

Dunn's Corners Fire District
1 Langworthy Road
Westerly, RI 02891
Minutes
Annual Meeting
July 15, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM, Moderator Matt Thomsen presiding.

Legal Notices - The meeting was advertised in the Westerly Sun on Tuesday July 7, 2015. Notice was posted at the Westerly Community Credit Union's Dunn's Corners Office; Dunn's Corners Market, Dunn's Corners Fire Station #1 on Langworthy Road, Dunn's Corners Mobil, East West Market, Charlestown and Dunn's Corners Fire Station #2 on Post Road, Charlestown. The notice was posted on the district's website and the Rhode Island Secretary of State's e-Town Crier site on June 30, 2015

Safety Protocols – Chief Frink reviewed the fire safety protocols for the meeting's attendees.

Pledge of Allegiance – The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America was conducted.

Moment of Silence – There was a moment of silence observed for those who have passed on from families of members of the Dunn's Corners Fire Department.

Reading of the Call – District Clerk Steve White read the meeting Call. 40 taxpayers signed the attendance roster. A quorum was present.

July 16, 2014 Annual Meeting Minutes - Copies of the minutes of the 2014 Annual Meeting were printed and available for those in attendance.

J Angelo of 20 Rockridge Road pointed out a date typo in the Financial Plan and Operating Budget section of the minutes.

A motion was made seconded and so voted by acclamation to approve the July 16, 2014 Annual Meeting minutes with the date typo corrected.

Reports

Chief's Report – Chief Frink provided an update on the following items.

The Fire Department responded to 717 calls over the past 12 months an increase of 55 over the previous year.

He informed the taxpayers that the state of the department is good. The membership totals 39 with 23 active firefighters, 4 fire police, 8 probationary firefighters, 2 junior fire fighters and 4 admin/life members.

The department had scheduled 84 training classes, drills and work parties amounting to 931 man-hours of training.

The District is monitoring legislative matters regarding fire districts especially as they pertain to the Block report and Lombardi editorial.

The Chief stated that the District received \$14,000 in grants last year for turnout gear, conducting open houses, trench rescue training and forestry equipment. The District did not receive the AFG federal grant to replace outdated fire hose. He went on to inform the taxpayers that he is applying for \$58,000 in grants for the upcoming year to upgrade the Department's communication system.

The District took delivery of Rescue Engine 4 in September 2014. The apparatus over the past year has been extensively used for all it was designed for and has met the needs of the Department.

The District sold Engine 2 over the past year for \$195,000. The Board of Engineers are requesting that the voters approve the use of up to \$178,000 of the sales proceeds for the purchase of capital items and to reduce debt as detailed in the resolutions section.

The Chief reviewed the plans for replacing the municipal fire alarm system which was a project approved at the 2014 Annual Meeting but will require additional funding to implement. He also discussed the process as to how businesses will be able pay back the District over a 4 year period for the approximately \$2,000 - \$2,500 cost for the equipment required.

The Chief discussed the long term capital needs of the District which include upgrades to Station 1 and in 2019 the replacement of all of the Self Contained Breathing Apparatus units at an estimated cost of \$250,000. The items are being reserved for through the District's funds accounts.

The Chief thanked the Operating Committee, Clerk, Tax Collector, Office manager, his officers and firefighters and, all the families and significant others of the firefighters who allow them to take the time to be away from them. He also thanked his wife and children who have been understanding of his absences.

A question was raised by E. Schilke of 27 Fern Drive in regards to the sale of Engine 2 and why the proceeds were not all used to pay down debt on the trucks . The Chief and Treasurer explained that some of the proceeds may be used to pay down the highest interest rate debt which is the note on Station 2 and that in order to hold the line on a tax increase this year the majority of the proceeds will be used for necessary capital purchases.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted by acclamation to approve the Chief's Report.

Treasurer's Report – The Treasurer reviewed the financial statements for the period of June 2014 through May 2015.

The 2014-2015 financial statements showed a net income of \$202,050.11 as a result of the gain on sale of Engine 2 and the past year's tax sale. Additionally, he discussed the District's equity position which stood at 1,896,303.79 and that the District was able to make an additional \$55,000 in principal debt reduction payments on Station 2 during the year.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted by acclimation to accept the Treasurer's Report and accept the fiscal year end 2014-2015 financial statements.

Moderator's Report – The Moderator thanked the members of the Operating Committee, the District's employees and the Department's volunteers who provided a service that cannot be valued.

