

# BONNET SHORES FIRE DISTRICT

## COMBINED Bylaws Workshop: Annual Meeting/Election Processes & Fiscal Responsibility And Monthly Council Meeting Wednesday, January 21, 2026

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Date/Time                                 | <b>Wednesday, January 21, 2026</b> – 6:30pm – 9:00pm as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continuation of Bylaws Workshop: Annual Meeting and Election Processes – 6:30pm – 7:15pm</li><li>• Bylaws Workshop Introduction: Fiscal Responsibility - 7:15pm – 7:30pm</li><li>• Monthly Council Meeting – 7:30pm – 9:00pm</li></ul>   |
| Place:                                    | Bonnet Shores Fire District Community Center  |
| Zoom <sup>1</sup> :                       | <p><b>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.</b></p> <p><b>Zoom Link:</b> <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87424760778">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87424760778</a></p> <p><b>Cut &amp; Paste URL Method:</b> 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><a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZMpde2vqDstHdxnsRozM4PjYX0cfjL8orp-/ics?icsToken=DFhsZs8sP6wJlqrjXQAALAAAAGeDqFjrFPT85-IfzNzW1iZi5RYThaHA714fdgkeu6RMPw0azVifE-y2nm5xfJdDE0w0Mt3m0EeE3_jgzAwMDAwMQ&amp;meetingMasterEventId=OxIoTSj2TQuIUuOBTwIqDA">https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZMpde2vqDstHdxnsRozM4PjYX0cfjL8orp-/ics?icsToken=DFhsZs8sP6wJlqrjXQAALAAAAGeDqFjrFPT85-IfzNzW1iZi5RYThaHA714fdgkeu6RMPw0azVifE-y2nm5xfJdDE0w0Mt3m0EeE3_jgzAwMDAwMQ&amp;meetingMasterEventId=OxIoTSj2TQuIUuOBTwIqDA</a></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 for all deceased members of our community especially longtime resident Teri Keegan, who passed away peacefully on January 6.

### BYLAWS WORKSHOP AGENDA: ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION PROCESSES<sup>2</sup>

- **Welcome**
- **Objectives** – To continue the discussion of possible improvements to the annual meeting and election processes from November 19, 2025.
- **Open Discussion:** Review, discuss, consider, revise and possibly vote on the work completed by predecessor bylaw committees and feedback from the community related to updating requirements for the Annual Meeting and Election such as evaluating the requirement to publish annual meeting notices in newspapers due to cost, evaluating the role of the Nominating Committee, evaluating the number of Tax Assessors, etc. If any approved improvements require by-law changes, those changes will need to be approved by a 2/3 majority vote at an annual meeting or special meeting.

- (See first attachment on agenda for current inventory of ideas).
- **Next Steps** – Next Steps will be determined in consideration of the outcomes of the above open discussion.
- **Adjourn Workshop**

## **BYLAWS WORKSHOP AGENDA: INTRODUCTION TO FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY<sup>2</sup>**

- **Background**
- **Open Discussion:** Introduction and discussion of the fiscal responsibility issues addressed in last year's Council sessions; caps on tax increases for municipalities under R.I.G.LL. Section 44-5-2; mill rate and how it works; provisions in the Fire District Charter relating to fiscal matters, and approval of major expenditures or debt at an Annual Meeting. If any approved improvements require by-law changes, those changes will need to be approved by a 2/3 majority vote at an annual meeting or special meeting
- **Next Steps** – Next Steps will be determined in consideration of the outcomes of the above open discussion.
- **Adjourn Workshop**

## **MONTHLY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA<sup>2</sup>**

### **Announcements:**

#### **Approval of the DRAFT Minutes from:**

- 12/17/2025 Monthly Council Meeting 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.

