

BONNET SHORES FIRE DISTRICT
Combined Special Council Meeting and Voting Rights Workshop
 Thursday, April 2, 2026

Date/Time	Thursday, April 2, 2026 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Council Meeting – 6:30-7:00pm • Voting Rights Workshop – 7:00-8:00pm
Place:	Bonnet Shores Fire District Community Center - 130 Bonnet Shores Road, Narragansett, RI
Zoom ¹ :	<p>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.</p> <p>Zoom Link https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85173451384</p> <p>Cut & Paste URL Method: 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>https://us02web.zoom.us/join/85173451384?signature=M-nRwhNpnlzO-MM-DWIA8AloXdvkLRwr-mWY5mWe-G8</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.

Please see the BSFD Website Document Library for this agenda and supporting presentations that will be discussed: [Bonnet Shores Fire District | 2026 Council Meetings - All](#)

Call To Order

- Pledge of Allegiance
- Moment of Silence

Special Council Meeting Agenda:

1. Motion, discussion on options, and possible vote to approve the date, time, location and format for the 2026 Annual Meeting.
2. Motion, discussion, and possible vote to approve the request by the law firm Lewis & Brisbois to increase the hourly rate for Attorney Michael Marcello due to the complexity and increased scope of work.

Voting Rights Workshop Agenda:

- 1) **Listening, discussion, revision and consideration to support community recommendation(s) on voting rights scenarios as submitted by Community members:** This could include reference to data analysis; reviews and discussions of the various populations impacted by the scenarios; and decisioning/voting/reconsidering what scenario(s) will move to the BSFD Council for consideration
 - a. **Scenario 1: BSFD Narragansett Registered Voters Only as previously discussed:** submitted by full time Residents Joe Iannucci and Sharon Dougherty (Attachment #1) (Link: [BSFD voting proposal comments](#))

- b. **Scenario 2: A community resident group formulated scenario outlined as: 1) All residents retain full voting rights and remain the majority of the electorate 2) Each residential home owned by a non-resident receives 1 vote per home 3) Each beach club unit receives one quarter (¼) vote per unit.** Community residents included: a lifetime resident, Janice McClanaghan; non-residents Kristen Deberghes and Carolyn DeLeo; a plaintiff, Mary Patterson; and earlier in the process, Louise Healy, former secretary of the Bonnet Shores Beach Club (Attachment #2) (Links: [BSFD Voting Proposal](#); [J. McClanaghan Letter](#))
- 2) **Discussion on Workshop Report Out to BSFD Council** - Review and discuss what/how to report out the Workshops findings/results to the Bonnet Shores Fire District Council.
- 3) **Next Steps:** Discussion of Next Steps.

Motion to Adjourn

¹Zoom Details

BSFD is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: BSFD Special Council Meeting & Voting Rights Workshop

Time: Apr 2, 2026 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85173451384>

View meeting insights with Zoom AI Companion

<https://us02web.zoom.us/launch/edl?muid=9c940a70-9f55-4d3c-bf49-716f9281ccb8>

Meeting ID: 851 7345 1384

One tap mobile

+13052241968,,85173451384# US

+13092053325,,85173451384# US

Join instructions

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meetings/85173451384/invitations?signature=M-nRwhNpnlzO-MM-DWIA8AloXdvklRwr-mWY5mWe-G8>

² **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.

² **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.

² **Disclaimer:** Written materials that may be referenced or distributed by individual Council members in connection with agenda items are the submissions of those individual members and are not official communications or findings of the Bonnet Shores Fire District Council unless formally adopted by vote of the Council. The publicly posted agenda is intended to satisfy the notice requirements of **Rhode Island General Laws § 42-46-6**.

Submitted by Joseph Iannucci and Sharon Dougherty
57 Onondeg Rd, Narragansett, RI. 02882

We support the proposal for section 2 A from the 2024 charter committee:

All persons who reside in the Bonnet Shores Fire District and who are duly registered with and eligible to vote in general or special election in the Town of Narragansett, using their address within Bonnet Shores, shall have the right to vote for all offices to be elected and on all questions submitted to the electors of the Bonnet Shores Fire District.

For the following reasons:

- 1) If we align the BSFD voter registry with the Town of Narragansett, the state legislature is unlikely to challenge this section.
- 2) By using the town's voter registry, the fire district is relieved of the tasks related to maintaining it's own registry.
- 3) By using the town's voter registry, the fire district avoids having to maintain and potentially update definitions of who can vote. For example:

At what age can someone vote, perhaps between 20 to 80 years old?

