

**Board of Warden and Burgesses
Annual Meeting~April 23, 2016**

The 216th Borough and Budget Meeting of the Borough of Stonington was called to order in Borough Firehouse at 9:00 AM by Warden Jeff Callahan. Present were Burgesses Michael Adair, Robert Scala, Amanda Barnes, Amy Nicholas, Howard Park, and Clerk-Treasurer Lisa Coleman. Also present were 29 Borough residents.

ADMINISTRATIVE REMINDERS:

- Warden Jeff Callahan asked that residents in attendance turn off their cell phones.
- Warden Jeff Callahan explained that under the Borough Charter only those citizens over the age of eighteen, who are listed on the official voters list for the Borough of Stonington, and/or citizens who are listed on the Borough of Stonington Grand List as having taxable property with an assessed value of at least \$1,000 are eligible to vote in this Annual Borough Meeting.

APPOINTMENT OF MODERATOR:

- A motion to appoint Borough resident Scott Bates as moderator of the Annual Meeting, made by Burgess Park and seconded by Burgess Scala, was unanimously approved.
- Moderator Scott Bates thanked the Warden and Burgesses for their work on behalf of the Borough of Stonington. He welcomed and thanked the residents of the Borough of Stonington in attendance.
- Moderator Scott Bates asked that we all stand as he led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- On a motion by Borough resident Jack Gorby, seconded by Borough resident Michael Schefers, acceptance of the minutes from the April 18, 2015 Annual Borough and Budget Meeting, was unanimously approved.

WARDEN'S REPORT/BUDGET PRESENTATION:

UPDATE --- Weather can have a major impact on life – and budgets -- in the Borough, as we saw last winter. This year was different. This winter was much milder in terms of both snowfall and temperatures compared with 2015. As a result, we spent much less on snow removal and building repairs. Of course, winter is not the only potential troublemaker for us. Don't forget that the Atlantic hurricane season officially begins in a little over five weeks. Since Sandy, we've enjoyed three benign summers; let's hope for more of the same. But recognizing the reality of sea level rise, the Borough is participating with the Town in developing a so-called "Resiliency Plan" that will help guide future development along the coast. The Town applied for and won a state grant of \$150,000 that will pay for the project, which should be completed by fall of 2017. Public input, which is an important part of the effort, will be solicited after the project starts in a month or so.

Those of you who were here last year will recall that the budget that was passed included money to pay the first installment of a nine-year lease-purchase agreement for two new fire engines. Shortly after that budget was passed, the Borough signed the agreement with Pierce Manufacturing Co. of Appleton, Wisconsin, and those two engines are now here. As you leave the meeting today, please take time to look them over and ask questions of the fire fighters who are standing by. Incidentally, the old 1985 pumpers, which no longer meet US OSHA standards, are being sold to a town in Albania.

OTHER ACTIVITIES SINCE LAST ANNUAL MEETING — Last summer, Gold Street was repaved, and the drive to the Stonington Free Library was paved. A new boiler was installed in the Borough Fire House, replacing one that had repeatedly shut down during cold weather. The flat roof over the stairway and elevator in Borough Hall was replaced, and the chimney was rebuilt, finally putting a halt to several leaks. The Fire Department responded to 110 calls, a ten percent increase over the previous year. Police activity was normal. “Dog park” matter is working itself to resolution. The annual Borough audit for the year ending 30 June 2015 showed another increase in net assets to 5.13 million dollars. Our cash reserve currently stands at about 150 thousand dollars, which is equivalent to two months operating costs.

PLANS FOR COMING YEAR – Aside from the usual parades, fairs, and street repairs, the major activity on the schedule this summer is selecting a new Borough fire chief. Jeff Hoadley, who has been a volunteer firefighter in the Borough for over 40 years and the chief for a quarter century, has decided to step down. For many of us, he is the only fire chief we’ve known. But after responding to literally thousands of calls in all sorts of weather, including the potentially devastating Monsanto fire in 2003 and post-Sandy flooded basements; and guiding the department through major equipment and organizational upgrades, he has decided to take a break. The Borough owes Jeff an enormous debt for his service.

After Jeff announced his decision to not seek another term as fire chief, I formed a committee to guide the selection of his successor. The committee is made up of four senior firefighters plus three “civilians” including me. After evaluating the demands of the chief position and the need to invest more resources in the fire marshal position, the committee decided to create a full-time position that would be both chief and fire marshal. This is what three of the Town’s other five departments did some time ago. We plan to post the position in the next month and conduct interviews over the summer. I recognize that moving to a full-time chief is a significant departure from tradition and past practice in the Borough, but I am convinced that it is the right thing to do. The fire department is essential for the protection of people and property in the Borough and surrounding area, and it must have strong, committed leadership.

There was applause and a standing ovation for Fire Chief Jeff Hoadley. Chief Hoadley thanked the many people who helped the fire department, including current and past Borough Wardens he has served under -- Michael Blair, Dorothy Papp, Andrew Maynard, Don Maranell, Paul Burgess, and Jeff Callahan. He also thanked the residents of the Borough who have been supportive of the capital purchases and budgets of the fire department through the years. He thanked his officers and the dedicated volunteers. He concluded by thanking his wife.

WILLIAMS FUND – The Borough is fortunate to have two funds created by generous former Borough citizens that can be used to help current residents in need. One is the Waldron Fund, which will be discussed later in the meeting. The other is the William Williams Fund, which was established in 1917 with a bequest of some \$5,500. It is overseen by the Warden and the Clerk-Treasurer. Over the past year the Williams Fund has assisted four residents and disbursed a total of \$6,750. The current balance is about \$78,900. I encourage you to think of these funds when you decide which charitable causes to support this year.