### **Reports / Updates:**

1. Treasurer Update
2. Tax Collector Update/Report
3. Land Trust Update – including outcomes from the January 16th meeting with the Foundation Group regarding the Land Trust 501c3.
4. BSFD Manager and Harbor Update/Report
5. Social Activities Group Update
6. Update on open BSFD APRA/litigation matters (APRA – Patterson vs BSFD; and Civil matter – Lisa DiBello)
7. Update on BSFD Insurance - Interlocal Trust

### **New and Ongoing Business:**

8. Review, discuss, consider and possibly vote to accept a property donation to the Bonnet Shores Land Trust subject to costs not to exceed \$1,500 for a title search yielding no liens, preparation of conveyance deed and possible title insurance (Lot # N-R-873 owned by Emily Beth Jenkins located at 0 Channing Road). (*Land Trust – Tony Girardi*)
9. Review, discuss, consider, and possibly vote on supporting public comment via zoom in Monthly Council Meetings. (*Leslie McKnight*). (*Note, for informational purposes only, the ACLU has published an update to its article on how municipalities are operating in terms of providing remote public access and participation as*

of February, 2025: <https://www.riaclu.org/publications/report-update-remote-access-public-meetings-post-covid-february-2025/>

10. Review, discuss, consider, and possibly vote on installing an electronic entry system or change the locks for the Community Center building. (*Leslie McKnight/ District Manager*)
11. Review, discuss, consider and possibly vote to approve the 2025 BSFD Strategic Planning Workshop's recommendations documented in the BSFD Strategic Plan Summary and Recommendation Report posted on the BSFD Website. (*See attachment #2 – Strategic Planning Recommendations*) (*Kevin O'Brien*)
12. Review, discuss, consider, and potentially vote on continuing the existing BSFD Council communication practices until a formal Communications Policy and related procedures are adopted by the council (*see attachment # 3- Email exchange with Attorney General regarding concerns raised*) (*Jane Duran*)
13. Consider and possibly vote on a communication policy. (*See attachment #4 - Draft Communication Policy*) (*Melissa Jenkins*)
14. Review, discussion, possible revision, and potential vote to approve revised draft on Paul Massee zoning letter. (*See attachment #5 – Revised Paul Massee letter with Community Comments*) (*Melissa Jenkins*)
15. Review, discussion and reading into the record individual statements submitted by Councilwoman Melissa Jenkins regarding:
  - a. Procedural Review: Committee Authority and Open Meetings Act Compliance
  - b. Procedural Review: Custody of District Records and Council Access
  - c. Procedural Review: Duties of District Manager and Council Oversight as outlined in job description.

*(See attachment #6) (Melissa Jenkins)*

The above statements on procedural reviews are from an individual council member and do not represent a position of the council unless otherwise voted upon.

### **Motion to Adjourn**

## Attachments (6 in total):

1. BSFD Annual Meeting / Election Process – Inventory of previously suggested changes
2. Strategic Planning Recommendations
3. Communications Concerns and feedback from RI Attorney General's Office
4. Proposed Draft Communications Policy
5. Revised Paul Masse letter including community comments
6. Procedural Reviews (3)

### Attachment #1 - BSFD Annual Meeting / Election Process – Inventory of previously suggested changes submitted by Leslie McKnight