Does a voter need to be a US citizen?

Can convicted felons vote?

Are there a minimum number of days that the voter must spend in the fire district?

ETC.

Note: Interested parties who are not eligible to vote can still participate by supporting and promoting candidates and policies which they believe align with their values and interests. This is common in our nation.

One additional thought: If in our quest to find common ground for voting we see significant need to allow voting by seasonal residents or other property owners,

the solution to end this on going conflict may be to organize as an owners' association rather than a fire district. (The elephant in the room.)

Attachment # 2 – Community Resident Group formulated scenario submitted by Janice McClanaghan Kristen Deberghes, Carolyn DeLeo, Mary Paterson – Link to full presentation: [BSFD Voting Proposal](#)

Working Toward a Community Solution

Our Group Affiliations: residents, non-residents, homeowners, beach club, plaintiff

Our Goals: Find a community-wide solution to amend the charter

Our Promise: Respect each other, respect the courts decision, include all stakeholders

Why This Workshop Exists

Plaintiffs vs BSFD, March 13, 2020
 Summary Judgement Decision: January 27, 2022
 Presiding : Judge Taft Carter

Complaint -> Summary Judgement Decision-> Consent Judgement -> Charter Revision

Risk of future litigation:
 Amending the charter is a contractual obligation
 Charter remains unconstitutional due to dilution

It is not a matter of IF we change the charter, it is HOW

Counts I and II – Can all Residents Vote?

Plaintiff's Claim:
 Property ownership requirement is "an unconstitutional restriction of the right to vote" (Complaint, p. 10)

Court Decision:
 Residents cannot be denied the right to vote based on property ownership (Summary Judgement, p. 19)

Outcome: 460 Residents added to the electorate

BSFD Claim:
 BSFD Requirements are not subject to the 14th amendment because it is not a governmental body (Summary Judgement, P. 8)

Final Ruling: "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 on the basis of property ownership are unconstitutional under the fourteenth amendment of the United States Constitution & Article 1, section 2 of the Rhode Island constitution" (Summary Judgement, page20)

Outcome: BSFD deemed Quasi Municipality

Count IV – Nonresident Voting

Complaint: BSFD has unconstitutionally diluted residents votes by by allowing numerous nonresidents to vote

"The right to vote can be denied by a dilution of the weight of a citizens vote just as effectively as by wholly prohibiting the free exercise of the franchise (Summary Judgement, p.31 -Reynolds)

"It is reasonable in some circumstances that local governments could find that nonresident property owners are sufficiently affected by the operations to justify their inclusion in the electorate" (Summary Judgment, p.38-May)

"There may be grave constitutional concerns, even where out of district voters have a substantial interest, where those voters wield such a disproportionate political influence that residents have little or no chance to control their local government" (Summary Judgement, p.44:Duncan)

The Deciding Factor: Substantial Interest

An "electorate is unconstitutional where the voters do not have 'substantial interest' in the outcome of the election". (Summary Judgement, P. 40-44:Duncan)

In a Nutshell, Nonresidents'

1. Financial contribution must be meaningful
2. Contribution must be in balance with voting power
3. Cannot dilute the votes of residents

Court Finding:
 "The BSFD Charter thereby allows multiple nonresidents, each of whom may possess only a relatively minor property interest to vote in BSFD Elections" (Summary Judgement, P. 42)
 The Plaintiffs " established the existence of an element essential to their case" (Summary Judgment, p. 45/46)

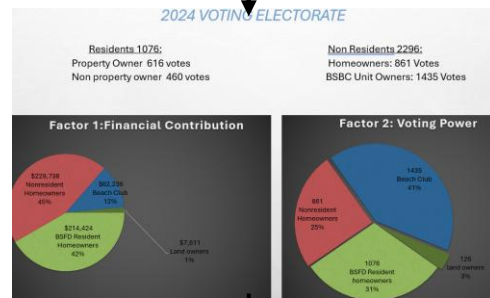
Outcome:
 Court lacked sufficient facts to finalize ruling=> settlement to avoid costly trial => Consent

Key Principles Used to Form our Proposal

Our Approach:
 Use the Summary Judgement as our guide
 Consider the concerns of all community affiliations

