



## Bonnet Shores Fire District 2025 Annual Meeting Newsletter

The Bonnet Shores Fire District (BSFD) Annual Meeting will be held on **Saturday, August 2, 2025**, at the BSFD Community Center located at 130 Bonnet Shores Road. **Registration begins at 8:00am and the meeting will start at 10:00am.** The purpose of this meeting is to address the items contained in the agenda provided within. Information regarding the Annual Meeting will be posted at the BSFD Community Center bulletin board and the Little Beach bulletin board and will also be available on the BSFD website at [www.bonnetshores.org](http://www.bonnetshores.org).

### **Know Before You Go**

- **Registration:** If you are registering as a taxpayer where there are several names on the deed, you may want to bring a copy of your deed to ease the registration process. Oftentimes, the list sent by the town truncates the taxpayer names and lists et al, rather than individual names.
- **Seating:** The annual meeting will be held under a tent. Seating may be limited so feel free to bring a lawn chair.
- **Parking:** Handicapped parking will be available in the front lot of the Community Center; general parking will be in the back field.
- **Interpreter Services:** Individuals requesting interpreter services for the hearing impaired must contact the Fire District Manager at least three (3) business days before the Annual Meeting date.
- **Identification:** All persons requesting a ballot to vote must present valid identification at check in, and the voter's name must appear on the verified voter list.
- **2024 Meeting Minutes:** Ratification of the 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes is an item on the agenda. You will find a Draft on the BSFD website [www.bonnetshores.org](http://www.bonnetshores.org). From the home page, click on Council> Council Meeting Minutes>, scroll down to the annual meeting minutes section and click on the first button "2024 Draft". Please review prior to the meeting. A hard copy can be obtained by contacting the District Manager.
- **Voting by Proxy:** Taxpayers wishing to vote by proxy may obtain a Proxy Form on the website ([www.bonnetshores.org](http://www.bonnetshores.org)>Council>Annual Meeting), or at the BSFD community center. The proxy must be notarized **IN ADVANCE** of the Annual Meeting and must be presented by a co-owner of the property on the day of the election in order to register. The names of both the guarantor and the proxy must appear on the voter list for the ballot to be issued. **NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE.** No proxies may be dropped off in advance at the Community Center.
- **Volunteers Needed:** Volunteers are needed to help with set up, directing traffic, parking and assisting elderly and handicapped community members. Please contact the District Manager via email at [district.manager@bonnetshores.org](mailto:district.manager@bonnetshores.org) if you are able to help out.

# **BONNET SHORES FIRE DISTRICT 2025 ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA**

**Saturday, August 2, 2025 at 10:00am - Voter Registration Begins at 8:00am**

Bonnet Shores Fire District Community Center | 130 Bonnet Shores Rd. Narragansett, RI 02882

1. Call to Order by District Moderator
  - a. Pledge of Allegiance
  - b. Reflection on deceased members of the BSFD community
2. Proper notice and quorum attestation by clerk
3. Report of Nominating Committee: Nominations for the following offices: Nominating Committee Endorsements: Council Candidates, Land Trust Candidates, Other Candidates for BSFD Offices.
4. Other candidates that identified themselves prior to the Annual Meeting
5. Nominations from the floor
6. Report of the Tax Collector
7. Report of the Treasurer
8. Vote to Approve BSFD Land Trust Allocation of \$1,500.00, pursuant to Section Four of the BSFD Land Trust Charter.
9. Vote to Approve Rates of Compensation for the following elected officials: Tax Collector, Clerk and Treasurer, pursuant to the BSFD Bylaws.
10. Ratification of 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes
11. Old Business
12. New Business
13. Review and Explanation of the Fiscal Responsibility Bylaw changes on ballot
14. Review and Explanation of non-binding opinion poll
15. Vote by Ballot and execute opinion poll
16. Election Results
17. Adjournment

*Individuals requesting interpreter services for the hearing impaired must contact the Fire District Manager at least three (3) business days before the Annual Meeting date.*

## **Communications**

BSFD makes every effort to connect with the community; particularly through e-mail. If you wish to be added to the e-mail list, please go to the website <http://www.bonnetshores.org>. From the main page, scroll down and to the right there is a box that is labelled "EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS SIGN-UP". Please click the red button for sign-up. Be sure to add [District.Manager@bonnetshores.org](mailto:District.Manager@bonnetshores.org) to your contacts. If you think you have registered previously but are not receiving e-mails, contact the District Manager at [district.manager@bonnetshores.org](mailto:district.manager@bonnetshores.org) and your information will be verified.