| Existing Process   | Suggested Change (Source of suggestion)   Recommendation from the Public or former By-Law Committee                               | Community Feedback   | Charter Change Required? | Bylaw Change Required? | Comments   |
|--|---|--|--------------------------|------------------------|--|
| Nominating Committee   | Candidates submit letter of interest 30 days prior to election (Public)   | Yes  | No                       | No                     |  |
|  | Meet and Greet with perspective candidates including zoom (Public)  | Yes  | No                       | No                     |  |
|  | Eliminate nominations from the floor (Public)   | Yes  | No                       | No                     |  |
|  | Election Meeting Committee-work with clerk and district manager to schedule meeting (Bylaw committee)                             | Role of NC to receive letter of interest and facilitate meet & greet |                          | Article II, S2         |  |
| Tax Assessors (3)  | Additional Tax Assessors (Public)   | Not needed - use volunteers  |                          | Article III, S6        | Tax Assessor needs to be paired with volunteer                 |
| Proxy Voting   | Expand to include sealed mail in/drop off ballots to be opened on the day of election/arrival prior to election (Bylaw committee) |  | Yes, S2                  | Article I, S5          | Must vote in person  |
|  | Eliminate proxy voting (Public)   |  | Yes, S2                  | Article I, S5          |  |
|  | Process for authenticating ballots/duplicates/notarizations (Public)  |  | No                       | No                     |  |
| Write-in Candidates  | Require additional information for write-in candidates (Public)   | No   | No                       | No                     |  |
|  | Eliminate write in's (Public)   | No   | No                       | No                     |  |
| Paper Ballots  | Electronic Ballots/Voting Machines (Public)   | Yes, voting machines   | No                       | No                     |  |
|  | Paper Ballots for write-ins only (Public)   | Yes  | No                       | No                     |  |
| Voter Registration List/Notice of Election                         | Discrepancies with Town of Narragansett List (Public)   | Pre-registration   | Yes, S2                  | Article I, S6          | Tax Collector prepares list                                    |
|  | One Notice per household/electronic, paper, website, posted (Public and Bylaw committee)  | Yes  | No                       | Article I, S3a         | Requires first class mail - 9 days prior                       |
|  | Publication Notice in local paper (Public and Bylaw committee)  | Yes  | Yes, S3                  | Article I, S3          | Requires PROJO and local                                       |
| Council Member -Term   | Council Member Term Limits two-3 year terms then 1 yr ineligibility, Chair maximum of 2 years (Bylaw committee)                   |  | No                       | No                     |  |
|  | Vacancy within 6 months of election-next highest vote getter (By-law committee)   |  | No                       | Article IV, S1         | Filled by council  |
|  | Vacancy appointed by the council (Bylaw committee)  |  | No                       | Article IV, S1         | Filled by council  |
| Other elected Officials - Term                                     | Extend to two year term (Public)  |  | No                       | No                     |  |
| Organizational Meeting   | Held immediately following annual meeting (Bylaw committee)   |  | No                       | Article II, S4         | As is convenient after annual meeting                          |
| Annual Meeting   | In person-present for entire meeting (Public)   |  | Yes, S2                  | Article I, S4          | In person or by proxy  |
|  | No voting until end of annual meeting (Public)  |  | No                       | Article I, S4          | In person or by proxy  |
|  | Allow continuous voting throughout the day (Public)   |  | No                       | Article I, S4          | In person or by proxy  |
| Council Member Absences (6 Meetings - meeting types not specified) | Reduce to 4 absences total or 2 consecutive absences (Bylaw committee)  |  | No                       | Article III, S10       | 6 absences within 12 month period - meeting type not specified |

Strategic Planning Workshop Recommendation

The recommendations below support continuing the BSFD strategic planning efforts. As shared in the full report, these recommendations address topics considered most important to the community.

**Strategic Plan Elements**

**• Process and Guidelines for Community and Communications**

The BSFD Council to host working session(s) to document and publish a single policies and procedures manual that the district uses to execute its business.

Lead: Jane Duran

**• Asset Management and Utilization**

Document what BSFD assets are owned and require maintenance. Document the current state maintenance plan and expectation with links to maintenance contracts where appropriate. Document the current state utilization plan and associated calendar if appropriate. Define and document ideal state maintenance plan. Define gap between the current state and ideal state maintenance and utilization plans. Propose solutions to the BSFD Council and/or Land Trust to fill maintenance and utilization gaps. Document the process for inspecting what is expected. In cases where this doesn't exist come up with proposals for the council to approve.

This will support the annual budgeting process and potential reserves that need to be established.

Lead: Kevin O'Brian

**• Social Programs and Community Engagement**

Build social networks and sense of shared community responsibility. Strengthen community engagement to help achieve growth and development goals.

Lead: Deborah Pannullo

**Process**

1. All meetings related to the Strategic Planning activities will follow OMA and bi-directional zoom meetings to maximize opportunity for community engagement and involvement.
2. The ongoing 2025 Strategic Planning reports be shared in Bonnet Blast communications and ideally includes a way to capture feedback.
3. A “BSFD Strategic Planning Operational Review and Adjustment” process included as an annual BSFD process. The details of the annual process will be finalized in the Process and Guidelines workshop but are expected to include:
  - Updating the current state each year with community input
  - Reviewing the approved BSFD vision
  - Updating implementation plans and cost estimates for the current calendar year with a focus on continuous improvement and filling the gap between the agreed BSFD current state and vision.
4. Strategic Plan leaders will be given time prior to, and at the 2026 BSFD annual meeting to review the 2025 Strategic Plan results and get input for the 2026 Strategic Planning effort.

