

# Bonnet Shores Charter Commission Presentation

## Operationalizing Weighted Voting Kevin O'Brien & Mary Weber unified proposal



BONNET SHORES  
FIRE DISTRICT

Narragansett, Rhode Island 02882

*Established 1932*

Kevin O'Brien

123 Colonel John Gardner Rd

Date: Jan 29, 2025

# The Recommendations Key Consideration Criteria “The Magic 7”



1. Solve for the Voter Dilution issue in fact based and defensible way
2. Solve for the Judge's substantial interest's criteria
3. Follow the core principals agreed to by the committee
4. Disenfranchise no one
5. Solve for quality of life including all getting the same benefits and protections of the BSFD Charter
6. Uses a proven simple and manageable approach
7. Provide a solution that stands the test of time

# Unified Weighting Proposal follows the Charter Committee's Core principals



## Defined in the initial meeting agenda

1. Supported by the majority of the Charter Committee
2. Benefit the majority of the BSFD Population
3. BSFD is a Quasi-municipality so has more flexibility in defining voter eligibility
4. Risks reviewed for probability and impact
5. Financial (Fiscally responsible)
6. Quality of Life
7. Uses Facts & Data

## Added during the initial, January 15, 2025 committee meeting

1. Disenfranchises no one
2. Viable and Open Minded
3. Compromise
4. Stands the test of time

# The Specific Weighted Voting Recommendation

Weigh BSFD votes on percentage of BSFD Taxes paid by the constituency groups



Operationalizing Job 1  Define Constituency Groups

*Webster Definition of Constituency --  
A body of citizens entitled to elect a representative*

# We did the Charter Commissions Assigned homework!

## We reviewed the 4 Data sources from the Charter Committee

- Four Data Sources Used:
  - 1) Aug '24 Certified BSFD Property Tax List
  - 2) Aug '24 Certified Narragansett Voter Registration List
  - 3) Aug '24 Election Voter Registrations
  - 4) Dec '24 Town of Narragansett BSFD Rental Registrations

## Observations

1. Agree on some Observations
2. Disagree on others - some observations shared at last week's initial charter commission meeting proved factually inaccurate



# Common Observations

## What we find in Common

1. There are 2 Constituency Groups
2. Constituency Groups are:
  - BSFD Residents; BSBC Owners
3. Affiliation is used to align a person to one of the above constituency groups

## Where we find errors:

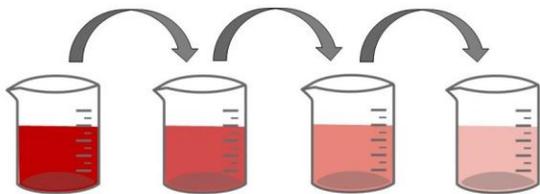
1. Affiliation was done using assumptions that went well beyond the 10% directionally accurate rule
2. Affiliation process used, resulted in statistically impossible findings
3. Affiliation process wasn't done "Apples to Apples"
4. We find clear BSFD voter dilution!!
5. We find dilution isn't a "yes or no" finding – it's graded on a scale. Even the numbers last week showed dilution



# Definitions – Webster's Dictionary



The state or relation of being closely associated or [affiliated](#) with a particular person, group, party, company, etc



Dilution

to diminish the strength, flavor, or brilliance of (something) by or as if by admixture

# A Statistical Impossibility!!! Conclusion of no Dilution is INVALID!!

## Scenario 1 | Current State

Scenario ---->	Scenario 1: Current State As of the Aug 2024 Election: BSFD Narr Reg Voters, and all Taxpayers					
	Total Eligible Voters		Actual Turnout Aug '24 (Original Registration Alignment)	Voter Turnout Eligible in Affiliation group	Turnout of Total Potential Voters in Election	% of Turnout of Total Turnout in Election
<b>BSFD Voter Affiliation*</b>						
BSFD Narr Reg Voters Only	460	13%	46	10%	1%	6%
BSFD Property Owners Only	870	25%	122	14%	3%	16%
BSFD Narr Voters & BSFD Property Owners	353	10%	174	49%	5%	22%
BSFD Narr Reg Voter & BSBC Owners	16	0%	8	50%	0%	1%
BSFD Property Owner & BSBC Owner	222	6%	85	38%	2%	11%
BSFD Narr Reg Voter, BSFD and BSBC (all 3)	122	3%	92	75%	3%	12%
<b>BSFD Sub Total</b>	<b>2043</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>527</b>	<b>Total N/A</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>68%</b>
BSBC Only Affiliation Total (based on Tax Roll)	1171	42%	247	17%	7%	32%
BSBC Balance of remaining (to balance to 1847)	316					
<b>Total BSBC Only Affiliation</b>	<b>1487</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>Total N/A</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3530</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>Total N/A</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on the August 2024 election, 22% of the 3560 potential voters turned out to vote (774 persons)



