

Dunn's Corners Fire District
Operating Committee Meeting
June 8, 2021

The Dunn's Corners Fire District Operating Committee (OC) convened on Tuesday, June 8, 2021 at 6:30 PM at Quonochontaug Grange, 5665 Post Road, Charlestown, Rhode Island.

Attendees were comprised of OC members Chief Keith Kenyon, Ken Martin, Richard Thomsen, Robert Delaney, John Merkel and Attorney Michael Cozzolino. A quorum was present.

Other Attendees: Friends of the Quonochontaug Grange.

John Merkel coordinated the meeting.

Actions of OC (all votes unanimous unless otherwise noted).

Agenda Items:

John Merkel started with the following point of order:

I have received some feedback that I have not done a good enough job of managing our discussions. The feedback is valid. There have been times when the individual who has the floor has been interrupted and I have neglected to stop it. This has not been intentional on my part. I have just allowed myself to get caught up in the discussion and forgotten my role as Moderator. I resolve to do better in the future.

To that end, I would like to first ask for help from my colleagues on the Operating Committee. We are all here because we care about the Dunn's Corners Fire District and take our roles in managing the District safely and effectively very seriously, actually passionately. I ask that we each direct some of that passion into hearing what members of the public and other members of the Operating Committee have to say about the subjects we discuss. We can only make the best decisions for the district if we have the best information to work with. We do not get information by talking, but by listening. So, let's work as hard at hearing other ideas as we do at expressing our own.

I also ask members of the public to remind me when I inevitably get caught up in the discussion and forget to do my job. Simply raise your hand and say, "Point of Order – I had the floor". I will take it from there.

If we all work together, we will have a better Fire District and that is what we are all here for.

Pledge of Allegiance – The meeting started at 6:30 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance and a Moment of Silence.

Next Meeting – The next meeting of the Operating Committee will be Tuesday, July 13, 2021 at 6:30 PM at Station 1.

Previous Meeting Minutes – *A motion was made, seconded and so voted to approve the minutes of the May 11, 2021 Operating Committee meeting.*

FOTQG Report – New rental requests are beginning, working on various marketing options post Covid Restrictions;

Work at the Grange: is being done – Butler/Caterer's Kitchen the warming ovens are pending;
Upcoming/Ongoing maintenance items include shingling East and North side; Parking Area drainage issue;

The Chief is not aware of any active leaks, but thinks the East side has taken a beaten through time; the East side has the most wear and tear;

Ann is trying to get four quotes; two contractors have looked at the shingling job;

John Merkel prefers to wait, if possible, until next year;

No questions.

Treasurer's Report – In Bob Delaney reports as follows:

The District's financial position has ended extremely well. The District is \$100,000.00 to the good and debt has been paid down.

The morale is good amongst everyone.

The auditors find Dunn's Corners Fire District very efficient to work with.

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

Tax Assessors/Collector's Report – Rosalind Choquette presented her report.

As we ended another tax collection year the office is purging all files in preparing of the upcoming tax collection 2021/2022

The Tax Collector's Office has been receiving payment from many clients whose properties were placed on the listing for Tax Sale. We currently have 14 properties to date which are still on the Tax Sale Listing which comprise 3 properties located in Charlestown and 11 properties located in Westerly. The listing posted outside of the office has been kept up should anyone come to inquire as to properties that will be up for sale.

The full advertisement was place in the Westerly Sun and Chariho Time.

The office has been receiving payment from other residents whose properties were in delinquent status but not listed for Tax Sale.

The office continues to make every effort to respond to calls and emails in a timely fashion.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to approve the Tax Collector's Report.

Chief's Report – Chief Kenyon reported the following for May

There were 29 F.C.; 12 EMS for a total of 41; Fire Marshall 34 residential, 3 commercial, 37 inspections;

357 hours of total combined training.

Working with Mike's Computer who gave a bid of \$10,000.00 to cover all equipment and system networking matters and upgrade.

Chief got an estimate for commercial blinds including installation for \$3,000.00.

One fire fighter was recently injured on a call (broken ankle) and will be out until September.

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

Moderator's Comments – John Merkel states he has received emails from Matthew Thomsen regarding the Nominating Committee. Matt has some takers. He has posted notice for various positions on Nominating Committee.

John asked about fire fighters on Operating Committee. Rich states he went to Ethic Board and relays that it is a case by case situation. Ken states that it is hard to get non-fire fighters to join the Operating Committee.

John reported on the different fire district contracts: Shelter Harbor – very happy with agreement just needs to get approval from Board. Their Board meets this month. Attorney Cozzolino drafted an Extension which was signed by all parties prior to May 31, 2021. Central Beach – signed contract, took out verbiage that it renews in a year. Contract will end next may again. Bob Delaney states that any benefit for one district must apply to all.

John is still working on Public Records Request form.

John is still working with Attorney Cozzolino and Bob Delaney on the Chief's contract.

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

Other Business – Budget - Chief Kenyon reviewed the proposed budget. He is trying to use what money is budgeted so no change has to be made. He indicated that the budget increase is about \$26,000.00 but he is still working on it, and the tax rate should stay the same. Bob states a 1.2% increase is very fair.

Credit Card Issue – John Merkel states its not a lot of money. Bob Delaney says it is estimated to be over 80,000 points in the account of the former chief that should be checked on for use in sending fire fighters to training conferences. He requests that the card activity be reviewed for a better estimate of the total points.

Chief Kenyon tried to use credit card to purchase a snowblower earlier this year and it was declined. This should not have been the case.

Bob would like to see a letter written to Credit Card Company/Southwest to obtain points for fire fighters to travel.

Attorney Cozzolino suggested Chief Degraeves to pay for any ticket to use the points. Points are assigned to only a certain person.

John thinks we should get some more information. John will work with Bob and Mary on this matter.

John asked the other members how they felt about the matter, Ken says to donate to Honor Flight if this is going to be long and drawn out; Rich agrees with Ken, Bob wants to know the number before making a decision and John feels more review is needed.

West Beach Road Property – Is identified as Charlestown Tax Assessor's Account No. 32-0070-01. It was acquired on September 30, 1994 and is listed in Book 141 at Page 683 of the Charlestown Land Records. It consists of approximately 23.99 acres. The property is land locked, and Ann will get contact information of the Charlestown Land Trust to see if they have any interest in this property.

Public Comments – Mary Rathbun informed everyone there is a Blood Drive to be held Friday, June 18, 2021 from 2 – 7 in the fire station Cafeteria.

Bob Delaney informed us that the Dunn's Corners School safety door on the second floor has been completed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:02 PM.

Linda F Garabedian, District Clerk