

SHELTER HARBOR FIRE DISTRICT
ANNUAL MEETING
9:00 AM, Saturday, August 10, 2019
Saint Clare Parish Center
4 St. Clare Way
Westerly, RI 02891

I. Call to Order

Due to the need to process voter registrations and an abnormally high volume of proxies, the Moderator called the meeting to order at 9:21 AM. The Moderator asked each member of the Board to introduce themselves. Joe Rucci announced that there was a quorum.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Since there was no flag in the hall, there was no pledge of allegiance.

III. Moderator's Comments

- A. The Moderator introduced Aaron Perkins, who runs the life guard program. Aaron noted that half of the guards will be leaving to go back to school by the 17th. It remains important to always swim in front of a life guard. A junior life guard program was conducted this summer. The beach remained pretty clean this year thanks to the residents taking their trash with them when leaving the beach. There have been no confirmed shark sightings in our swimming areas this year. There were a couple fins spotted. But they turned out to be sunfish. As a precaution, swimmers are reminded to avoid swimming in the early morning and late evening, not to wear shiny jewelry in the water, and not to swim near heavy bait fish activity. If a fin is sighted, the life guards will close the area to swimming for at least 30 minutes. Aaron noted that there have been some higher than normal bacteria readings taken in the pond, but not in the ocean swimming area. The high-level readings in the pond were near the yacht club, not near Grove Dock. Please be respectful of our neighbors who live close to Grove Dock by not blocking access to their driveway or letting vehicles or boats idle for long periods of time in the early hours. Aaron reminded us that dogs are not allowed at Grove Dock or on the beach regardless if on a leash. Aaron cautioned about digging deep holes on the beach as that not only causes a hazard for those walking on the beach but could cause a dangerous situation for small children. Holes should not be dug any more than waist deep to the smallest person in the area. It was noted that the extension of the entrance mat was well received. It was also noted that two portable radios were purchased this year to better facilitate communication between the guards and security.
- B. Next the Moderator introduced Simon Dewar and Kim from the Shelter Harbor Inn. It was noted that the ownership of the Inn is changing. Dr. Dennis Flanagan will be the sole proprietor. Simon noted that the plans are moving forward at a good pace. The four rooms in the Carriage House are open. The remainder of the rooms at the Inn will be finished by 8/22/19 and the kitchen will be finished by 8/29/19. The plan is to start service the day after Labor Day.
- C. The Moderator then made these comments:
Harbor Management Plan – Under the new plan, every member of SH who wanted a mooring has been assigned a mooring. There have been no applications from people outside our community for a mooring is SH.

The State will be building a new boat ramp and 24' dock at the public launch area on the Charlestown side of the breach way. It will run parallel to the flow rather than perpendicular to it as the existing ramp does. This will start in the fall.

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Last spring the Moderator hired a surveyor to mark the property line between SHFD and the Shelter Harbor Inn. Arborvitaes have been installed along that line. This is intended to resolve the encroachment issue of the Inn onto SHFD property.

There was a 1981 Agreement between SHFD and the Shelter Harbor Inn in settlement of a law suit over certain items between the two entities including the use of SHFD amenities and easements, etc. That agreement did not transfer with the deed when the Inn was recently purchased. So, the BoG is starting over to generate such an agreement with the new ownership of the Inn.

Speeding continues to be a problem of Wagner Road. Jay Weismann has contacted the Town Manager and Police Chief to arrange a meeting to discuss possible solutions. Alex Platt made arrangements for the speed sign at the upper end of Wagner Road.

There have been discussions by the BoG about increasing security in the community and at the beach. One possible option in the community is the installation of cameras that would store recordings of vehicle coming and going in the community for a period of time. The BoG has not settled on actions to be taken yet.

The beach access issue that came up in South Kingston was reviewed. The Moderator suggested that perhaps it is better to overlook the few people who may sneak onto the beach that we rent from Weekapaug Fire District rather than creating a scene.

There was a meeting of the Fire District Moderators recently. Our Moderator was impressed with SHFD compared to the other Fire Districts. The Moderator is proud that we have a ten-year capital plan which done of the other fire districts have. Nor do any of them have a litigation fund. The Moderator pointed out that we are in very good financial condition due to the management of the Financial Committee and the work of past BoGs.

The new street lighting that has been installed in SH has caused concern with many residents. The new lights are too bright and are not shaded. This extends the coverage of the light into windows. Harry Gregory is heading an effort to have the Town remedy the situation.

Joe Rucci and Dick Ferris were voted in at the last BoG meeting to manage the voting process at this annual meeting and to resolve any voter eligibility issues. The voter registration list had fallen into disarray over the years. It has now been updated and corrected. Joe Rucci suggested that the BoG appoint a registrar to maintain the list going forward. The Moderator thanks both for their efforts.

