

*Watch Hill Fire District
Watch Hill, R. I. 02891*

DISTRICT COUNCIL MEETING

Friday, March 19, 2010

4:00 P.M.

Fire Station

222 Watch Hill Road

Watch Hill, RI

A meeting of the District Council of the Watch Hill Fire District was held at the Watch Hill Fire Station at 4:00 p.m. Friday, March 19, 2010.

The following members were present:

Edwin L. Russell, Moderator

Grant G. Simmons III, Chairman of the Park Commission

William H. White, Treasurer

James Beale, Chairman of the Finance Committee

Scott Harold, Fire Chief

Voters present:

John Daukas

Peter Griffin

Judy Lentz

Walter Lentz

Robert Peacock

Robert Russell

Henry Toolan

Also present were:

Chaplin B. Barnes

Philip Koretski, Misquamicut Club

Judy Kelley, Office Manager

Lyn Traver, Fire District Administrative Assistant

By Phone:

Penelope Kelly, District Council Member at Large

Andrew Parsons, District Council Member at Large

Proper notice having been given and a quorum being present, the Moderator, Edwin L. Russell, called the meeting to order at 4:00 P.M.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the February 19, 2010 meeting. The motion was seconded and approved.

Financial Update – James Beale

Revenues: Mr. Beale reported that the revenue from property taxes was \$405,583, \$4,000 ahead of last year at this time but \$13,000 below budget. Mr. Beale will speak with Ann Brockmann to determine who is delinquent. Also in the revenue category this year is the \$66,457 arrears payment from the Cabana group. Mr. Beale noted that a check for about \$20,000 has just been received from HOB Yachts.

Expenses: Mr. Beale noted that the office supplies line is about \$1,000 under budget. Those funds may be used to purchase new software for the office.

Mr. Simmons was asked about various Park Commission budgeted expenses. Would the monies set aside for restroom maintenance be spent? Mr. Simmons said that those funds would be spent as part of the spring startup. Asked about the money for the Ft. Mansfield study, Mr. Simmons said he was trying to get a better understanding of what will be done, what the end product will look like and why the project is so expensive. Mr. Simmons will be taking the Westerly Town Manager out to the fort this Saturday. The dune restoration dollars budgeted will be spent, primarily on snow fence repair; there is enough in the budget to cover needs. Under capital improvements, Mr. Simmons advised that the Fort Road repair might not be done due to the water line repair.

Mr. White summarized that the Fire District currently has \$410,000 in cash, of which \$360,000 is unrestricted, plus the new \$20,000 just received from HOB Yachts.

Database Consolidation – James Beale

Mr. Beale explained that Judy and Lyn have been working with five different databases, much of which is an overlap. Consolidation will result in labor efficiencies and reduced exposure to input error. The new database should be complete by 5/1/10.

Fire Department - Scott Harold

Mr. Harold reported that despite the very stormy weekend, there were relatively few calls. Most calls came Sunday morning and related to downed power and phone lines. The Fire Department had to perform some light tree removal as well as general storm assessment that was forwarded to the central storm response team. There were no fire alarm issues and the Fire Department was not called to assist other communities.

Mr. Harold explained that the fire alarm system at the Misquamicut Club is tied to an underground cable connected to a pole and from there to the Fire House. The pole is on private land (Mr. Smith) and is being taken down. In order to keep the Misquamicut Club connected, they need to use a radio box, which the Fire Department does not have the infrastructure to support. However the Misquamicut Fire Department does have the infrastructure, so it has been worked out that the signal will be sent to the Misquamicut Fire Department, who will relay it to Watch Hill. The Misquamicut Club will pay the Misquamicut Fire District for any related expenses.

Mr. Simmons asked if Mr. Harold thought there would be other problems such as this as the underground utility project progresses. Mr. Harold advised that the current system was purchased second hand about 40 years ago and has undergone regular maintenance. He noted

that Dunns Corner Fire Department had just paid \$4,000 per mile to run similar cable. Mr. Simmons wondered if the Watch Hill Fire Department should look at the cost of going wireless.

Mr. Koretski noted that the Misquamicut Club is in the middle of 100 acres of land. To go to a wireless fire alarm cost \$5,000. To dig wire to replace the cable would have cost \$15,000 to \$16,000. Therefore, Mr. Koretski really appreciated the cooperative agreement worked out between the Watch Hill and Misquamicut Fire Departments.

Website – Andrew Parsons/Robert Russell

Mr. Parsons noted that there is still work to be done in updating the minutes area and the calendar sections.

The first category is “about”. Mr. Robert Russell wondered if it should be called “introduction” or some other name. The section includes information on parking, landmarks and contact us. It was decided to leave it “about”.

The Government tab has the charter, minutes, and Moderator’s letter. Mr. White asked why there was no list of the members of the District Council and the committees. Mr. Parsons replied that it was there once and will be put back in ahead of the charter.

The question was raised as to whether the charter should or should not be on the site. Mr. Beale felt it should be there since it is also available on the Secretary of State’s website and that one is not up to date. Mr. Simmons noted that if a group were trying to attack the Fire District, they could start by going through the charter to look for ammunition. He wondered why we would make it easy for them. Mr. Harold was in favor of having the charter on the site to maintain transparency. Mr. Edwin Russell was also for keeping the charter on the site. A vote was taken and a majority was in favor of having the charter on the website. Mr. Harold suggested that the document be made read only so it could not be printed. Mr. Robert Russell replied that he could make printing difficult but if someone were determined to do it, they still could.

It was decided to post the 12 months of minutes going forward, reflecting the fiscal year of July – June.

The News and Events tab will have an events calendar, which will list events chronologically but may change to a calendar grid if there are more than 30 events per month, and an important news tab, which would include notice of the Annual Meeting and updates on projects.

The finance tab now includes just a summary of the budget. Mr. Robert Russell wondered if there should be more detail. It was suggested that income from property taxes, rental income and total income be added at the top of the budget. Also, those present liked the idea of a side by side comparison of two years. The header at the top needs to identify which year is which.

The public spaces tab includes beaches, parks, dockage and Watch Hill Village. It was decided that a section should be added on the Watch Hill Fire Department as well as a link to their website. Links also need to be added to the Watch Hill Chapel, the Watch Hill Improvement Society and the East Beach Association.

All in all, Mr. Edwin Russell summarized that the website is just about ready.

Waterline Update – Mr. Simmons

Mr. Simmons reported that CRMC permission has been received for the work. The Fire District also has a relationship agreement with East Coast Construction and will sign a contract as soon as they determine how the utility pole piece fits in. The Conservancy is getting bids from East Coast and Cherenzia for that work. Mr. Simmons noted that East Coast Construction is currently doing the cabana septic work and their underground piping.

Mr. Harold asked if a performance bond was necessary and/or if the Fire District was linked with the town. Mr. Simmons will check.

Mr. Simmons said the Park Commission budget was in good shape overall but he might be able to free up \$25,000 from the Ft. Road project for this repair. Mr. Beale stated that the main pint is that there is enough money in the budget to cover the water line repair.

General Discussion

Mr. Edwin Russell stated that he occasionally sends letters to the Westerly Sun. When he sends them in he advises that he is speaking as an individual and not in his role as Moderator, but that is not always noted in the printed result. Mr. Beale suggested that Mr. Russell put the disclaimer in the text of the letter itself to insure that is its printed.

The meeting was adjourned to executive session at 5:15 pm.

The District Council returned to regular session at 5:50 pm and, there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Kelley
Office Manager