

Bonnet Shores Fire District
Annual Meeting/Election Process Workshop
DRAFT Meeting Minutes
November 19, 2025 6:30pm

Council Attendees: Jane Duran, Tony Girardi, Melissa Jenkins, Faith LaSalle, Leslie McKnight and Kevin O'Brien.

Leslie McKnight called the meeting to order at 6:37pm.

Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was observed.

Leslie announced that the Annual Meeting/Election Workshop is intended to recommend potential changes in the annual meeting and associated elections processes. She reviewed the attached reference table which lists all of the ideas that were previously submitted on this topic either through the former by-laws committee or through the public. The team began with the Nominating Committee item on the attached sheet. The following dialogue ensued for the ideas:

Nominating Committee

- Leslie McKnight reviewed the three items related to the nominating committee. A discussion arose on the following resulting in the workshop attendees agreeing these were a good practice as recorded in the chart attached.
 - Candidates submit letter of interest 30 days prior to election (Public)
 - Meet and Greet with perspective candidates including zoom (Public)
 - Eliminate nominations from the floor (Public)
 - Election Meeting Committee-work with clerk and district manager to schedule meeting (Bylaw committee) - Role of the nominating committee should be to receive letter of interest and facilitate meet & greet
- Jane Duran noted that if it is a charter or bylaws change, it will not take effect until after the June 2026 election as it needs to be voted on by the community but we can make changes to processes outside of the by-laws.
- Bill Delgizzo commented that he felt that any changes that we can affect this year to the process would be welcomed by the community even if it means holding a Special Meeting to adopt the Charter/By Law changes and it would be worth the expense. Jane Duran cautioned the expense aspect.
- Bob Patterson noted that the Nominating Committee is in place for this year and suggested we look to change their role to help identify candidates up front and that we are not bound by Roberts Rule to allow nominations from the floor.
- Melissa Jenkins suggested that her interpretation of the by-laws indicate that a moderator should be present at every meeting – not just the annual meeting and that we may want to leverage the Clerk for this purpose. She agreed that the nominating committee could take on a different role.
- Faith LaSalle offered a different interpretation of the Charter and the requirement to have a moderator at an Annual Meeting and a Special meeting, not the monthly council meetings.

- Kevin O'Brien agreed that if we have identified candidates 30 days ahead of time, allowing nominations from the floor could be used as a mechanism to circumvent that process.
- Tony Girardi commented that nominations from the floor have never been saucerful.
- Lelsi McKnight indicated that write-ins can be time consuming because if candidate is written in and win, the clerk has to track down the write-ins to see if they accept the position which delays result.

Tax Assessors

Leslie McKnight reviewed the idea to onboard additional Tax Assessors. Kevin O'Brien asked if the nominating Committee can help her. The group discussed that the rule is that the 3 Tax Assessors are partnered with a volunteer. You must have a Tax Assessor assigned to a table. The improvements expected from the voting automation should help with this greatly.

Bob Patterson proposed that we if you are a Narragansett Tax assessor, you are qualified to vote. If you are a deed owner, you should only have to come in once (for all future years) to become a registered voter. Jane Duran suggested that this would have to be done every year because property ownership/trustees change year over year but we could ask them to come in every year ahead of time but not sure if that would be a recurring inconvenience. Jane indicated that we get both lists from the town (Narragansett Registered Voters and the Tax Roll). A compromise might be to have deed owners validate against the town records, just do it in advance of the election. This would also help with how many ballots we need.

Proxy Voting

Proxy votes were deferred due to time remaining.

Write-In Candidates

Write-in candidates were discussed under other topic (See nominating committee section) but the group agreed there will still be some and that we cannot prevent write-ins.