## Findings and

### Conclusion

- 4) BSBC Only - 42% of the total current eligible population is only a BSBC owner. Of this population, 7% voted in the last election representing **32% of the registered voters (minority)** - no dilution from BSBC ONLY)

## Actual August 2024 Voter Registration data

<b>Voter Registration Alignment - Original</b>			
<b>Total</b>	<b>774</b>		<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Taxpayer</b>		<b>547</b>	<b>71.0%</b>
	BSFD Property Owners	256	33.0%
	BSBC Unit Owners	291	38.0%
<b>Narragansett Registered Voters</b>	<b>227</b>		<b>29.0%</b>

There were 38% BSBC Owners registered BEFORE you ADD in any from the Narragansett Registered owner's group (29% of registrations). Adding can't subtract 6% of the baseline!! If you split Narragansett voters 50/50 BSBC ends up with the 53% majority vote!

# Not Apples to Apples This is BSBC ONLY to BSFD AND ALL other AFFILIATIONS

BSBC When Compared to BSFD has majority even with flawed assumption data in!!  
2,291 (53%) vs 2,043 (47%)

## This is STATISTICAL DILUTION

- Multiple Affiliations added ONLY TO BSFD Group.
- No Clear Affiliation added ONLY TO BSFD Group.
- When you add these to BSBC as well you get:
  - **2,291 vs 2,043**
- This is with the very inaccurate affiliation assumptions (previous slide)

3) Multiple affiliations with BSFD - **58% of the total current eligible population has an affiliation with BSFD other than being a BSBC owner.** Of this population 15% voted in the last election representing 68% of the registered voters (majority).

## Scenario 1 | Current State

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Based on the August 2024 election, 22% of the 3560 potential voters turned out to vote (774 persons)

# We find clear dilution and impact on the 2024 BSFD Election



Even with very inaccurate assumptions data applied to the provided data, the data shows the group paying 11% of the BSFD taxes (an 11% significant interest) had the MAJORITY VOTE.

The dilution proved HIGHLY IMPACTFUL in the 2024 BSFD Election!  
- See future slides

# Operationalizing Job 1 – Our background work

## Reviewed charter committee voter data to determine “Constituencies”

<u>Voter Registration Alignment - Original</u>			
Total		<b>774</b>	100.0%
<b>Taxpayer</b>		<b>547</b>	71.0%
	BSFD Property Owners	256	33.0%
	BSBC Unit Owners	291	38.0%
<b>Narragansett Registered Voters</b>		<b>227</b>	29.0%

Voter Turnout by BSFD Affiliation			
Total		<b>774</b>	
	Only Narragansett Reistered Voter	45	5.8%
	Only BSFD Homeowner	117	15.1%
	Only BSBC Unit Owner	246	31.8%
	Narragansett Voter & BSFD Owner	180	23.3%
	Narragansett Voter & BSBC Owner	9	1.2%
	BSFD Homeowner & BSBC Owner	83	10.7%
	All 3 (Narr Voter, BSFD Owner & BSBC Owner)	94	

### 3 Voter Registration Groups.

1. BSFD Property Owner
2. BSBC Unit Owner
3. Narragansett Registered Voter
  - To clarify: Is a Narragansett resident owner with a “Substantial interest” in BSFD - either through BSFD property taxed, on deed, renter or BSBC Owner

### 2 Clear Voter “Constituencies”

1. BSFD Owner, BSBC Unit Owner
2. Prior Analysis Affiliation breakdown:
  - Based on assumptive & unclean data
  - Results is 3 groups - 256 BSBC; 297 BSFD; 222 Unclear
3. Be proactive with affiliation and have the Narragansett Voters align to the above Constituencies.