The Moderator thanks all those who helped with signing people in at the beginning of this meeting.

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The Moderator decided to re-order the agenda in order to move the voting for the BoG members, Officers, and other positions earlier in the meeting so that other business could be conducted will the votes were tallied. So, items X parts B and C were moved ahead of item V. The voting will now occur following the thank-you's.

IV. Approval of the Draft Minutes from the August 11, 2018 Annual Meeting

A motion was made by Betty Waters to accept the Minutes of the 8/11/18 Annual Meeting as distributed. There was a second. The vote was taken and it passed unanimously.

V. Appointment of Parliamentarian

Joe Rucci was appointed by the Moderator and accepted.

VI. Announcements

The Moderator read of list of the following neighbors who passed away during the last year and asked for a moment of silence: Suzanne Davenport, Nathalie Rosin, Walter Shwayka, Mario Turco, and Nona Turco.

The Moderator introduced the following new neighbors: Mark & Fran Brunault, Scott & Rachel Farley, Paul & Ann Foye, Mark & Judy Gauvain, Larry & Cindy Geisinger, Griffen & Alicia Murray, Ed & Heather Kuffner, Scott & Michelle Perkins, and Christian & Kathy Peterson.

The Moderator then asked for the following people to stand and be recognized for their volunteerism: Liz Miller, Bob Duff, Marianne Nardone, Tracy Pontarelli, Rick Wiatrowski, Adam Wiatrowski, Lucas Wiatrowski, Phil Leffert, Roland Hellwig, Steve Sweeney, Jack Hardick, Karen Matheson, Phyllis Visnauskas, Brenda Manning, Barbara Albert, Jim Levins, Rochelle Levins, Sharon Riechers, Marie Davenport, Lynn Reale, Katie Davenport, Karen Manuzzi, Nick Manuzzi, Lisa Pagliarulo, Al Handel, Eric Aborjaily, Ken Pontarelli, Jayne Staley, Joe Miceli, Joey Miceli, Bruno DiCecco, Mary DiCecco, Helene Hardick, Denise Williams, Mary Harrop, John Bruno, Val Blume, Carl Blume, Peter Nardone, Mark Kane, Gigi Porcelli, and Carlos Porcelli. Thanks to all.

VII. Election of Officers

Since each of these positions was running unopposed, a motion was made by John Bruno and seconded by Ann Thomas to accept each of the candidates (Tom Lloyd for Moderator, Glen Berwick for Treasurer, Harry Gregory for Assessor and Tax Collector, and Margaret Leffert for Clerk). There was no discussion. The vote was taken and it passed unanimously.

VIII. Election of Members of the Board of Governors (two positions)

Joe Rucci explained how the new voter registration list was completed and what constitutes a qualified voter and the number of votes allowed per person. It was then explained why there were multiple ballots for the members of the BoG. The Moderator then called for the voting to begin with the green copy of the ballots. After the voting was underway, the candidates were allowed to stand and address the audience. Some asked if they could change their vote now that they heard from the candidates. This was not allowed.

IX. Reports of the Tax Collector, Treasurer, and Finance Committee

The Tax Collector reported that 100% of the accessed taxes have been collected. In fact, slightly more (about \$628) has been collected due to late charges and some rounding-off on the payment amounts. The Tax Collector noted that the mill rate will actually be reduced next year but deferred to the Treasurer to explain that later. The Tax Collector asked that the Chair entertain a motion to deem all accounts paid in full and have the Treasurer write-off any overage or underpayment.

The Treasurer reviewed the financial reports that were distributed with the information packet. He also explained that the BoG approved the reallocation of funds originally budgeted for the Undesignated Surplus Fund, the Capital Fund, and the Litigation Fund to off-set unbudgeted expenses encountered last year. Those unbudgeted expenses were primarily the Point Dock ramp repairs and some professional service expenses.

The Moderator thanked Glen Berwick for all his hard work.

Bob Palumbo reviewed the Finance Committee report that was distributed in the packet. He noted that the new budget has a new line item in it for a Pond Restoration Fund. It was explained that while the mill rate did reduce slightly that the accessed property values went up, thus funding the increase in the annual budget.

There were several public comments about the new budget.

A motion was moved by Allen Leadbetter and seconded by Vivian Duff to deem all tax accounts paid in full and have the Treasurer write-off any miscellaneous overage or underpayment. The vote was taken and passed unanimously.

There was a motion by Vivian Duff seconded by John Bruno to accept the reports of the Tax Collector, Treasurer, and Finance Committee Chair as submitted. The vote was taken and passed unanimously.