As I do each year at this event I want to recognize and thank people that I haven’t mentioned already: First, the volunteers who participate in our boards and commissions—P&Z, led by Chris Errichetti; ZBA led by Bob Montgomery; and the Harbor Management Commission, which is a joint commission with the Town; five of the ten members are Borough residents. The second group are the paid staff, full time and part time: Barbara Perry in the Borough Office; Sue Cordeiro and Roger Collelo in the Street Dept; Dave Atkinson, our zoning officer; the Fire

Department officers, Chief Hoadley, Deputy Chief Teixeira, and Asst. Chief Mitchell; and our part-time Fire Marshal, George Brennan. The third group are elected officials: my colleagues on the Board of Warden and Burgesses, Michael Adair, Amanda Barnes, Amy Nicholas, Howard Park, and Bob Scala, who in their roles as commissioners oversee the streets, sidewalks, parks, fire department, public buildings, and public safety. And our other elected officials: clerk-treasurer, Lisa Coleman, Borough tax assessor, Michael Schefers, and our tax collector, Tom Sanford, who has served for years and steadfastly declines to accept a salary.

Without all these people, the Borough simply couldn't and wouldn't function. I invite other members of the community who are interested in serving on one of these boards or commissions or in the volunteer fire department to contact me.

In closing I want to remember some local citizens who died in the past year: Emily Lynch; Michael Blair; Nick Reardon; and David Clapp. Each of these people, in their own way, played an important role in this community and contributed to making Stonington Borough the unusual and wonderful place that it is.

ACT ON PROPOSED BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2016:

Introductory comments made by Warden Jeff Callahan. He reviewed the FY 2016-2017 proposed budget, copies of which were distributed and are available at Borough Hall. On the revenue side, the totals are \$1,138,490.00. There will be a 1 mill increase in our property taxes. On the expenditure side there were no significant changes in most of the lines except the change in the fire chief position. Jeff, there was something here you said about allocation for capital improvements. The expenditures budgeted total is \$1,138,490.00.

Resident Joe Larkin asked why we don't vote line by line.

Resident Lisa Tepper Bates thanked the Warden and Burgesses and acknowledged the thoughtful proposal by the Board on the Fire Chief paid position.

- On a motion by Burgess Scala, seconded by Borough Resident Michael Schefers, to accept the proposed annual budget (for which a public hearing was held on March 21 2016) for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2017, was passed by majority. (27 yes, 1 opposed, one abstention.)

CONSIDER A HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM:

In order to receive funding under the state's Local Capital Improvement Program, the Borough must apply for assistant on a project that is part of a current approved five-year capital improvement program. Each project is reviewed by the Board prior to initiation.

Following is a summary of the Street Commissioner's five-year proposal for infrastructure, major roadway, curbing, and sidewalk improvements.

Highway Department Capital Improvement Program

2016/2017	Partial repaving of Orchard & Church Streets; repairs to Hancox storm drains	\$100,000
2017/18	Cross, Front & Diving Streets	\$150,000
2018/19	Pearl & Cliff (north end) Streets	\$160,000
2019/20	Denison Avenue	\$160,000

2020/21

Water Street

\$250,000

Resident Joe Williams, 1 Church St. had questions about the assessment done by an engineering report that is eight years old. Warden Callahan and Burgess Park said that the roads are walked over and reviewed and reassessed each year.

All 29 residents in attendance voted to adopt the highway department capital improvement program.

SELECT TRUSTEES FOR THE WALDRON FUND:

Borough resident and current Waldron Fund trustee Michael Schefers provided an overview of the Waldron Fund and its activities for the fiscal year 2015/2016.

- Last year we were successful in further reducing the number of returned mailings by comparing addresses with Borough voting and motor vehicle/ homeowner tax rolls.
- In late April of last year, we did make two additional Spring gifts in the amount of \$1000.00.
- In the fall/winter we assisted four people in the amount of \$3650.00.
- In the winter/spring we assisted three people in the amount of \$1500.00
- As you may know the Waldron Fund provides assistance from October thru April so the aforementioned numbers may change given today's date.
- The current Borough of Stonington/Waldron Fund Checking account balance is \$53,890.55 It was our intent to place our principal funds (upon their maturity) with The Community Foundation of Southeastern Connecticut, where it was anticipated that we would earn interest far exceeding the average returns we are now realizing. Until we can obtain pro-bono legal counsel, however, that move is on hold. The legal costs connected with the Trust and the associated interpretation/transfer, makes the change imprudent.
- The Waldron Funds holds \$70,201.18 in two CD's earning 0.995% and 1.59%, with maturities in September of 2017. Again, these funds are impacted by the above referenced discussion concerning the CFSC.
- Community contributions this year totaled \$750.00, up from \$250.00 in 2014/2015.
- The Trustees of the Waldron Fund: Amanda Mann, Gillian Patrick, Michael Schefers.
- On a motion made by Warden Callahan, seconded by resident Jack Gorby, to accept the Waldron Fund report made by Michael Schefers and the slate of three candidates including Amanda Crane Mann, Michael Schefers, and Gillian Patrick, passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion by Burgess Scala, seconded by resident Michael Schefers, adjournment of the meeting at 9:36 AM was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa M. Coleman, Clerk-Treasurer
August 15, 2016