

Borough of Stonington
Board of Warden and Burgesses Regular Monthly Meeting
January 23, 2024
MINUTES

Warden Michael Schefers called the monthly meeting of the Borough of Stonington Board of Warden and Burgesses to order at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held at Borough Hall. Present, in addition to Warden Schefers were Burgesses Kevin Rogers, Amy Nicholas, Kevin Bowdler and Amanda Barnes, and Clerk-Treasurer Lisa Coleman. Approximately 22 members of the public were present.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On a motion by Burgess Nicholas, seconded by Burgess Rogers, approval of the minutes of the monthly meeting of November 20, 2023 as amended to clarify Jesse Diggs comment Public Comment to read “Jesse Diggs asked if funding was location specific and thinks it should not be” and Buzzi Memorial to read “Buzzi Memorial”, were approved.

On a motion by Burgess Nicholas, seconded by Burgess Barnes, approval of the minutes of the monthly meeting of December 18, 2023, as amended (to discuss staff bonuses and no vote was taken), were approved.

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED:

Ian McCreary — Diving Street
Mary Maranell — email Memorial Gail Woodrow
Buzzi Memorial contract — Cannon Square

REPORT OF CLERK-TREASURER

None

REVIEW OF BILLS/YTD FINANCIAL REPORT; ARPA UPDATE

Bills for the period December 16, 2023 through January 11, 2024 totaled \$30,476.12. Large bills of note were \$2,649.92 to Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce from ARPA funds (they did not spend the total amount and have a credit), \$7,367.00 to Stonington Historic Society from ARPA funds (they did not spend the total amount and have a credit), I&E through January 12, 2024 shows total revenue to date of \$1,421,745.11; and net income to date of \$528,640.10. Balance of ARPA funds is \$30,538 (and any monies coming back from Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce and Stonington Historic Society-approximately \$6,000.00)

Warden suggested we do a budget review next month and put that on the agenda. The auditor will come to the Board for the presentation in February, 2024.

The Warden clarified that the Allocations from ARPA must be made by calendar year end 2024 and must be spent by end of calendar year 2026.

WARDEN'S REPORT

Attended December SECCOG Meeting

Attended Danielle's January Staff Meeting and our monthly meeting

Attended Meeting on Emergency Planning notification software

Met with Sandy Alexander SBMA consultant to discuss with the merchants and stakeholders on how we can promote our economic development.

Met with Darrell Hayward (CLA Engineers) on Church Street Drainage and Elm Street Pedestrian Bridge Projects.

Discussed follow-up meeting with Amtrak. Amtrak is setting up a follow-up meeting on the viaduct with CT DOT and stakeholders

Met with Nick Paigo of IQT to analyze Borough Hall as-built foot prints for the building

BOROUGH CLOCK – None

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Streets & Sidewalks (Schefers) Conducted monthly brush pickup.

Continued leaf pick-up.

Continued Park maintenance.

Removed Storm Seaweed from East Grand Street. Needed two removals.

Initiated Christmas Tree Monday pickups.

Closed access to flooded streets, rights of ways, and the Point and cleared debris, sand, and seaweed.

Fire & Emergency Management (Nicholas/Hoadley)

SBFD responded to 13 Alarms in December 2023, they were as follows:

- 1) 12-4-23 3:56am Power line down Pearl & Water St. (EVERSOURCE enroute)
- 2) 12-11-23 7:33am Tree across Rd. 17 Elihu Island Rd. (Cut up & moved, no wires)
- 3) 12-12-23 9:23am CO Alarm Activation 23 Cemetery Rd. (faulty detector)
- 4) 12-12-23 3:05pm Fire Alarm Activation 33 Church St., Calvary Church (workers)
- 5) 12-15-23 8:59am Fire Alarm Activation 33 Church St., Calvary Church (workers)
- 6) 12-16-23 3:04pm Child stuck in a tree, Wad. Square (library, 6 yr. old 25' high in tree) 7)
12-18-23 6:41am Mutual aid to Weq. Fire Dept. (Structure Fire, 350 Greenhaven Rd.)
- 8) 12-18-23 12:00pm Fire Alarm Activation 55 Church St. (detector in basement was wet) 9)
- 12-18-23 1:48pm Water in basement 10 Maplewood La. (saltwater tide from storm) Have

worked with Stonington Human Services to get temporary housing for the family that lives there.

