

Bonnet Shores Fire District Council Monthly Meeting

130 Bonnet Shores Road

January 21, 2026

6:30 pm

Meeting Minutes

Prior to the Monthly Council meeting, a “By Laws Annual Meeting/Election Processes” and a “Fiscal Responsibility” workshop was conducted. A recording of those workshops, as well as the Monthly Council meeting, is available on the Fire District website - www.bonnetshores.org

Call to Order

Council Chair Leslie McKnight called the Monthly Council meeting to order at 7:40 pm. Council members present were: John Chereskin, Jane Duran, Tony Girardi, Melissa Jenkins, Faith LaSalle, Leslie McKnight and Kevin O’Brien.

Announcements

None

Approval of Minutes

The Council next took up consideration of approval of the draft minutes of the December 17, 2025 Monthly Council meeting, copies of which had been distributed to the Council members before the meeting. J. Chereskin moved that the minutes be approved as drafted, seconded by M. Jenkins. A discussion was had regarding proposed edits, at the conclusion of which K. O’Brien and M. Jenkins voted to approve the minutes as drafted; L. McKnight, J. Chereskin, T. Girardi, F. LaSalle opposed. J. Duran did not attend December 17 meeting and was ineligible to vote. As a result, L. McKnight tabled further consideration of the minutes until a future meeting, and directed the Clerk to file the draft minutes with the Secretary of State.

Urgent Business – None

Public Comment

- Melissa Jenkins discussed access to keys to the Community Center, and the need for an agreed upon access policy.
- Bill DelGizzo spoke to the need for organized handling of public records. He discussed the proposed letter regarding the proposed Masse dealership. He said he posting of official communications should be done by the Clerk. There was discussion about of storage of Executive Session minutes.
- Nancy Cordy discussed findings by the Attorney General regarding OMA complaints, include one filed against the Council, regarding applicability to committees.

- Donna Stephens opposed use of Zoom for public participation at Council meetings by remote attendees.

Reports/Updates

Treasurer Update – Neal Prescott reported that the District remains in strong financial health with a combined balance in savings, checking and CD accounts of \$471,000. The new bookkeeper has been onboarded; bills are current, comments have been added to checks.

Tax Collector – 92% of taxes have been collected, delinquent notices will be sent out shortly. A decision will be made later in the year about holding a tax sale.

Land Trust – a report will be given in the future about the results of the call with the Foundation Group. The Fire District did not receive the requested grant from the Rhode Island Foundation. The Land Trust made a \$225 profit on T Shirt sales. Council action will be requested on a proposed land donation by Emily B. Jenkins. A research paper on phragmites was posted on the website.

Manager’s Report – Applications for extensions of the port-o-john and seaweed removal CRMC assents will be submitted. Trash service is proceeding well. The community center has been rented; an AV closet will be proposed. The Manager commented that his job seems to be becoming a place of workplace hostility.

Social Activities Group – No report.

Litigation Matters – F. LaSalle reported on the status of pending litigation matters, including a civil matter brought by Lisa DiBello, and OMA complaints brought by Mary Patterson and Melissa Jenkins. Prior to the meeting, Thomas Dickinson advised the Chair that pending receipt of guidance for the Rhode Island Supreme Court Ethics Advisory Panel, he cannot provide legal guidance on matters involving M. Jenkins. Accordingly, the Fire District is currently without legal representation in the Jenkins OMA matter.

Interlocal Trust – F. LaSalle gave a review of the insurance coverage provided to the Fire District by the Interlocal Trust; it was suggested that a list of District owned assets be prepared; that representatives of the Interlocal Trust be invited to inspect Fire District property; examples of proposed uses of the Community Center will be solicited.

New and On-Going Business

8. Proposed Land Donation– (1:53 – 2:00 on the meeting recording) Council members expressed the need for further information before considering whether to accept the proposed donation of land. T. Girardi moved that the matter be tabled pending receipt of additional information; J. Chereskin seconded. The motion to table was approved unanimously.