X. Report of the Auditor

Nick Manuzzi reported that the balance sheet accurately reflects the district financial condition. It was determined that the financial statements fairly and accurately reflect the financial positions at year end.

There was a motion by Ann Thomas seconded by Cheryl Ferris to accept the Auditor's report as submitted. A vote was taken and passed unanimously.

XI. Reports of Committees and Agents

The reports from the committees and agents were reviewed as included in the packets.

There was a suggestion made that perhaps the beach bus schedule and route could be adjusted next year.

Cheryl Ferris thanked Vivian Duff for arranging for the extended entrance mat to the beach.

The Small Boat Rack Agent asked that if anyone is not using their assigned spot to let him know because we are running out of open spots.

Neighbors were reminded to let the Clerk know if you change your email address as soon as possible.

The Moderator asked the Roads Agent to contact the town regarding trimming back some of the vegetation along Wagner Road.

Ann Thomas noted that there is also a Facebook page for SH.

XII. Approval of the Budget for F/Y 2019-2020

A motion was made by Louise Thorson to adopt the budget as presented. It was seconded by several. A vote was taken and it passed unanimously.

XIII. Resolution to Assess and Collect Taxes

The following resolution was read by the Moderator. "That the voters of Shelter Harbor Fire District assembled in annual meeting on August 10, 2019, hereby order the assessment and collection of a tax on ratable real estate within the district based on a tax rate of \$1.25/\$1000 of assessed value, such taxes to be used for the purposes of, including, but not limited to, paying the accounts of the district for fire prevention, for repairs of roads, docks and walks, for payment of services rendered by officers and employees of the district, for payment of general bills and all other obligations or indebtedness of the district.

The assessors of taxes shall assess and apportion a tax on the ratable real property in the District as of the 3rd day of September 2019 2 o'clock p.m., and shall date, certify and sign the assessment, and deliver it to the Collector of Taxes of the District on or before the 4th day of September 2019, and this tax shall be payable by 30th day of September 2019. All taxes remaining unpaid on October 1, 2019 shall incur a penalty at the rate of one percent (1%) per month or portion thereof until paid." A motion was made to adopt this resolution by Ann Thomas and seconded by Vivian Duff. The vote was taken and it passed unanimously.

XIV. Announcement of new Board Members

Before the new Board members were announced, the Moderator thanks the outgoing members (Vivian Duff and John Bruno) for their service.

The two new Board members as a result of the election are Patrick Kinney and Alex Platt.

XV. Ratification of Prior Actions and Resolutions

The Moderator read the following resolution, "Be it hereby resolved that, all prior actions of the Board of Governors, Officers and Agents of the Shelter Harbor Fire District taken prior hereto in the operation of the Fire District's business or in the furtherance thereof are hereby ratified and confirmed and all documents executed on behalf of and in the name of the Fire District are hereby adopted and consented to by a majority vote of the electors voting at the 2019 Annual Meeting."

There was a motion to adopt the resolution as read. It was seconded. When asked if there was any discussion Phil Leffert asked if the Board could tell us if there were any actions taken that were not in the meeting minutes. District Counsel clarified that the resolution would only cover legal actions by those named and no secret actions. There was no further discussion. The vote was taken and the resolution was adopted.

XVI. Old Business

There was none.

XVII. New Business

- A. Motion to Amend Article 2, Section 2 of the By-Laws (Qualified Voter). This motion was withdrawn by its maker.
- B. Motion to Amend Article 16 of the By-Laws (Small Lots). This motion was made by Aaron Priest and seconded by Arleen Priest. Aaron Priest explained the reason for the motion. There was much discussion. Finally, Dick Ferris called to move the question. A vote was taken by secret ballot. The motion was defeated.

XVIII. Public Comment

Dick Ferris commented on his overview of the voting process. Dick said that there was 128 people in checked into the room at the beginning of the meeting. One third of those people carried two thirds of the votes cast. That is an average of just over four votes per person present. Some of that is due to owning multiple properties but much of it was due to the heavy use of proxies. Dick doesn't think it speaks well to our core values. We must do better and improve the voting process.

Cheryl Ferris spoke about the Salt Pond Coalition and encouraged everyone to consider joining.

Denise Williams asked that Joe Rucci and Dick Ferris be kept on in their roles and work on ways to improve the voting process.

Vivian Duff thanked Tom Lloyd for his service as Moderator.

Tom Lloyd asked everyone to consider joining the SH Conservation Society.

XIX. Adjournment

Motion was made and seconded to adjourn. The vote taken and passed. Meeting adjourned at 12:20 PM.

Respectfully prepared and submitted by:
Margaret Leffert
Clerk, Shelter Harbor Fire District