**Attachment # 3 – Communications concerns and Attorney General Response submitted by Jane Duran**

**From:** Jane Duran <jane.duran@bonnetshores.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 18, 2025 9:10 AM  
**To:** Patrick Reynolds <PReynolds@riag.ri.gov>  
**Cc:** Leslie McKnight <leslie.mcknight@bonnetshores.org>  
**Subject:** BSFD: Request for Guidance on the Rhode Island Open Meetings Act regarding Communications

[External email: Use caution with links and attachments]

Jane Duran  
Vice Chair, Bonnet Shores Fire District Council  
Bonnet Shores Fire District  
130 Bonnet Shores Road  
Narragansett, RI 02882  
jane.duran@bonnetshores.org

December 18, 2025

Patrick Reynolds  
Special Assistant Attorney General  
State of Rhode Island | Office of the Attorney General  
150 South Main Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903  
PReynolds@riag.ri.gov

Re: Request for Guidance on the Rhode Island Open Meetings Act regarding Communications

Dear Mr. Reynolds,

I am Council Vice Chair and Communications lead for the Bonnet Shores Fire District (BSFD). I am writing to respectfully request guidance regarding the application of the Rhode Island Open Meetings Act (OMA) to certain communication practices of our Fire District

Council.

The BSFD has an established practice of preparing and distributing post-meeting recaps in the form of a one-page bulleted list of meeting outcomes (distinct from official meeting minutes). These recaps are drafted by the Vice Chair, reviewed and approved by the Chair, and then emailed to a community mailing list to promote transparency and timely communication. Recently, a newly elected Council member has raised concerns that this practice may violate the OMA, asserting that all official communications from the Council must be reviewed and approved by the entire Council prior to dissemination. Additionally, the council member has insisted that we do not communicate anything as a council because as a council member, she does not grant us authorization to speak on her behalf without approval of the communication.

This same concern has been raised in other contexts. For example, when the BSFD website experienced a technical issue, the Webmaster—who also serves as Vice Chair—drafted and distributed a brief communication to the community explaining the issue and offering a temporary workaround. The same Council member objected, stating that this communication also should have required prior approval by the full Council, including herself.

Additionally, this Council member has asserted that the Clerk is the only individual authorized to disseminate official communications on behalf of the Council without advance approval of the full Council.

This Council member also asserts that any "official" reports posted on our website must be approved by the entire Council. My understanding is that draft versions of documents are considered public information so long as they do not fall under an OMA exception. Therefore, in order to provide transparency, our practice has been to post reports, whether draft or final.

The BSFD wishes to adopt a formal Communications Policy to ensure compliance with the OMA while still providing timely and transparent information to the community we serve. However, these specific claims regarding communication approval and authorization are not expressly addressed in the OMA, and Council members have differing interpretations of what the Act requires.

Accordingly, we respectfully request your guidance on the following questions:

1. Does the OMA require that all written communications issued on behalf of a public or quasi-public body be approved by the full body prior to distribution. If so, does this have to occur in a public meeting or can it transpire via email?
2. Are post-meeting summaries or recaps (that do not constitute official minutes) subject to OMA approval requirements?
3. Does the OMA restrict which officers or staff members may disseminate informational or administrative communications on behalf of a quasi-public body?
4. Does the OMA require full council approval for draft/final reports that are posted on a website?
5. How does the OMA balance transparency requirements with the practical need for timely communication to the public?

Your advice on what the OMA requires—and does not require—will be invaluable as the BSFD works to align its policies and practices with state law while maintaining effective and timely communications with our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I greatly appreciate the guidance provided by your office and look forward to your response.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Duran  
Vice Chair and Communications Lead  
Bonnet Shores Fire District Council

cc: Leslie McKnight, BSFD Council Chair

**From** Patrick Reynolds <PReynolds@riag.ri.gov>  
**Date** Thu 12/18/2025 11:10 AM  
**To** Jane Duran <jane.duran@bonnetshores.org>  
**Cc** Leslie McKnight <leslie.mcknight@bonnetshores.org>

Good morning Ms. Duran,

The OMA does not speak to whether individual members of a public body can send out communications on behalf of the body or if full public body approval is required for sending communications or approving draft/final reports. Such a determination falls outside of the OMA and is typically governed by the individual public body's by-laws, rules, or practices.