This newsletter and all of the reports therein can be found on the Bonnet Shores website: <https://bonnetshores.org/>. If you require hard copies of any of the information, please contact the District Manager.

## **Bonnet Shores Fire District Reports**

### **State of the District by BSFD Chair, Carol O'Donnell**

#### *Review of the Past Year...*

In the past year, our community elected seven council members and five land trust members, as well as other officials. This was the largest election in the history of our district with 774 voters. Our council and land trust members together with other elected officials have been busy conducting the business of the district including:

- Reconstituting the Charter Committee charged with addressing the issue of defining the voting electorate. This process included engaging community members who presented creative options to move our community forward.
- Improving communications to our community members through
  - Completion of an RFP and selection of a website vendor. Launch of our new website is scheduled for this fall.
  - Introduction of the “Do you Know?” communication tool to deliver short, frequent and relevant bursts of information.
- Addressing climate change challenges through
  - The application and award of a \$75,000 RIDEM grant for a planning phase focused on Wesquage Pond Flood Prevention and Mitigation. We are engaging CRMC and DEM to draft the contract and will be pursuing proposals for the analysis work.
  - Working with the Town of Narragansett to repair the seawall/road on Colonel John Gardner Road using a FEMA grant award of \$143,467.89, at a cost to the District of \$17,933.49.
  - Regularly scheduled culvert maintenance and drainage cleaning
- Proactively addressing fiscal responsibility through
  - A thoughtful and responsible budget process
  - Proposing by-law changes which ensure adequate financial reserves to address capital needs and preservation of our natural resources
- Maintaining our Community and Quality of Life
  - Replaced the Bonnet Shores Fire District Community sign at the crossroads of Bonnet Point Road and Bonnet Shores Road
  - Continued the 90 + year tradition of the Bonnet Shores Fire District Summer Camp with the summer of 2025 having our highest annual attendance

#### *Looking Forward...*

- Continue a proactive approach to maintain our strong financial position
- With the community's input and support, continue improving our Annual Meeting and Election processes, including clarifying voter eligibility in alignment with both the General Assembly expectations and the broader community's perspective
- Work with the Land Trust to improve our memorial bench program
- Revisit past community events like Bonnet Days and Earth Day

**Report of the Nominating Committee:** On July 9, 2025, the 2025 Nominating Committee voted to endorse the following candidates for the following positions.

1. Annual Meeting Moderator - **Joe Thomas**
2. Tax Assessor - **Sharon Remington Ford**
3. Tax Assessor - **Paul Luba**
4. Tax Assessor - **Steve Danuszar**
5. Council - **James Hill**
6. Council - **Kevin O'Brien**

## Report of the Tax Collector

Bonnet Shores Fire District Tax Collector Report 2024-25		
<u>Taxes Collected</u>		
Mail In Payments	\$363,691.35	71%
Credit Card	\$77,678.05	15%
eCheck	<u>\$67,512.28</u>	13%
Total Collected	\$508,881.68	
Total 2024-25 collected	\$499,449.59	
Total 2024-25 Taxes Budget	\$514,000.00	
% Collected	97%	
Total PY Taxes	\$5,483.22	
PY Tax Budget	\$7,000.00	
% Collected	78%	
Fees Collected		
-Interest	\$2,118.24	
-Legal	\$8.00	
-NSF Fees	\$30.00	
Taxes Owed by Year		
-2024-25	\$14,550.41	
-2023-24	\$3,376.30	
-2010-23	\$5,011.85	
Total	\$22,938.56	
Other		
-Helen Patience elected Tax Collector 8/2024		
-Helen Patience resigned 12/2024		
-John Chereskin appointed Tax Collector		
-Preparation for tax sale in 11/2025		

