

**Borough of Stonington
Board of Warden and Burgesses
Regular Monthly Meeting – February 22, 2022
MINUTES**

CALL TO ORDER

Warden Jeffrey Callahan 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 and also by way of Zoom conferencing video. Present in Borough Hall in addition to Warden Callahan were Burgesses Kevin Rogers, Amy Nicholas, and Amanda Barnes. Burgess Shaun Mastroianni participated by Zoom. Clerk-Treasurer Lisa Coleman was absent.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On a motion by Burgess Nicholas, seconded by Burgess Rogers, the minutes of the regular meeting of January 18, 2022, were unanimously approved.

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT PRESENTATION

Joseph Centofanti, lead auditor from PKF O’Connor Davies, walked the Board through the annual financial report for fiscal year ending June 30, 2021. It is a clean audit with no material deficiencies. Borough’s net position increased by \$108,474 to \$4,407,810. Unassigned fund balance is \$490,784, which equals 39% of annual budget. Long term debt decreased by \$100,000 to \$318,873 (fire trucks).

REPORT OF ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT – NONE

CORRESPONDENCE

BOROUGH PROPERTY USE REQUESTS:

- a. PHGS – Reserved parking spaces (3-4) on Main Street for fish & chips Fridays during Lent.

MEETINGS/HEARINGS: Town of Stonington Planning & Zoning Commission hearing on proposed cannabis moratorium. March 1, 2022 at Board of Ed Office.

OTHER:

- a. Stonington Ambulance Corps- Letter of thanks for ARPA stipends to Ambulance Corps volunteers.
- b. Narragansett Flag Co. - Proposal to replace Cannon Square flagpole
- c. 176 Water Street Condo Association - Request to remove tulip tree in front of 176 Water Street
- d. PHGS – Revised ARPA grant request
- e. Stonington Historical Society – Revised ARPA grant request
- f. Copy of December 1884 report by the Board of Warden & Burgesses on laying out several new streets
- g. SCCOG – Proposed agreement for SCCOG to provide technical and planning support to Borough Planning & Zoning Commission as it updates the Plan of Conservation & Development this year
- h. Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce – Request for ARPA funding to support Borough businesses

OUTGOING: None.

REPORT OF CLERK-TREASURER: NONE

REVIEW OF BILLS/YTD FINANCIAL REPORT

Bills for the period January 15 through February 17, 2022 totalled \$88,026. Snow removal expenses, following the blizzard of January 29, accounted for \$52,987.

Despite this large unbudgeted expense, the Borough is in good financial shape. With a little over four months to go in the fiscal year revenue is \$40k over budget and net income is \$411,872 compared with \$371,907 in budgeted expenses remaining.

WARDEN'S REPORT

WARDEN'S REPORT – FEBRUARY 22, 2022 (2.21.2022)

1. Town Hall department head meeting for February cancelled
2. Began drafting FY 2022-23 budget. Input welcome
3. Received two revised ARPA grant requests from local NFPs
4. Local Covid statistics: New London County hospitalizations have finally dropped below 100 for the past week, while total deaths have increased to 543. Stonington Town deaths are 51 and total cases equal 2862.
5. Submitted 2022 CRS recertification report to FEMA and received response indicating that the Borough remains a Class 8 member of CRS, with 10% discount on NFIP flood policies of Borough property owners. Next recertification deadline is February 2023.
6. Executed storm water study contract with CLA Engineers. Data collection will begin soon.
7. Surveyors working around viaduct in preparation for possible State maintenance project
8. Preliminary 2020 census count for Borough is 976, the first increase in decades.
9. Received proposal from SSCOG to provide planner support for update of Borough POCD.
10. Worked with Town on annual MS4 (Storm Water) report.

BOROUGH CLOCK – None

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Streets & Sidewalks (Callahan)

1. Conducted monthly brush pickup.
2. Cleaned outfall at Harbor Edge
3. Plowed and sanded for January 29th blizzard. Removed snow with contractors on 1/31, 2/01, 2/02, 2/03. Cost = \$52k. Sanded all day during 2/13 snow.
4. Met with Narragansett Flag Co. regarding Cannon Square pole. Received proposal to replace pole.
5. Issued 2 dumpster permits
6. Patched potholes

Fire & Emergency Management (Nicholas/Hoadley)

SBFD responded to 11 Alarms in January 2022, they were as follows:

- 1)1-5-22 9:25am CO detector activation 148 Flanders Rd. (35ppm vented house)
- 2)1-11-22 5:20pm Mutual Aid to QFD 37 Lords Hill Rd. (outside rabbit hutch burned up)

- 3)1-16-22 6:14pm Fire Alarm activation 17 Elihu Island Rd. (damper closed on fireplace)
- 4)1-17-22 6:09am Transformer explosion IFO 66 Quanaaduck Rd. (called EVERSOURCE)
- 5)1-17-22 6:35am Flag pole leaning into tree @ Cannon Square (broken at ground)
- 6)1-17-22 9:06am Water emergency 10 Maplewood Lane(1 ft. of ocean in basement)
- 7)1-17-22 10:29am Gasoline sheen in water outside 40 Orchard St. (called in DEEP)
- 8)1-22-22 3:34pm Water emergency 127 Water St. (2ft. In basement)
- 9)1-23-22 10:17am Water emergency 68 Main St. (burst pipe 2nd floor)
- 10)1-29-22 7:57am CO detector activation 3 Ash St. (broken propane hot water heater,over 50ppm,vented house,shut down hot water heater)
- 11)1-30-22 4:45am MVA IFO 57 Lindberg Rd. Lords Pt. (snowplow hit telephone pole knocking service off house,called EVERSOURCE)