- 10) 12-18-23 7:50pm Water Emergency 24 Cutler St. (no issue)
- 11) 12-19-23 4:56pm Wires down IFO 48 Harborview Terrace (truck took down)
- 12) 12-27-23 10:41am Medical assist with SAC 131 Water St. (lift assist)
- 13) 12-29-23 6:12pm Arcing wires IFO 1 Lambert La. (nothing found)

Report that there was 4 feet of water in the basement of 33 Elm St. Happened last year and three times this year, has to be pumped out.

SBFD RESPONDED TO 133 ALARMS IN 2023 (2022 was 136 alarms) BREAKDOWN IS AS FOLLOWS:

STONINGTON BOROUGH.....64 ALARMS
STONINGTON FIRE DISTRICT.....54 ALARMS
WAMPASSUC PT.....4 ALARMS
LORDS PT.....4 ALARMS MUTUAL
AID.....7 ALARMS

December Police Incident Report

No report from the police since they are switching computer systems. Just one comment, we can no longer use the telephone poles for the speed signs so we must figure something else. Eversource had reprimanded the police department. The poles for the garbage holders are not strong enough. Probably need to install new poles, this will hold up the speed signs data reports.

Parks, Trees & Rights of Way (Barnes)

The removals of the maple on the northwest corner of Wad Square and the Linden in front of 68 Main Street are complete. I am waiting to hear when the stump-grinding will take place. A tree in front of 53 Main Street and the two lindens in front of 68 Main Street were pruned. Received a couple messages regarding downed limbs on eastern end of Broad St and Sue picked them up. Asked Bartlett to look at those trees.

Public Buildings (Rogers)

Brendan Malloy of IQT did his analysis of Borough Hall and once we get the drawings back we can move ahead with the comfort station.

Utilities & Sanitation (Bowdler)

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

Resident Chris Erricetti, Vice President of Stonington Commons Association, along with fellow Board member Elizabeth Hopkins, reported about the sea walk condition. About ten years ago the sea walk had a major reconstruction and has performed well, however, as the storms become more intense and frequent. Beginning last year, the construction has been less storm resilient, and this past storm took away the soil, but the concrete is still there but now we have a huge hole. Our engineers will come in a month with an idea of what needs to be done. There has not been a lot of cooperation from the community (people still go on it even though there are signs) and we ask that the Borough place more signage. Warden mentioned that we are working with the State of CT, FEMA with New London County being declared a disaster area so we can approach FEMA through our regional emergency planning director for monies for municipalities (grants will be available)

Erricetti mentioned the condition of the breakwater effecting the seawall. There is a weak spot in the breakwater.

Stonington Commons resident Elizabeth Hopkins thanked the Borough for putting highway signs around on each end of the seawall. There will be “do not enter” signs made by the Borough.

Resident Jesse Diggs of 8 School St. asked what is the status of the speed cushions? Warden answered that we are working with the Police Commission and the Chief of Police and he suggests this be addressed town wide. He asked if the meeting with Amtrak and DOT about the viaduct will be open to the public. Warden answered no, there will not be an open meeting until the conceptual design is brought forth. Jesse Diggs feels it should be open to the public. Warden says he has received Diggs’ analysis and that that info be shared at the meeting.

I am vice-chair of Harbor Management Commission who for several years have looked at how to build up the Monsanto breakwater. Perhaps there could be a synergy between Borough, Stonington Commons, Harbor Management Commission, and the Town Flood Prevention Commission. A discussion around who owns the breakwater ensued and Don Maranell says the Town owns the breakwater.

Resident Don Maranell of Bayview Avenue remarked that that since Eversource is not allowing us to post the speed signs on their poles, that we up the pressure on them to remove double poles and repair the areas around the poles that they did not complete. Mentioned that there have never been storms this bad or as frequently. The last three storms have come out of the southeast.

Pam Mola of 2 Church Street submitted a letter to the Board yesterday regarding the fallout at Whalen’s Wharf. The issue will be on the agenda next month. Warden says we are at the point on final approval by Corps of Engineers and DEEP. When Phase one (Conceptual Design) is completed, the Borough W&B have to approve what CLA is proposing.

