

Board of Warden and Burgesses
Annual Meeting~ April 27, 2013

The Annual Borough and Budget Meeting of the Borough of Stonington was called to order in Borough Hall at 9 AM by Warden Paul Burgess. Present were Burgesses Michael Adair, Kathryn Burchenal, Amy Nicholas, Howard Park, Robert Scala, and Clerk- Treasurer Brian Kraffack. Also present were 8 Borough residents.

Appointment of Moderator:

1. A motion to appoint Borough resident Jeffrey Callahan as moderator of the Annual Meeting was made by Warden Paul Burgess and seconded by Burgess Park.
2. A motion to close nominations for a moderator of the Annual Meeting was made by Borough resident Richard Easton and seconded by Burgess Burchenal.
3. The motion to appoint Borough resident Jeffrey Callahan as moderator of the Annual Meeting was unanimously approved.

Administrative Reminders:

1. Moderator Jeffrey Callahan asked that Borough residents in attendance turn off their cell phones.
2. Moderator Jeffrey Callahan asked that Borough residents who wish to address the Board state their name and address.
3. Moderator Jeffrey Callahan explained that only those citizens who are listed on the official voters list for the Town of Stonington, and/or Citizens who are listed on the Town of Stonington Grand List as having taxable property with an assessed value of at least \$1,000 are qualified as eligible to vote in this Annual Borough Meeting.

Approval of Minutes:

1. On a motion by Borough resident Spike Lobdell, seconded by Burgess Park, acceptance of the minutes from the April 21, 2012 Annual Borough and Budget Meeting and minutes of the July 14, 2012 Special Borough Meeting by Petition SBO-02 Bus Ordinance was unanimously approved.

Warden's Report- Highlights of the Activities of the Board of Warden and Burgesses:

1. Borough Hall Renovations:
 - a. This project was funded by Borough Ordinance SBO-16 passed in 2004 in conjunction with the bond for the construction of the Firehouse. The recently completed project includes a new elevator, handicapped accessible restrooms, heat detection, and a fire alarm system.
 - b. The last Firehouse bond payment of \$35,000 will be made in fiscal year 2013-2014; with that payment, the Borough will be debt-free.
2. Road reconstruction; Hyde Street, Maplewood Avenue, Orchard Street, Grand Street, and Church Street:
 - a. Road and drainage improvements made in accordance with the Highway Department Capital Improvement Plan.

3. Fire District Contracts:
 - a. Warden Burgess, working with Burgess Nicholas, secured Fire Protection Agreement Contracts with the Lord's Point Association, Wamphassuc Point Association, and the Stonington Fire District.
 - b. Contracts had not previously been in place and represent a significant source of revenue for the Borough.
 - c. There are provisions in the contract for fee adjustments.
4. Hurricane Sandy:
 - a. FEMA reimbursement to the Borough totaled approximately \$50,000; approximately 75 percent of expenses.
 - b. The Wall Street Seawall restoration, which is the last restoration project as a result of Hurricane Sandy, is scheduled to be completed in one to two weeks.
5. February Blizzard Nemo:
 - a. Applications for FEMA reimbursements are in progress.
6. Ash Street Seaweed Removal:
 - a. The seaweed removal involved substantial coordination with CT DEEP.
 - b. This was an unfunded activity and could become an annual expense.
7. Parks and Trees:
 - a. Burgess Park had to deal with many damaged and downed trees as a result of Hurricane Sandy, Blizzard Nemo, and a variety of other unnamed storms.
8. Police and Public Relations:
 - a. Burgess Burchenal developed and implemented policies for special events.
9. Sidewalks:
 - a. Burgess Scala did an excellent job monitoring sidewalks for repairs and coordinating repairs, when necessary, with Borough residents.
10. Fire Department:
 - a. Burgess Nicholas assisted Warden Burgess with the Fire District Contracts.
 - b. The Fire Department does a lot of hard work throughout the year, including weekly training, and should be recognized for their efforts.

