

BONNET SHORES FIRE DISTRICT

Bonnet Shores Fire District Council Monthly Meeting
130 Bonnet Shores Road
March 18, 2026
7:00 pm

Meeting Minutes

The Monthly Council meeting was preceded by a Policy List Creation and Prioritization Workshop. The Workshop portion of the meeting was not recorded. 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 7:00 pm. Council members present were: John Chereskin, Jane Duran, Tony Girardi, Melissa Jenkins, Faith LaSalle, Leslie McKnight and Kevin O’Brien.

Announcement

A Voting Rights Workshop will be held on April 2, 2026 at 6:30 pm. Community members are invited to submit voting rights proposals in advance of the workshop.

Approval of Minutes

J. Duran moved that the minutes of the February 5, 2026 Special Meeting of the Council be approved as drafted; J. Chereskin seconded. The Council voted unanimously to approve the minutes as drafted (T. Girardi did not attend the February 5 meeting and did not vote on the motion.) J. Chereskin moved that the draft minutes of the February 18, 2026 Monthly Council meeting be approved as drafted; T. Girardi seconded. The Council voted unanimously to approve the minutes as drafted (K. O’Brien and J. Duran did not attend the February 18 meeting and did not vote on the motion).

Urgent Business – None

Public Comment

- **Mary Weber** – recommended that a Recall procedure for elected officials be adopted; a list of uninsured assets should be maintained; tax increases should be capped at 4%
- **Chris Mannix** – supports Leslie McKnight; objects to Melissa Jenkins’ conduct; accused the Clerk with collaborating with Melissa Jenkins
- **Bob Patterson** – denied Chris Mannix’ accusation of collaboration

- **Steve Danuszar** - praised the work of Mark Gillooly and Council members. Feels the survey last year should have included “status quo”; encouraged a tax increase cap. Gave his interpretation of the Court’s prior decision
- **Matt Mannix** – commented on agenda preparation and complexity; averred Bonnet Shores is private; wants the ACLU to go away; wants proxy voting; complained that service of the Voting Rights lawsuit was attempted during the 2021 pandemic
- **Donna Stephens** – complained that Melissa Jenkins creates conflict and about her social media activity; opposed efforts to remove Leslie McKnight as Chair; identifies activities the Council should focus on; encouraged collaboration
- **Wendy Peters** – agreed with Donna Stephens; respects Leslie McKnight
- **Bonnie Dalton** – Bonnet is a beautiful place; spoke to the need for compromise
- **Jane Duran** – is appalled by the allegations against Leslie McKnight; reviewed several claims made against her and denied each; spoke in support of Leslie
- **Leslie McKnight** – responded to published allegations made against her and refuted each; discussed circumstances attendant to the various allegations; has a written response to the allegations made

J. Chereskin suggested that the meeting end at 9:30 pm and any remaining open agenda items be put on the next agenda.

Reports/Updates

Treasurer Update – (1:02 – 1:09 on the meeting recording) The Fire District is in great financial shape with a combined balance of \$427,000; spending is on track; QuickBooks has been reconciled; will be looking for greater interest on deposits. J. Chereskin and Neal Prescott discussed a tentative timeline for the new fiscal year budget planning, including a public meeting and Council workshop. F. LaSalle wants information about vendor contracts; Council guidance will be sought.

Tax Collector – (1:09:26 – 1:10:50 on the meeting recording) - 180 delinquent tax notices, cumulative amount of approximately \$41,800, were mailed; approximately \$12,500 collected as a result; approximately \$601,000 in total taxes have been collected. Checks returned to property owners affected by the tax sale.

Land Trust – (1:11 – 1:12 on the meeting recording) Due to an administrative mistake, the meeting scheduled for March 16 was rescheduled until March 19, 2026.

Manager’s Report – (1:12 – 1:21:20 on the meeting recording) The Manager referred the Council to his monthly report distributed prior to the meeting. In response to a question

from M. Jenkins, Mark Gillooly discussed how he responded to calls received during the recent storm and said he felt he was being subjected to a hostile work environment by Melissa Jenkins. T. Girardi objected to M. Jenkins' conduct.

Social Activities Group – No report.

Legal Matters – (1:22 – 1:30 on the meeting recording) Legal fees to date are \$5050. Mr. Marcello has not yet submitted a bill. Two APRA and two OMA matters were updated. The DelBello matter is in discovery. The beach club service agreement expires in June, though beach raking will continue until 2028. Parking, chair storage, radio usage, and trash removal will need to be considered. F. LaSalle questioned other contract matters. J. Chereskin said these matters should be considered as part of the budget process.

