

BONNET SHORES FIRE DISTRICT

Bonnet Shores Fire District Council Monthly Meeting
130 Bonnet Shores Road
February 18, 2026
6:30 pm

Meeting Minutes

(A recording of the Monthly Council meeting is available on the Fire District website - www.bonnetshores.org under “2026 Council Meetings – All”

Call to Order

Council Chair Leslie McKnight called the Monthly Council meeting to order at 6:37 pm. Council members present were: John Chereskin, Tony Girardi, Melissa Jenkins, Faith LaSalle, Leslie McKnight. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Minutes

As its first order of business, the Council next took up consideration of approval of the draft minutes of the December 17, 2025 Monthly Council meeting, as revised, copies of which had been distributed to the Council members before the meeting. Upon a motion made by J. Chereskin, seconded by M. Jenkins, the minutes as revised were unanimously approved. Next, the Council considered approval of the draft minutes of the January 21, 2026 Monthly Council meeting, copies of which has also been distributed to the Council members prior to the meeting. J. Chereskin moved that the minutes be approved; seconded by M. Jenkins. T. Girardi asked that the minutes be revised to reflect that Mark Gillooly had commented “This job seems to be becoming a place of workplace hostility”. With that addition, J. Chereskin, T. Girardi, F. LaSalle, and L. McKnight voted in favor of approval the minutes; M. Jenkins abstained.

Urgent Business – None

Public Comment

- **Bob Patterson** – opposed a revote at the 2026 Annual Meeting on a proposed By-Law change regarding a cap on tax increases.
- **Chris Mannix** – criticized behavior at recent Council meeting.
- J. Chereskin read a statement from **Carolyn DiLeo** opposing providing keys to Council members for areas where paper records are kept, while agreeing to the proposal to create a digital inventory of District records

- L. McKnight read an email from **Rosanne DiCenso Rotenberg** in support of Jane Duran’s informational messages to the community and encouraging her to continue.
- L. Mc Knight read a statement from **Janice McClanaghan** encouraging resolution of the voting rights matter in order to bring the community together. She discussed efforts she and others had recently made to develop a new proposal, a draft of which was distributed to the attendees, and asked that a workshop be convened to consider the proposal.

Reports/Updates

Treasurer Update – (22:22 – 34:00 on the meeting recording) Neal Prescott reported the District has a combined balance of \$431,000 in savings, checking and CD accounts; bill payment reports will be aligned going forward; almost all bill payments will be made electronically; 81% of the budget had been spent through 75% of the year; all District part-time employees receive W-2s. Last year’s tax sale resulted in a loss of approximately \$5700 in unreimbursed fees; possible changes to future tax sale procedures, and associated budgeting impacts, were discussed. He reported that the District had approximately \$161,000 in reserves and that the new bookkeeper is doing well. F. LaSalle suggested that planning for next year’s budget begin soon.

Tax Collector – No report.

Land Trust – (34:18 - 41:30 on the meeting recording) A resident complained about trimming of trees; Memorial Bench agreements due March 31; F. LaSalle going to draft rules and regulations for the Land Trust, which will be filed with the IRS. The Land Trust voted unanimously to reject a proposed donation of undeveloped land due to costs. The old Causeway signs that had been stored in the Community Center were found to be missing; a police report has been filed.

Manager’s Report – (42:00 – 48:50 on the meeting recording) The Manager referred the Council to his monthly report distributed prior to the meeting. M. Jenkins referred to a letter she sent to the ACLU, which she said was not intended as a complaint regarding the Manager, but a request for a policy review. A discussion ensued. T. Girardi thanked Mark for installing the key fob system and his service to the community. Mark noted he will be working remotely for the month of April at a rate of 50% of his salary.

Social Activities Group – No report.

Legal Matters – (48:50 – 52:00 on the meeting recording) F. LaSalle reported the Fire District is currently the subject of two OMA complaints; the previously discussed letter to the ACLU; an APRA-related matter, and a personal injury matter. Michael Marcello has been hired to represent the Fire District in the first three matters; the Inter Local trust retained an attorney to represent the Fire District in the personal injury matter.

New and On-Going Business

1. Paul Masse Auto Dealership Letter – (52:00 – 56:00 on the meeting recording)

The status of the proposed Paul Masse automobile dealership on Boston Neck Road remains uncertain. Upon a motion made by J. Chereskin, seconded by T. Girardi, it was moved that Melissa Jenkins be delegated authority to transmit the letter previously drafted on behalf of the Council to the Town of Narragansett when, as and if the proposal moves forward. Upon a vote, J. Chereskin, T. Girardi, M. Jenkins, F. LaSalle voted in favor of the motion. L. McKnight abstained. The motion carried.

