inspection himself
 - v. States the harbor master wants to conform to the town's rules due to liability
 - vi. He states the liability is on the mooring owner and not the Fire District – there is no duty on the Fire District
 - vii. Carol O'Donnell asked Walter Manning if he feels competent with his certifications to inspect his mooring
 - viii. He does feel competent and feels it's safer for the owner to do the inspection
 - ix. Bill Delgizzo asked if other municipalities require mooring inspections – the harbor master agrees they do
 - x. Carolyn Dileo spoke about the inspection policy included in the harbor plan
- g. Walter Manning
 - i. Asked about the pilings and the reason for replacement
- h. Steve McCooey
 - i. Strongly feels the harbor should have a committee to give everyone a voice
 - ii. Some residents still have boats in their driveways because of the changes made back in the spring
 - iii. Believes he should inspect his own mooring; does not want a mooring company he is not comfortable with moving his mooring and equipment
 - iv. Carol O'Donnell asked why we have so few boats in the water
 - v. With the changes made, it has been annoying to participate and it's driving people out
 - vi. He asked for a decision about moorings be made today
- i. Carol O'Donnell state she is very upset with the discord surrounding the harbor. She is concerned with us as a community and lack of boaters using the harbor. She suggests a grace period of thirty days to form a harbor committee and allow people to get their boats in the water, have a voice and straighten things out moving forward. To recognize there is an issue and it has not been communicated properly
- j. Bill DelGizzo states the plan and ordinances must be followed and suggests asking the person from the state to address this issue.
- k. Motion for discussion on thirty-day grace period
 - i. Marlene Bellini added to the motion stating Carol O'Donnell should be chair and if a committee is not formed within the time period, then things will go back to the way they are now.
- l. Discussion included comments that the only communication between the harbor master and the boaters was on email and they did not meet in a group
- m. Harbor master Joe Bleczynski stated the council has voted twice before on this mooring issue and this is the third time they are discussing it.

- n. Motion to grant a grace period so the boaters can inspect their moorings and to create a harbor committee organized to relook at rules and regs and work with the harbor master; boaters must participate
- o. Motion granted
- p. Joe Thomas What Cheer Road
 - i. Asked about how to obtain boat ramp gate keys;
 - ii. It was decided it was a decision for the harbor committee to discuss
- q. Meeting adjourned: 1425