

BONNET SHORES FIRE DISTRICT

Monthly Council Meeting Agenda¹

Wednesday, December 17, 2025

Date/Time	Wednesday, December 17, 2025 – 6:30pm – 9:00pm
Place:	Bonnet Shores Fire District Community Center
Zoom ² :	<p>Virtual access is being provided only as a convenience and is not an official “location” where access to the meeting is guaranteed. If any technical, host, or operator issues arise with Zoom, the meeting will still proceed. Therefore, being physically present at the meeting is the only way to guarantee complete and uninterrupted access to the meeting.</p> <p>Zoom Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87424760778</p> <p>Cut & Paste URL Method: If you are having trouble with the above link, please cut and paste the below into your browser or visit the BSFD Website Calendar.</p> <p>https://us02web.zoom.us/join/joinMeeting?meetingId=87424760778&from=joinUrl</p>
Designated area for recording/ photography	To preserve order and decorum, and to avoid interfering with the ability of spectators to see and hear, any members of the public video recording or photographing the meeting should do so from the designated area.

CALL TO ORDER

- Pledge of Allegiance
- Moment of Silence

Announcements:

- New Website launched Tuesday, Dec 9th
- The *Fiscal Responsibility* workshops and the *Annual Meeting/Election Process* workshops will resume in January 2026.

Approval of the DRAFT Minutes from:

- 11/19/2025 Monthly Council Meeting Minutes
- 11/19/2025 Executive Session – Public Minutes

Urgent Business:

Public Comment: Public comment is for in-person attendees only. Please approach the microphone, identify yourself including BSFD address. Limit 3 minutes.

Response to Previous Public Comment/Email Inquiries: Members of the Council have requested to respond to previously communicated public comments and/or email inquiries since the last meeting. Topics include:

- Response to Community Center access and key distribution concerns expressed via email and phone calls

Reports / Updates:

1. Treasurer Update
2. Tax Collector Update/Report
3. Land Trust Update
4. BSFD Manager and Harbor Update/Report
5. Social Activities Group Update

New and Ongoing Business:

6. Review, discuss and consider and potentially vote to engage a newly identified bookkeeper as a replacement for the current BSFD bookkeeper *(Neal Prescott, Treasurer may be called to share information)*
7. Review, discuss and consider and potentially vote to purchase a *SquareUp* device which accepts credit cards in an effort to migrate BSFD to “cashless” payments. *(Neal Prescott, Treasurer may be called to share information)*
8. Review, discuss, consider, revise and potentially vote on a letter from the BSFD Council to the Narragansett Planning board in opposition of the proposed Paul Masse Automobile Dealership on route 1A. *(Melissa Jenkins)*
9. Review, discuss, consider, and potentially vote on creating a BSFD Policy/Process/Guidelines Manual. The content development of this manual will be prioritized based on identified risks and needs.
10. Review, discuss, consider, revise and potentially vote on a proposed USE policy/protocols/process for the BSFD Community Center.
11. Review, discuss, consider, revise and potentially vote on a proposed ACCESS policy/protocols/process for the BSFD Community Center.
12. Review, discuss, consider and potentially vote to pause all non-district use of the Community Center until policies/procedures are adopted and to collect all issued building keys, except for District-sponsored events or activities covered by an approved Rental Agreement until applicable policies/procedures are adopted.
13. Review, discuss, consider and potentially vote to change the Community Center key lock box passcode and re-issue to only those requiring physical access to the building to discuss District Business until applicable policies/procedures are adopted.
14. Review and discuss procedures, process and scope for the Strategic Planning Workshop to ensure inclusiveness and transparency *(Faith LaSalle)*.