2. Prioritization Workshop (56:40- 1:02:10 on the meeting recording) L. McKnight raised the topic of scheduling a policy review and prioritization workshop. A discussion followed, at the end of which J. Chereskin moved that a workshop meeting be scheduled to develop a prioritized list of proposed policies to be considered in the future; M. Jenkins seconded, whereupon a vote was taken, with the Council voting unanimously in favor of the motion. The motion carried.

3. Policy Writing Workshop (1:02:10 – 1:03 on the meeting recording) After brief discussion, M. Jenkins moved that this item be tabled; J. Chereskin seconded, whereupon the Council voted unanimously in favor of tabling this agenda item.

4. Legal Services Funds - (1:03 – 1:08:20 on the meeting recording) F. LaSalle suggested this item be tabled pending receipt of additional information; M. Jenkins discussed a handout she prepared regarding risk management. After discussion, J. Chereskin moved that this item be tabled; T. Girardi seconded, whereupon the Council voted unanimously in favor of tabling this agenda item.

5. Harbormaster Job Description - (1:08:20 – 1:37:45 on the meeting recording) T. Girardi advised that he had formed a committee to assist with the search for a new Harbormaster. He said he had received valuable community input into the proposed job description for the Harbormaster position, and that the suggestions had been incorporated into a revised job description. A discussion ensued, and additional revisions were proposed, at the end of which T. Girardi moved that the job description, as amended be approved; L. McKnight seconded, whereupon J. Chereskin, T. Girardi, F. LaSalle, and L. McKnight voted in favor of the motion; M. Jenkins abstained. The motion carried.

6. Pro-Rated Salary for Harbormaster - (1:37:50 – 1:40:41 on the meeting recording) Next, the Council considered continuing to pay Mark Gillooly the salary associated with his service as Harbormaster while the search for a replacement is conducted. T. Girardi moved that Mark Gillooly continued to be paid, at the current rate associated with his role as Harbormaster, throughout the on-boarding of a replacement Harbormaster; J. Chereskin seconded, whereupon J. Chereskin, T. Girardi, F. LaSalle and L. McKnight voted in favor; M. Jenkins abstained. The motion carried.

7. Foundation Group Call - (1:40:50 – 1:43:00 on the meeting recording) Tony Girardi gave a report on the January 16 call between members of Land Trust, the Council, and

representatives of the Foundation Group, regarding the Land Trust's 501c3 application. He reported that there was a desire to maintain the 501c3 status, and that any amendments to the prior application, including new rules and regulations, would be submitted to the IRS through a Form 990. No vote was taken.

8. Voting Rights Workshop - (1:43:10:08 – 1:51:40 on the meeting recording) L.

McKnight referred to a proposal received from a group of residents (referred to earlier in public comments) regarding proposed revisions to the Fire District's voting rights provisions, including a request that a public workshop and listening session regarding the proposal be scheduled. Discussion was had about the terms of an agenda for the meeting, including an invitation to the public to make alternative proposals, if interested. J. Chereskin moved that the workshop and listening session, as described session be scheduled; T. Girardi seconded, whereupon J. Chereskin, T. Girardi, F. LaSalle and L. McKnight voted in favor; M. Jenkins abstained. The motion carried.

9. Drop Box Licenses - (1:51:40 – 2:05:00 on the meeting recording)

Next, the Council considered a proposal made by M. Jenkins for the Fire District to purchase Dropbox licenses, or other similar mechanisms, to provide access to all Council members to all District digital records. A discussion ensued, including how to control access and protect data, at the conclusion of which F. LaSalle moved that Dropbox licenses be purchased for each Council member, which T. Girardi seconded. Whereupon M. Jenkins voted in favor of the motion; J. Chereskin, T. Girardi, F. LaSalle and L. McKnight opposed. The motion did not pass.

10. Keys to Council Members – (2:05:00 – 2:05:45 on the meeting recording)

The Council then considered a proposal to provide keys to all Council members to locations where paper District records are stored. After discussion, upon a motion made by M. Jenkins, seconded by F. LaSalle, a vote was taken: M. Jenkins voted in favor of the motion; J. Chereskin, T. Girardi, F. LaSalle and L. McKnight voted no. The motion did not pass.

11. Incentive for Digital Inventory – (2:05:47 - 2:09:25 on the meeting agenda)

Upon a unanimous vote of the Council, this item was tabled.

12. Draft By Law – (2:09:25 – 2:17:10 on the meeting recording)

After reviewing her reasons for supporting a By Law change limiting tax increases, F. LaSalle suggested, and the Council agreed, that this item be tabled and re-submitted for future consideration.

13. Open Government Training – (2:17:11- 2:18:10 on the meeting recoding)

Upon a show of hands, the Council members in attendance indicated who had completed the on-line training.

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:53 pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Robert E. Patterson, Clerk