## Report of the Treasurer

May 1, 2025
<b>Fiscal Year 2025 Treasurer's Report</b>
Dear Community Members,
As we wrap up Fiscal Year 2025, I'm happy to share the financial results and some exciting updates:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total Income: \$549,550</li> <li>Total Operating Expenses: \$471,867</li> <li>Total Capital Expenses: \$22,946</li> <li>Surplus: \$54,737</li> <li>Bank Balance as of April 30, 2025: \$302,359</li> </ul>
Here's how we're using the surplus:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$17,000 will go into the Capital Reserve account to replace the \$17,000 URI Grant study match.</li> <li>\$3,450 will fund the Harbor CD.</li> <li>\$34,288 will go into the new dedicated Storm Fund.</li> </ul>
Also, the Fiscal Year 2026 budget has been approved. Here are a few important updates:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A new dedicated operations fund has been set up for legal expenses, with \$5,000 allocated.</li> <li>We've approved a 4% increase to last year's budget for capital expenses, helping us keep up with the necessary improvements and future needs.</li> <li>\$15,000 has been approved for application expenses to cover permits, repairs to the garage and driveway entrance, a new PA system with cameras for our community center, and repairs to the bulletin boards.</li> </ul>
Thank you all for your continued support. If you have any questions or want to know more, feel free to reach out.
Best,
Laurie McCarthy Bonnet Shores Fire District Treasurer

## Bonnet Shore Fire District Monthly Council Meeting Schedule | July 2025 – June 2026

BSFD monthly council meetings are held at 7:30pm at the Bonnet Shores Community Center located at 130 Bonnet Shores Road, Narragansett, RI 02882 unless otherwise communicated.

Third Wednesday Date - 2025	Third Wednesday Date - 2026
July 16, 2025	January 21, 2026
August 20, 2025	February 18, 2026
September 17, 2025	March 18, 2026
October 15, 2025	April 15, 2026
November 19, 2025	May 20, 2026
December 17, 2025	June 17, 2026

## DRAFT 2024 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

Item 10 on the Annual Meeting agenda is the ratification of the 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes. These minutes are located at [www.bonnetshores.org](http://www.bonnetshores.org) >Council>Council Meeting Minutes. Scroll down to the annual meeting minutes section and click on the first button "2024 Draft". If you require a hard copy of the minutes, please contact the District Manager.

Bonnet Shores Fire District					
FY 2026 Budget					
				<u>Budget</u>	
Income					
4100 Tax Revenue					
4110 Tax Revenue - Current FY			534,00		
4111 Tax Revenue - Current FY Interest			1,00		
4112 Tax Revenue - Prepay next FY			1,00		
4113 Tax Revenue - Previous FY			5,00		
Total 4100 Tax Revenue			541,00		
4200 Day Camp Fees					
4201 Fees - Day Camp			20,00		
4202 TSHIRTS - Day Camp					
4203 DONATIONS - Day Camp					
Total 4200 Day Camp Fees			20,00		
4300 Harbor Fees					
4310 Mooring Fees			13,20		
4320 Mooring Wait List Fees					
4330 Ramp Fees			30		
4340 Water Craft Registrations			30		
Total 4300 Harbor Fees			13,80		
4400 Grants					
4500 Interest Earned - Bank Accts			25		
4900 Other Income					
4910 Beach Tag Replacements					
4930 Hall Rental Fees			4,00		
4990 Other Misc. Income					
Total 4900 Other Income			4,00		
Total Income			579,00		
Expenses					
6000 Admin Wages and Taxes					
6010 Manager Wages			60,00		
6020 Clerk Wages					6,00
6030 Tax Collector Wages					6,00
6040 Treasurer Wages					6,00
6060 Admin Employer Payroll Taxes					6,80
Total 6000 Admin Wages and Taxes					84,80
6100 Administrative Expense					
6105 Accounting/Bookkeeping					8,10
6106 CPA					4,00
6110 Advertising Expense					
6115 Annual Meeting Expense					14,00
6120 Bank Charges					
6125 Charter Revision Expense					
6130 Council Discretionary Expense					30
6135 Insurance					10,00
6140 IT and Web Services					25,00
6145 Land Trust Operating Alloc'n					1,20
6155 Legal Fees, Ordinary					10,00
6160 Legal Fees, Tax Sale					15
6165 Meeting Expense					1,50
6175 Office Supplies & Equipment					2,50
6180 Payroll and Financial Services					1,20
6190 Tax Collection Costs					8,00
Total 6100 Administrative Expense					85,95
6300 Beach Expense					
6310 Beach Wages					21,00
6320 Beach Employer Payroll Taxes					1,60
6330 Beach Bus					12,00
6340 Beach Raking & Maintenance					40,00
6350 Beach Security					9,00
6360 Beach Supplies					3,50
Total 6300 Beach Expense					87,10
6400 Day Camp Expense					
6410 Camp Wages					15,50

