

**BOROUGH OF STONINGTON
ANNUAL MEETING
April 27, 2019**

DRAFT MINUTES

Item 1. Warden Callahan opened the 219th annual meeting of the Borough of Stonington in Borough Hall at 10:00am. Approximately 60 people were present. After a few introductory remarks, he called for nominations for the meeting moderator. Michael Schefers nominated Beth Leamon, with the motion seconded by Richard Easton. There being no other nominations, Beth Leamon was unanimously elected moderator.

Item 2. Approve Minutes of 2018 Annual Meeting. On a motion by Amanda Barnes, seconded by Shaun Mastroianni, the minutes of the 2018 annual meeting were unanimously approved as drafted.

Item 3. Warden's Report and Public Comment. Warden Callahan presented his annual report. At the conclusion Warden Callahan asked if there were any questions or comment from the public. David Luce asked if the footbridge has been evaluated. Callahan replied that the Borough is still trying to confirm who is ultimately responsible for the footbridge. It is likely to be Amtrak, according to Town land records. Kirby Williams asked about the status of the seawall repair at Wayland's Wharf. Warden Callahan said it is included in the proposed Capital Improvement Plan. Pam Mola inquired about fixing parking lots at Wayland's Wharf and the Point. Warden Callahan stated that both are graded annually and once the rain subsides, a contractor will level it off. Richard Hanratty thanked Warden Callahan and his team for keeping the Borough running smoothly.

Item 4. Budget Presentation, Discussion, and Vote. Warden Callahan presented and discussed the proposed detailed budget for FY 2019-20 (Exhibit A) and answered questions. Regarding the proposed day-time, part-time zoning officer, Richard Easton asked if it would be someone other than Tom Zannarini. Warden Callahan stated it was possible only because Tom does have a full time job, and he would have to work it out with his employer. If Tom couldn't make an arrangement with his employer, we might hire a retired town planner or zoning officer. Pam Mola asked if the Borough would be keeping the evening zoning officer as well, and Warden Callahan replied that the details have not been worked out yet. Alan Vaskas asked if there was a way for zoning application fees to be raised to offset cost of increased activity. Warden Callahan said he would look into when the last time the fees were raised and also informed the public that the majority of the fee goes directly to the State. Richard Easton asked Warden Callahan to explain the Accumulated Surplus Fund, more specifically is it funds transferred or was it bookkeeping? His reply was that it was bookkeeping and it was recommended by auditors to be about 15%. The Borough's surplus is about 20%. Richard questioned how the amount to be transferred to next year's budget was determined. Warden Callahan replied that he first adjusted the mill rate then used reserve funds to close the remaining gap. The warden acknowledged that he could have transferred a larger amount and not increased the mill rate, but stated that he is fiscally cautious and prefers to keep a healthy balance in reserve. Richard observed that creating the budget appears to be a one-man operation. Callahan acknowledged that he does do most of it himself, but he does solicit input from the Board, which does vote on it before it goes to the Annual Meeting. Ryan Schoen asked if there was a long-

term capital plan and does it lay out responsibility for seawall repair, as in the Borough vs the State vs Fed Government, to which Warden Callahan responded yes, there is a 5-year plan which would be discussed next but most of capital improvement program is for streets. The general assumption is that there will be little or no funding from the State. Pam Mola asked who was paying for undergrounding the electric at the Borough School. Warden Callahan said it was private funding, i.e., the condo association. When asked how much it cost, he suggested asking Bill Griffin.

On a motion by Richard Easton and seconded by Alan Vaskas, the proposed budget was approved by all present, with the exception of one nay.

Item 5. Capital Improvement Program. Warden Callahan presented the five-year Borough Capital Improvement Program (Exhibit C). Richard Easton asked if Church Street will be repaired after the heavy equipment and construction at Salt Acres and at the end of Church Street (mainly) and if it is not considered in the improvement plan, can the Borough request a contribution? Warden Callahan said it could be looked at if we defer other street repairs. Richard stated that he was not suggesting something be done immediately but rather down the road to which Warden Callahan proposed it be looked at next year, as priorities may change. Ann Lobdell asked for Warden Callahan to clarify the proposed "lower Water Street" repair. He said the repair was Trumbull to Omega, to be able to work around the traffic. Ms. Lobdell suggested including the section from Omega to the Point, and Callahan said he would consider adding that piece if the budget supported it. Kirby Williams commented on increasing zoning fees again, stating that she received a sign approval for Wayland's Wharf and the majority of the money went to the State - not the Borough. Ryan Schoen asked if it made sense in a long-term plan to look at underground electric for Water Street as work is being done. Callahan replied that the work and cost would not be unreasonable but the time incurred to do it may pose as a problem. Paula Thompson asked if the Borough could work with the State on the wetlands and possible seawall on Maplewood Lane, which is a major flood zone. Warden Callahan confirmed that he has reviewed that area and the challenge of preventing tidal flow into the area. The entire area between the railroad tracks and Grand Street is very flat and would need a sea wall to prevent flooding. Paula said there was blockage under Salt Acres Road and Warden Callahan suggested they talk off-line about the issue. Ashley Morgan asked for clarification of Improvement Program without details being given. Beth Leamon explained that the vote was on the approval of proposal and Warden Callahan reiterated that what was being approved was what was on paper.

Jeff Callahan moved approval of the proposed Capital Improvement Plan, and Amanda Barnes seconded. All were in favor and none were opposed. After vote, there was further clarification on the process given to Ashley Morgan and the public.

Item 6. Select Trustees for Waldron Fund. Michael Schefers deferred to Gillian Patrick, who presented the Waldron Fund report. Richard Easton asked if the all requests for the year were approved, and Michael replied yes, with the exception of one. That family was advised to seek assistance from the State and other sources, because they had made multiple requests to the Waldron Fund. Richard also asked if the requests were for general help, to which Michael replied 90% was for food. Judith Hanratty asked what the process was to become a trustee for the Fund. Beth Leamon told her it was through an election process, and suggested she talk to the current trustees about getting involved. Beth Leamon asked for a motion to reappoint Michael Schefers, Gillian Patrick

and Caroline Muller as trustees of the Waldron Fund. Warden Callahan moved the nominations, and Richard Easton gave a second and the motion was approved unanimously.

Item 7. Other Business. Gillian Patrick asked about the traffic on Main Street and the speed calculator panel. Warden Callahan explained the study being done by the Stonington Police Department. The results came back stating that 75-80% of traffic was going less than 25 mph. Additionally, there was a shocking number of cars (21,000) driving north bound over just a two-week period. Gillian Patrick also asked if any money from tickets issued goes to the Borough, to which Warden Callahan replied No. Al Razzano asked if there was any way to address cars going wrong way on Trumbull and School Streets. Callahan suggested perhaps a bigger sign. Doug Mola stated that 75% of parking at Wayland's Wharf in high season is used by NESS employees. Doug also re-addressed the health care costs for Borough employees and their spouses. He and Mr. Razzano felt it is excessively generous to give spouses the same coverage as employees. Bergin O'Malley stated that the Borough has loyal employees who deserve good medical insurance. Warden Callahan said he was looking into a State program that might lower the cost. Burgess Mastroianni also commented that the Board is paying attention to this in that the cost increase took them by surprise. Warden Callahan ended the discussion by stating that nobody else in the Borough Fire Department had benefits (other than LoSAP) except for Chief Hoadley.

At 11:07am, Amanda Barnes moved to adjourn the annual meeting, with a second by Gillian Patrick. The meeting then adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tiffany Cook, Clerk-Treasurer
April 30, 2019