Motion to Adjourn

Attachments (6 in total):

- 1) DRAFT - Letter from Council to Town of Narragansett re: Paul Masse Dealership**
 - 2) DRAFT - Proposed Community Center USE Policy**
 - 3) DRAFT - Enhanced ACCESS Protocols for the BSFD Community Center:**
 - a) Community Center Building Access Policy
 - b) Community Center Access Code - Recipient Agreement
 - c) Community Center Access Sign-in log
 - 4) DRAFT - Working policy for casual use of community center by residents**
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DRAFT

To:
Narragansett Planning Board
Narragansett Zoning Board of Review
Narragansett Town Council
25 Fifth Avenue
Narragansett, RI 02882

Re: Community Concerns Regarding Proposed Automobile Dealership Adjacent to Bonnet Shores

Dear Members of the Planning Board, Zoning Board, and Town Council:

On behalf of the Bonnet Shores Fire District Council (BSFD Council) and the residents of the Bonnet Shores community, we are writing to express our strong opposition to the proposed automobile dealership planned for construction directly uphill from our neighborhood. As the community most immediately affected by this development, we request that the Town deny the application in its current form or require substantial revisions to ensure full consistency with Narragansett's Comprehensive Community Plan, Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, and ongoing resilience initiatives.

1. Floodplain Vulnerability & Stormwater Runoff Risks

Bonnet Shores lies downhill from the proposed site, with portions of our community located in recognized flood-prone areas. Narragansett's flood-protection requirements, including compliance with National Flood Insurance Program standards and Rhode Island building codes, exist to prevent precisely the kind of downstream impacts that a large impervious commercial installation can create.

The Narragansett Comprehensive Plan calls for minimizing impervious surface in flood-prone areas and prioritizing the protection of open space to reduce flood hazards. Increasing hardscape above a vulnerable residential neighborhood is starkly inconsistent with these stated objectives.

Additionally, the BSFD—often in partnership with the Town and the Bonnet Shores Land Trust—has actively pursued watershed resilience improvements, including a 2024 BWRP-funded proposal involving equalization piping at Wesquage Pond and culvert enhancements along Bonnet Point Road. Allowing a high-intensity commercial use uphill from these planned mitigation areas would undermine ongoing public investments and resilience work.

2. Environmental & Water Quality Impacts

The Wesquage Pond Watershed Management Plan identifies stormwater pollution as a major threat to local water bodies. Auto dealerships, due to their substantial paved surfaces and vehicle storage areas, routinely generate runoff containing oils, metals, and other contaminants.

The Comprehensive Plan's Natural and Cultural Resources policies emphasize protecting groundwater, wetlands, and coastal features. Allowing a use that increases pollutant loads and stormwater volume represents a departure from the Town's stated environmental stewardship goals.

3. Traffic, Public Safety, and Impacts to Parks and Bikeways

The proposed dealership would be located directly adjacent to a public park frequently used by Bonnet Shores families, including children who walk or bike to the park daily. Introducing a high-trip commercial use at this location would significantly increase vehicle movements, delivery truck traffic, and test-drive circulation—dramatically elevating risk for pedestrians and cyclists accessing the park.

Moreover, the site connects directly to Boston Neck Road (Route 1A), a critical corridor with designated bike lanes that serve as one of Narragansett's only protected cycling routes. Increased turning movements, site entrances, and commercial traffic would reduce the safety and reliability of these bike lanes, increasing the likelihood of conflicts between vehicles and cyclists.

These impacts contradict the Town's goals of enhancing pedestrian/bicycle safety, supporting multimodal transportation, and protecting access to recreational areas.

4. Consistency with Town Policies, Codes, & Community Vision

Both the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations and the Comprehensive Plan require that new development:

- avoid adverse impacts on surrounding properties;
- support community character;
- protect natural resources and watershed systems; and
- align with long-term resilience strategies.

The proposed dealership, as currently designed, does not meet these standards.

Request for Denial or Major Revision

We respectfully request that the Town deny the proposal as submitted.

If the boards choose to consider a modified proposal, we urge the imposition of the following requirements:

1. A full downstream hydrological and stormwater impact analysis including Wesquage Pond and all Bonnet Shores drainage pathways;
2. Reduction of impervious area and incorporation of green stormwater infrastructure;
3. A comprehensive traffic and multimodal safety study, with specific findings regarding impacts to the adjacent park and Boston Neck Road bike lanes;
4. Coordination with BSFD and Town resilience projects underway in the watershed;
5. A clear finding of consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

Conclusion

We appreciate the Town's commitment to responsible planning and environmental stewardship. The Bonnet Shores Fire District Council stands ready to collaborate in safeguarding the health, safety, and character of our community.

