

## **Bonnet Shores Fire District**

Bonnet Shores Fire District Council Budget Hearing and Monthly Meeting  
Wednesday, June 18, 2025  
6:30 pm

### **Meeting Minutes**

#### **Budget Hearing**

##### **Call to Order**

Council Chair Carol O'Donnell called the Budget Hearing to order at 6:34 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance and a Moment of Silence. In attendance were council members Leslie McKnight, Jane Duran, Faith LaSalle and John Chereskin. Also in attendance were Tax Collector John Chereskin, Treasurer Laurie McCarthy and District Manager Mark Gillooly. Council members Anthony Girardi and Steve Danuszar were absent.

##### **Announcements**

C. O'Donnell shared that a police detail will be present at this meeting and future meetings because of an incident that occurred at the Community Center following the April 16, 2025 council meeting.

C. O'Donnell reported that the Little Beach seaweed cleanup took place on May 31 and that the tides had brought back most of the seaweed within 24 hours of the cleanup.

##### **Budget**

C. O'Donnell turned the meeting over to Treasurer L. McCarthy and Tax Collector J. Chereskin. The following comments were made by members of the public:

- F. LaSalle suggested a reserve fund of \$5,000.00.
- Jan McClanaghan inquired about the removal of the beach tag line item. J. Chereskin stated that the Fire District will still provide beach tags, but that it would no longer include them as a budget item.
- Paula Childs inquired about the expenses from the prior year's Annual Meeting. J. Chereskin stated that the cost of the mailings was larger than usual. He stated that the Beach Club did not charge the Fire District a rental/usage fee. L. McCarthy stated that the Beach Club did not charge the Fire District for the use of its audio equipment or for the use of an additional 250 chairs.
- E.J. Sutherland inquired about the existence of separate capital and operating reserves.

- Joan Fandetti stated that the Land Trust budget was reduced to \$1,200.00

J. Chereskin **moved**, seconded by C. O'Donnell, to approve the budget, with the following changes: (1) increase overall tax revenue from \$509,243 to \$543,000 (line 4110), (2) create a \$5,000 operating reserve fund and (3) increase the storm fund to \$35,000, with the balance moving to the capital reserve fund. The motion was **approved**, 5-0.

#### Tax Sale Discussion

J. Chereskin recommended that the properties that owed taxes to the Fire District for more than ten years not be included in the tax sale because of the unlikelihood that the true owners would come forward to claim them. He had labeled them with a "2" on a spreadsheet he provided of all the properties up for tax sale. C. O'Donnell **moved**, seconded by J. Duran, to not include the properties labeled with a "2" in the upcoming tax sale. The motion was **approved**, 5-0.

#### Adjournment

J. Chereskin **moved**, seconded by J. Duran, to adjourn the meeting. The motion was **approved**, 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:32 pm without the council addressing items III (Approval of Minutes) and IV (Bylaws).

### Monthly Council Meeting

#### Call to Order of Regular Council Meeting

The regular council meeting was called to order at 7:41 pm. In attendance were council members Leslie McKnight, Jane Duran, Faith LaSalle, Steve Danuszar and John Chereskin. Also in attendance were Tax Collector John Chereskin, Treasurer Laurie McCarthy and District Manager Mark Gillooly. Council member Anthony Girardi was absent.

C. O'Donnell reiterated the announcements regarding the police detail and Little Beach that she made at the budget hearing.

#### Approval of Minutes

Postponed.

#### Committee Reports

*Treasurer (L. McCarthy):* L. McCarthy stated that the Fire District budget had been approved at the budget hearing held prior to this meeting.

*Tax Collector (J. Chereskin):* J. Chereskin stated that he was planning the Fire District Tax Sale.

*Land Trust (J. Fandetti):* Joan Fandetti stated the next Land Trust meeting will be held at 6:30 pm on July 15, 2025. She stated that the list of memorial benches had been created.

*District Manager and Harbor (M. Gillooly):* M. M. Gillooly reported the yard waste dumpster often gets abused by overfilling. He stated that 47 moorings had registered. He stated that the Bonnet Yard Sale will be held on Saturday, July 19, 2025 and that Bulky Pickup will be held on Saturday, July 26, 2025. He reported that the Summer Camp will open on June 23, 2025.

*Social:* Cocktails on the Beach was cancelled this month.

*Website (J. Duran):* J. Duran reported that the final review of the homepage was underway and the committee was reviewing the supporting webpages.

### New and Ongoing Business

#### *Next Steps on Voting Rights*

- C. O'Donnell reported that the General Assembly is closing soon and that the charter amendment(s) did not obtain a sponsor. The council members discussed getting the "temperature" of the community regarding the voting issue. J. Chereskin suggested giving the voters three options in a non-binding referendum at the Annual Meeting.
- J. Chereskin **moved**, seconded by C. O'Donnell, to put forward a non-binding referendum including (1) BSFD Narragansett registered voters, BSFD deeded residential property owners and landowners and deeded BSBC owners ("existing state"), (2) BSFD Narragansett registered voters, BSFD deeded residential property owners and landowners and one deeded designated BSBC owner per unit ("one unit, one vote") (3) BSFD Narragansett registered voters only ("residents only"). The motion was **approved**, 6-0.

#### *Annual Meeting Logistics*

- L. McKnight reported that she had researched different venues for the Annual Meeting. She stated that the Narragansett High School Auditorium (approximate capacity of 400 with approximately 156 parking spaces), Narragansett Senior Center (approximate capacity of 185 with approximately 190 parking spaces including overflow) and St. Veronica Chapel (approximate capacity of 300 with approximately 165 parking spaces) were not adequate if the Fire District anticipates turnout similar to the 2024 and 2021 Annual Meetings. J. Duran stated that she did not want the Annual Meeting to be held at the Beach Club.
- C. O'Donnell **moved**, seconded by J. Duran, to hold the Annual Meeting at the Bonnet Shores Community Center on Saturday, August 2, 2025 at 10:00 am. The motion was **approved**, 6-0.

#### *Annual Meeting/Election Workshop*

- J. Chereskin **moved**, seconded by J. Duran, to schedule a workshop. The motion was **approved**, 6-0.

### *Fiscal Responsibility*

- The council discussed several proposed changes to the bylaws regarding fiscal issues, which were attached to the agenda for this meeting. After receiving feedback from the council and Treasurer regarding these proposed changes, F. LaSalle indicated she would bring revised versions of the proposed changes to the next council meeting.

### *Land Trust Memorial Bench Protocol*

- Land Trust Chair Joan Fandetti had provided the council with a proposal regarding Memorial Bench maintenance. L. McKnight suggested that the Land Trust reach out to the Town Parks and Recreation Department and model our bench protocol similar to theirs.

S. Danuszar left the meeting at 9:34 pm.

### Public Comment

- Kristen Deberghes asked about the non-binding referendum and its placement on the ballot at the Annual Meeting.
- Diane Kendall discussed what she saw as a disconnect between the Fire District and the Beach Club.

### Adjournment:

J. Chereskin **moved**, seconded by J. Duran, to adjourn the meeting. The motion was **approved**, 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 9:43 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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

\*Ratified: July 16, 2025\*