

**Borough of Stonington
Board of Warden and Burgesses Budget Hearing and Regular Monthly Meeting
April 15, 2024
MINUTES**

Warden Michael Schefers called the monthly meeting and budget hearing of the Borough of Stonington Board of Warden and Burgesses to order at 6:32 p.m. The meeting was held at Borough Hall. Present, in addition to Warden Schefers were Burgesses Kevin Rogers, Kevin Bowdler, Amy Nicholas, and Amanda Barnes, and Clerk-Treasurer Lisa Coleman. Approximately 8 members of the public were present.

PUBLIC HEARING ON BUDGET

Mill is slightly reduced for this budget. The income percentage from investments, being a new addition this year, is anticipated to be a 4% return. In this draft budget, LOCIP is to be removed this year. Fire Protection Fees for Lord's Point and Stonington Fire will increase, however the contracts are being re-negotiated. We have an election next year, line 103 is \$5,000. Line 125, Professional services are being reduced. Line 108, Health Insurance is reduced. Line 126, Bank Fees are increased. Line 205, Professional fees is increased. Lines 304 and 305 are increased due to Maintenance of trucks and Tools increase. Line 343, suggested increase to \$45,000. Chief, Deputy Chief, and Fire Marshal to be increased by COL of 4.5%, Line 656 as well. Line 366, Station Coverage is increased to cover the expense of Chief taking every other weekend off. Line 502, Heating Oil is increased. Line 504 and 505, and 565 Water, Sewer, and Supplies, Janitorial in Borough Hall are increased due to anticipated Public Restroom Expenses. Line 802, Tree Maintenance is reduced. Line 805 Signs, Surveys and ROW increase.

Allocations to Special Funds, Infrastructure Reserves increase to \$256,000. (MICHAEL, I am unsure if this total is correct, as well as \$235,000 was a total mentioned) Truck Fund increase to \$31,000, the Clock Fund, Wayland's Wharf, LOCIP, Cannon Fund lines are being removed and added as lines under the Infrastructure Reserve.

The total revenue is \$1,448,551. Total expenses is \$1,448,551.48 and the \$42,500 added. Mill rate is .00213

Capital Improvement Program 2024-

PROPOSED

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM: 2024-2028 (rev 4.15-24)

FY 24-25: REPAIR UPPER CLIFF STREET AND AROUND CANNON SQUARE
(\$70,000) (\$80,000) SIDEWALK REPAIRS)

FY 25-26: PAVE BROAD STREET (Main to Water); PAVE DIVING STREET
(\$150,000)

FY 26-27: PAVE PEARL STREET (Main to Water); PAVE NORTHWEST STREET (\$130,000)

FY 27-28: UPPER WATER VIADUCT TO DODSON (TBD)

Public Comment on the budget –

Burgess Kevin Rogers suggested we do a Borough Boundaries Walk to look at the streets. Burgess Bowdler suggested we talk with the “Town Engineer” and find out how they review streets. Lisa Tepper Bates pointed out a structural engineer explained to her that sand keeps eroding, and no one knows if Wayland’s Wharf is structurally stable. We should have a structural engineer do a study. Pam Mola mentioned parking lot is packed during the summer and gets lots of visitors and if it is sinking, it is a liability. Al Razzano mentioned that the other fire districts will hear that we are increasing our rates.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On a motion by Burgess Bowdler, seconded by Burgess Rogers, approval of the minutes of the monthly meeting of March 18 , 2024 with the addition of the line “Warden Schefers stated that the project is on hold,” were approved.

CORRESPONDENCE

RECEIVED:
Email from Lisa Tepper Bates, regarding Wayland’s Wharf

REPORT OF CLERK-TREASURER

None

REVIEW OF BILLS/YTD FINANCIAL REPORT; ARPA UPDATE

Bills for the period March 16, 2024 through April 12, 2024 totaled \$146,343.58. Large bills of note were the fire truck leases. I&E through April 12, 2024 shows total revenue to date of \$1,470,743.12; and net income to date of \$314,741.75. Balance of ARPA funds is \$37,016.

WARDEN’S REPORT

Attended March SCOOG Meeting
Met with First Selectman Danielle on local items of interest
Attended Cultural Commission walk
Met with Nick Kepple, Blunt White and Ann Fiore on Fire District FY 24-25 Fees
Met with Bob Snyder of Water Street paving repairs.
Met with Attorney Nick Kepple on various matters
Attended April First Selectman monthly staff meeting.
Met with Amanda on tree related sidewalk issues.

BOROUGH CLOCK –

None

COMMISSIONERS’ REPORTS

Streets & Sidewalks (Schefers)
Conducted monthly brush pickup.
Continued Park maintenance.
Cleaned storm water pipe on Main Street
Cleared storm debris from East Grand and Diving Streets.

Filled potholes at various locations

With Town Public Works and Vendor examined conditions at Water Street storm water drain.