6420 Camp Employer Payroll Tax			1,500		
6430 Camp Supplies/Expenses			5,500		
Total 6400 Day Camp Expense			22,500		
6500 Harbor Expense					
6510 Harbormaster Wages			6,000		
6520 Harbormaster Employer Taxes			485		
6540 Harbor Maintenance			1,000		
6550 Harbor Supplies			1,000		
6590 Harbor Fund Tfr Designated Acct			0		
Total 6500 Harbor Expense			8,485		
6600 Property Expense					
6610 Beautification & Social			1,000		
6620 Community Center Cleaning			4,150		
6625 Electricity			1,800		
6630 Fire Inspection			500		
6635 Maintenance			2,500		
6640 Natural Gas			3,600		
6645 Office Cell Phone			1,200		
6650 Pond			0		
6655 Telephone & Internet			3,000		
6670 Water			600		
6680 Repairs paid by Insurance			0		
Total 6600 Property Expense			18,350		
6700 Public Works					
6710 Breachway and Culverts Maintenance			6,000		
6730 General Maintenance			175		
6740 Landscaping			13,000		
6760 Sanitation			192,000		
6770 Snow Removal			3,000		
Total 6700 Public Works			214,175		
**Operating Dedicated Legal Account			5,000		
Total Expenses			526,360		
Net Operating Income			52,690		
Other Income					
7000 Capital Income					
7100 Capital Allocation Income					0
7150 Capital Grants Income					0
Total 7000 Capital Income					0
Other Expenses					
8000 Capital Expenses					
8100 Capital Improvements					34,757
8150 Capital Grants Expenses					17,933
8160 Capital Allocation Expenses					0
Total 8000 Capital Expenses					52,690
Net Income					0

## **Explanation of the Proposed Fiscal Responsibility Bylaw Changes on the Ballot**

The BSFD Council is proposing the following Fiscal Responsibility Amendments to the Bonnet Shores Fire District Bylaws to establish stronger checks and balances and instill more decision-making power to community members on the use of taxpayer funds. Fiscal responsibility is a core duty of the Council, and current Bylaws lack the necessary spending safeguards. We urge you to approve these amendments to ensure sound financial oversight now and for the future.

### **PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO BY-LAWS IN FURTHERANCE OF FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY**

#### **ARTICLE VI**

#### **Financial Matters**

Proposed

Section #

2a	<p><i>Section 2: The district shall establish 2 funds. A current account of these funds will be provided annually by the end of the fiscal year:</i></p> <p><b>Capital Reserve Fund:</b> The district shall establish a Capital Reserve Fund dedicated to the maintenance and replacement of equipment, software, and capital assets. Each fiscal year, an amount up to ten percent (10%) of the previous year's tax levy will be allocated to the Capitol Reserve Fund. At the discretion of the District Council, an amount greater than ten percent (10%) of the prior year's tax levy may be allocated to the Capital Reserve Fund from the operating surpluses of previous years. The Capital Reserve Fund shall be considered minimally funded at one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) and fully funded at five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000). If the Capital Reserve Fund falls below the minimal funding amount, the budget allocation for the fund in the following year must be at least ten percent (10%) of the previous year's tax levy. Once the Capital Reserve Fund reaches the maximum funding amount, the annual funding allocation of up to ten percent (10%) is suspended until the Capital Reserve Fund falls below this maximum.</p> <p><i>Purpose: This fiscal responsibility proposal is to have funds available for capital improvements as needed. Presently the surplus is about \$128,000, so that is why the minimum is at \$100,000.</i></p>
2b	<p><b>Storm Infrastructure Repair Fund:</b> A restricted fund with a minimum balance of thirty-five thousand (\$35,000) and a maximum balance up to sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000) shall be established for infrastructure repair caused by extreme weather events. The District Council shall vote on using this fund to pay for weather-related infrastructure costs. When the fund balance at the end of a fiscal year is below the minimum amount, a budget allocation shall be made for the subsequent year to bring it up to the minimum amount.</p>
3	<p><b>Extraordinary Capital Purchases</b> – The District may raise money through debt or liabilities, to cover extraordinary capital expenditures for which the District Council deems the Capital Reserve Fund either insufficient or inappropriate to pay. Debt obligations must first be passed by the majority of the District Council. Debt obligations exceeding seventy-five thousand (\$75,000) in any fiscal year must additionally be approved by at least two-thirds of the qualified voters present at the meeting through a referendum at the Annual Meeting or a special meeting.</p> <p><i>Purpose: This proposal is a check and balance provision before incurring large debt by giving the voters a voice about the expense.</i></p>
4	<p><b>Grants</b> - All grants, including those for the benefit of the Bonnet Shores Land Trust, must receive approval from the District Council before authorization. Grants exceeding an unreimbursed, monetary contribution of \$200,000 by the district will be processed through a budget amendment and approved by at least two-thirds (2/3) of the qualified voters present at the meeting through a referendum at an Annual Meeting or a special meeting.</p> <p><i>Purpose: This proposal is a check and balance provision before incurring large debt by giving the voters a voice about the expense.</i></p>