Paper Ballots

After group discussion, the attendees agreed that the following ideas should be recommended as improvements as the machines and ballots are free: Bob Patterson agreed to investigate the following:

- Electronic Ballots/Voting Machines (Public)
- Paper Ballots for write-ins only (Public)

After group discussion, vacancies would be appointed until the next election and then the person elected would begin his/her 2-year term. John Chereskin noted that if there is a vacancy that must be appointed, we run the risk of ramping up training and then at the next election the person is not elected into the role. It was acknowledged that risk is a condition we live with now.

Voter Registration List/Notice of Election

The group discussed the possibility to make email an acceptable method of notice. However, the Charter instructs delivery to be by US Mail. Jane Duran suggested that we use post cards and try

to fit all the requirements (agenda etc.) on the post card to cut down on the cost and see if we can have the newsletter electronic only.

The newspaper publication is mandatory in the Providence Journal which is very expensive per Charter so it would be a bylaw/charter change.

The group took a 5-minute break and then the Monthly Council Meeting began.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jane Duran

Attachment – Results of 11/19/26 Workshop

BSFD Annual Meeting/Voting Process Modernization Workshop November & December 2025					
Inventory of previously suggested improvements					
Existing Process	Suggested Change (Source of suggestion) Recommendation from the Public or former By-Law Committee	Community Feedback	Charter Change Required?	Bylaw Change Required?	Comments
Nominating Committee	Candidates submit letter of interest 30 days prior to election (Public)	Yes	No	No	
	Meet and Greet with perspective candidates including zoom (Public)	Yes	No	No	
	Eliminate nominations from the floor (Public)	Yes	No	No	
	Election Meeting Committee-work with clerk and district manager to schedule meeting (Bylaw committee)	Role of NC to receive letter of interest and facilitate meet & greet			Article II, S2
Tax Assessors (3)	Additional Tax Assessors (Public)	Not needed - use volunteers		Article III, S6	Tax Assessor needs to be paired with volunteer
Proxy Voting	Expand to include sealed mail in/drop off ballots to be opened on the day of election/arrival prior to election (Bylaw committee)		Yes, S2	Article I, S5	Must vote in person
	Eliminate proxy voting (Public)		Yes, S2	Article I, S5	
	Process for authenticating ballots/duplicates/notarizations (Public)		No	No	
Write-in Candidates	Require additional information for write-in candidates (Public)	No	No	No	
	Eliminate write in's (Public)	No	No	No	
Paper Ballots	Electronic Ballots/Voting Machines (Public)	Yes, voting machines	No	No	
	Paper Ballots for write-ins only (Public)	Yes	No	No	
Voter Registration List/Notice of Election	Discrepancies with Town of Narragansett List (Public)	Pre-registration	Yes, S2	Article I, S6	Tax Collector prepares list
	One Notice per household/electronic, paper, website, posted (Public and Bylaw committee)	Yes	No	Article I, S3a	Requires first class mail - 9 days prior
	Publication Notice in local paper (Public and Bylaw committee)	Yes	Yes, S3	Article I, S3	Requires PROJO and local
Council Member -Term	Council Member Term Limits two-3 year terms then 1 yr ineligibility, Chair maximum of 2 years (Bylaw committee)		No	No	
	Vacancy within 6 months of election-next highest vote getter (By-law committee)		No	Article IV, S1	Filled by council
	Vacancy appointed by the council (Bylaw committee)		No	Article IV, S1	Filled by council
Other elected Officials - Term	Extend to two year term (Public)		No	No	
Organizational Meeting	Held immediately following annual meeting (Bylaw committee)		No	Article II, S4	As is convenient after annual meeting
Annual Meeting	In person-present for entire meeting (Public)		Yes, S2	Article I, S4	In person or by proxy
	No voting until end of annual meeting (Public)		No	Article I, S4	In person or by proxy
	Allow continuous voting throughout the day (Public)		No	Article I, S4	In person or by proxy
Council Member Absences (6 Meetings - meeting types not specified)	Reduce to 4 absences total or 2 consecutive absences (Bylaw committee)		No	Article III, S10	6 absences within 12 month period - meeting type not specified