# Operationalizing Job 2 – Dive deeper in election facts and data



## Use Additional Data sources to:

1. Clearly refine and define constituency groups
2. Clearly define constituency group definition and membership rules
3. Ensure constituency groups, and members in it, have significant interest in BSFD and clear rules for membership

# A review of election process and results data

## ***One Community, One Fire District, One BSFD Charter Process to place candidates on the ballot BUT ..... Two election processes, Two election communication processes AND Two Ballots***

BSBC Endorsed (In August)

### BSFD Nominating Committee - Ballot Candidates

84% write in's - nominated on floor of election meeting

**Nominating Committee** <nominating.committee@bonnetshores.org>  
To: Nominating Committee <nominating.committee@bonnetshores.org>

Mon, Jul 1, 2024 at 8:12 PM

Hello everyone,

The Nominating Committee is putting forward the following candidates:

Moderator: Joe Thomas  
Clerk: Stephanie Caldwell  
Treasurer: Laurie McCarthy  
Tax Collector: open position  
Tax Assessors (3): Linda Kaufman, Carole Duffy, Nancy Cordy  
Fire Warden: Bill Giannini  
Land Trust (5): Terry Beaty, David Kaufman, Jim Riccitelli, EJ Sutherland, Joe Thomas  
Council: John Chereskin, Carolyn DiLeo, Anita Langer, Leslie McKnight, Gary Moore, Kevin O'Brien, Cristiana Quinn

Thank you to everyone who applied and were willing to step up and serve the community. We hope that everyone will stay involved as we strive to uphold the values that define Bonnet Shores as a vibrant and flourishing community.

★ ★ ★ **VOTE! VOTE! VOTE!** ★ ★ ★

*BSFD Council*

						
Carol O'Donnell*	Faith LaSalle*	Steve Danuszar*	Jane Wolferseder Duran*	Tony Girardi*	Leslie McKnight**	John Chereskin**

*Land Trust*

				
Paulette Brousseau*	Kevin Dolan*	Joan Fandetti*	Kelly Sheridan*	Joe Thomas**

\*Must check box ✓ and write in candidate name on ballot.  
\*\*Candidates on ballot.

# BSFD Ballot, Communication and Election Process

## Defined in the BSFD charter

1. Candidates Apply for the position via the website
2. Supply a biography and answer the Nominating Committee in writing.
3. Formerly interview with the Nominating Committee
4. Committee puts forth the nominees
5. BSFD Council selects voting location, posts notices to BSFD email list.
6. BSFD Council runs election at the annual meeting

The election for candidates will be held at the annual meeting of the Bonnet Shores Fire District, on **June 27, 2024**. All candidates for office must be qualified voters of the Bonnet Shores Fire District.

Interested candidates are asked to send a letter of intent along with a short bio to the committee by clicking below by **Friday, May 17, 2024**:

APPLY

MORE INFO

Candidates are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the **By Laws and Charter** of the Bonnet Shores Fire District.

BYLAWS & CHARTER

BSFD Current **Job Descriptions** are underway. Many are completed.

DESCRIPTIONS

Previous **Nominating Committee Minutes** and streams are available on our site. Navigate to the Committee Minutes page by clicking the button below, and scroll about half way down.

MINUTES

# BSBC Ballot, Communication and Election Process

## BSBC Example -- August 24<sup>th</sup> Newsletter highlights

9. Could you please give us the names of the endorsed candidates for whom we should vote?

For **COUNCIL**, we endorse the following seven (7) candidates.

Carol O'Donnell  
 Attorney Faith Lasalle  
 Steve Danuszar  
 Jane Wolferseder Duran  
 Tony Girardi  
 Leslie McKnight  
 John Chereskin

For **LAND TRUST**, we endorse the following five (5) candidates.

Paulette Brousseau  
 Kevin Dolan  
 Joan Fandetti  
 Kelly Sheridan  
 Joe Thomas

For **TAX ASSESSORS**, we endorse the following three (3) candidates.

