

Dunn's Corners Fire District

1 Langworthy Rd
Westerly, RI 02891

Minutes Operating Committee Meeting December 8, 2015

The Dunn's Corners Fire District Operating Committee (OC) convened on Tuesday, December 8, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. at Station #1.

Attendees were comprised of the OC members Moderator Matt Thomsen, Chief Mike Frink, Treasurer Bob Delaney, Ken Martin, Tom Algiere and Jon Schreier. A quorum was present.

Additional Attendees: District Clerk-Steve White; Grange Manager Deb McManus; from Friends of the Grange Ron Meneo and Tom Doyle; from the Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District Bill Heep and Charles Freedgood

Actions of the OC (all votes unanimous unless otherwise noted):

Agenda Items:

Pledge of Allegiance - The meeting started at 6:00 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Friends of the Quonochontaug Grange – Ron Meneo reviewed a proposed lease for the organization Friends of the Quonochontaug Grange, Inc with the District to help formalize the relationship between both organizations. There was discussion regarding revenue sharing, the budgeted district support to maintain the facility and unallocated recurring expenses.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to have the Moderator sign the "Summary of Lease for the Quonochontaug Grange Building" document striking section 13 "Rights of First Refusal".

There was conversation regarding a Christmas tree which was donated to Friends of the Quonochontaug Grange, Inc and planted in front of the building. It was noted that in the future all plantings would need prior approval of the Operating Committee. The moderator stated that he had given the group approval for the Christmas Tree to be used at the Grange during the holiday season but did not realize that it was going to be planted on the grounds.

Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District Contract– The Committee met with representatives of the Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District (QCBFD) to discuss a framework for a future contract. The representatives of the QCBFD were concerned about the valuations in their District moving up more quickly than that of the DCFD and recommend that DCFD uses the Dunn's Corners year over year percentage change in the aggregate of property tax assessment (i.e., the Grand List) as of 12/31 each year (be it increase or decrease) as a multiplier against the QCB Grand List fixed as of December 31, 2014 or some agreed to

assessment date for the length of the contract. Additionally they discussed that there are members of the QCBFD who are year round residents on fixed incomes and have concerns over rising assessments. The representatives also stated that many residents are seasonal therefore reducing the amount of DCFD resources needed to support the district during the cold weather months.

The majority of the committee members were resolute in their opinion that all of the contracting districts agreements should be written to the same terms and conditions in regards to the bill calculation and use of assessments. The majority of the committee was adamant that any agreement reached for contracted fire protection services be at a rate of payment equivalent to the tax rate paid by the Dunn's Corners Fire District Taxpayers. Finally, committee member K. Martin disputed the notion that properties not used during the winter are substantially less of a fire risk hazard than year round occupancies.

Previous Meeting Minutes – The minutes of the October 13, 2015 meeting were approved as presented. The Minutes of the November 10, 2015 minutes were approved with the addition of the appointment of the Charter Review committee.

Next OC Meeting – The next OC meeting will take place at Station #1 on Tuesday January 12, 2015 at 6:00 p.m.

Treasurer's Report - The Treasurer noted that tax collections are on track and the District is on budget. The second round of tax bills will be going out in mid December and that the past due taxes not yet received by the district was approximately \$64,000. He noted that the auditors have completed their site work and were waiting for a letter from the District's attorney stating that there were no legal actions currently pending against the District.

Chief's Report – The Chief provided the committee with the following update;

- Inspections – Facilities Manager/Fire Fighter Chris Wells has been spending most of his time conducting alarm inspections of the district's businesses.
- Repeater Site – The equipment has been installed and has improved communications in the district. The cost of the project was under budget by \$18,000 in part due to the ability of the district to use a town water tower at no annual cost.
- Bay doors – The doors are installed and have come in \$6,000 under budget.
- Radio Boxes – The installation of the department's components have started.
- Calls – The department responded to 50 calls in November of which 34 were medical and 22 fire.
- Inspections and Plan Reviews – The fire marshals conducted 52 inspections and plan reviews of which 10 were plan reviews, 18 residential inspections and 24 commercial inspections.
- Town Advocacy – The Chief stated he has been engaged with the town on the following; medical marijuana ordinances, house numbering ordinances, an accountability system and a Westerly EOP.
- Grants – The Chief informed the committee that he and Chief Peacock are working on a \$1.0 million four department grant to replace aging SCBA equipment.
- State Wide Advocacy – The Chief advised the committee that he as President of the RI Fire Chiefs' Association has been involved in fire prevention outreach which has included Christmas Tree safety, appearances on the "Road Show" and recruitment and retention ads.

Public Comments – James Angelo asked what happens to funds for projects which are unused. The Treasurer stated that they remain in the appropriate restricted fund and are sometime released by the tax payers at the annual meeting for such items as debt reduction.

Other Business

Weekapaug Fire District Building Fire – The Chief stated that 16 members of the department responded to the mutual aid request. The Chief complimented the members who responded for doing a great job and commended Deputy Chief Algieri for his efforts. T. Algieri complemented the Chief for his leadership at the scene and for all of the training requirements that he has initiated and the positive impact they are having on the performance of the members in the field.

Weekapaug Billing Motion – Treasurer Delaney noted that after the Weekapaug Fire District(WFD) switched its fire protection contract to the Misquamicut Fire District, it was notified that it would be billed anytime the DCFD responded to mutual aid in the Weekapaug Fire District at a rate established by the State of Rhode Island.

The Treasurer made a motion to have the Chief research the proper costs and have the District invoice WFD for that amount. The motion was seconded by Chief Frink to bring the matter to a vote; Discussion of the matter included the Chief stating that local cooperation with the other departments has been good and that invoicing WFD may undue some of the goodwill which has been developed over the past year. There was also conversation regarding the potential impact this could have on mutual aid to DCFD contracting districts.

The Treasurer took the position that DCFD taxpayers were promised that Weekapaug's District would be billed if DCFD had to respond there for any incidents after they chose to end their contract relationship for a lower cost contract with the Misquamicut Fire District. Not billing Weekapaug will set a precedent for future incidents where DCFD man power and equipment are called to that District for service. This also opens the door for other Contract Districts to move their contracts for service to other districts for lower cost and receive free service from DCFD if needed at DCFD tax payer expense. Not charging Weekapaug affirms that they made a very good "business" decision. Contract elsewhere at less cost and receive free DCFD service if needed.

The vote was 5 to 1 against the motion with Treasurer Delaney voting for it.

Bradford Industrial Park (BIP) Skate Park – The Chief informed the committee that BIP has leased part of its facility for use as skate park without getting proper approvals. The matter has been referred to the state fire marshal.

Moderator

Contracting Districts – *A motion was made seconded and so voted to authorize the Moderator to sign new contracts with the Shelter Harbor and Shady Harbor Fire Districts to provide fire protection services under the terms approved at the 2015 Annual Meeting.*

Bradford Fire District Contract – The moderator informed the committee that the Bradford Fire District has verbally agreed to a 2 year contract with a 1 year option.

Bradford Industrial Park – The Moderator informed the committee that attorney Patrick McKinney, esquire was ready to file and serve a complaint on behalf of the Dunn’s Corners Fire District looking for relief from being the first department on call to respond to BIP fire alarm situations other than for life threatening or confirmed fire related incidents.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20.

Steve White District Clerk