

**Borough of Stonington  
Board of Warden and Burgesses Regular Monthly Meeting  
February 20, 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 Stonington Borough Fire House. Present, in addition to Warden Schefers were Burgesses Kevin Rogers, Amy Nicholas, and Amanda Barnes, and Clerk-Treasurer Lisa Coleman. Burgess Kevin Bowdler was on ZOOM. Approximately 24 members of the public were present.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

On a motion by Burgess Nicholas, seconded by Burgess Barnes, approval of the minutes of the monthly meeting of January 17, 2024 as amended to correct the spelling of Wayland's Wharf, were approved.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

RECEIVED:

Application-Blessing of the Fleet 5K race

Application-Art Walk

PKF O'Connor Davies audit presentation

Ed Smith's letter regarding traffic issues

Dennis Neumann-email regarding trees

Ann Lobdell-letter regarding sidewalks and trees (will be added to the package)

**MOVE FROM NEW BUSINESS TO EARLIER ON AGENDA**

A motion by Burgess Barnes, seconded by Burgess Nicholas, to move the Auditor's (PKF O'Connor Davies) Fiscal Year Presentation of Financial Statements from New Business to Clerk-Treasurer report location on the agenda, was unanimously approved.

**REPORT OF CLERK-TREASURER**

Katherine Patnaude, partner from PFK O'Connor Davies in charge of the Borough audit. Warden and Burgesses were given the Y/E June 30, 2023 audit presentation, copies of which were available at the meeting. The opinion on the financial statements was unmodified. General fund budget highlights – Revenue variance was favorable by \$48,000 and the Expenditure variance was favorable for \$53,000. ARPA funds had revenues and expenditures of \$70,000, unspent ARPA funds at year-end balance of \$119,000. The reserve for Capital/Nonrecurring fund had a fund balance increase of \$32,000 with a year-end balance of \$92,000. The Infrastructure Reserve Fund had a fund balance decrease by \$10,000 with a year-end balance of \$33,000. For the Capital Assets the significant additions were fire equipment additions in the amount of \$16,000 and road improvement additions of \$123,000. Long Term Debt decreased by \$106,000 due to principal payments to a balance of \$109,000.

General fund--Unassigned fund balance which was 45% of budgetary expenditures for total of \$583,000. Net change in fund balance increase of \$16,000. Total revenues were above budget by \$48,706. Other financing sources were down by \$88,136.

Letter was included in the report and there were no uncorrected mis-statements in the financials and there were no material adjustments. There were no concerns.

While Burgess Bowdler was connected via Zoom, a discussion happened about the budget report, we should have spent in theory 63.56% of the budget and in reality, we have spent 61% of our budget. Warden mentioned that the budget may have significant overruns and underruns due to have expenditures coming in at different times of the year. Of note, is the sewer system overflow in the firehouse that just happened. There were a lot of expenditures due to the two storms and damage to rights of way and the Point. The Point has been resurfaced and regraded three times this year. Burgess Bowdler asked if there will be additional charges on the firetruck accident. The insurance will pay all but the \$500 deductible. We have been paid the \$29,000. Burgess Barnes asked about the insurance for Main St for the tree. The police department is pursuing this.

#### **REVIEW OF BILLS/YTD FINANCIAL REPORT; ARPA UPDATE**

Bills for the period January 12, 2024 through February 16, 2024 totaled \$53,727.37. I&E through February 16, 2024 shows total revenue to date of \$1,461,816.24; and net income to date of \$481,695.01. Balance of ARPA funds is \$37,016.

#### **WARDEN'S REPORT**

Did not attend the SCOOG meeting in January but did attend the SCOOG Legislative Meeting Attended Danielle's Staff Meeting and our one on one bi-monthly meeting

Completed Draft MS4 (Stormwater) Borough Report to Town Engineer. Report of how much material is removed from each storm drain.

Conducted Review of Stormwater event damage with Town Emergency Planning Director (Brian Schneider) and state and federal officials. Orchard St and Maplewood losses were noted but New London County did not meet the FEMA aid requirements. Warden will meet with Schneider and State Regional Director of Event Mitigation shortly. There will be a presentation at LaGrua about stormwater and flooding in Stonington by Henri Gourd.

Submitted CRS/Fema report.

#### **BOROUGH CLOCK –**

None

#### **COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS**

##### **Streets & Sidewalks (Schefers)**

Conducted monthly brush pickup.