Police Incident Report (Nicholas)

During the month of January 2022 there were 58 incidents in the police report for the Borough including 11 Medical Assists, 10 Burglar Alarms including 6 that were false, 6 Assist Citizens, 4 Parking/Motor Vehicle Complaints, 3 911 Misdiagnoses/Hang ups, 3 Animal Control, 2 Nuisance, 2 Suspicious Activities, 2 Welfare Checks, 2 Landlord/Tenant Dispute, 2 Fire Related Calls and 2 Assist Other Agency. There was one incident each of Larceny, Keys in Vehicle, Disturbance, Motor Vehicle Abandoned, Vandalism, Motor Vehicle Stop, Alarm Panic, Check Building and Found Item.

Parks, Trees & Rights of Way (Barnes)

Received request to remove the large tulip tree in front of 176 Water Street. Preparing a response.

Public Buildings (Mastroianni)

Nothing to report

Utilities & Sanitation (Rogers)

Handed out six notices to residents who had violated the rules for putting out trash. Trash pickup was disrupted by the blizzard but now seems to have gotten back on track.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Sarah Blair complimented the Board on improvements to the area around the footbridge.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Status of COVID-19 in Region

Warden Callahan referred to his report, which noted significant declines in infections and hospitalizations in the last two weeks. State-wide positivity rate has been below 5% for over a week.

Memorial plaques

SVIA continues to work on this.

Cannabis use on public property

Warden Callahan distributed a first draft of an ordinance from Borough Atty Kepple. Needs further work.

Parking and Traffic

Presentation by consultant John Burke planned for March meeting.

Ordinance enforcement

Borough Attorney Kepple is working on two ordinances to set up enforcement mechanisms for parking infractions and other issues such as failure to clear sidewalks of snow or violation of the trash ordinance.

Mask policy and venue for next meeting

On a motion by Warden Callahan, seconded by Burgess Barnes, the Board voted unanimously to continue requiring persons entering Borough Hall to wear masks, regardless of vaccination status. This requirement will continue in effect through March 22nd. There is no mask mandate for Borough Fire House starting February 23rd. The next Board meeting will be a hybrid meeting, in person (with masks) and Zoom.

NEW BUSINESS

Consider requests to use Borough property

On a motion by Burgess Rogers, seconded by Warden Callahan, the request by the PHGS for 3-4 reserved parking spaces in front of 26 Main Street on Friday afternoons from March 4th through April 15th was unanimously approved.

Consider funding NFP and business support grant requests

On a motion by Burgess Mastroianni, seconded by Burgess Barnes, eight requests for ARPA funding from local Not-for-Profit organizations (LaGrúa Center, SVIA, NESS, Stonington Free Library, Portuguese Holy Ghost Society, Stonington Historical Society, James Merrill House, and Mystic Paper Beasts) for a total sum of \$60,918 were unanimously approved. One request was denied because the request did not come from a registered NFP. During discussion, Warden Callahan explained that guidance from the US Treasury Department on how ARPA funds should be used had broadened over the past year. The projects proposed by the local NFPs are consistent with Treasury guidance that allows “assistance to small business and non-profits.”

On a motion by Burgess Nicholas, seconded by Burgess Mastroianni, the request for ARPA funding from the Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce/Stonington Borough Merchants Association was unanimously approved with one modification. Item #2 (Lobster Trap Tree Buoys) was deleted, and the requested funding for that item is added to Item #1. Half of the total request (\$13,043) is available now, with the remainder (\$13,042) available on July 1, 2022.

Consider dates for Borough Annual Meeting and Budget Hearing

On a motion by Warden Callahan, seconded by Burgess Mastroianni, the Borough Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday April 30th at 10 am and the budget hearing will be held at 6:30 pm on Monday April 18th. Locations for both events will be determined by the Covid situation in April.

Consider approval of agreement with SCCOG for POCD support

On a motion by Burgess Rogers, seconded by Burgess Nicholas, the Board unanimously accepted the proposal from SCCOG to provide planning and technical support to the Borough Planning & Zoning Commission as it updates the Plan of Conservation & Development this year. Total cost not to exceed \$5,500.

Consider appeal of tree commissioner’s decision regarding plane tree on Denison Avenue

Chief Hoadley had requested that the large London Plane Tree at the corner of Denison and Cliff be removed to improve access by fire trucks. After his request was denied by the Tree Commissioner, he appealed to the full Board. A long discussion ensued weighing the value of the tree, which is in good health, versus the public safety benefits of improved access. In addition it was noted that the tree roots have damaged the adjacent street. Eventually the matter was tabled until the March meeting. Tree Commissioner Barnes will consult with Bartlett Tree regarding the impact on the tree of cutting the roots under the street prior to repairing Denison Avenue.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Burgess Mastroianni, seconded by Burgess Nicholas, adjournment of the meeting at 9:03 p.m., was unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jeffrey Callahan
February 24, 2022