

Borough of Stonington
Board of Warden and Burgesses Regular Monthly Meeting
November 20, 2023
DRAFT 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 Kevin Rogers and Amanda Barnes, Kevin Bowdler, Amy Nicholas and Clerk-Treasurer Lisa Coleman was absent. Approximately 60 members of the public were present.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On a motion by Burgess Barnes, seconded by Burgess Rogers, the minutes of the monthly meeting of October 20, 2023, were unanimously approved.

Warden Schefers seconded made a motion to move the Comfort Station Update and corresponding Public Comment moved to next item on the agenda. Unanimous approved.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Comfort Station Update

Albert Razzanno presented the results of the latest Comfort Station Committee.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Warden Schefers thanked the Committee. Warden Schefers made a reference to the survey in 2020, the 200 plus signatures at Tom's and the 125/150 signatures to a petition in 2023.

David Purvis Grand Street thanked the committee and the idea of NIMBY and CNS

Jessie Diggs 8 School Street thanked the Warden and the Burgess for allowing the committee. How are you using the recommendations which Burgess Bowdler recommending deferring until after Public Comment

Libby Kononen of 103 Elm Street read a letter against the Wadawanuck Square location.

Jane Lahr of Omega Street

Michael Weiss of 94 Water Street asked about Funding availability. Warden Schefers explained that Borough has allocated \$50,000 of ARPA money to the comfort station. For Wadawanuck Square, additional money was made through donations and the borough was looking at a bond for the Wadawanuck Square and a \$50,000 allocation from the town. Burgess Nicholas explained that some of the donation money is explicit for Wadawanuck Square such as \$10,000 from Stonington Garden Club. The \$50,000 of town money was allocated to Wad Square that

would have to reallocate to the new location this Fiscal Year which ends in June. Donations were made for Wad Square which may be available.

Dodie Bump of Quanaduck Cove clarified that the money was raised using the SVIA's 501C status to enable tax deductibility but that the money is in escrow and, at the option of the donor(s), may be returned. It is not the SVIA donation.

Michael Liersch 45 Main Street asked what the hours and what security will be in place since he has a young family. Burgess Bowdler said hours likely to be daylight hours with shorter hours in the winter. Michael asked if there is a recourse due to loitering. Burgess Bowdler said call police and come back to us.

Jessie Diggs asked if funding was location specific and thinks should be for the cause.

Steve Horvath 1 High Street pro the recommendation

Jane Keenar 7 Harmony Street commended committee

Lisa Tepper Bates 118 Water Street thanked all three committees and asked that the Warden and Burgesses please have have 2 bathrooms, please make permanent and have changing tables. I hope you move along with alacrity.

Paul Janssens of Harmony Street presenter did an excellent presentation

Annette Bienkowski proprietor of Cove Ledge and resident of 42 Island Road and although she couldn't vote she was on the committee and heard other points of view. Annette thanked the committee and reiterated the need for a public bathroom. It is here every day.

Rachel Liersch of 45 Main if it available now and what is the implementation. Warden Schefers said it is not ready and we have to have an ordinance to fund it. Burgess Nicholas explained it is not available now as there is no staff to clean it and the building is not set up. Burgess Bowdler said the implementation will be decided later in the meeting

Michael Liersch of 45 Main asked about people hanging around Burgess Bowdler said contact police and write a letter to W and B

Lisa Konicki of Ocean Community explained the Ocean Chamber has an arm that can fund in certain worthwhile projects. Please come to us in April. Lisa explained that if one bathroom has a changing table then other must have one as well.

Jessie Diggs said it is has to have a bathroom and it has to be open. Burgess Bowdler said it is but not publicized.

Jamie Fowler of 22 Elm Street asked about a petition with 200 plus signatures supporting Wad Square. Warden Schefers explained it is in the Comfort Station Book on the back table. Jamie asked about the money.

Jodie Bump explained that the prior administration and SVIA paid for Julia and is not part of \$50,000 ARPA allocated to Comfort Station. Burgess Nicholas talked about \$50,000 from the town which was allocated in April. Warden Schefers said that the \$50,000 is a line item for this fiscal year which ends of June. Dodie explained that SVIA raised \$50,000 in donations for Wad Square is being held in escrow. Warden Schefers explained that W and B were looking at Bonding for Wad Square. Burgess Nicholas said obtaining bonding for Borough Hall is not necessary as it could be done out of cash flow.