However, I will note some areas of caution concerning the OMA. 1) If the public body decides that it will require full public body approval of communications or reports, it must have any related discussions or votes during a properly noticed public meeting (a quorum cannot discuss the matter via email, text, or some other non-public way). 2) Although it is not violative of the OMA for the Vice-Chair to send out a post-meeting recap to the community mailing list, please be cautious that no members of the Council reply-all or reply to fellow Councilors in response to these recap communications in order to avoid creating a rolling quorum.

I hope this addresses your inquiry. Let me know if you have any further questions.

Best,  
-Patrick



**Patrick Reynolds | Special Assistant Attorney General**  
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**Attachment #4 - DRAFT DISTRICT COMMUNICATIONS POLICY submitted by Melissa Jenkins**

**1. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all official communications of the District are accurate, consistent, transparent, and properly authorized by the elected governing body. This policy establishes clear procedures for creating, approving, and disseminating official District communications, including website content, reports, newsletters, social media, and public statements which comply with the Open Meetings Act and best practices for quasi municipal government. And, to ensure compliance with the Rhode Island Open Meetings Act, including prohibitions on deliberation or decision-making outside of properly noticed public meetings

**2. Definitions**

“Official Communication” means any written, electronic, or verbal statement that:

- Represents the position or action of the District or its governing Council;
- Is issued in the name of the District, Council, Officers, or Committees;
- Is labeled as an “official report,” “official statement,” “District update,” or similar; or
- Is intended for public dissemination as an authoritative communication from the District.

“Website eblasts and Social Media Administrators” means individuals with login credentials allowing posting, editing, or managing District web eblasts, text alerts, Social Media content or any other mass communication on behalf of the District.

**3. Authority of the Council**

1. The elected Council holds sole authority to approve, issue, or authorize official communications of the District.
2. No individual member, group of members, committee, volunteer, or outside organization may issue official communications without prior authorization by a majority vote of the Council.
3. All official actions or statements must reflect the collective decisions of the Council made at a properly noticed public meeting.

**4. Approval Requirement for Official Communications**

1. Any document or statement intended to be issued as an official communication must be:

- Drafted or submitted to the Council for review;
- Placed on a meeting agenda in accordance with District procedure; and
- Approved by majority vote before publication.

2. No posting may appear on the District’s website, social media, email list, or other channels that purports to be an official communication unless formally approved. The only exception is time sensitive information about public services or public safety information, which shall be posted as necessary to inform residents about the scheduling of public services including routine reminders of social events, public services or any urgent public safety concerns (including trash collection, water, road maintenance, beach closures etc.)

**5. Website Governance**

**5.1 Administrative Control**

1. Administrative control of the District website shall be vested in the elected Clerk/Secretary and the appointed Communications Chair or other officer(s) as designated by vote of the Council. No non-elected party shall hold such credentials. Third-party vendors may be granted administrative credentials solely for technical maintenance purposes, provided that such access is governed by contract and subject to Council oversight.
2. At least two elected officers shall hold full administrative login credentials.
3. No person may retain exclusive control over website credentials or content, and all content must be officially approved by the full council at publicly noticed meetings.

**5.2 Posting Requirements**

1. Website, eblasts and Social Media Administrators shall post only those items that have been authorized by Council vote, with the exception of routine administrative updates approved in advance (e.g., meeting dates, agendas, minutes once approved).
2. All posts must accurately reflect official decisions and actions of the Council.

#### 5.3 Removal of Unauthorized Content

1. Any content published without authorization shall be removed promptly.
2. The Council may direct the Clerk/Secretary to issue a corrective statement if necessary to clarify that unauthorized communications were not official.

#### 6. Committee Communications

1. Committees may communicate factual information about meeting times, agendas, and statutory duties without prior Council approval.
2. Committees may not issue reports or statements purporting to represent the position of the District or Council unless expressly authorized by Council vote.
3. Committee reports intended for public release must be first presented to the Council for approval. Most often, committee reports will be presented to the full Council during a regular meeting, and will be conveyed to the public via the official minutes of that meeting.

