

**Borough of Stonington
Board of Warden and Burgesses
Special Meeting – March 22, 2021**

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Warden Jeffrey Callahan called the special meeting of the Borough of Stonington Board of Warden and Burgesses to order, by way of Zoom conferencing video, at 7:00 p.m. Participating were Burgesses Amy Nicholas, Kevin Rogers, Amanda Barnes, and Shaun Mastroianni. Warden Callahan took minutes, assisted by Burgess Nicholas.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On a motion by Burgess Barnes, seconded by Burgess Mastroianni, the minutes of the special meeting held on February 22, 2021 were unanimously approved as submitted.

3. REPORT OF ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

The administrative assistant is updating and consolidating the mailing list.

4. CORRESPONDENCE

PROPERTY USE REQUEST: COMO – WAD SQUARE AUGUST 6-9 FOR VILLAGE FAIR; NOAH’S – OUTDOOR (SIDEWALK & CHURCH STREET) DINING 2021; WATER STREET CAFÉ – OUTDOOR (SIDEWALK) DINING 2021

MEETINGS: NONE

OTHER: MARYBETH BARTHOLET – EMAIL EXPRESSING CONCERNS ABOUT DINING ON CHURCH STREET; STONINGTON FREE LIBRARY, ASKING FOR RENEWED FINANCIAL SUPPORT IN FY 21-22 BUDGET; STONINGTON GARDEN CLUB, ANNOUNCING POSTPONEMENT OF GARDEN TOUR UNTIL JUNE 2022.

OUTGOING: NONE

5. REPORT OF CLERK-TREASURER

The clerk-treasurer continues to prepare for the election.

6. REVIEW OF BILLS/YTD FINANCIAL REPORT

Bills for the period February 17 through March 18, 2021 totaled \$27,735. Net income as of March 18th is \$489,452. Warden Callahan projects a year-end surplus of about \$75,000.

7. WARDEN’S REPORT

WARDEN’S REPORT – March 22, 2021

1. Participated in Zoom COVID-19 update with SCCOG and local health districts

2. Participated in Town Department Head meeting
3. Working on Waldron-Williams Funds merger
4. Tracked Governor's executive orders (about 100) and local Covid statistics; New London County hospitalizations have decreased significantly since January (now around 17 compared to a high of 100 during winter), while total deaths have risen to 417 from 390 last month. Stonington Town deaths have stayed at 28 and total cases equal 991.
5. Continued working on FEMA concerns about one resident's flood map revision request.
6. Drafting letter to residents
7. Finalized proposed FY21-22 budget and 2021-26 Capital Improvement Program

BOROUGH CLOCK – Adjusted clock for Daylight Savings Time

8. COMMISSIONER REPORTS

a. Streets & Sidewalks (Callahan)

1. Conducted monthly brush pickup
2. Began spring street sweeping
3. Filled potholes
4. Issued 3 dumpster permits

b. Fire & Emergency Management (Rogers/Hoadley)

There were 5 Alarms in February 2021, they were as follows:

- 1) 2-1-21 11:15pm Tree limb on wires upper Briar patch Rd. (wind,ice,snow storm)
- 2) 2-8-21 4:56pm Explosions under Lords Pt. Bridge (water from melting snow)
- 3) 2-10-21 3:47pm Fire Alarm Activation Stonington Commons (workers set off)
- 4) 2-12-21 11:33pm Odor of gas in a fireplace Stonington Commons (nothing found)
- 5) 2-15-21 8:59am Fire Alarm Activation 349 Elm St., Salt Water Farm Vineyard (set off accidentally by alarm tech)

Chief Hoadley reported that he has successfully completed the Open Burning on line course and soon will be certified. At that point he will begin drafting a Borough ordinance on this topic.

c. Parks, Trees & Rights of Way (Barnes)

Commissioner Barnes reported that Bartlett will perform pruning on the maple near the northwest corner of Wad Square within a week or so. She also reported that Bartlett recommends fertilizing both large trees at that corner. The Warden concurred with that recommendation.

d. Public Buildings (Mastroianni)

Commissioner Mastroianni is getting new (higher) estimates for new fire escape.

e. Public Information (Rogers) – Survey questions to be discussed later in meeting.

f. Police & Sanitation (Nicholas)

Police Incident Report

During the month of February 2021 there were 40 incidents in the police report for the Borough including 8 Motor Vehicle/Parking Complaints, 4 Assist Citizen, 4 Burglar Alarms 3 of which were false, 2 Medical Assists, 2 Welfare Checks, 2 Community Policing, 2 Red Tag Vehicle, 2 Trespass one of which resulted in an arrest, 2 Suspicious Activities, 2 Escort, and 2 911 Misdials/Hang ups. There was one incident each of Motor Vehicle Abandoned, Animal Control, Scam Against the Elderly, Nuisance and one Fire Related Activity.

Sanitation Report

Distributed several notices regarding yellow bag violations.