We request that this letter be included in the public record for all related hearings.

Respectfully submitted,
Bonnet Shores Fire District Council
[Names & Titles]

Draft Community Center Use Policy:

For use by taxpayers of the Bonnet Shores Fire District

- Require completion of rental registration application/agreement including taxpayer name, address, date/time of use, reason for use
- All requests to be made directly through the District Manager
- Damage deposit upon signing of rental agreement-deposit in the form of a check to be held until return of access key and inspection
- Payment of rental fee due at time of signing of application/securing of rental-soft hold can be placed but this does not guarantee date
- Renters will be required to obtain rental insurance through approved carrier and provide evidence of liability insurance and that the Bonnet Shores Fire District and its Land Trust are named as additional insureds prior to obtaining access to the community center
- Renters will be provided access to the community center on the day of rental and must leave the access key upon vacating the property
- The community center is to be left in broom swept condition
- Alcohol cannot be sold at the event
- All additional permits are the responsibility of the renter (i.e. fire, tent, sound, etc.)
- Capacity cannot exceed the Town of Narragansett Fire Department maximum use
- Use will be on a first come first served basis

District Sponsored Events

- District sponsored events fall under the Social Activities Group and are events that are open to all community members of the BSFD. Examples include annual holiday party, other community gatherings (Bonnet Days, card games, book club, etc.)
- All requests to be made directly through the District Manager
- Use of the community center is subject to allowable uses per the Bonnet Shores Fire District Charter, laws relating to the Land Trust, and the Rhode Island Interlocal Risk Management Trust
- These uses may be subject to signing of a liability waiver
- Capacity cannot exceed the Town of Narragansett Fire Department maximum use
- Use will be on a first come first served basis and cannot conflict with scheduled community center rentals or scheduled BSFD Council, Land Trust, committee or working group meetings

Other District Events

- Examples include the annual BSFD Children's Summer Camp
- Participants are required to sign a waiver of liability form
- The use has been approved by the Rhode Island Interlocal Risk Trust Management



Community Center Building Access Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the security of the Community Center building and the safety of its users by clearly defining who may access the facility and under what conditions.

Policy

1. Authorized Access

- Only individuals who have been expressly authorized by the District Manager may access the community building.
- Authorized individuals include BSFD Council Members, Elected Officials, District staff, and persons who have been granted approved use of the building.

2. Unauthorized Access

Individuals who are not authorized may not enter or use the Community Center building on their own.

Unauthorized individuals may only enter the building if:

- a) They are accompanied at all times by an authorized individual, **or**
- b) They have scheduled an appointment with the District Manager and have been granted temporary access.
- c) All unauthorized individuals must log their visit using the sign-in sheet.

3. Enforcement

- Any individual found to be in the building without authorization or without proper accompaniment will be considered in violation of this policy.
- Repeated violations may result in further action as determined by the District Manager.

4. Access Code and Key

- Building access code and/or key are issued only to authorized individuals.
- Code and key must not be shared or transferred under any circumstances.



Community Center Building Access Code Agreement

This Agreement is entered into by and between **the Bonnet Shores Fire District (BSFD)** (the "Community") and the undersigned individual ("Recipient").

Purpose

The Community provides access codes to Council Members and other approved individuals ("Recipients") to allow authorized use of the Community Center building. The security of the building and the safety of residents depends on maintaining strict control of these codes.

Agreement Terms

1. Confidentiality of Access Code

- Upon receipt of the access code, the Recipient agrees to keep the code strictly confidential.
- The Recipient shall not disclose, share, or otherwise provide the access code to any other individual, including family, friends, or other residents.

2. Personal Responsibility

- The Recipient acknowledges that they are personally responsible for any use of the access code issued to them.
- The Recipient agrees to immediately notify the District Manager if the code is compromised, lost, or believed to be known by an unauthorized person.

3. Return and Revocation

- The access code may be changed at any time by the District Manager.
- Upon the end of the Recipient's term, approved use, or authorization, the access code will be changed.

4. Acknowledgment of Consequences

- The Recipient understands that violation of this Agreement may result in disciplinary action by the District Manager, including removal of access privileges, and may subject the Recipient to further consequences as determined by the District Manager.