The Moderator reviewed for the taxpayers proposed contracts to provide fire protection services for both the Shady and Shelter Harbor Fire Districts.

Shady Harbor Fire District proposed contract - The agreement is based on past ones. An annual fee based on the DCFD mil rate applied to the entire Shady Harbor assessment, less 4% for non-fire protection related administrative expenses such as collections and audits. The term of the agreement is 5 years.

A motion was made, seconded and approved by acclimation to authorize the Operating Committee to enter into a 5-year contract with the Shady Harbor Fire District to provide fire protection services based on the Dunn's Corners Fire District mil rate less 4%.

Shelter Harbor Fire District proposed contract - The agreement is based on past ones. Annual fee based on the DCFD mil rate applied to the entire Shelter Harbor assessment, less 4% for non-fire protection related administrative expenses such as collections and audits. For the first three years, there shall be an additional reduction to the bill of \$3,500 to account for being released from the old contract. The term of the agreement is 6 years.

A motion was made, seconded and approved by acclimation to authorize the Operating Committee to enter into a 6-year contract with the Shelter Harbor Fire District to provide fire protection services based on the Dunn's Corners Fire District mil rate less 4% as well as an additional reduction of \$3500 per year for years 1 through 3 of the contract.

Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District- the Operating Committee anticipates negotiating during the upcoming year a new multi-year contract to provide fire protection services to QCBFD.

J. Angelo of 20 Rockridge Road requested information on the number of taxed properties in the district. Information will be provided by the Tax Assessor.

The Moderator discussed issues regarding the Bradford Industrial Park and the Dispatcher. Currently, the DCFD is the first department called when there is an issue at the Bradford Industrial Park even though BIP does not reside in any fire district. The Operating Committee has engaged a litigator in an effort to remove DCFD as the primary responder to this property.

There was an update on the status of the Quonochontaug Grange. The Operating Committee has been working with a volunteer group called "Friends of the Grange" to devise plans for future physical plant improvement to maintain the long term viability of the facility as a community building.

Finally, the Moderator requested volunteers to work on an ad hoc charter review committee to resolve some of the management issues created by firefighters serving on the Operating Committee with the Chief. The Moderator expects to appoint the ad hoc Charter Review Committee at the September 8th Operating Committee meeting.

Tax Assessor's Report – Tax Assessor Diane Nardone reported for the fiscal year 2014 – 2015 property within the town of Westerly had an assessed value of \$916,111,400 and was taxed at a rate of .43 cents per thousand establishing an amount for collection of \$394,086.60. Of that total the District collected 96% or \$380,271.55 plus an additional \$837.66 in interest payments on past due taxes. The overall collection rate of 102% factors in past due amounts collected for the years 2011 thru 2013, bringing the total to \$403,481.75. For the town of Charlestown property had an assessed value of \$637,144,600 and was taxed at a rate of \$.43 cents per thousand establishing an amount for collection of \$273,884.37. The District collected 97% or \$266,463.78 in principal and \$454.42 in interest on past due taxes. The overall collection rate of 103% or \$283,929.54 factors in past due amounts collected for the years 2011 thru 2013.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted by acclimation to accept the Tax Assessor's Report.

Financial Plan and Operating Budget 2015/2016 – The Chief reviewed the proposed expense budget recommended to the taxpayers by the Operating Committee and developed by the Chief and the Board of Engineers. The draft budget totals \$943,234.00, which is an increase of \$48,887 over the 2014/2015 budget the increase to be covered by higher than anticipated General Funds primarily due to the recent tax sale and sale of Engine2.

D. Schilke of 139 Dunn's Corners road asked why the sale proceeds amount for Engine2 in the Chiefs report was different from the amount posted in the financial statements.

Treasurer Delaney responded that the difference was the un-depreciated value of the vehicle remaining on the books of the District which had to be expensed as part of the transaction.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted by acclimation to approve the proposed 2015/2016 budget.

Resolutions:

Wired Alarm System Replacement - Resolved to use \$110,000 from the Equipment Restricted Fund to update the existing fire alarm monitoring system from wired to wireless.

A motion was made seconded and so voted by acclimation to approve the resolution as presented.

Wireless Radio Alarm Boxes - Resolved to use \$76,000 (38 units at \$2000.00 per unit) from the General Fund to purchase wireless radio alarm boxes to replace the wired alarm boxes currently being used in the District. Each user will be given a period of three years after installation to reimburse the District for the cost of the new box. Installation not included.