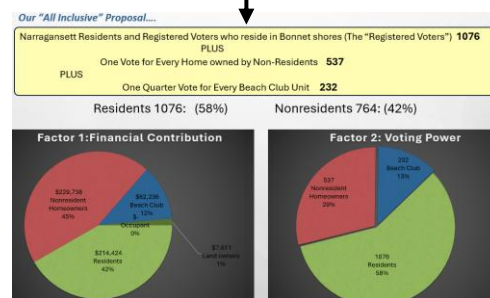
Direct from the Record:
 Court Discussion indicating the electorate would need to be reduced

- All Residents in the BSFD may vote regardless of property ownership
- Residents must have the majority of votes (51% or greater)
- All nonresidents with substantial interest can vote
- Nonresident voting should be adjusted to reflect their financial contribution to the operations of the District



Testing Possible Solutions

- X **Current State substantial Interest** -> Residents don't have majority vote -> Nonresident voting greater than
- X **Residents Only but don't vote** -> Excludes Nonresidents w/substantial Interest -> Nonresident voters fund 57% of budget
- X **1 Vote/Cabana substantial interest** -> Residents don't have majority vote -> Beach Club voting greater than



Testing Possible Solutions

- X **Current State** -> Residents don't have majority vote -> Nonresident voting greater than substantial Interest
- X **Residents Only** -> Excludes Nonresidents w/substantial Interest -> Nonresident voters fund 57% of budget but don't vote
- X **1 Vote/Cabana** -> Residents don't have majority vote -> Beach Club voting greater than substantial interest
- YES **All Inclusive with substantial interest** -> Residents have majority vote -> All Nonresidents vote -> Nonresidents voting in line

Resulting Benefits of All Inclusive Amendment

- RESIDENTS NOW HAVE THE MAJORITY OF VOTING POWER, AND THEIR VOTES ARE NOT DILUTED!
- NON-RESIDENTS HAVE NOT BEEN DISENFRANCHISED
- NON-RESIDENT VOTING IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH JUDGE TAFT CARTER'S SUBSTANTIAL INTEREST TEST
- DISTRICT WILL BE IN COMPLIANCE WITH CONSENT ORDER

PEACE

Link to Letter: [J. McClanaghan Letter](#)

Dear Bonnet Shores Council Members and Bonnet Community

Thank you for your consideration in holding a workshop prior to the March Bonnet Shores Fire District Council meeting to present our vision towards a solution to the voting problem.

I'm a full-time Narragansett registered voter, a taxpayer and an owner at the Beach Club.

I have lived in this community for over 75 years, and I have always tried with all my heart and soul to do what is best for this community. In August of 2025, at the monthly council meeting, I spoke about the voting issue in Bonnet, and how the divide needs to end. The ugliness needs to end. It's time to take all the information and resources and work together to bring this community back together as one.

Kristen Deberghes contacted me after that night. We talked about forming a group of private citizens that represented the various affiliations with different viewpoints that had been vocal on this issue and ask them if they would sit down and try to address and strategize ways to come up with a peaceful resolution to bring this community back together again.

That group included a plaintiff, Mary Paterson, Concerned Citizens, Carolyn DeLeo, a non-resident Kristen Deberghes and Louise Healy, Bonnet Shores Beach Club and myself.

The Beach Club, due to a resolution that was passed at a recent board meeting, could not continue to work with us until we had a new vision, but they did convey their thoughts, and we agreed to keep them informed of the process.

The group also agreed that we would be respectful of each other, we would be open minded, we would review all the documents, options and ideas that were introduced, talk about any barriers and concerns, and be willing to explore any new ideas.

Our goals were to ensure that whatever final proposal we developed, it would meet the following points: It be constitutional, solve dilution, include as many voting members of this community in regards to substantial interest, and address concerns of the non-resident beach club and the non-resident homeowners, with the overall goal to bring peace and harmony back to this community.

Tonight, after countless hours of work, you are being provided with a summary of our recommendation, which will be passed out for your review. It is our hope that at that workshop we will explain the merits of how our final recommendation reflects what we learned, how it incorporates those diverse viewpoints while remaining aligned with the constitutional requirements set by the court. It is not only what we are proposing, but why this recommendation is thoughtful, legally sound, and responsive to this community.

We believe that what we are presenting is fair, inclusive, and strive to ensure that everyone has a voice, that residents have more of a say, and each of the other fractions are giving up something to align with our goals.

Our hope is to now go out to the community to obtain their feedback and move forward to a final resolution.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Janice McClanaghan