#### 7. Public Records Compliance

1. All drafts, emails, posts, and materials relating to official communications are public records and must be retained in accordance with state law.
2. Website, eblasts and Social Media Administrators must provide copies of any requested drafts or materials to the Clerk/Secretary upon request.
3. Text messages and messaging platform communications related to District business are also public records

#### 8. Prohibited Conduct

1. Issuing or disseminating unapproved communications that purport to represent the District or the Council.
2. Misrepresenting personal or subgroup opinions as official District positions.
3. Withholding, altering, or refusing to provide website access, drafts, or materials to the Council or Clerk/Secretary.
4. Using the District website or communication channels for political activity, personal advocacy, or non-Council-authorized messaging.

#### 9. Enforcement and Corrective Measures

1. The Council may vote to:
  - Remove or reassign Website, eblasts and Social Media Administrators;
  - Revoke access to District communication platforms;
  - Issue corrective statements;
  - Refer matters to legal counsel and/or the Attorney General if statutory compliance issues arise.
2. Individuals acting outside this policy may be subject to administrative or legal consequences consistent with District authority and state law.

#### 10. Effective Date

This policy shall take effect immediately upon adoption by vote of the Council.

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**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 BWRF-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.

*Drainage infrastructure in Bonnet Shores is already inadequate. Multiple homes in low-lying areas routinely experience flooded streets and basement seepage during heavy rain events. These are existing, recurring conditions that have worsened following nearby hardscape expansion, most notably the St. Veronica Chapel parking lot project, which resulted in significant tree removal and increased runoff into the Muratore Plat neighborhood and Wesquage Pond.*

*Any development on the subject property would sit uphill from residential streets including Clara Lane, Onondaga Road, and Dean Knauss Road—all areas identified as likely collection points for stormwater runoff. Properties below the vacant parcel would inevitably bear the downstream consequences of additional impervious surface installation.*

*The Planning Board itself has previously raised concerns about stormwater runoff in this corridor, explicitly referencing the St. Veronica project during the Masse pre-application presentation. These prior impacts underscore the need for heightened scrutiny and caution.*

**1A. Water Supply & Infrastructure Capacity**

*We are also deeply concerned about water supply capacity. We have water restrictions every summer. Even during mid-winter months, portions of Bonnet Shores remain unable to use outdoor water systems due to infrastructure limitations. With ongoing residential and commercial development town-wide, Narragansett faces a real risk of future water shortages.*

*An automobile dealership would require an unknown but potentially substantial volume of daily water usage for vehicle washing, maintenance, and operations. The existing water infrastructure has not been demonstrated to support this additional demand, raising serious concerns about long-term sustainability and public safety.*

**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.

*In addition to water quality concerns, we request consideration of wildlife impacts. Similar large-scale development projects in neighboring Massachusetts communities have been halted due to demonstrated harm to amphibian populations, including frogs, whose habitats are especially sensitive to hydrological changes and roadway barriers.*

*The Wesquage Pond watershed and surrounding wetlands support diverse wildlife species including birds, frogs, and turtles that are highly vulnerable to altered drainage patterns, increased lighting, noise, and vehicular activity. These impacts extend beyond aesthetics and affect biodiversity, wetland function, and long-term ecological health.*

*Residents are also concerned about air quality impacts from increased vehicle exhaust, noise, lighting, and overall degradation of community character. There are already numerous locations nearby where motor vehicles can be purchased; this proposal does not serve an unmet need and instead places disproportionate risk on an established residential neighborhood and conservation lands without any need-based justification.*

### 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.

*The public park referenced above is not solely a neighborhood amenity—it is used by residents from across Narragansett and the State of Rhode Island. As such, safety impacts associated with increased commercial traffic extend beyond Bonnet Shores and affect the broader public.*

*Boston Neck Road is designated Scenic Route 1A. This designation reflects the Town's intent to preserve its character for small-scale, community-serving businesses. A large automobile dealership is incompatible with the scenic, recreational, and residential nature of this corridor and is more appropriately located along Route 1.*

*Traffic conditions on Boston Neck Road are already severely constrained, particularly on Saturday mornings, during peak beach season, and during University of Rhode Island academic sessions. Residents regularly experience bumper-to-bumper traffic in this corridor.*

*Vehicle delivery logistics raise additional safety concerns. Multi-car auto carriers are typically 65–75 feet long; semi-trailers may be up to 53 feet long; RIPTA buses are approximately 40 feet long; and standard box trucks range from 10–26 feet. At the intersection of Boston Neck Road and Bridgetown Road, turning radii are already limited. It is highly doubtful that car carrier trucks could safely navigate these turns without blocking lanes or bike paths.*