Approval of Fiscal Year 2013-2014 Budget:

1. Warden Burgess presented the budget and explained that there is a 1 percent increase in operating expenses over the prior fiscal year.
 - a. The Borough has a tax collection rate of approximately 99 percent, which is very good.
 - b. Line 105 Professional Services, has been increased by \$5,000 over the prior fiscal year to account for professional fees that may be required for road and building improvements and for legal fees.
 - c. \$5,000 has been allocated for employee raises, representing approximately 2 percent of eligible salaries. This is an increase of \$500 in the amount given as employee bonuses in the prior fiscal year.
 - d. Line 191 Contributions to the Stonington Free Library, has been increased by \$5,500 over the prior fiscal year at the request of the Library.
 - e. Fire Department general expenses have been increased by \$3,300 over the prior fiscal year at the recommendation of Chief Hoadley.

- f. Line 802 Tree Maintenance, has been increased by \$3,000 over the prior fiscal year as a result of actual expenses made necessary by the seemingly increasing frequency and severity of storms.
 - g. Line 604 Street Repairs, has been decreased by \$5,000 from the prior fiscal year; most of the money used for street repairs comes from the Infrastructure Reserve Fund.
2. Warden Burgess noted that property values in the Borough have seen an average decline of approximately 20 percent. The mil rate has been adjusted so that revenue from property taxes will remain approximately the same as the prior fiscal year.
 3. Borough resident Richard Easton, noting that the current fiscal year has not ended, asked historically how close year end numbers have been to projected budgets.
 - a. Warden Burgess noted that an audit has recently been completed of the Borough finances and it is projected that approximately \$50,000 will be available at the end of the year to add to reserve funds.
 - b. Warden Burgess pointed out that certain line items in the budget have been exceeded as a result of the major storms of the past year. The FEMA reimbursement is only 75 percent and some of the reimbursements have yet to be received.
 - c. Borough resident Jeffrey Callahan added that the Borough has a history of ending fiscal years on budget or with a slight surplus.
 4. On a motion by Borough resident Spike Lobdell, seconded by Borough Resident Lisa Tepper Bates, adoption of the Budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2014, as presented, was unanimously approved.

Highway Department Capital Improvement Plan:

1. Warden Burgess explained that the Borough is required by the State of Connecticut to have a five-year Capital Improvement Plan for roads and infrastructure in order to be eligible for state funds. The budget includes a deposit of \$165,000 to the Infrastructure Reserve Fund.
 - a. Borough resident Spike Lobdell asked how much money the Borough receives from the State for infrastructure repairs.
 - i. Warden Burgess explained the amount is in the range of \$7,000 to \$8,000.
 - b. Borough resident Kevin Bowdler asked how priorities are established for infrastructure repairs.
 - i. Warden Burgess explained that the five-year plan commissioned a study, and priorities were established by that study.
 - c. Borough resident Lisa Tepper Bates asked if the Borough is on track to complete the infrastructure repairs outlined by the five-year plan.
 - i. Warden Burgess explained that if the Borough keeps up the rigorous pace of repairs and improvements of the past few years, we will be in good shape.
2. On a motion by Borough Resident Spike Lobdell, seconded by Borough Resident Richard Easton, approval of the Highway Department Capital Improvement Plan for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2014, as presented, was unanimously approved.

Appointment of Waldron Fund Trustees:

1. Borough resident and current Waldron Fund Trustee Lisa Tepper Bates provided an overview of the Waldron Fund and its activities for the fiscal year 2012-2013:
 - a. The Fund, established in 1837 through a bequest from Jonathan C. Waldron to Stonington Borough, can provide modest sums of financial assistance to Borough residents who need