9. Public Comment via Zoom (2:00 – 2:20:28 on the meeting recording) J. Duran moved that the Council support allowing public comment via Zoom at monthly Council meetings; K. O'Brien seconded. A discussion ensued with some Council members supporting the proposal while others raised questions about the potential impact of technical problems, including potential OMA violations. At the end of the discussion a vote was held: K. O'Brien, M. Jenkins and J. Chereskin voted in favor; J. Duran, L. McKnight, T. Girardi and F. LaSalle voted no. The motion failed.

10. Electronic Entry System - (2:20:30 -2:36 on the meeting recording) Mark Gillooly reported on efforts to recover keys to the Community Center that had been previously distributed. He advised that the cost to replace the current physical keys and locks with an electronic key fob system would be \$4172.32 (versus \$600 to rekey the current locks) and reviewed the features of the proposed fob system. After discussion, T. Girardi moved that the Council authorize the purchase and installation of a key fob system, as discussed; J. Duran seconded the motion. Whereupon a vote was taken: M. Jenkins and J. Chereskin voted no; T. Girardi, J. Duran, L. McKnight and F. LaSalle voted in favor; K. O'Brien abstained. The motion carried.

11. Strategic Planning Workshop - (2:37 – 2:41:30 on the meeting recording) L. McKnight moved that this item should be removed from the agenda, due to a pending related OMA complaint and an open question about the availability of legal counsel to represent the Council; J. Duran seconded. M. Jenkins, J. Duran, L. McKnight, F. LaSalle and J. Chereskin voted in favor; K. O'Brien voted no; T. Girardi abstained. The motion carried.

12. Council Communications Policy - (2:41:30 - 2:56 on the meeting recording) J. Duran moved that the Council approve the following: "Motion to affirm and continue the Council's established communication practices whereas: (1) communication ideas may be submitted by elected officials (2) the Communications Lead shall prepare draft communications and review them with the submitting party and, when applicable, the Council's legal liaison; (3) finalized communications shall be submitted to the Council Chair for approval prior to distribution through the community's opt-in email list; and (4) draft reports and documents shall continue to be posted on the website to ensure transparency. This practice shall remain in effect until the Council adopts an alternative communications policy or procedure." Discussion ensued about what constitutes, and the scope of, official communications, and the appropriate associated approval process. At the conclusion of the discussion a vote was taken: K. O'Brien, J. Duran, L. McKnight, F. LaSalle and T. Girardi voted in favor of the motion; M. Jenkins voted no; J. Chereskin abstained. The motion carried.

13. Proposed Communication Policy – (2:56 - 3:03:50 on the meeting recording) M. Jenkins moved that this item be tabled until a future meeting. T. Girardi seconded, whereupon a vote was taken: M. Jenkins, T. Girardi, F. LaSalle, L. McKnight voted in favor; J. Duran abstained. K. O'Brien asked that the minutes reflect that per the plan previously approved by the Council, any and all recommendations coming from the Strategic Planning Workshop will be subject to Council review and approval.

14. Proposed Paul Masse Dealership Letter - (3:04 – 3:09 on the meeting recording)

M. Jenkins moved that the revised draft letter in opposition to the proposed Paul Masse automobile dealership, previously distributed to the Council, be approved as an official Council communication. Additional edits were proposed and agreed upon. The letter is to be finalized but held in reserve for issuance until such time as the matter is taken up by the Town of Narragansett. J Chereskin seconded motion. L. McKnight reiterated that she was recusing herself from any participation in this matter and would not be a signatory to any letter. T. Girardi said he would not be a signatory to the letter. Whereupon the Council voted unanimously to approve the revised letter. L. McKnight abstained.

15. Proposed Procedural Review Statements - (3:09- 3:10 on the meeting recording)

Given the lateness of the hour, the Council voted unanimously to table this item until a future Council meeting.

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted:

/S/

Robert E. Patterson, Clerk