5	<p><b>Levy Cap</b> - The District shall restrict any increase in its property tax levy (Levy Cap) to a maximum of ten percent (10%) over the previous year's amount that is budgeted to be raised by taxation, or by the amount of annual inflation (per the CPI index, All Urban, Consumers, New England). The District may increase the amount by taxation by a percentage greater than 10 percent (10%) or the annual inflation rate, if the increase is approved through a referendum during the district's Annual Meeting or a special meeting. The mill rate shall then be calculated using assessed values to determine the budgeted tax collection.</p> <p><i>Purpose: This change is a prudent measure to provide for a cap on tax increases consistent with the Levy Cap for cities and towns in the State of Rhode Island. The mill rate in the original Charter is outdated, based upon the current value of the properties in the district, potentially allowing for taxes of about \$7,500,000 (million). This is an effort to ensure greater fiscal responsibility to the community. Cities and Towns have a 4% Levy Cap by state law. This bylaw does not change the Charter as the mil rate remains the same but reflects the district's realization that the archaic mill rate is not relevant today, and is a fiscal responsibility measure to align taxes with current municipal tax trends.</i></p>
6	<p><b>Extraordinary Costs</b> – Those costs associated with a declared emergency may be excluded from the District Levy Cap. “Extraordinary costs” are expenses incurred for immediate response, preparation, recovery, and restoration of district services following extreme weather events or catastrophic occurrences. This exception applies only to those costs that exceed what would typically be incurred under normal, non-emergency conditions. Approval of these extraordinary charges require support by at least two-thirds (2/3) of the District Council. Funds allocated for these costs shall be treated as a one-time request subject to adjustment based on any federal or state reimbursements.</p> <p><i>Purpose: This addition is to allow for unforeseen emergency expenses that may occur above the Levy Cap.</i></p>

### **Explanation of non-binding opinion poll**

During the Annual Meeting, you will be asked to participate in a non-binding opinion poll. This non-binding poll is intended to gauge the community's perspective on the future of our voting franchise. The two options in the poll include the work of two Charter Committees. The BSFD Council would like to understand your perspective on these options. They are:

- Option 1: **Narragansett Registered Voters Only:** Eligible voters would be limited to Bonnet Shores Fire District community members that are registered to vote in the town of Narragansett.
- Option 2: **Reduced Bonnet Shores Beach Club Voting:** Eligible voters would need to meet one of the following criteria:
  - 1) Bonnet Shores Fire District community members that are registered to vote in the town of Narragansett
  - 2) Bonnet Shores Fire District deeded residential property owners
  - 3) One designated deeded Bonnet Shores Beach Club owner per unit

*Note that an individual can only vote once regardless of how many of the above criteria they meet.*

If you do not like either option, there is a space to provide commentary on this very important issue. Please, let your voice be heard by participating in this opinion poll.

**THIS OPINION POLL WILL NOT RESULT IN ANY AUTOMATIC CHANGES TO THE VOTING FRANCHISE.  
ITS SOLE PURPOSE IS TO GATHER COMMUNITY INPUT ON THIS IMPORTANT ISSUE.**