Lori Salvo of 17 Temple Street asked about we make the decision. Burgess Bowdler said the Warden and Burgesses would take it up later in the meeting

Chuck Hartman of 13 Elm Street said the new Committee came up with a cost of Option Two \$80,000 upfront at Borough Hall. So it could be paid out of the budget. The numbers are ten year carrying cost which added in maintenance. Very clear we can pay for the \$50,000 out of the \$80,000. This compares to \$350-400,000 for Wad Square in 2020 dollars. If you add inflation, the cost goes up approximately 18%. So, \$475,000 vs. \$80,000.

Julia Leeming of 94 Farmholme explained that same exact price for square foot was used for Wad Square as for Borough Hall so if inflation impacts Wad Square also impacts Borough Hall. It was a back of the envelope

Warden Schefers explained that we will do it as part of an ordinance

Jesse Diggs asked what the threshold is for an ordinance. Warden Schefers said it was \$100,000. Jessie explained that if so, then an ordinance is not needed. Warden Schefers explained that much had to be done.

Burgess Questions

Burgess Nicholas asked Julia Leeming what is the maximum that can be spent since the building is in a flood zone. Julia Leeming said \$288,600 in one year based on building's value of \$577,200 Burgess Rogers explained that the second bathroom is not handicapped accessible. We have to fix it.

Julia Leeming explained that it doesn't have 4 feet of clear space for entry by a wheelchair at the door.

Burgess Rogers wanted to remind everyone that it is not just for people who live. It is for the merchants to help keep them happy and we want them to be here. Burgess Rogers further

explained that this is a great fix for Borough Hall but I am not sure it is a great fix for the merchants.

Burgess Rogers said we need to keep it open to alternatives because this is a band aid Al Razzanno explained that we have to crawl before we walk since we don't have data. Burgess Rogers wanted everyone to hear it.

Burgess Rogers asked at what meeting did Wad Square come off Al Razzanno said 10/5 with a vote of 6 to 4.

Burgess Rogers asked when the Rubric was solidified on which to keep and which to go Burgess Bowdler responded 10/11 Burgess Rogers further queried that Wad Square was taken off on 10/5 before the rubric was made on 10/11 which didn't make sense to him. Bowdler explained that were 25 locations. Where there wasn't a broad consensus, let's clear the table. Where there wasn't a broad consensus a number came off, where owners said they didn't what bathrooms on their property came off, and a number of properties went to a vote including Wad Square which was the closest at 6 to 4.

Burgess Rogers asked why St Mary's and the Fire House were still on for the 10/11 why weren't they taken off when Wad Square taken off. Bowdler explained that they had existing facilities Burgess Rogers said that when we get requests for Races, Walks and Fair are all held at Wad Square. Rogers commended the committee.

Warden Schefers referenced the comment about changing tables

Julia Leeming said one bathroom would unisex and accessible

Julia Leeming said one bathroom would be unisex and inaccessible

Burgess Bowdler motioned seconded by Burgess Fowler that we approve in principal option 2 to get some drawings to enable costing estimates for 2 bathrooms at Borough Hall.

Unanimously approved. Burgess Bowdler further explained that he recommended 2 bathrooms so there is a contingency if one clogs and that the second floor be for employees and that we move forward now as the town commitment expires at the end of the fiscal year in June and then we will not have to look for the money.

Kevin Bowdler seconded by Burgess Rogers motioned that we approach the Town to add a second port aloo and add landscaping unanimously approved.

Meeting adjourned for 5 minutes

CORRESPONDENCE

RECEIVED:

Connecticut Water Authority letter to appoint two people; Email: Kevin Rogers regarding RVs.

REPORT OF CLERK-TREASURER

Not Present. Nothing to report.

REVIEW OF BILLS/YTD FINANCIAL REPORT; ARPA UPDATE

Review of Bills/YTD Financial Report/ ARPA update Burgess Nicholas questioned line 104 being over budget by more than \$35,257. Burgess Bowdler believes there was a double payment that the Administrative Assistant is researching. Per Administrative Assistant amounts are correct. Item moved per auditors, but moved back to line #324.