Recipient Acknowledgment

I, the undersigned, have read and understand the above Agreement. I agree to comply with all requirements regarding the Community Center building access code.

Recipient's Printed Name: _____

Recipient Signature: _____

Date: _____

District Manager's Approval

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____



Bonnet Shores Fire District

Community Center Building Access Sign-In Log

From the BSFD Policy on Community Center Building Access: *Unauthorized individuals may only enter the building if: They are accompanied at all times by an authorized individual, or they have scheduled an appointment with the District Manager and have been granted temporary access. All unauthorized individuals must log their visit using this sign-in sheet.*

Date	Visitor Name	Accompanied by Authorized Individual's Name	District Manager Approval Y/N (If you are not accompanied by an authorized individual, please indicate if you have received District Manager's approval)	Time In	Time Out

A justification for policy manual development

Municipal and quasi-municipal governments *need* a policy manual because it is the backbone of consistency, legality, and organizational stability. Here are the key reasons:

1. Ensures Consistency and Fairness

- A written policy manual ensures that staff, elected officials, and volunteers follow the same rules.
- Without one, decisions can seem arbitrary or influenced by personality, politics, or who happens to be on duty.

2. Reduces Legal Risk

- Policies help make sure the municipality complies with:
 - state statutes and regulations
 - constitutional standards (e.g., First Amendment, due process)
 - labor laws
 - public records and open meetings requirements
- A written policy manual shows that the government *intentionally* follows consistent legal procedures, which can reduce liability in lawsuits.

3. Provides Clarity and Expectations

- Staff and officials know:
 - what their roles are
 - what procedures they must follow
 - how to handle recurring issues (public facility use, HR matters, bidding, procurement, etc.)
- This prevents confusion and eliminates “reinventing the wheel” when issues arise.

4. Protects Institutional Memory

- Municipalities are especially prone to turnover—elections, retirements, volunteers rotating in and out.
- A policy manual preserves knowledge so the organization doesn’t lose its operational foundation every time personnel changes.

5. Supports Transparency and Public Trust

- A policy manual allows community members to understand:
 - how decisions are made
 - what rules apply to them
 - how to appeal or request services
- Clear, accessible policies help the government appear fair and accountable.

6. Helps Manage Risk and Emergencies

- Policies on:
 - procurement
 - facility use
 - cybersecurity
 - emergency response
 - financial controls
- ...all reduce operational and financial risk. Many insurers and auditors *require* a policy manual as part of municipal risk-management programs.

7. Aids in Training

- New staff, board members, and volunteers can be onboarded efficiently.
- A policy manual provides structured guidance and reduces dependence on oral tradition (which leads to inconsistent onboarding).

8. Distinguishes Policy from Politics

- A written manual helps elected officials separate:
 - policy decisions (what should be done) from

- administrative actions (how staff carries it out)
 - This supports good governance models like council-manager systems and helps avoid micromanagement.
9. Creates a Defense Against Claims of Bias
- In facility-use issues, First Amendment situations, or enforcement actions, having *neutral, content-neutral, consistently applied written policies* protects the municipality from accusations of discrimination or viewpoint suppression.
10. Supports Long-Term Planning
- Policies guide decisions over many years, even as leadership changes.
 - They keep the municipality stable during political transitions and growth.

Working policy for casual use of community center by residents:

1. Residents may use the community center by reservation only for meetings for civic, educational or recreational purposes for up to 2 hours a week at no charge by making a reservation with the designated scheduler.
2. The responsible resident user shall complete a reservation form including a liability waiver at the time of first use, which shall remain in effect until revoked.
3. This individual will obtain and follow instructions for securely entering and closing the facility.
4. No more than 25 people should be expected to attend such events. Larger gatherings or longer meetings should utilize the rental policy.
5. Employees and others may enter the facility during use, but should not disturb users.
6. Noise must be kept to a minimum and certainly should not disturb the neighbors, employees or others in the vicinity.
7. No commercial use of the property is permitted, including selling products or services or any other use by a commercial entity.
8. Fundraisers for tax exempt organizations including the Land Trust are permitted, as are educational programs requiring materials fees of less than \$25.
9. This is a nonsmoking facility and no flammable materials are permitted anywhere in the building or on the premises.
10. Organized groups should be generally open to the public and should strive for inclusivity as much as possible.