*If unloading were to occur on Boston Neck Road—as commonly occurs on Route 1—the bike lane would be rendered completely inaccessible during that process, disrupting northbound and southbound traffic and creating dangerous conditions for cyclists. The weight of these vehicles would also accelerate deterioration of roadway surfaces that have only recently been repaved.*

*The proximity of Christofaro Park, a Montessori school, and the Bonnet Shores Fire Station further heightens public safety concerns, particularly given the need for reliable emergency vehicle access.*

### 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.

*Approval of this proposal would also set a troubling precedent. Allowing a high-intensity commercial use uphill from Bonnet Shores would make it significantly more difficult to protect this watershed and residential neighborhood in the future. Once approved, similar developments could follow, compounding impervious surface coverage, traffic impacts, and flood risk over time. These effects would be permanent and extremely difficult to reverse.*

#### Conflict with Existing Stormwater Management Commitments

*This proposal directly conflicts with the Town of Narragansett's revised Stormwater Management Program Plan submitted to RIDEM on March 10, 2006. That plan—developed in collaboration with the Bonnet Shores Land Trust, RIDEM, Dr. David Black Jr., PhD, the Town of Narragansett, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency—sets forth specific goals and deliverables to reduce stormwater runoff town-wide. Pages 15–17 specifically emphasize mitigation, reduction of impervious surface, and watershed protection. Construction of a large automobile dealership at this location would undermine these commitments.*

#### 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:

A full downstream hydrological and stormwater impact analysis including Wesquage Pond and all Bonnet Shores drainage pathways;

*Address impacts to the wetland habitat of birds, turtles and frogs;*

Reduction of impervious area and incorporation of green stormwater infrastructure;

A comprehensive traffic and multimodal safety study, with specific findings regarding impacts to the adjacent park, school and Boston Neck Road bike lanes;

Coordination with BSFD and Town resilience projects underway in the watershed;

A clear finding of consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and Watershed Management 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.

*For all of these reasons—environmental harm, flood risk, infrastructure strain, public safety concerns, precedent-setting impacts, and incompatibility with Scenic Route 1A—the location itself is fundamentally unsuitable for an automobile dealership. No amount of revision can change that underlying reality.*

*The residents of Bonnet Shores stand united in our opposition to this proposal to change the character of our peaceful beachfront community with protections for wildlife and the environment into an industrial corridor which disregards those values—which are clearly codified in both the town Comprehensive Plan and the Wesquage Pond Watershed Management Plan.*

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

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnet Shores Fire District Council  
[Names & Titles]

**Attachment # 6 – Procedural Reviews submitted by Melissa Jenkins**

**Procedural Review: Committee Authority and Open Meetings Act Compliance**

Type: Procedural Review / No Action Required

Script (Read Into the Record)

“This item is a procedural review and is being placed on the record to clarify existing legal requirements and governance practices.

Under Rhode Island law, authority rests with the Council as a whole and is exercised only through votes taken at properly noticed public meetings. Committees established by the Council are advisory only and do not have independent authority to act, assign work, issue communications, or speak on behalf of the Council.

Committee work must be specifically defined by the Council. General or undefined descriptions such as ‘strategic planning’ or ‘communications’ do not, by themselves, authorize independent projects or public action.

Committees created by the Council may be subject to the Open Meetings Act when they deliberate or make recommendations and must comply with notice, open meeting, and minute requirements. Committees may not be used to conduct Council business outside the public process.

This review is procedural in nature, reflects existing law and standard governance practice, and does not require Council action or debate.”

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**Procedural Review: Custody of District Records and Council Access**

Type: Procedural Review / No Action Required

Script (Read Into the Record)

“The Bonnet Shores Fire District Council is the governing body of the District and is legally responsible for the custody, control, and oversight of all District records, whether such records are maintained in paper or electronic form.

While the District Manager and other staff may serve as administrative or physical custodians of records in the ordinary course of business, such custodial responsibility is delegated and operational in nature and does not divest the Council of its ultimate authority or responsibility over District records.

All records created, received, or maintained in connection with District business—including but not limited to governance documents, financial records, ballots, contracts, correspondence, personnel records (subject to lawful confidentiality), and records responsive to public records requests—are District records held on behalf of the Council.

