

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

DISTRICT COUNCIL MEETING

Friday, April 26, 2013

4:30 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 4:30 p.m. Friday, April 26, 2013.

The following members were present:

Charles S. Whitman III, Moderator
John M. Regan III, Deputy Moderator
William H. White, Treasurer
Grant G. Simmons III, Chairman Park Commission
Jason Simmons, Fire Chief
Ann Stevenson, Member at Large

By Phone:

Andrew Parsons, Member at Large

Also present were:

Chaplin B. Barnes
Lyn Traver, Administrative Assistant

Proper notice having been given and a quorum being present, the Moderator, Charles S. Whitman III, called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m.

Finance Committee – William White for Mr. James Beale

Mr. White reported that at the end of March, receipts were \$856,000+ representing 99% of anticipated receipts for the entire year. In April the Fire District received \$40,000 from HOB Yacht which left the District with revenues totaling 896,000, 4% over the anticipated budget. Expenses at the end of March were at 79% of budget. Mr. White said that many of the storm-related expenses were not factored in his report, but with the approval for additional funds that took place at the reconvened annual meeting, further expenditures can now be made. Compared to last year, receipts are \$58,000, or 7%, above last year and expenses are 5% below. By any measure, and despite Sandy, the finances are in good shape.

Mr. Whitman expressed concern over the reserve funds. Mr. White said that the expected reimbursements will replenish some of the existing reserves, but that the Fire District needs to anticipate capital expenditures over the long term. Mr. Parsons added that the modest Damage Sinking Fund might need to be increased. Mr. White said that the Finance Committee will be making a recommendation to the Council regarding replenishing a restricted storm damage fund versus a more general, unrestricted reserve fund that could be used for a variety of emergencies. Mr. White felt that an unrestricted surplus offers more flexibility.

Fire Department – Jason Simmons

Chief Simmons reiterated his decision to step down as Chief. At the last Department meeting, upon Chief Simmons' recommendation, Mr. Peacock was unanimously endorsed to take over the position. Chief Simmons felt strongly that Mr. Peacock would be an excellent Chief and will be able to move the Department forward. Chief Simmons pointed out that Mr. Peacock was unable to attend the meeting due to a large brush fire in Bradford. Chief Simmons said that the call volume has significantly increased and is nearly double what it was last year at this time.

Chief Simmons said that Mr. Peacock intends to concentrate on recruitment and retention of personnel when he takes over. Chief Simmons said that the inspections of businesses along the Bay Street area have begun. Because the Larkin Square area of town is still without power, inspections have not been done in that section. Mr. Grant Simmons pointed out that the lack of power was "Sandy" related, not due to the utility project.

Chief Simmons said that the decision was made to issue Hurricane passes again this season, but the procedures on how to use the passes will not be finalized until June or July. Order of re-entry procedures after a storm might be changed for the coming season as well.

Lastly, Chief Simmons thought it would be beneficial to pass out hurricane preparation procedures to the residents at the annual meeting to avoid mistakes that were made last year, i.e., handling propane tanks. It was agreed that these procedures should come from the Fire Department. It was suggested that this could be part of a packet available at the meeting.

Park Commission

Mr. Grant Simmons reported that the Park Commission recently advertised for parking lot attendants. The parking attendants will be expected to sign a letter stipulating certain points on general conduct and dress code. A contractor will be commencing work on the repairs to the bath houses by next week. Power to the Merry-Go-Round will be reinstated soon. Jersey Barriers will be used as a retaining wall to hold back the beach by the Merry-Go-Round and will be used to mark the property line by Larkin Square. One side of the barriers will be hidden by sand, and the parking lot side could be clad in a faux stone veneer for a more appealing look. Mr. White asked if the barriers would be a repair item for this year or a budget item for next year. Mr. Simmons said he did not know yet.

The contract with HOB Yachts expired in October, 2012. Since HOB Yachts had already committed funds for expenses and repairs, it was decided to retain their service this year and then allow new operators to present competing proposals in October, 2013. The electric work is being completed on the dock. Lights are being installed on Fort Road. The stone wall along Fort Road is being repaired and the seawall is being reinforced with steel rods. The parking lot will be black topped in the area in front of the entrance to the Misquamicut Beach Club. A permit has been granted so that sand, currently piled up on the parking lot, can be replaced onto the beach after it is sifted by Fields of Dreams.

Other Business

Mr. Barnes reported that Rich Youngken had been working with the Town of Westerly to apply for a transportation grant allowing monies to be moved from the Canal Street Project to the Bay Street project. The Town of Westerly is to receive from the DOT \$563,000 which could be used to pave Bay Street. The DOT will pay an additional \$200,000 for streetscape. The project will be completed by the fall of 2014 with new crosswalks, granite curbing, sidewalks, and period street lighting.

Mr. Barnes felt that there would be minimal disruption during the summer. Work will stop on May 15 and will resume on October 13. The road will be patched for the summer, and the sidewalks will be concrete not asphalt. Mr. White expressed concern with the liability risk due to the uneven sidewalks. Mr. Grant Simmons suggested that there might be a need for the Conservancy to have additional insurance.

The meeting was adjourned to Executive session at 5:02 pm.

The meeting was returned to regular session at 5:34 p.m., and, there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Lyn Traver
Administrative Assistant