New and On-Going Business

7. Harbormaster Job Description – (1:30:10 – 1:31:40 on the meeting recording) J. Chereskin moved, and J. Duran seconded, that the Harbormaster job description be considered. J. Duran said the revised job description had been distributed to the Council members and moved that it be approved. F. LaSalle seconded the motion, whereupon a vote was taken: J. Chereskin, J. Duran, T. Girardi, F. LaSalle, L. McKnight and K. O'Brien voted in favor; M. Jenkins abstained. The motion was approved.

8. Harbormaster Search Committee – (1:31:40 – 1:34:09 on the meeting recording) J. Chereskin moved, and T. Girardi seconded, that the following proposed members of the Harbormaster search committee be approved and appointed: Joe Thomas, Mike Tortolani, Lenny Mercier, David Croce and Steve McCooley. T. Girardi will serve as Committee Chair. A vote was taken: J. Chereskin, T. Girardi, F. LaSalle, L. McKnight and K. O'Brien voted in favor of the motion; M. Jenkins abstained and objected to the process followed in choosing the search committee membership.

9. Removal of the Chair (1:34:10 – 1:35 on the meeting recording) (Due to the nature of this agenda item, J. Duran acted as Chair for this portion of the meeting.) M. Jenkins moved that Leslie McKnight be removed as Council Chair, and a replacement elected. The motion received no second; accordingly, the matter did not proceed.

10. Waiver and Release for Use of the Community Center - (1:35 – 1:41:30 on the meeting recording) J. Duran moved that the Council take up consideration of a Waiver and Release agreement for use of the Community Center; L. McKnight seconded. F. LaSalle said she had prepared a "Waiver and Indemnity" for use of the Community Center and premises, which was modeled after one used by the Town of Narragansett. After discussion a vote was taken: J. Chereskin, T. Girardi, F. LaSalle, L. McKnight and K. O'Brien voted in favor of the motion; M. Jenkins opposed. The motion carried.

11. Contracts Review – (1:41:30 – 1:45:54 on the meeting recording) The Council next took up consideration of approving Kevin O'Brien to work with the District Manager to review existing maintenance contracts and/or policies so that the current state is clearly understood and

potential areas for improvement identified. Results will be documented and brought to the Council at a future date. No actions will be taken without Council approval. J. Chereskin moved that the proposal be approved; J. Duran seconded, whereupon a vote was taken: J. Chereskin, T. Girardi, F. LaSalle, L. McKnight and K. O'Brien voted in favor of the motion; M. Jenkins opposed. The motion carried.

12. Purchase of Square Device (1:45:55 – 1:47:17 on the meeting recording) Upon a motion made by J. Chereskin, seconded by T. Girardi, the Council voted unanimously in favor of authorizing the Treasurer to purchase a credit/debit card device (a "Square Device") at a cost not to exceed \$500, in an effort to pursue cashless transactions.

13. Appointment of a Moderator (1:47:18 – 1:49 on the meeting recording) M. Jenkins moved that a Moderator be appointed to preside at Council meetings to comply with Robert's Rules. The motion did not receive a second, accordingly, the matter did not proceed.

14. Annual Meeting (1:49 – 2:27 on the meeting recording) As to the next order of business, J. Duran moved that the Council take up consideration of the date, time and location of the 2026 Annual Meeting. After extensive discussion, K. O'Brien moved that the Council approve the Annual Meeting for June 25, 2026, from 10:00 am until 8:00 pm at the Narragansett Schools. M. Jenkins seconded the motion. Upon a vote, K. O'Brien and M. Jenkins voted in favor, J. Duran, L. McKnight, F. LaSalle, T. Girardi voted vote no. J. Chereskin did not vote. At the conclusion of the discussion and vote, the Council asked that it be provided with additional information regarding possible use of the Narragansett school facilities for the Annual Meeting. Pending receipt of that information, this matter was tabled to a future meeting.

15. Proxies (2:27:13 – 2:49:30 on the meeting recording) Next, J. Duran moved that the Council take up consideration of a response to the Clerk's opposition to use of proxies at the Annual Meeting. After discussion, the Council decided to table this item until the April 2, 2026 Special Meeting.

In light of the time, the Council decided unanimously to table the remaining items and adjourn the meeting. Accordingly, the meeting was adjourned at 9:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Robert E. Patterson, Clerk