

Borough of Stonington
Board of Warden and Burgesses
August 18, 2025
MEETING 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 Borough Hall. Present, in addition to Warden Schefers were Burgesses Amy Nicholas, Kevin Rogers, Kevin Bowdler, and Clerk-Treasurer Lisa Coleman. Burgess Amanda Barnes was absent. Approximately 27 members of the public were present.

ADD TO AGENDA

On a motion by Burgess Rogers, seconded by Burgess Bowdler, to add Flags and Buntings discussion to New Business, was approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by Burgess Bowdler, seconded by Burgess Nicholas, the minutes of the monthly meeting of July 21, 2025, as amended to include Jesse Diggs comments under Public Comment; Ran over budget for FY 2024-5 by about \$30,000; correct spelling of Sarael Sargent under Public Comment; correct Maplewood Flooding under unfinished Business to read "There will be a meeting next week with Borough residents, Warden and CT DEEP," were approved.

CORRESPONDENCE

RECEIVED:

Event application Stonington Library
Woodfellas Pizza truck
PHGS Application – Celebration of the Holy Ghost

REPORT OF CLERK-TREASURER

None

REVIEW OF BILLS/YTD FINANCIAL REPORT

Bills for the period July 18, 2025, through August 15, 2025, totaled \$140,114.19. Large bills of note were to Tim Keena for grading of the Point and Wayland's Wharf, Aquarion Water for 1st payment on hydrants, and Flock Group for speed camera, clothing allowances for Road Department. I&E for July 2025 through June 30, 2026, shows total income to date of \$855,797.33; and net income to date of \$340,211.42.

Burgess Nicholas said Line 104 should be moved to Line 324.

WARDEN'S REPORT

Met with First Selectman Danielle Cheseborough on shared local items of interest.
Attended July SECOG Meeting.
Attended July SEAT Board Meeting

Met with Como and SVIA, and Safety and Sanitation responsibilities
Met with Sidewalk Contractor to discuss repairs to Storm Drain on Hancox Street
Attended Public Meeting with DOT on Viaduct Bridge
Met with Danielle and Town Engineer on Town and Borough response to DOT
Attended Maplewood Flooding Mtg with DEEP

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Streets & Sidewalks (Scheffers)

Conducted Brush Pickup and Park Mowing and Maintenance
Continued Street and Curb Painting.
Continued Street Cleaning
Completed Sidewalk repairs on Main Street

Fire & Emergency Management (Nicholas/Hoadley)

SBFD responded to 18 alarms in July 2025 (11 were in Borough), they were as follows:

- 1) 7-1-25 4:57am Multiple explosions in area of 4 South St. (osprey nest on Amtrak pole)
- 2) 7-4-25 11:43am Fire Alarm Activation 4 Elihu St., (faulty detector, changed batteries)
- 3) 7-5-25 7:44am Tree/Wire burning IFO 262 Wamphassuc Pt. Rd., (EVERSOURCE enroute)
- 4) 7-7-25 11:17am Fire Alarm Activation 14 Trumbull St., (blew out detector full of dust)
- 5) 7-8-25 2:02pm Wires down IFO 28 Elm St., (utility wire)
- 6) 7-9-25 9:06pm Fire Alarm Activation 117 Water St., (Fire in microwave, vented smoke)
- 7) 7-11-25 6:59am Wires arcing Bradley & South St., (Amtrak not EVERSOURCE, osprey)
- 8) 7-11-25 2:10pm Medical assist IFO 20 High St. SF Library (lady fainted, hitting head)
- 9) 7-14-25 12:59pm Fire Alarm Activation 22 Quarry Path LP, (burnt food)
- 10) 7-15-25 1:15pm Smoke Detector Activation 214 N. Water St., (faulty detectors)
- 11) 7-16-25 12:53pm Fire Alarm Activation 23 Gold St., (burnt toast, vented smoke)
- 12) 7-16-25 2:08pm Fire Alarm Activation 32 Water St., Ston. Commons (unintentional)
- 13) 7-16-25 3:20pm Smell of smoke 12 East Neck Rd. WP (light fixture on wall melting)
- 14) 7-19-25 7:51am Smoke Detector Activation 8 Oak Dr., (faulty detectors)
- 15) 7-20-25 9:19am Fire Alarm Activation 127 Wamphassuc Pt. Rd., (nothing found)
- 16) 7-23-25 4:39pm Brush Fire on tracks IFO 11 Bradley St., (osprey nest burning again)
- 17) 7-26-25 6:10am Power lines on Fire IFO 14 Flanders Rd., (EVERSOURCE enroute)
- 18) 7-31-25 2:32pm Capsized Sailboat off Stonington Point (no injuries, all ok)

