

BONNET SHORES FIRE DISTRICT

Monthly COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday, July 16, 2025

MEETING MINUTES

Call to Order: Leslie McKnight called the meeting to order at 7:33pm. Council members in attendance were L. McKnight, J. Duran, F. LaSalle and J. Chereskin. Pledge of Allegiance and a Moment of Silence was observed.

Urgent Business: None

Announcements: L. McKnight read statements of appreciation honoring Steve Danuszar and Carol O'Donnell for their service on the council.

1. **Approval of the following DRAFT Minutes from:**

Minutes from 3/12/25 were already approved on 4/16/25. F. LaSalle had some amendments to the 7/10/25 Minutes. She then made a motion to accept the minutes from 4/16/25, 5/21/25, 6/4/25, 6/18/25 & 7/10/25 as amended. J. Chereskin seconded the motion, Vote was 4-0.

2. **Public Comment:**

- **Carolyn DiLeo** recommended that we change to time of the monthly council meetings to 6:30pm or 7:00pm suggesting an earlier start time may encourage more attendance. She expressed support of the memorial bench program and suggested that it should be an ordinance. She also suggested that we should include a donation to the Land Trust as part of the program. F. LaSalle asked if Carolyn knew of a memorial bench waiting list that exists. Carolyn was not aware but suggested that Carol O'Donnell may be aware.
- **Tom Lonergan** suggested that Little Beach should be cleaned more often. He also stressed that community members with mobility issues cannot access the beach. He also noted that the Bonnet Chores Beach Club should be removed from the Bonnet Shores Fire District. F. LaSalle commented that the majority of the Council are full-time residents and not beach club owners.
- **Kristen Deberghes** read an email from some community members thanking L. McKnight for cleaning the bird droppings on the bench by the court. She commented that she has been a champion of redistricting the BSFD to exclude the beach club and suggested that the council may want to reconsider this option.
- **Neal Prescott** posed a question on why the proposed Capital Reserve Fund maximum is set at \$500k. J. Chereskin noted that there are many other expenditures in the district (payroll, beach costs, unplanned expenses) that take away from our ability to fund the Capital Reserve Fund each year. J. Chereskin also noted that it will take years to reach the maximum but we have to start someone as it is prudent fiscal management.

3. **Treasurer Update:** J. Chereskin provided the update in Laurie McCarthy's absence. He noted that there are sufficient funds in the account until the next tax drop, the CPA has been engaged on the annual fiscal reporting and the FY26 budget has been submitted for the Annual Meeting.

4. **Tax Collector Update/Report:** J. Chereskin noted the Tax Sale has been started and some additional payments have been made and he is managing the Tax Sale list accordingly and he is handling many inquiries from community members that are delinquent. He submitted the Property List and Narragansett voter list for the annual meeting. He will now begin to calculate the 2025-2026 Tax bills that are due Sept 15th.

5. **Land Trust Update:** J. Fandetti thanked community members who have donated flowers/planting to beautify the community. She noted that the barrels have been moved to the CC to avoid the construction and some are in need of repair/replacement.

6. **Manager and Harbor Update/Report:** M. Gillooly indicated that the quote to paint the interior of the community center came in at \$4,350.00. The council recommended that he ask for an amended quote to include the kitchen/back hall/bathrooms. He noted that 5 moorings are open and 3 remain unpaid. He indicated that Kelly Beach Seaweed is a growing concern. He reached out to the beach club that indicted there are 3 main causes: 1) the current is pushing a large amount of seaweed this year on the Kelly beach side, 2) the raking is interdependent on several factors including tides, weather, breachway clearance and community members staking out a spot on the beach during raking periods. He reiterated that the contract calls for raking, not removal and the beach club is skimming regularly balancing the factors noted. He noted the Yard Waste dumpster will be back Aug 9th and 10th. The last day of kid's camp is July 31 and it has been very successful this year in that we have collected over \$20k.
7. **Social Committee Update:** F. LaSalle noted that the Meet the Candidate Night is scheduled for the same night as Cocktails on the Beach. She will reach out to D. Pannullo to see if they want to combine the events at the community center or consider other options.
8. **New and Ongoing Business:**
 - a. **RI Attorney General Open Meetings Act Training** – L. McKnight suggested that an in-person OMA training might be very beneficial for the council and the community. In person training will allow us to talk through various scenarios that we have encountered and pose questions. We have two new council members joining the council and the community should also be aware of the OMA requirements. J. Chereskin motioned to schedule the training and F. LaSalle seconded, council vote 4-0 in favor.
 - b. **Little Beach Seaweed and Access**
 - J. Duran explained that there is \$30k in the budget for seaweed removal. Last year the vendor came 3 times and it was \$10k each time. Because of the high cost, this year we tried a new vendor that is only \$4k each time. M. Gillooly indicated he has come one time this year and is scheduled to come again on Saturday July 19th. There was a discussion on the exorbitant cost and the dependencies/challenges with cleaning the beach including: 1) finding a reliable vendor to do it, removal of the seaweed as there is no place to bury it, tides, equipment access and removing seaweed deposits from the rocky shore. The Council agreed that Community Communication is important on this topic and supported the idea of going out to RFP.
 - J. Duran began the discussion on the LB access issue noting that it is not as easy as installing a ramp. That CRMC must be consulted in any structure that we place. The council entered into a dialogue that sand ramps are useful but wash away with the tide. Placing a rubberized matt on the sand will become very uneven as the tides takes the sand from beneath so we would have to be prepared to maintain the level of the ramps for safety reasons. Finally, placing any time of temporary structure requires CRMC approval and would need regular stability maintenance. Liability concerns need to be considered in designing any solution. The council agreed that Little Beach is a valuable asst to BSFD. They agreed that perhaps CRMC should be consulted on what options we have not involving CRMC vs what they would need to approve.
 - c. **Proposed Land Trust Memorial Bench Protocol** – The proposed memorial Bench program is good documentation for existing benches. However, the council has request that going forward, a new protocol be developed that mimics the Town of Narragansett's bench program where the Town buys, installs and maintains the bench for a period of 15 years. The memorial family pays the Town up front for the bench. At 15 years, the Memorial family has first right of refusal to renew the bench with a replacement or give up their bench to the next person on the list. F. LaSalle asked J. Fandetti if she knew of any waiting list for BSFD. J. Fandetti indicated that she had asked several people and no one knew of the list. J. Duran made a motion to have the Land Trust re-frame the attached protocol for those benches that are already in existence and to develop a protocol for new benches that mimics the Town of Narragansett. J. Chereskin seconded the motion. Vote was 4-0 in favor.

