

Board of Warden and Burgesses
Monthly Meeting ~ February 21, 2017
Minutes (REVISED DRAFT)

CALL TO ORDER

Warden Jeffrey Callahan called the monthly meeting of the Borough of Stonington Board of Warden and Burgesses to order at Borough Fire House at 7:38 pm. Present were Burgesses Howard Park, Karen von Ruffer Hills, Michael Adair, Robert Scala, Amy Nicholas, and Amanda Barnes. Clerk-Treasurer Lisa Coleman was absent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by Burgess Scala, seconded by Burgess Park, the minutes from the monthly meeting held on January 17, 2017, were unanimously approved. On a motion by Burgess Scala, seconded by Warden Callahan, the minutes of the special meeting held on February 1, 2017 were approved by Scala, Callahan, Park, and Adair. Barnes, Nicholas, and von Ruffer Hills abstained.

PRESENTATION OF PROCLAMATION

Warden Callahan presented Bill Teixeira with a formal resolution declaring June 28, 2017 “William Teixeira Day” in Stonington Borough, in recognition of his many years of service to the Borough and surrounding communities.

REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Ms. Perry reported collections of \$3,500.06. She prepared W-2’s and 1099’s during the month.

CORRESPONDENCE

Received letters from the First Selectman’s office (regarding stone breakwater ownership); Al Razzano and Jean Fiore requesting to be appointed to Planning & Zoning Commission); citation and summons re: 147 Water, LLC; and copy of letter from SPD to Michele Crowley, regarding the Blessing of the Fleet 5k Race later this year.

REPORT OF CLERK-TREASURER: There was none as Ms. Coleman is away.

REVIEW OF BILLS/YTD FINANCIAL REPORT

Bills totaled \$76,083. Net income for year-to-date is \$379,122. Reserve stands at \$251,413, or about four months operating expenses.

WARDEN’S REPORT

Warden Callahan reported that he met with the Town’s First Selectman and his staff to discuss options for resolving various appeals by opponents of the dog park. He also attended a meeting in Town Hall concerning the old stone breakwater behind Stonington Commons. Congress and the Army Corps of Engineers have transferred ownership to the State, and the First Selectman has requested the CT attorney general to make a formal determination as to which municipality owns it. The Warden also met during the month with candidates for positions in Borough government.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Streets- Commissioner Park met with Sullivan Paving to discuss the Bayview Avenue project (paving and crosswalk) and to discuss replacing the crosswalk on Summit Street. The new wheels were mounted on the easterly cannon in Cannon Square. The crew put in many hours dealing with the snow/sleet/rain storms of February 9 and 11.

Fire – Chief Hoadley reported 9 calls in January. He stated that 911 is working properly from the fire house, but he wants to test it from other Main Street locations to confirm that the problem is resolved. Main Street appears to be the only Borough street that is affected. Chief Hoadley starts the second half of Fire Marshal School this week.

Parks & Trees- Commissioner Barnes had nothing to report.

Public Buildings- Commissioner Adair has contacted two more companies in addition to Overhead Door to provide proposals to replace the vehicle doors in the fire house. He met with Performance Door of N. Franklin, who will provide a quote to replace all the doors. Parma Doors of Smithfield, RI will meet with Borough representatives in early April. We expect to have three quotes by late April.

Sidewalks - Commissioner Scala had nothing to report.

Police – Commissioner Nicholas stated that the SPD report for January indicated there were 44 incidents, including one arrest.

Utilities- Commissioner von Ruffer Hills had nothing to report.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Carol Martin: Noted that there was ice on the footbridge after the snow storm and asked who is responsible for clearing the footbridge. Burgess Park stated that the Borough Street Dept is responsible for the footbridge; he also pointed out that the Town and Borough share responsibility for clearing the viaduct.

Richard Easton: First, complimented Commissioner Park on installing the new wheels on the cannon. Mr. Park stated that the temporary supports would be removed after the cannon position had been adjusted. Then Mr. Easton pointed out that the Borough Charter (Chapter 7) requires that the Borough's fiscal year must be set by a Borough ordinance, and no such ordinance exists. Warden Callahan took his comment under advisement. Mr. Easton questioned the Board's decision to purchase a new street sweeper through a lease rather than purchasing it outright and saving several thousand dollars. Warden Callahan responded that he is concerned about anticipated but unknown legal costs associated with ongoing lawsuits related to P&Z decisions, among other unpredictable expenses over the remainder of the year. He recommended, and the Board concurred, that it would be prudent to use a lease purchase.

That led to discussions about the recent spike in legal actions following P&Z Commission decisions. Everyone agreed that it would be highly desirable if these disputes could be settled without contentious and expensive legal action, but neither the Board of Warden & Burgesses nor the P&Z Commission has authority to stop property owners from appealing P&Z decisions. Warden Callahan stated that he and Borough Atty Nick Kepple have made several attempts to work out compromises in both the dog park and lighthouse disputes, without success thus far.

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Consider letter to First Selectman:** Warden Callahan moved and Burgess Park seconded, sending the letter drafted by Warden Callahan to First Selectman Simmons. The letter concerns the Town's plan to install a fence in the so-called dog park. Motion passed unanimously.
- **Budget discussion:** Warden Callahan distributed copies of the current draft budget for FY 17-18. The Revenue portion of the budget is incomplete because the Town has not provided the 2016 Grand List figures, and therefore income from property taxes, which represent about 70% of the Borough's annual revenue, cannot be calculated. The Town Assessor's Office hopes to have those figures by the end of February.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Consider requests to use Borough property:** None
- **Consider appointing Jean Fiore and Al Razzano as alternate members of P&ZC**
A motion by Burgess Nicholas, seconded by Burgess Adair, to appoint Jean Fiore and Al Razzano as alternate members of P&ZC with terms ending December 2019 passed unanimously.
- **Schedule Annual Meeting and budget public hearing:** After some discussion the Board decided to hold the Annual Meeting on Saturday April 22, 2017 at 10 am in Borough Hall. The budget public hearing will be held before the regular W&B meeting on March 20th in Borough Hall.

ADJOURNMENT:

- On a motion by Burgess Scala, seconded by Burgess Park, adjournment of the meeting at 8:45 pm, was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey Callahan, Warden
February 22, 2017