June Police Incident Report (Nicholas)

Michael and I met with Chief Del Grasso and Deputy Chief Olson to discuss bumps/humps. The burgesses have been given the procedure for applying for a speed bump/hump so it can be discussed next month. Unfortunately, the humps/bumps must be permanent. I am in the process of reviewing the requirements. The parking lot at the point on July 4th weekend was overcrowded creating safety issues. While a better long-term solution needs to be found, the borough requested a police officer for select weekends to ensure access for emergency vehicles.

The Point was a disaster this past weekend. There was a group using SVIA property without permission, causing parking issues and it was too late to get a police officer down to the point to help with control. Emergency vehicles could not get through. A police cruiser came to help with the parking issues. The trash problem has been corrected. rash was not a problem. When asked to move the cars there were some problems. Chief said this is the worst summer he has ever seen to get firetrucks down to the Point. School buses were sent down School St. from PHGS and tore down utility lines. It happened again with a truck.

Burgess Nicholas, Warden Schefers and Chief Hoadley will schedule a meeting with the Police Chief.

Chief Hoadley says the information gathering on the viaduct bridge continues and there is another meeting tomorrow.

Burgess Rogers asked if there had at one time been an Ordinance that kept busses out of the Borough past Wadawanuck Square. It was rescinded and perhaps should revisit the Ordinance. Add an agenda item to September agenda.

There was graffiti drawn on the footbridge, this is the third time this year. Burgess Nicholas asked residents near the footbridge to keep an eye open. The police did say they will have more patrols. Sue will take care of spraying over the graffiti.

Parks, Trees & Rights of Way (Barnes)

When the sidewalk workers were doing the repairs on Main St. the Warden asked the workers to tidy up the area where the tree across from Ellen Whitman's house is, so a tree can be replanted there.

Public Buildings (Rogers)

Borough Hall

After reviewing the contractor's proposal for wall material replacement, we have decided not to proceed with the suggested option. The proposed material was cost-prohibitive and would have required the complete removal of everything on the walls, including the toilet, adding significant expense to the project. Instead, we will address wall maintenance through periodic repainting as needed, which will be both cost-effective and less disruptive.

Firehouse

The air conditioning project at the Firehouse has been completed and approved by the Building Inspector. The Fire Chief has provided a short list of additional repairs and maintenance items for consideration. The Warden and I will review these items together and develop a plan for addressing them in a timely and efficient manner.

Viaduct/Alpha Bridge Replacement vs. Repair

I was proud to attend the town meeting at Stonington High School to address the CT DOT with my opinion on the project. I was thrilled to see such overwhelming support from the community. I made it clear how I stand at this point, which is I am supporting the REPAIR plan instead of the REPLACE plan. I am looking forward to hearing what the DOT plans for the next step. Hopefully, they heard loud and clear the community's wishes. I especially want to shout out to Chief Hoadley for his impactful words that were listened to.

Utilities & Sanitation (Bowdler)

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

Resident Al Razzano of 25 Main St. asked that we dedicate some real estate on the website regarding the viaduct including reports, upcoming meetings, agendas, correspondence.

He also brought up the issue of unleashed dogs and one on Thursday nights who runs with his dog off leash. He has been approached three times. Also, a dog from Wad Square that often is off leash. Burgess Nicholas says a warning can be submitted.

Annette Binkowski of 42 Island Rd. represents the SVIA park and beach. A 360-degree camera has been installed at the beach gazebo. Thanked the Borough for the trash receptacles. There is concern that people allow their dogs to roam on the beach and we will start issuing warnings to dog owners that have their dogs unleashed.

Resident Jesse Diggs of 8 School St. asked what happened to the concrete dividers at the Point. That would go far to control parking.

Regarding speed cushions that Burgess Nicholas is saying are permanent. Years ago, they were not permanent. If you disagree, contact the police department.

Resident Mary Hines of 5 Water Street reports that there has been aggressiveness and arrogance of cars coming down the rise leading into the Point. Warden Schefers mentioned that he gets complaints about cars leaving. Warden mentioned we will look at this issue again.