Examples: card games, book clubs, lectures, knitting circles, painting classes, bake sales, foreign language conversation groups, meditation classes, tai chi, trivia games, chess club, walking club and other civic, educational and recreational gatherings.

Reservation Form:

Participant/Group Name: _____

Date(s) of Use: _____

Type of Activity/Meeting: _____

1. Assumption of Risk

I, the undersigned, acknowledge that my use of the Bonnet Shores Fire District Community Center facilities may involve certain risks, including but not limited to slips, falls, injuries, property damage, and other hazards associated with participation in meetings or activities. I voluntarily assume all such risks, whether known or unknown.

2. Release of Liability

In consideration for being permitted to use the Bonnet Shores Fire District Community Center property and facilities, I hereby release, waive, discharge, and covenant not to sue the Bonnet Shores Fire District, its residents, employees, volunteers, representatives, or agents from any and all liability, claims, demands, or causes of action arising out of or related to any loss, damage, injury, or death that may occur while on the premises.

3. Indemnification

I agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Bonnet Shores Fire District Community Center from any claims, damages, liabilities, costs, or expenses (including attorney fees) arising out of my actions or the actions of any participants within my group while using the facility.

4. Compliance With Rules

I agree to follow all rules, regulations, and instructions provided by the Bonnet Shores Fire District Community Center staff and to ensure that any participants in my group do the same.

5. Cleaning and repair

I agree to leave the premises in the same condition as I found them, and to reimburse the Bonnet Shores Fire District for reasonable fees for cleaning and repair should I fail to do so.

6. Security

I agree to secure the building and obtain and return the access key or code as instructed upon completion of my reserved time.

Signature

Date

This form will remain in effect until withdrawal by the signer and will apply to all meetings of the same individual or organization.

NOTES

Can political activity be prohibited?

NO- at least not if it wants to stay within U.S. First Amendment limits.

Here's the legal breakdown in plain English:

If a public building opens its space to the community, it usually becomes a designated public forum or limited public forum.

That means the government cannot discriminate based on viewpoint, including political viewpoints.

It can limit the types of activities allowed (e.g., "only educational uses"),

but it cannot say:

- "No political meetings,"

while allowing similar kinds of community meetings.

That would be considered viewpoint discrimination, which is unconstitutional.

Key rulings that support this:

- *Lamb's Chapel v. Center Moriches School District* (1993) – once a public facility opens for community use, it can't exclude groups because of their viewpoint.
- *Good News Club v. Milford Central School* (2001) – government may set subject-matter limits, but not viewpoint-based ones.
- *Perry Education Association v. Perry Local Educators' Association* (1983) – establishes rules for different types of public forums.

What is allowed?

A public building *can* set content-neutral rules, like:

- Closing hours
- Noise limits
- Capacity rules
- "No fundraising" for any group
- "Only civic, educational, or recreational uses" (as long as applied evenly)

But it cannot say:

- "Civic groups can meet here, but political groups can't."
- "Only non-controversial meetings allowed."
- "You can discuss history, but not political advocacy."

Those are all unconstitutional viewpoint restrictions.

Claiming that current users are somehow "sponsored" or official is an illegal way to govern content as those groups are not organized by the council and are simply community members using the community center under the same terms as anyone else.

¹ **R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-46-6(b):** Nothing contained herein shall prevent a public body, other than a school committee, from adding items to the agenda for discussion purposes only, if the added item was not known or could not have been reasonably known 48 hours in advance of the meeting; provided, however, that the public body may not vote on the added item.

² Zoom Details

Topic: BSFD Council Meeting Invitation

Time: Dec 17, 2025 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

View meeting insights with Zoom AI Companion: <https://us02web.zoom.us/launch/edl?muid=e75b7993-9ff0-41d5-a3ba-5f8d72a5f650>

Meeting ID: 874 2476 0778

One tap mobile

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Join instructions:

https://us02web.zoom.us/join/87424760778?signature=cXmA0_gm6UQNMQ5I7mAdzlH8VFNMurhl6mzuuulmH-M