A motion was made seconded and so voted by acclimation to approve the resolution as presented.

Repeater Site Installation - Resolved to use up to \$18,000 from the proceeds of the sale of Engine 2 credited to the unrestricted General fund to install a new repeater site to provide for better communications within the District.

A motion was made seconded and so voted by acclimation to approve the resolution as presented.

Bay Doors Repair and Replacement - Resolved to use up to \$35,000 from the proceeds of the sale of Engine 2 credited to the unrestricted General fund to replace and repair the Bay doors and associated equipment at Station 1.

A motion was made seconded and so voted by acclimation to approve the resolution as presented.

Pond Boat Purchase - Resolved to use up to \$25,000 from the proceeds of the sale of Engine 2 credited to the unrestricted General fund for the purchase of a pond boat.

There was a taxpayer question in regards to what a pond boat is? The Chief responded that it was a small boat to be used in the District's ponds and streams for search and rescue.

A motion was made seconded and so voted by acclimation to approve the resolution as presented.

Pay down on Station 2 Loan - Resolved to leave it to the OC's discretion to pay down up to \$35,000 on the principal owed on the Station 2 loan from the proceeds of the sale of Engine 2 credited to the unrestricted General fund.

A motion was made seconded and so voted by acclimation to approve the resolution as presented.

Phone System - Resolved to use up to \$10,000 from the proceeds of the sale of Engine 2 credited to the unrestricted General fund to replace the District's phone system.

J. Angelo of 20 Rockridge Road requested clarification as to was it the District's telephone system or was it an alarm system?

The Chief responded that it was for replacement of the District's telephone system and was separate from the wireless alarm system previously discussed.

A motion was made seconded and so voted by acclimation to approve the resolution as presented.

Training Fund – Resolved that \$5,000 in unused training funds in the fiscal 2014/2015 budget be carried over into the 2015/2016 Training Fund.

A motion was made seconded and so voted by acclimation to approve the resolution as presented.

Unrestricted General Fund Disbursement – Resolved that up to \$50,000 be disbursed from the unrestricted General Fund to pay for capital items and improvements within the 2015/2016 budget in an effort to not exceed the previous year’s tax assessment of \$676, 996.

A motion was made seconded and so voted by acclimation to approve the resolution as presented.

Authority To Access Restricted Funds for Unanticipated Repairs - Resolved that the Operating Committee be given the authority to access the Restricted Truck Fund for up to \$10,000.00 to mitigate unanticipated truck repairs and the Restricted Equipment Fund for up to \$5,000.00 to mitigate unanticipated equipment repairs that may occur between Annual Meetings.

A motion was made seconded and so voted by acclimation to approve the resolution as presented.

Ratification and Approval of Acts of Officers - Resolved that each and all of the resolutions, acts and proceedings of the District Officers, as shown by the records of the respective officers in carrying out and promoting the purposes, objects and interests of the Dunn’s Corners Fire District, be and the same approved, ratified and hereby made the acts and deeds of the Dunn’s Corners Fire District.

A motion was made seconded and so voted by acclimation to approve the resolution as presented.

Authorization of Representation - Resolved that the moderator, or such person or persons as the Operating Committee or the Moderator shall designate, be and hereby are fully authorized and empowered to enter objections or legal actions on behalf of the Dunn’s Corners Fire District in reference to any zoning matters, liquor licenses, legislative matters, or any other subject affecting the Dunn’s Corners Fire District.

A motion was made seconded and so voted by acclimation to approve the resolution as presented.

Tax Resolution - Resolved that the taxable inhabitants of said District qualified to vote on any proposition to impose tax, in District meeting legally assembled on the 15th day of July, A.D.,

2015, hereby order the assessment and collection of a tax on the taxable inhabitants and property in the sum of not less than \$650,959 nor more than \$670,487 credited to. Said tax is for ordinary expenses of interest and charges, for the payment of interest and indebtedness in whole or in part of said District and for other purposes authorized by law. The Board of Assessors shall assess and apportion said tax on the inhabitants and ratable property of said District of the 31st day of December, 2014, at 12:00 o'clock Noon, according to law, and shall, on completion of said assessment, date, certify, and sign the same and deliver to and deposit the same in the office of the District Clerk on or before the 15th day of August, A.D. 2015. The District Clerk, on receipt of said assessment, shall forthwith make a copy of the same and deliver it to the District Treasurer, who shall forthwith issue and affix to said copy a warrant under his/her hand, directed to the Collector of Taxes of said District commanding him/her to proceed and collect said tax on the persons and estates liable therefore. Said tax shall be due and payable on and between the first day of September next and the 30th day of September, 2015, and all taxes remaining unpaid on said 30th day of September, A.D. 2015, shall carry, until collected, a penalty at the rate of twelve per centum (12%) per annum upon such unpaid tax. A \$2.00 handling fee will be imposed on reissued tax bills sent for collection purposes. No tax bill sent out shall be less than five and 00/100 (5.00) dollars.