Elissa Bass of 203 N Main St. thank you to Warden Schefers for stepping up with the DOT at the July 31 meeting and thank you to Kevin for spreading the word far and wide to residents and townspeople. This is far from over, and I appreciate your continued vigilance, I don't trust them at all and feel it is important they be kept honest in the future.

Resident Chuck Hartman of 13 Elm St. questioned the speed cushions. There is a permanent installation, and the Warden and Burgesses have a report to look at.

Resident Sarael Sargent of 72 Main Street mentioned the speedometer in front of our house sometimes works, sometimes does not. Burgess Nicholas says it is effective. Warden Schefers says we want a second one.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

PHGS Food Trucks Update

Warden has spoken with Howard and Al about the PHGS Food Trucks. Their policy will no longer be to allow food trucks.

NEW BUSINESS

Event application – Woodfellas pizza truck

On a motion by Burgess Bowdler, seconded by Burgess Nicholas, the application made by Micayla Hall, Library Director of the Stonington Free Library to use space on High Street in front of the library for the Woodfellas pizza truck during the Battle of Stonington 5K, on Tuesday, August 19th from 5:00 to 7:30 pm, was approved.

Appointment of Fire Chief Search Committee

On a motion by Burgess Bowdler seconded by Burgess Rogers, the appointment of Chief Hoadley, Pawcatuck Fire Chief Byron Stillman, Rob Palmer, Burgess Amy Nicholas, Warden Schefers and Deb McFadden, president of Lord's Point Fire District to be on the Fire Chief Search Committee, was approved.

Viaduct update

There was a July 31st meeting held at the High School with around 250 people in attendance. Danielle and I met with the Town Engineer and divided responsibilities: Danielle and the Chief Engineer are putting together a response to DOT stating three things: Understand you are proposing a new bridge, but we are asking for two other options, perhaps 20- or 40-year options. On all four scenarios we are asking what are the impacts on the properties on all four locations. What is the cost to the town? The Borough? for all three scenarios. What is the lifespan of all options? How long will the work take for all three options. We meet with all DOT tomorrow.

Warden Schefers has pursued the issue of reopening up the North Water St. railway crossing and have it open again during construction and thereafter. Federal Railroad Authority is the authority and is asking our local politicians to say to the head of DOT and Homeland Security that this be reassessed. Part of the discussion tomorrow will be who to send a letter to have that crossing reopened.

Courtney's office has requested for a meeting with DOT, Amtack, and all stakeholders to be held in September.

Meeting was opened to more public comments:

Jesse Diggs wrote a letter to the editor which all are invited to see in The Day.

Nancy McClendon asked that letters to be sent to other parties concerning the viaduct be added to website

Resident Judith Hanratty of 102 Main St. reports that DOT engineer the sound level during construction will be 90 decibels.

Resident Mike Montana of Main St. asked to confirm Federal Railroad Authority is the only authority who can address the crossing.

Resident Gabe Wahl 18 Water St. asked clarification that if we go to a single lane which Warden explained if it is a repair, it will be a two-lane road. ***(Michael, please clarify this for me).***

Resident Chuck Hartman asked that there be some clarification about Shoreline East.

Accounting policy change to allow Borough funds to be held in our Investment Account

On a motion by Warden Schefers, seconded by Burgess Rogers to allow Borough funds to be held in our Investment Account and be reflected in our financial reporting, was approved.

PHGS application – Celebration of the Holy Ghost with Crown

On a motion by Burgess Nicholas, seconded by Burgess Bowdler to approve the application made by Howard Taylor of PHGS to use Main St., Broad St., Water St., and Cannon Square (Start PHGS – St Mary’s Church – PHGS) for the Procession in Celebration of the Feast of the Holy Ghost with Crown held on Saturday, August 30, 2025 from 5:00 to 6:00 pm, subject to proof of proper insurance, was approved.

PHGS application – Celebration of the Holy Ghost

On a motion by Burgess Nicholas, seconded by Burgess Bowdler, to approve the application made by Howard Taylor of PHGS to use Main St., Broad St., Water St., and Cannon Square (Start PHGS – Stopping at St Mary’s Church – PHGS) for the Procession to Mass at St. Mary’s and return in Celebration of the Feast of the Holy Ghost, held on Sunday, August 31, 2025 from 10:00 am to noon, subject to proof of proper insurance, was approved.

OTHER BUSINESS and DISCUSSION

None.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Burgess Bowdler, seconded by Burgess Nicholas, adjournment of the meeting at 8:11 p.m., was unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa M. Coleman
August 24, 2025