WARDEN'S REPORT

1. SCOOG Meeting (Oct. & Nov.)
2. Danielle's Staff Meeting
3. Lobster Tree Meeting on traffic concerns
4. Tower Clock Maintenance meeting with Contractor
5. Westerly Shoreline East Meeting
6. 24 Cutler Street Meeting with Town
7. Diving Street Right of Way/Beach Meeting with Amanda
8. Superior Plumbing & Drain Service Meeting
9. Discussed a Speed Cushion/Plan forward with Amy.
10. Attended Comfort Station Meetings

BOROUGH CLOCK –

None

STREET & SIDEWALKS COMMISSIONER REPORT – (Schefers)

1. Conducted monthly brush pickup.
2. Started leaf pick-up.
3. Continued road-sweeping and lawn maintenance.
4. Installed new Storm Water Drain at Church & Water.
5. Installed a larger new **Stop Ahead Sign** before Omega Street.

October Police Incident Report

In October, the police responded to 58 incidents in the borough including 9 Parking/Motor Vehicle Complaints, 9 Burglar Alarm 4 of which were false, 7 Medical Assists, 3 Fire related calls, 3 Animal Control, 2 Assist Citizen, 2 Motor Vehicle Stops, 2 Accidents including One Hit and Run, 2 Check Building, 2 Disturbances, 2 Community Policing, 2 Patrol Request and 2 911 Hang ups/Misdials. There was one incident each of Raffle Application, Alarm Not Registered, Assist Other Agency, Harassment, General Information, Suspicious Activity, Pistol Permit, Domestic Disturbance, Sudden Death, Criminal Mischief and Found Item.

There was four arrests related two related to the Domestic Disturbance and two related to one of the Disturbances.

In December, the Street Department and Borough Government will meet with the Police Chief to discuss Speed Cushions.

October Fire Report

In October, SBFDF responded to 8 calls of which 4 were in the Borough.

Parks, Trees & Rights of Way (Barnes)

Nothing to add from report.

Public Buildings (Rogers)

Working on plumbing issue. Firehouse noticed that the top layer on the floor needed some repair which Burgess Rogers will discuss with the Chief when he returns. Cannon Wheels are done. We are waiting for him to come back in no hurry as the granite pieces by Buzzy's Memorial will be in the spring.

Utilities & Sanitation (Bowdler)

Nothing to add. Burgess Rogers said that yellow bags are everywhere. Burgess Bowdler will go out on Monday.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chuck Hartman asked the tree at 39 Main Street that is posted for removal. Burgess Barnes explained that it was necessary to remove the tree as it was compromised. There was a discussion about Bartlett missing the poor health of the tree and not being available recently resulting in the delay of stump removal, etc.

Pam Mola of Church Street asked if they were considering dredging Church Street and if the pipe to the Condos was cracked. Warden Schefers explained that dredging ought to be done prior to put in the new pipe. Sue and Emerson we need to dredge could not find anything peculiar with the pipe. The Warden will discuss with the consultant and the cracked pipe and with the Harbor Commission about dredging.

Sibby Lynch complained about bright lights.

Al Razzanno commented about RV ordinance 05 #4. Warden Schefers explained that we are looking at that ordinance. Discussed later

Viaduct update

None. Warden Schefers explained that we haven't heard from Amtrak. Chuck Hartman asked about progress with viaduct Warden Schefers explained that we agreed to option 5. Burgess Nicholas are that renderings will be available in July 2024 and one lane. Discussion about raising the widening the viaduct.

Draft Vendor Ordinance

Tabled until Planning and Zoning have met.

Update on Water Street Flooding Project

No update from DEEP.

NEW BUSINESS

Connecticut Water Authority letter to appoint two people (V) Warden Schefers seconded by Burgess Nicholas motioned to appoint Kathryn Burchenal and Burgess Bowdler to the Board unanimously approved

Burgess Nicholas seconded by Burgess Bowdler motioned to approve 2024 W and B Schedule unanimously approved

Burgess Barnes seconded by Burgess Bowdler motioned to approve removal of tree at 39 Main Street unanimously approved

Burgess Barnes seconded by Burgess Rogers motioned approve removal of tree at Wad Square unanimously approved

Warden Schefers Recommended Administrative Assistant Ann Fiore title be changed to Business Manager. All agreed. No vote needed.

Stonington Historical Society requested that W and B take over Fourth of July Parade W and B declined as inappropriate. Non profits more appropriate

OTHER BUSINESS AND DISCUSSION

Warden Schefers explained that 3 residents on Bayview are not hooked up to sewer.

ADJOURNMENT

(V) Burgess Nicholas seconded by Burgess Bowdler motioned to adjourn at 9:20 unanimously approved

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Nicholas
November 27, 2023