Conducted Christmas tree pickup.

Continued Park maintenance.

Removed sand, seaweed, and storm debris from various Borough locations  
Graded and resurfaced Point Parking Lot twice due to Storm damage  
Addressed flood related storm drain issues on Diving, Main and Bradley  
Reviewed Flooding and Snow responses and problems/issues with Borough Highway Foreman. I will be writing another letter regarding the parking ordinances during snowstorms.  
Mentioned this under Burgess Rogers report that Burgess Barnes and Warden will walk through the Borough streets and sidewalks again and work with Rogers on a report.

### **Fire & Emergency Management (Nicholas/Hoadley)**

SBFD responded to 5 Alarms in January, 2024, they were as follows:

- 1-10-2024 1:06pm 4ft. of water in basement 33 Elm St. (helped pump)
- 1-12-2024 10:49pm Fire Alarm Activation 214 N. Water St. (burnt cake in oven)
- 1-13-2024 12:01pm 3ft. of water in basement 33 Elm St. (helped pump)
- 1-18-2024 12:40pm Wires down 205 N. Water St. (utility, called Frontier)
- 1-22-2024 4:34pm Water emergency 6 Maplewood Lane (outside shower pipe)

### **January Police Incident Report**

No report from the police since they are switching computer systems. Once again, I want to mention the parking ordinances.

### **Parks, Trees & Rights of Way (Barnes)**

I met with representatives from Eversource on Friday, February 9, as they will be doing some tree pruning and trimming throughout the Borough in the very near future (mostly on Main and Water Streets.) Should anyone have any questions about this, please reach out to me so that I can provide contact information for the people we are working with at Eversource.

### **Public Buildings (Rogers)**

We hired a group to do a thorough walk-through of the Borough Hall and Firehouse. We went through the attics down into the garage and subfloors. Found that mostly everything was fine at Borough Hall and at the firehouse except the floor underneath one of the firetrucks is bubbling and we are having that fixed. In addition, the bell outside is having the rust removed and repainted. Chief pointed out that there is no central air in the Firehouse and the window air conditioners are not handling the job.

Met with Julia Leeming and the designs are all coming into shape and will go out to bid in the a few weeks.

The Cannon wheels have been returned. They need to be oiled with linseed and painted with several coats of paint. Met with Chris Curran, Buzzi Memorials, and painter to shave off some money and I found \$1,000 and will be painting the other set of wheels at the same time to extend their life for 6 to 10 years as well.

### **Utilities & Sanitation (Bowdler)**

#### **Sanitation**

I issued six 'Warning' citations and one \$100 fine, all for yellow bags not being properly contained within a closed bin on the night before collection.

### **Utilities**

I have conducted a six-month audit of duplicate Eversource poles. The good news is that three duplicate poles have been removed and no new duplicate poles have been installed. We have nine duplicate poles remaining in the Borough. The bad news is that there are many bases around the new poles that need to be fixed with either concrete or bitumen. I originally thought that this was the homeowner's responsibility, but Teresa Jackman from Eversource has asked me to provide a list of poles that need to be fixed and an Eversource crew will come and fix them. We have 13 poles that have bases that need fixing. I have sent a summary spreadsheet and photos of the above issues to our point person at Eversource.

### **Street Lighting**

At January's meeting we discussed street lighting, and I said I would do a review of areas on Water St and Main Street that are particularly dark. We have a streetlight on nearly every street corner that projects light mainly on the intersection with some additional light also hitting the footpath closest to the pole upon which the light fixture is attached. The lighting is not uniform from one intersection to the next because the poles *are* on different sides of the street. The darkest areas are in the middle section between each intersection. I have shaded in red the darkest areas on Water Street and Main St. There are two poles on Main St which do not have proximate neighbors and could be considered for adding streetlights. The purpose however of streetlights is primarily for safe driving, not for safe walking. Pedestrians receive an indirect benefit from the streetlights, but it is not necessarily solving the specific issue we are trying to solve, which is safe walking around the Borough. We also want to minimize light trespass. I am sure that there is a solution to provide a consistent and non-invasive lighting to nighttime pedestrians. I do not feel qualified to solve this issue and think this is an area where we need expert guidance on how to proceed. As an aside, I noticed that we have a couple of different non-street light options in the Borough. Should we try to be consistent? I will come to the next meeting with ideas and additional information. Warden Rogers thinks we should do the sidewalks and streetlights at the same time.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Resident Jesse Diggs of 8 School St. thanked the Warden for his recent letter to all Borough residents and posting the meetings on the viaduct bridge. It looks like when looking at the financials that you are going forward with the public restrooms being in Borough Hall and I don't see anything on the financials. Warden pointed out that yes, ARPA money is set aside and Infrastructure funds and LOSIP monies are available. We won't know the cost until the bids come in nor who from SVIA will be donating. I feel it is important that Amtrak know that CLA recommends repairing not replacing the viaduct bridge. Warden says we don't have a conceptual design yet.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### **Comfort Station Update**