Resident Al Razzano of 25nMain Street asked to move Public Comment to later in meeting.

Resident Jesse Diggs of 8 School Street said that the reason for Public Comment being where it is on the agenda is to have input on business being voted on at the meeting.

Resident Michelle Petrucelli of 1 Church St mentioned that there is a large group of people at this meeting regarding the Whalen's Wharf output. It will be on the agenda next month.

Burgess Amanda Barnes asked who removed the phragmites by the footbridge. Warden will ask Sue.

Resident Sibby Lynch of 198 Water Street mentioned people have comments that come up after Public Comment and cannot say what they want. Burgess Bowdler commented that you have the right during Public Comment to make your comments and that W&B were elected to make the ultimate decisions, your role is to look at the agenda before Public Comment and prepare your comments. Burgess Nicholas commented that you can contact any one of the Warden and Burgesses beforehand.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Comfort Station Update

Burgess Rogers said that once Brenden's report is received the design can start.

Viaduct update

See Warden report above.

Draft Vendor Ordinance

Still with Planning and Zoning. Warden will follow up with Zanarini

Water Street Flooding Project Update

Warden has spent time with project engineer and showed drawings of what is happening now and what is being proposed regarding the storm drainage that currently feeds the one pipe. Warden to ask CLA to make a new presentation at March 2024 Board meeting, after the board has had a month of re-education.

Recreational Vehicles and Motor Homes (Ordinance Clarification)

Warden received the restrictions from several towns and will share with Attorney Kepple and Town Zoning to make a recommendation to us.

Public Comment Discussion

Burgess Nicholas feels like it should stay when it is in the agenda and has become unwieldy and to limit the time. Burgess Barnes asks that the agenda items be made clearer. Burgess Bowdler agreed with Burgess Barnes and to leave it where it is on the agenda. Burgess Rogers suggested two Public Comment sections. Other burgesses disagreed with having two Public Comments, but to be clearer on the agenda listings.

NEW BUSINESS

Diving Street discussion

Tabled since this is not an issue.

Planning & Zoning Commission — Paul Collette to Member

A motion by Burgess Bowdler, seconded by Burgess Rogers, to appoint Paul Collette to Planning and Zoning Commission for a two-year term, was unanimously approved.

Gail Woodrow memorial

The board received a letter from Mary Maranell. Mary Maranell will come back with a proposal on where to put a memorial to Gail Woodrow on Wadawanuck Square.

Cannon Square — Buzzi Memorials invoice

A motion by Warden Callahan, seconded by Burgess Barnes to allocate \$1,616 from Borough General Fund to cover additional costs of the granite slabs to be placed under the cannon wheels at Cannon Square, was unanimously approved.

Lighting and sidewalk concerns on Water and Main Streets

Various kinds of street lights were discussed. A discussion ensued regarding lighting and state of Borough sidewalks. Burgess Rogers thinks the two issues should be dealt with as a dual project. Eversource's new fixtures do comply with dark sky's initiative. By next meeting, the burgesses will identify locations on Main Street that are dark. Burgess Rogers will share his photo of bad sidewalks in the Borough. Warden will report at Feb meeting.

Revision to SBO-4 Off Street Parking application

No vote taken. There will be a line added to the application for who is responsible for cost of curb cuts.

Fiscal Year Audit 2022-2023

The audit was completed. There were some recommendations from the auditor. A digital copy will be requested from the auditor.

Consider requests to use Borough property Consider request made by PHGS for parking

A motion by Burgess Rogers, seconded by Burgess Bowdler, to approve the request by the

Portuguese Holy Ghost Society to use three to four parking spaces on Fridays in front of 26 Main St (PHGS) this winter and early spring, February 9, 2024 through March 29, from 11 am to 6 pm, for take away orders only, was unanimously approved.

Borough representative to Ledge Light Health District

A motion by Burgess Barnes, seconded by Burgess Nicholas, to approve the appointment of Borough resident Michelle Petrucelli to Ledge Light Health District, was unanimously approved.

OTHER BUSINESS AND DISCUSSION

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Burgess Nicholas, seconded by Burgess Bowdler, adjournment of the meeting at 8:34 pm, was unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lisa M. Coleman January
23, 2024