

Bonnet Shores Fire District

Bonnet Shores Fire District Council Monthly Meeting

Wednesday, April 16, 2025

7:30 pm

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order

Council Chair Carol O'Donnell called the meeting to order at 7:33 pm, led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance and asked for a Moment of Silence for deceased members of the community. In attendance were council members Leslie McKnight, Jane Duran, Faith LaSalle, John Chereskin, Steve Danuszar and Anthony Girardi. Also in attendance was Treasurer Laurie McCarthy. District Manager Mark Gillooly was absent.

Urgent Business None.

Announcements

J. Duran reported that the four council members who owned units at the Beach Club received a clearance from the Ethics Commission to permit them to vote on matters affecting the Beach Club without conflict.

Approval of Minutes

J. Duran **moved**, seconded by F. LaSalle, to amend and approve the March 8, 2025 meeting minutes to incorporate two suggested amendments from F. LaSalle regarding the Charter Committee. The motion was **approved** unanimously.

Committee Reports

Treasurer (L. McCarthy): L. McCarthy stated that the meeting schedule for approval of the budget was in the works and that there is approximately \$348,000.00 in available funds.

Tax Collector (J. Chereskin): J. Chereskin reported that the Fire District has collected 97% of taxes (\$509,000.00). He also reported that there are 123 delinquent accounts.

Land Trust (J. Fandetti): Joan Fandetti stated she was in touch with Kate Sayles from the Land Trust Alliance. She stated that two water sampling volunteers have come forward. She has worked with the council liaison Anthony Girardi to ensure the list of Land Trust properties is up to date.

District Manager and Harbor (Absent): C. O'Donnell reported that the Interlocal Trust, which provides insurance for the Fire District, advised the Fire District not to allow pickleball lessons to take place at the Community Center.

Social: No report.

Website (J. Duran): J. Duran reported that the website is being designed and that the revisions to the homepage are being discussed.

New and Ongoing Business

Suggested Changes to Charter Other Than Voting Franchise

- F. LaSalle revisited the recommendation to place a cap on year-to-year spending of four percent (4%). She stated that Paul Luba should be included in a workshop on financial matters. L. McCarthy stated that such a cap may be too restrictive for the Fire District and expressed support for lowering the mill rate from 7 to 1. F. LaSalle indicated that some changes could take place via by-law amendments. Several council members expressed support for greater fiscal restraints. J. Chereskin indicated that the 4% cap may be too restrictive and inflexible.

Charter Committee Update & Discussion and Consideration of Charter Committee's Conclusion

- After a long discussion regarding the voting franchise, the council went through the options discussed by the Charter Committee, all of which had failed to obtain majority support at the committee level. L. McKnight **moved**, seconded by F. LaSalle, to send up a scenario to the General Assembly that Bonnet Shores Fire District Narragansett registered voters *and* non-resident property owners *and* one person designated per unit from the Beach Club as a voter will be the voting pool. The motion was **approved** unanimously.

Public Comment

- Robert Patterson discussed the impact of the Consent Order from the lawsuit on the Charter Commission and new Charter Committee.
- Pamela Childs discussed how some council members take notes while others are speaking.
- Christiana Quinn discussed increasing options for public input.
- Paula Childs discussed the 2024 Annual Meeting.
- Michelle Dunne discussed the Charter Committee, the voting process and her reasons for voting for and against certain proposals.
- E.J. Sutherland stated that there are no objective criteria for the voting discussion and that the General Assembly does not want to see this issue.

Adjournment:

J. Duran **moved**, seconded by S. Danuszar, to adjourn the meeting. The motion was **approved** unanimously. The meeting adjourned 9:42 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/Matthew M. Mannix
Bonnet Shores Fire District Clerk

Ratified: July 16, 2025