In order to fulfill their fiduciary, statutory, and oversight duties, all duly elected council members must have ongoing, reasonable access to District records relevant to District operations and governance. Council-member access to records is distinct from public access under the Access to Public Records Act and may not be conditioned, restricted, or denied absent a specific legal basis.

The Council retains responsibility for ensuring that:

- District records are properly maintained, preserved, and retained;
- Recordkeeping practices comply with applicable law;
- Access protocols allow council members to review all records necessary to perform their official duties; and
- No single officer, employee, or committee exercises unilateral control over District records to the exclusion of the Council or any of its members.”

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**Procedural review: Duties of District Manager and Council Oversight as outlined in job description.**

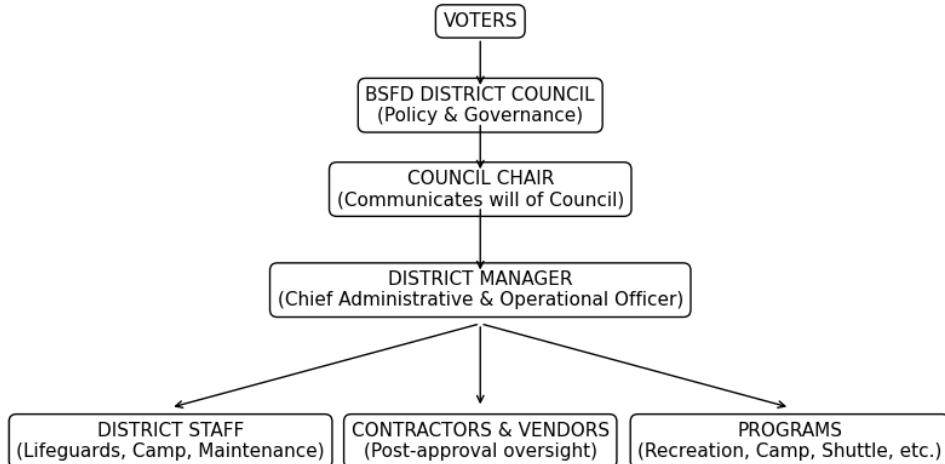
Type: Procedural Review / No Action Required

Script (Read Into the Record)

“Summary of Duties – District Manager

The District Manager is responsible for the administration, coordination, and execution of the day-to-day operations of the Bonnet Shores Fire District. Duties include coordinating public safety and emergency preparedness; managing District property, infrastructure, and capital assets; supervising staff, contractors, and vendors; administering financial and procurement processes within established controls; supporting budget development; ensuring regulatory compliance; providing constituent services and community outreach; and representing the District before external entities as authorized by the District Council. The District Manager implements Council policy, exercises independent judgment in routine and emergency operational matters, and provides professional recommendations to the Council, but does not set policy or exercise legislative authority.

The District Manager exercises independent judgment in routine and emergency operational matters consistent with Council policy, and remains accountable to the Council as a whole, not to any individual Council member. No single Council member, including the Chair, may issue unilateral directives, establish policy, or alter the scope of the Manager's authority absent action by the full Council."



**External Coordination (no command authority; under Council policy):**

- Town of Narragansett (Fire, Police, Rescue)
- State Agencies (CRMC, DEM)
- Businesses
- Land Trust & Other Property Partners

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#### **1Zoom Details**

Topic: BSFD Council Meeting Invitation

Time: Jan 21, 2026 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

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

Meeting ID: 874 2476 0778

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One tap mobile

+13017158592,,87424760778# US (Washington DC)

+13052241968,,87424760778# US

Join instructions: [https://us02web.zoom.us/meetings/87424760778/invitations?signature=cXmAO\\_gm6UQNMQ5I7mAdzlH8VFNMurhl6mzuvuImH-M](https://us02web.zoom.us/meetings/87424760778/invitations?signature=cXmAO_gm6UQNMQ5I7mAdzlH8VFNMurhl6mzuvuImH-M)

**<sup>2</sup> 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.

**<sup>2</sup> ADA Accommodations:** The BSFD is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities. Anyone requiring an accommodation is encouraged to contact the District Manager at least 48 hours before the meeting to allow adequate preparation. Requests received after that time will be addressed to the extent reasonably practicable.