- d. **Annual Meeting Preparation Discussion** – Janice McClanaghan gave an update. All is on track including tent, sound, parking, volunteers and required notice/printing of materials. She noted that if one of the Tax Assessors cannot make the meeting, that an emergency meeting will need to be held to appoint a new Tax Assessor.
9. **Adjournment** – J. Duran motioned to adjourn, L. McKnight seconded. 4-0 vote in favor.

Attachment #1: Proposed BSFD Memorial Bench Protocol

Bonnet Shores Fire District (BSFD)

Memorial Bench Protocol

Effective: July 1, 2025

In coordination with the BSFD Council and the BSFD Land Trust, a new protocol for Memorial Benches will go into effect starting July 2025. The following guidelines have been developed to ensure safety, consistency, and accountability.

General Guidelines

1. **Application Process**

- A formal letter must be submitted to the BSFD Land Trust requesting consideration for a Memorial Bench.

2. **Construction Requirements**

- Per insurance recommendations, no volunteers may participate in the construction or installation of benches.
- All work must be performed by a licensed contractor with valid insurance.
- Benches must conform to the existing design and materials currently in use within the district.

3. **Cost & Responsibility**

- The Memorial Family is responsible for the full cost of the Memorial Bench.
- The Memorial Family assumes responsibility for the ongoing maintenance and structural integrity of the bench.
- A Consent to Maintain Agreement must be signed by the Memorial Family.

4. **Maintenance Protocol**

- Benches will be subject to routine inspections by the BSFD Land Trust to ensure continued safety and quality.
- Any bench found to be in disrepair will receive one written warning.
- Failure to correct the issue within the specified time frame will result in forfeiture of the bench.
- Forfeited benches may be reassigned to the next individual or family on the official Memorial Bench waiting list.

5. **Storm Preparation**

- In the event of a known or forecasted storm, complete removal of benches is advised to protect both property and people in the Bonnet area.
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Approved Maintenance Provider

The following contractor has been approved by the BSFD Council and BSFD Land Trust to provide authorized maintenance:

Consent to Maintain Agreement

Signature Required

Your signature on the Memorial Bench Consent to Maintain Agreement signifies your commitment to the ongoing care and responsibility for your Memorial Bench as outlined above. This includes compliance with all maintenance standards and cooperation with inspections and removal guidelines.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

BONNET SHORES FIRE DISTRICT (BSFD)

MEMORIAL BENCH CONSENT TO MAINTAIN AGREEMENT

This Consent to Maintain a Memorial Bench Agreement is governed by the Bonnet Shores Fire District Council and the Bonnet Shores Fire District Land Trust (BSFD LT).

Upon issuance of a Memorial Bench, the recipient family ("Honored Family") agrees to the following terms and conditions regarding the care and maintenance of their designated Memorial Bench:

Bench Specifications:

- Material: Pressure-treated pine or composite material (e.g., Trex)
- Design/Location:
 - Little Beach: Consistent with existing benches
 - Bonnet Battery: Consistent with existing benches

Terms of Maintenance:

By signing below, the Honored Family agrees to accept full responsibility for maintaining the condition and structural integrity of the awarded Memorial Bench.

The BSFD Council and the BSFD Land Trust shall not be responsible for the upkeep or repair of the bench. If the bench falls into disrepair and appropriate maintenance is not provided by the responsible family, the BSFD reserves the right to remove or reassign the bench. Neglect may result in forfeiture of the memorial bench privilege.

Honored Family Representative Name: _____

Date Issued: _____

Bench Number & Location: _____

Signature of Responsible Party: _____

BSFD Representative (Name/Title/Date): _____

Respectfully submitted,

/s/Jane Duran

Appointed Minute Taker - Bonnet Shores Fire
District

Ratified: August 18, 2025