Burgess Rogers said that once Julia's drawings are complete, it can go out to bid. The sewer pipe problem will be fixed at the same time.

**Viaduct update**

See Warden report above. The meeting with DOT and Amtrak will be held be on March 18 regarding egress and ingress.

**Draft Vendor Ordinance**

Email to Don Maranell and Tom Zanarini has not been replied to. Warden will clarify with Zanarini. Warden will add to the March agenda.

**Water Street Flooding Project Update**

Issue is the storm drain in front of Dog Watch Café will be addressed. Town is doing it for the Borough and we are reimbursing the Town. Might need removing material and flushing out. Burgess Barnes asked how many we do each year, and it is once.

Pam Mola sent a letter regarding the outflow at Wayland's Wharf. Warden has talking with CLA, and the approval of permits have not been returned yet and we stop and watch for another year or two; however, proceed with the detailed engineering to have a "shovel ready" project in case the problem returns.

**Infrastructure Funds**

A motion by Burgess Barnes, seconded by Burgess Nicholas, to allocate Infrastructure Funds not to exceed \$25,000 towards an engineering design of the pedestrian footbridge, was unanimously approved.

The Warden will get an estimate for the engineering design.

**Recreational Vehicles and Motor Homes (Ordinance Clarification)**

Warden and Attorney Kepple will sit down to discuss.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Consider requests to use Borough property**

**Consider request made by St. Michael/Norwich RCDC for the Blessing of the Fleet 5K Race**

A motion by Burgess Nicholas, seconded by Burgess Rogers, to approve the request by St. Michael Parish/Norwich RCDC to use Town Dock and Borough Streets for the Blessing of the Fleet 5K on Thursday, July 25 from 4:00-8:00 pm, subject to receiving insurance certificate, was unanimously approved.

**Consider request made by St. Michael/Norwich RCDC for the Blessing of the Fleet Event and Procession**

A motion by Burgess Nicholas, seconded by Burgess Barnes, to approve the request by St. Michael Parish/Norwich RCDC to use Town Dock and Borough Streets for the Blessing of the

Fleet Event and Procession on Saturday, July 28 from 12:00-4:00 pm, subject to receiving insurance certificate, was unanimously approved.

**Consider request made by Stonington Borough Merchants Association for the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Art Walk**

A motion by Burgess Nicholas, seconded by Burgess Barnes, to approve the request by Stonington Borough Merchants Association to use Water Street between High and Church, Wadawanuck Square driveway and green with access to outlets for the purpose of approximately five food vendors and music, on Saturday, September 14<sup>th</sup> (rain date Sunday, September 15<sup>th</sup>) from 10 am-4 pm, road to be closed at 7:30 am, for the Sixth Annual Art Walk- a one day outdoor, art show with musicians and food vendors, artists will set up in the center of Water Street and music will be at select locations along the road, subject to receiving insurance certificate, was unanimously approved.

**Budget Presentation**

Warden asked all Burgesses/Commissioners to get their figures to him the 2024/25 budget. The draft budget will be available, with the two added columns added.

**Ed Smith**

Referred the letter to Lisa Tepper Bates (police commissioner) and Burgess Nicholas

**Dennis Neumann – email concerning trees on Water Street**

Referred to Burgess Barnes who will look at it. Also mentioned were the screws and tree tags that are being grown over.

**OTHER BUSINESS AND DISCUSSION**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

A motion by Burgess Nicholas, seconded by Burgess Barnes, to go into Executive Session at 8:30 pm was unanimously approved. Executive Session ended at 9:10 am and no votes were taken.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Burgess Nicholas, seconded by Burgess Barnes, adjournment of the meeting at 8:30 pm, was unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Lisa M. Coleman  
Feb 25, 2024