**VOTE** for these candidates to *Restore Community Unity*  
 Check the box  & be sure to WRITE IN your candidates!

**FIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
 WRITE IN & BALLOT !!!

**LAND TRUST**  
 WRITE IN & BALLOT !!!

-  CAROL O'DONNELL
-  ATTY: FAITH LASALLE
-  TONY GIRARDI
-  STEVE DANUSZAR
-  JANE WOLFERSEDER DURAN
- LESLIE MCKNIGHT (BALLOT)
- JOHN CHERESKIN (BALLOT)

-  KELLY SHERIDAN
-  PAULETTE BROUSSEAU
-  JOAN FANDETTI
-  KEVIN DOLAN
- JOE THOMAS (BALLOT)

**ELECTION MONDAY 8/26**  
 BONNET SHORES BEACH CLUB 5:30PM REGISTRATION

# BSBC Voting Process

## Notarized Proxy Service offered to BSBC Voters only

### Process used to dilute

- 17% of ballots cast in the 2024 election were notarized proxy ballots
- 2024 Proxy Ballot Breakdown by Constituency:
  - 70% BSBC; 30% BSFD
- BSBC Voting Process and services offered only to BSBC Voters :
  - Free on-site proxy notary services offered for weeks prior to election
  - Offered day of election on site of election to BSBC Voters.
  - Guided voters to write in process prior to nominees being on ballot

**2. Can I simply go to the BSFD Annual Meeting Registration, get my ballot, fill it out, drop it in the polling box, and leave right away?**

No. You must stay for the meeting which begins at 7:30pm.

Our endorsed candidates will be nominated from the floor.

You can only deposit your ballot(s) into the polling box when everyone else does after the nominations from the floor have been made.

We believe this is not too much to ask in view of the fact that folks have worked long and hard to protect your voting rights.

**8. What happens if I don't know a notary public?**

In case you don't know a notary --- or can't find one -- we can help you. One of our office workers happens to be a notary. In addition, we will have other notaries available throughout this weekend.

# 2024 BSFD Election Result Statistics

BSFD Role	% of BSFD Ballot Candidates only	% of BSBC Endorsed only	% Both
BSFD Council	Zero % (0/5)	100% (5/5)	100 (2/2)
Land Trust	Zero %(0/4)	100% (4/4)	100 (1/1)
Moderator	Zero % (0/1)	100% (1/1)	N/A
Clerk	Zero % (0/1)	100% (1/1)	N/A
Treasurer	N/A	N/A	100 (1/1)
Tax Collector	N/A – candidate (incumbent) resigned just before election	100 (1/1)	N/A
Tax Assessors	Zero % (0/3)	100% (3/3)	N/A
Nominating Committee	Zero % (0/5)	100% (5/5)	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>Zero % (0/20)</b>	<b>100% (20/20)</b>	<b>100% (4/4)</b>

# Bonnet Shores Charter Commission Presentation

## The Resulting Proposed Operational Process



BONNET SHORES  
FIRE DISTRICT

Narragansett, Rhode Island 02882

*Established 1932*

Kevin O'Brien

123 Colonel John Gardner Rd

Date Jan 29, 2025

# Things to Address in Operationalizing Jan 22, 2022 - Summary Judgement decision and findings

Allow voters who do not own property to vote (i.e. Not on deed and renters)

Top of page 20:

Consequently, the Court finds that the BSFD is a quasi-municipal entity that exercises general governmental powers and that the provisions of the BSFD Charter which prevent residents from voting in BSFD elections on the basis of property ownership are unconstitutional under both the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution and article 1, section 2 of the Rhode Island Constitution.

# Things to Address in Operationalizing

## Jan 22, 2022 - Summary Judgement decision and findings

### Resolve dilution and align to the substantial interest clause

Bottom of page 40:

[A] legislature's decision to expand the electorate is irrational and therefore unconstitutional where the enfranchised voters do not have a 'substantial interest' in the outcome of the election." *Day*, 693 F. Supp. 2d at 1005 (citing *Duncan*, 69 F.3d at 94-95). In *Duncan v. Coffee County, Tenn.*, cited *supra*, the Sixth Circuit considered the substantial interest question in light of "(1) the degree to which the nonresident voters finance the relevant district; [and] (2) the voting power of non-resident voters[.]"<sup>9</sup> *Day*, 693 F. Supp. 2d at 1005 (citing *Duncan*, 69 F.3d at 96). The first factor is relevant because the provision of financing gives nonresidents a stake in how the district operates. *See May*, 132 F.3d at 582-83. The second factor is relevant because an electoral scheme affording residents "little or no chance" to control their local government raises