- help with the costs of food, fuel, and clothing during the winter months, October through April.
- b. Current Waldron Fund Trustees Kathryn Nason Burchenal, Elizabeth Tobin Brown, and Lisa Tepper Bates are honored to serve the Borough government and the citizens of the Borough through their work with the Waldron Fund.
 - c. During the 2012-2013 Waldron season, the Trustees sent for the second time a postcard to all Borough addresses to raise awareness about the existence of the Waldron Fund, and the separate Williams Fund, and to encourage inquiries from those in need.
 - d. The Waldron Fund remains open to referrals and cooperative work to serve Borough residents in need. Local partner agencies include the Borough churches, the Stonington School System, and Stonington's Human Services Department.
 - e. During the 2012-2013 winter season the fund has provided assistance to 19 Borough residents. Beneficiaries were families, single adult households, and lifelong Borough residents. The support ranged from grocery gift cards and funds for clothing to substantial assistance with heating costs.
 - f. The Trustees are committed to those who approach them for assistance to maintain confidentiality with regard to any information shared to explain their need.
 - g. As in Jonathan Waldron's lifetime, the high cost of heating remains one of the greatest challenges for those facing economic hardship. The resources of the Waldron Fund are particularly helpful in this area as heating costs in our state and community are extremely high, and this past winter was long and particularly cold.
 - h. The Waldron Fund plays an important role in the lives of Borough residents struggling to make ends meet, especially in these challenging economic times. We are fortunate to have such a resource.
 - i. The Trustees plan next year to re-send the post card with brief information about the Waldron Fund (and the Williams Fund) to every mailing address in the Borough, in order to ensure that those in need are aware of this resource.
2. Borough resident Michael Blair asked dollar amount of the assistance provided.
 - a. Trustee Kathryn Burchenal said the amount was \$7,800.
 3. Borough resident Richard Easton asked if the terms of the bequest limited funds for distribution to just interest on the principal amount.
 - a. Ms. Tepper Bates explained that the Fund is not limited to access to just interest, noting that the Fund was started in 1837 with \$1,000.
 4. Mr. Easton asked if the Fund is adequately meeting the needs of those who approach for assistance.
 - a. Ms. Tepper Bates explained that the current Trustees have only been in place for 4 years so there is not a long history against which to compare.
 - b. Ms. Tepper Bates said that the Fund has seen more need this past year, which could be a result of increased awareness of the Fund and its purpose.
 5. Ms. Tepper Bates said that it is difficult when people come seeking assistance for rent, since the bequest does not allow distributions for that type of assistance. Ms. Tepper Bates said that those citizens are referred to the Williams Fund for assistance.
 - a. Warden Burgess explained that the Williams Fund, administered by the Warden and the Clerk- Treasurer, is not restricted by season and can offer assistance to those in need of help with rent.
 - b. Warden Burgess said the Williams Fund typically provides assistance to 3 to 4 individuals or families per year.
 6. Mr. Easton asked if the Waldron Fund solicits contributions.
 - a. Ms. Tepper Bates explained that the post card mailed to Borough residents explains that contributions are welcome.

- b. Mr. Easton suggested that perhaps the fund could be more active in soliciting donations.
7. On a motion by Borough Resident Cormac O'Malley, seconded by Burgess Park, appointment of Lisa Tepper Bates, Kathryn Burchenal, and Elizabeth Tobin Brown as Trustees of the Waldron Fund for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2014 was unanimously approved.

Other Business:

1. Ms. Tepper Bates said she wished to recognize the fine work of outgoing Warden Paul Burgess noting that the citizens of the Borough owe him a debt of thanks.
 - a. Ms. Tepper Bates said that Warden Burgess was not paid commensurate with the amount of hours he put into the job.
2. Borough resident Scott Bates said that he saw Warden Burgess in action in very challenging positions, noting that Warden Burgess was always calm in a crisis and did very well as a representative of the Borough citizens when meeting with other government officials.
3. Borough resident Michael Blair, who served as Warden from 1987 to 1992, said in his 30 years as a Borough resident, he has never seen a Warden do as good a job as Warden Burgess.
 - a. Mr. Blair noted that people do not always appreciate how difficult the Warden's job is.
4. Warden Burgess received a standing ovation from the Board and from those in attendance.

Adjournment:

1. On a motion by Burgess Scala, seconded by Burgess Park, adjournment of the meeting at 9:40 AM was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian S. Krafjack
Clerk- Treasurer