Fire & Emergency Management (Nicholas/Hoadley)

SBFD Responded to 8 Alarms (4 of which were in the Borough) in March 2024, they were as follows:

3-6-24 8:01am Fire Alarm Activation 11 Shore Dr. (burned French toast)

3-11-24 1:33pm Tree on power lines IFO 52 Briar Patch Rd. (EVERSOURCE enroute)

3-17-24 5:38pm CO detector activation 123 Water St. Apt. 2 (faulty detector)

3-19-24 3:17am Water Emergency 23 Bayview Ave. (2ft. water in basement)

3-21-24 4:10pm Tree on wires N. Water @ Palmer St. (ongoing issue)

3-23-24 12:08 pm Fire Alarm Activation 65 Cutler St. (burnt food)

3-26-24 8:22am Fire Alarm Activation 22 Bayview Ave. VM (accidental)

3-30-24 12:06pm Fire Alarm Activation 101 Main St. (Smoke from cooking)

February Police Incident Report

Still no report from the Stonington police. Burgess Nicholas mentioned that police were called because eggs were thrown at cars at night in the Borough.

Parks, Trees & Rights of Way (Barnes)

I met with Megan from Bartlett to look at two trees on the east end of Broad Street. Bartlett recommends that these trees be removed because of rot near the bases of the trees and die-back in the crowns. There are four trees in a row - a third of which needs pruning, the fourth is fine. In accordance with these recommendations and per the Borough tree policy, I have concluded that the trees should be considered for removal for reasons of public safety. Signs will therefore be posted on the trunks of each tree advising that they will be considered for removal (at least 14 days in advance of the next meeting), and this will be an item for vote on the May agenda.

Bartlett will address the pruning of the cherry tree behind the northeastern corner of the library as requested by Micayla Hall.

Rights of Way walk is being talked about before or after the Annual Meeting.

Public Buildings (Rogers)

Cannon update -- The final paint job on the cannon wheels is finished. Chief Hoadley agreed to take them back and store them in the fire house. Buzzi Memorial was asked to follow the timetable and get the granite by July 4th at the latest. The painter will prep and paint the actual cannons. To save money, I will paint the carriages. The color will match what is there now.

Public Bathroom update -- The plumber has painted the ground to show where to dig to replace the current, outdated pipes. Julia has done her due diligence and has come up with an agreeable plan to keep the fire door in place, but with an added, automatic magnetic release if the fire alarm is set off. Julia has also come up with the fixtures for the bathrooms. We are almost ready to go out to the bidding process.

Burgess Bowdler asked about security (locks and cameras in Borough Hall) being included in the new budget. As well, he asked about the cannon painting.

Utilities & Sanitation (Bowdler)

Three citations were issued this month to homeowners who placed their yellow bags out the night before collection but not in a covered bin.

Porta-Loos at the Playground -- I met with the SVIA on April 8th to discuss their willingness to maintain the garden area around the porta loos at the playground, as agreed by the Comfort Station Committee. The SVIA maintains the gardens around the playground, so we thought it logical for them to also maintain the adjacent porta loos. They are prepared to nurture the new plantings this year and keep them watered and weeded if the Borough contributes \$500 towards the SVIA. This would be an annual agreement. I would propose that we accept that offer. The \$500 has been included in the Parks budget for 2024-25.

The Stonington Garden Club is open to providing a grant for the plants. We will also seek a grant from the Ocean Community Foundation.

I have spoken to Richard Ward at Human Services re the beautification of the Playground porta loos and the change in location. Human Services pay for the existing porta loos at the playground. He is very supportive of the idea and wanted to check with the other stakeholders (Fisherman, Waterfront Commission and SSBA) to see if they had any issues. He will also look if we need to go to zoning to get approval.

Utilities -- Eversource promptly resolved a problem on Front Street where a delivery truck knocked the cover off a high voltage underground access point. The Stonington Free Library is willing to have two EV charging stations connected to their electrical box if the Borough is prepared the upfront installation costs. Probably in the 10 to 15K range. The charging stations would be on Borough owned property so that would also need to be agreed by the Warden and Burgesses.

Still collecting information on lighting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Resident Pam Mola of 2 Church Street said that there is a photo in the engineering study that grate at the fallout at Cross and Northwest likely restricts the outflow out of the pipe.

Resident Al Razzano of 25 Main St. mentioned that he is trying to understand the vendor ordinance.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Comfort Station Update

see above

Consider additions to Draft Vendor Ordinance

Rather than having a one by one application there is a draft vendor ordinance SBO-10. On a motion by Burgess Bowdler, seconded by Burgess Nicholas, approval of the changes to the Draft Vendor Ordinance were approved. The ordinance is on the Borough website.

Water Street Flooding Project Update

At Dog Watch we were successful at blowing out and sucking out 120 feet of 150 ft. of the pipe under Water Street in front of Dog Watch.

Recreational Vehicles and Motor Homes (Ordinance Clarification)

None

NEW BUSINESS

Consider SBO-08 Public Property Ordinance

A motion by Burgess Bowdler, seconded by Burgess Nicholas, to approve the Public Property Ordinance, was unanimously approved. A copy of the revised SBO-08 Public Property Ordinance is available on the Borough website.

ARPA fund transfer of \$37,016 to Public Restroom

A motion by Burgess Nicholas, seconded by Warden Schefers, to transfer \$37,016 from ARPA Funds to the Public Restroom, was unanimously approved.

Fire District contract discussion for FY 24-25 and beyond

Discussed in budget hearing (above)

OTHER BUSINESS

None

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully Submitted,
Lisa M. Coleman
April 23, 2024

Subsequent to the meeting, an email vote was unanimously approved for a Borough Road procession for the Feast of Fatima.