# Proposed BSFD weighted voting operational approach

1. The two constituency groups vote sized to BSFD taxes paid once per year
  - This satisfies the Judges dilution finding and substantial interest clause
2. All BSFD voters be aligned to one of the two constituency groups before election day.
  - Next 3 slides detail how the constituencies are defined
3. BSFD Annual Meeting and vote is held meeting at a neutral location
  - All voters from both constituency groups are invited to hear candidates
  - Actual constituency vote recommended to be in separate locations.
4. BSBC and BSFD Constituency representatives tally the combined constituency votes and post results

# Proposed BSFD weighted voting operational approach

## Voter Pool and Weights (1 of 3 slides)

### BSBC Unit Owner Voters:

1. BSBC Units total voting weight in alignment with taxes paid.
  1. Today (Jan 2025) that would be 11%
2. BSBC determines how vote is operationally run as well as where and when. This meeting will be separate from the BSFD Annual meeting.
  1. This includes who gets to vote and how
  2. For example – BSBC Council make decision on options such as:
    - all unit owners, 1 vote per unit, weighted votes, etc
3. BSBC Elector(s) brings their ballot(s) with vote allocations (number per candidate) to vote tallying location

# Proposed BSFD weighted voting operational approach

## Voter Pool and Weights (2 of 3)

### BSFD Resident Voters:

1. All persons qualified to vote in Narragansett elections who reside in Bonnet Shores residential zoned property;
  - This includes permanent residents who own the home and live there and/or (this is up to what is legally correct) are renters.

PLUS

2. People who are not qualified to vote in Narragansett elections but whose names appear on Bonnet Shores tax bills for residential zoned properties (as determined by town of Narragansett) can also vote.
  - Residential zone properties held by LLC's, Trusts, and Corporations (except BSBC) get one vote per Narragansett Voter registered person.
  - Grandfathering existing non-residential corporations (9), with the exception of BSBC, have one vote.

# Proposed BSFD weighted voting operational approach

## Voter Pool and Weights (3 of 3)

### BSFD & BSBC Owners

1. The voter chooses which group they vote in – could happen at the registration check in desk if you want. Pick your ballot type.
2. It is an either/or declaration

# Annual Meeting Voting Day EXAMPLE!!

## BSBC Vote

### Example Scenario

- Total Bonnet Shores Elector Votes is 1,000
  - 1,000 is picked as an example to set a fixed pool
- BSBC is allocated 10% of Bonnet Shores Elector Votes based on 10% taxes paid to the district
  - Results in 100 total BSFD Elector Votes per vote block (council, land trust, moderator, etc.)
- Meeting held on BSFD Election Day at BSBC
- 500 BSBC Example Vote results for BSFD Council are in table.
- BSBC votes for allocated positions are summed up to be the denominator for calculating allocation percentage
  - In this example 482 votes for first 7 positions so division uses this as denominator
- BSBC Rep(s) & BSFD Reps meet after both meetings They sum up elector votes to come up final BSFD vote result.

Candidate for Council	BSBC Gross Votes	BSBC % Vote	Elector Votes
Candidate A	125	26%	26
Candidate B	108	22%	22
Candidate C	83	17%	17
Candidate D	75	16%	16
Candidate E	43	9%	9
Candidate F	30	6%	6
Candidate G	18	4%	4
Candidate H	8		
Candidate I	6		
Candidate J	4		
Total	500	100%	100

# Summary of Weighted Voting Operational Proposal

1. Two Constituency Groups – BSFD Residents & BSBC Unit Owners
  1. BSBC Constituency Group vote percentage aligned to % of BSFD tax revenue paid.
    - Percentage is established each year.
    - Group includes all BSBC Owners
  2. BSFD Residents Constituency Group vote percentage is the remainder. Group includes:
    - Residential property owners, trusts, LLC's
      - One vote per person registered in town of Narragansett and/or named on the deed and live in a BSFD residential zoned property.
    - Corporations and non-residential trusts, LLC and addresses – one vote per address
    - Renters – one per person registered in town of Narragansett and living in a BSFD residential zoned property.
2. People affiliated with both constituencies be assigned to the one of the above group
  - Option to have voter choose but must adhere to “one body/one vote”.
3. BSFD Annual Meeting and vote be held at a neutral location