A motion was made seconded and so voted by acclimation to approve the resolution as presented.

Special Appropriation - Resolved that the Treasurer be directed to deposit in the Unrestricted General Fund Surplus the total of the unexpended appropriations as shown by the records of the Treasurer for the fiscal year 2014-2015, and all other monies collected during said fiscal year, but not otherwise appropriated. Provided, however, that prior to January 1, 2016, the Treasurer is authorized to use such portion of said sum of unexpended appropriations and other monies not otherwise appropriated as he or she deems necessary in anticipation of receipt of taxes assessed December 31, 2014.

A motion was made seconded and so voted by acclimation to approve the resolution as presented.

Tax Anticipation Note - Resolved that the District Treasurer be and hereby is authorized and empowered during the current fiscal year of the District, commencing June 1, 2015, and ending May 31, 2016, to borrow such sum or sums of money as shall be necessary for the payment of the current liabilities and expenses of the District, but not to exceed in the whole the sum of Fifty thousand AND NO/100 (\$50,000) DOLLARS and to issue negotiable promissory note or notes of the District therefore, which shall be made payable not later than one (1) year from the respective date or dates thereof. Negotiable notes issued pursuant to the authority hereof shall be signed by the District Treasurer and countersigned by the District Clerk, and such countersignatures shall be conclusive evidence to all holders of such note or notes of the approval and consent of the District and the District Officers to the loan or loans evidenced thereby. All terms and conditions of said note or notes and the method of sale thereof not fixed herein or by the provisions of law or the charter of the District may be fixed by the District

Treasurer. The District Treasurer is hereby authorized and empowered to renew any of said notes from time to time, but any such renewal note shall be due not later than one (1) year of the original note so renewed.

A motion was made seconded and so voted by acclimation to approve the resolution as presented.

Awards and Recognition

A. **Swearing in of Line Officers** - The Chief swore in the following line officers at the meeting:

Deputy Chiefs: Keith Kenyon, Carl Johnson, Tom Algieri

Capt: Dan Schilke

Lieutenants: Jeff Thomas, Station 2 Keith Moody, Nick Schilke

Fire Police Capt. Bob Delaney

B. **Solicitor's Retirement** - The Committee and the Chief recognized Attorney Vin Naccaratto who is retiring from the post of District Solicitor after 42 years of service. The Committee and Chief thanked him for his many years of service and provided him with a gift and commemorative clock to mark the occasion. The soon to be former Solicitor remarked on how he had watched the District grow from meeting at the members' homes to an organization whose budget is approaching \$1.00 million and that he has been proud to be a part of it.

Nominating Committee Report: Andy Schilke, Art Ganz, and Gina Laudone submitted The Nominating Committee report. Committee Member Andy Schilke presented the report.

The Nominating Committee of the Dunn's Corners Fire District submitted to the Electors of the Dunn's Corners Fire District the following Slate of Candidates to serve on the Operating Committee:

- Matt Thomsen – Term to expire 2017
- Ken Martin – Term to expire 2017

There were no further nominations and a motion was made to have the clerk cast one ballot to elect the proposed slate as members at large of the Operating Committee.

Old Business – No old business.

New Business

Election of the Nominating Committee

A motion was made seconded and so voted to approve the 2015-16 Nominating Committee of Andy Schilke, Gina Laudone, and Art Ganz.

Public Comments – Ron Meneo spoke on behalf of “Friends of the Grange” and thanked the Operating Committee for its support of the Grange in the current budget; mentioned the group’s website and that a link was available to it on the DCFD website and briefly discussed the group’s vision for maintaining the Grange as community building and resource.

Adjournment:

A motion was made seconded and so voted by acclamation to adjourn the Annual Meeting of the Dunn’s Corners Fire District at 8:00 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Steve White
District Clerk