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Status of COVID-19 in region and reopening plans: Warden Callahan reiterated that the state, county, and town are doing well according to all statistical indicators. Deaths and hospitalizations are levelling off. The Governor has loosened restrictions on gatherings and restaurant capacity, among other moves.

b. Possible resident survey. Burgesses Rogers and Mastroianni have drafted possible survey questions, which they will forward to Board for comment. Warden Callahan indicated that he is preparing a letter to all residents for the purpose of alerting them to the upcoming election. If survey can't be finalized quickly, it will have to go out in separate mailing.

c. Update on possible ordinance on fire pits and open burning generally. See item 8.b above

d. Lower Water Street traffic and parking. Burgess Rogers is going to contact Mr. Sorrento, who is a professional traffic planner, about submitting a proposal to study lower Water Street.

e. Revision to SBO-12: On a motion by Burgess Mastroianni, seconded by Burgess Nicholas, the following revised version of SBO-12 was unanimously approved:

SBO-12. SALARIES AND STIPENDS OF ELECTED OFFICIALS

1. Salaries- The warden shall receive \$15,000 per year and each burgess shall receive \$1500 per year. Elected and appointed official salaries shall be paid monthly in arrears.

2. Commissioner Stipends- The streets and sidewalks commissioner shall be paid a stipend of \$6,500 per year. All other commissioners shall each be paid \$500 per year. Commissioner stipends shall be paid monthly in arrears.

3. Effective July 1, 2021.

f. The Board tabled consideration of appointing a member to be a trustee of The Waldron-Williams Fund until the merger of the two funds is completed.

11. NEW BUSINESS

a. Requests to use Borough property: (1) On a motion by Burgess Nicholas, seconded by Burgess Mastroianni, the request by the Stonington Community Center to hold the village fair on Wadawanuck Square from August 6 to August 9, 2021 was unanimously approved. Details of how the fair is to be conducted will be determined by the COVID situation during summer.

(2) Noah's Outdoor Dining Request. Warden Callahan opened discussion by pointing out that although the Governor has lifted capacity restrictions on restaurants, he has left in place the 6-foot spacing requirement. The net result is that Noah's (and Water Street Café) will not be able to add any interior seating. He also noted that the Executive Orders that permit expedited consideration of outdoor dining requests are scheduled to expire on April 20, but could be extended again by the Governor. An abutting residential property owner stated that having tables on Church Street last summer and fall had a negative impact on their family. She expressed support for Noah's and its staff, but made clear that she and her family do not want to spend another summer with people and noise impacting their lives. On the other hand, several people who live or own businesses on Water Street expressed strong support for outdoor dining at Noah's and at Water Street Café. Burgess Nicholas noted the financial difficulties that small businesses have endured during the past year and stated her support for Noah's application, while Burgess Barnes sympathized with the abutting neighbor. Several motions were put forward, modified, and then withdrawn before Burgess Mastroianni moved and Burgess Rogers seconded, that the application by Noah's Restaurant to have dining on the adjacent Water and Church Street sidewalks and part of Church Street itself be approved through June 30, 2021 with one modification, i.e., that the two 2-person tables on the east end of the proposed seating area must be removed.

(3) On a motion by Burgess Nicholas, seconded by Burgess Rogers, the application by Water Street Café to allow four tables for outdoor dining on the sidewalk in front of WSC, was unanimously approved through June 30, 2021, contingent on WSC submitting the proper Borough documents.

b. On a motion by Warden Callahan, seconded by Burgess Mastroianni, the proposed Capital Improvement Program for FY22 -26 was unanimously approved. On a motion by Warden Callahan, seconded by Burgess Mastroianni, the proposed budget for FY21-22 was unanimously approved. Both will be presented for final approval at the April Warden & Burgesses meeting.

c. On a motion by Warden Callahan, seconded by Burgess Rogers, Joseph Williams III of 38 Broad Street was unanimously appointed to a second term on the Stonington Harbor Management Commission, with term ending June 30, 2024.

d. Warden Callahan informed the Board that he had recently been approached by Janet Vaskas, president of the SVIA, to discuss the possibility of constructing public restrooms in the Borough. Subsequently, a remote meeting was held with Callahan, Vaskas, Deb Norman, and architect Julia Leeming, to discuss possible locations for such a facility. The Town Dock area would be an excellent site except that it is in the floodplain (the VE zone), which makes building an accessible

restroom difficult and expensive. The Point (East Lawn) and Matthews Park are considered too far from the commercial district. Borough Hall was discussed, but there isn't a good location within the hall for a new restroom, and access would be problematic. Finally, the group settled on the north side of Wadawanuck Square, behind the library, as the best solution. (At this point, the Board and general public were invited to suggest alternative sites.) Warden Callahan requested that he be allowed to expend up to \$10,000 from the Building Fund to conduct a survey of Wadawanuck Square and to have preliminary drawings of the facility prepared. The Board concurred.

13. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Burgess Nicholas, seconded by Warden Callahan, adjournment of the meeting at 8:55 p.m. was unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jeffrey Callahan
March 25, 2021