

## **DRAFT MINUTES TO BE APPROVED AT 2012 ANNUAL MEETING**

110th ANNUAL MEETING  
WATCH HILL FIRE DISTRICT  
July 9, 2011  
9:30 A.M.

### **MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by the Moderator, Edwin L. Russell.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag – Robert Brockmann

### **REPORT OF BOARD OF CANVASSERS**

Shelley S. Weier, Assessor of Taxes, presented a List of District Voters, as certified by the Board of Canvassers, to the Clerk.

She said:

As required by the District Charter, the Board of Canvassers, consisting of myself as Assessor of Taxes and Ann Brockmann, Collector of Taxes, met on the last Monday of June to prepare the list of voters for this meeting. We certify that the copy presented to the Clerk is a true copy of that list.

### **QUORUM**

The Moderator called on the Clerk to report that there was a quorum (10 voters) present, which there was.

The Moderator declared the meeting in order and called on the Clerk to read the Necrology.

Necrology – Clerk, George C. Moore, Jr.

David Cabot  
Dwight Campbell  
Louis B. Cappuccio, Sr.  
Lois A. Collins-Ladd  
Joseph A. Creaturo  
Walter R. Donahue  
John McVeigh  
John M. Regan, Jr.  
Robert Renault  
Margaret V. B. Weber  
Anne H. White  
Kathryn F. W. Winans

The Moderator introduced the only guest, Police Chief Edward Mello.

Chief Mello spoke about preparedness for hurricanes. He stated that Westerly was overdue for a category two or three storm - that it was a matter of when and not if. He asked those present to take each of two handouts. One directed a resident to a website where they can register to be notified by the police in case of an emergency. The second handout included a list of supplies one should have on hand when a storm is predicted. Chief Mello advised that each household should prepare for 3 days of self survival.

If an evacuation should be ordered, the police and fire personnel would go door to door to notify people. They would then set up security check points, usually on Shore Road and increase patrols south of Shore Road once people were evacuated since the homes would be empty. Those evacuated would be provided with shelter, food and water and there would be provisions for storing boats and pets. If someone were to choose to stay in their home, they would have to survive on their own. The police would not bring in food and water.

Once a storm had passed through, the police would check the area to be certain it was safe and then allow residents to return via the check point. They would be cleared back in via their hurricane passes or via their drivers' license.

Mr. George Moore stated that he was concerned about the increasing number of children without helmets on bicycles on Watch Hill Road and Ocean View Highway. He wondered if the Community Service Officers (CSO's) could warn the children. Chief Mello replied that by law children under a certain age must wear a helmet and that the police officers and CSO's will remind them of that fact.

Mr. Russell asked if there could be a sign in Watch Hill about motorcycle noise similar to the one currently in Misquamicut. Chief Mello said the sign at the fire station, currently warning of a new stop sign, will be changed within the week to warn of excessive motorcycle noise.

As for as the new stop sign, it was noted that only about 60% of people stop. Chief Mello advised that it is hard to get 100% compliance but at least most people slow down. He said there will be an officer there occasionally to ticket those who don't stop.

Chief Mello stated that this would be his last summer in Westerly; that he was going to be moving to Jamestown in the fall. He thanked everyone for their support stating the community had been good to him and his family.

The Moderator reminded those present of the qualification of voters (i.e., Watch Hill residents who are eligible to vote in a Westerly election and owners of property in Watch Hill –all individual owners, and one representative of any trust, corporation, partnership or other entity owning property), and asked that those present who are not qualified voters refrain from participating.

**Minutes of Last Annual Meeting, July 10, 2010**

A motion to waive a reading of the minutes was made, seconded and approved.

**Report of the Treasurer – James Beale for Bill White**

Mr. Beale advised that the full financial report by the Fire District’s accountant, DiSanto Priest & Co., was available in office should anyone wish to review it.

Mr. Beale reported that the cash balance at the beginning of the year was \$206,515 and at the end of the year (5/31/11) it was \$230,255. Operating cash was \$142,049 while restricted cash was \$87,766. The balance in the Storm Damage Sinking Fund was \$60,666. Mr. Beale said that there was now a contingency and capital reserve fund which will be built up over time to \$100,000 so that should an unforeseen emergency occur, some funds would be available.

Mr. Beale called on the Clerk to propose the following resolution:

**RESOLUTION VALIDATING OVER-EXPENDITURES OF APPROPRIATIONS AND TRANSFERRING UNEXPENDED BALANCES**

RESOLVED:

That all over-expended appropriations as of May 31, 2011, aggregating \$44,154.29 for the fiscal year ending May 31, 2011 before application of unexpended appropriations for said fiscal year, as reported by the District Treasurer and as noted in Schedule C under Statement of Appropriations, Cash Disbursements, and Encumbrances, be and the same are hereby validated to the same extent as if the District Treasurer had been fully authorized to make such expenditures, and all unexpended balances of appropriations as of May 31, 2011, as reported by the District Treasurer and as noted in said Schedule C, be and the same are hereby applied against said over-expended appropriations.

The motion was seconded and approved.

**Report of the Tax Assessor – Shelley S. Weier**

Grand List of District properties is \$1,166,657,900 as of December 31, 2010. After the deduction of Westerly and Watch Hill exemptions of \$17,566,760, the assessed value of taxable property is \$1,149,091,140. This reflects an increase since last year of \$4,829,500 in assessed value.

**Report of the Tax Collector – Ann L. Brockmann**

Taxes received	
2010	\$434,584.75
With Interest	\$1,053.19
Total	\$435,637.94
Prior Years	\$\$4,318.87
Unpaid Taxes (Total)	\$6,407.21 on 8 properties

Comparison Unpaid in Prior Years

2009	\$1,157.78
2008	\$ 0.00

**Report of Fire Department – Chief Jason Simmons**

Chief Jason Simmons noted that he is the 12<sup>th</sup> Fire Chief, having taken over in the fall. During the year there have been 109 alarms. Most of the false alarms are due to contractors who don't take proper precautions relative to the alarm system before starting work.

Chief Simmons emphasized that quick response time is critical and that residents should be aware of factors that slow response, such as overgrown shrubbery or hard to read house numbers.

Chief Simmons noted that the Fire Department is very proud of their marine program. There are two boats now, both donated. There were 13 calls in the past year and the Watch Hill Fire Department was first on the scene in 11 of those 13.

Chief Simmons advised that the Fire Department has a new website which is also used for disseminating department information and as a tool for recruitment as well as for general information. He also noted that recruitment and retention remain an area of concern. He has appointed a committee to study the situation and to look for a long term solution.

Chief Simmons thanked his assistant chiefs, Scott Harold and Robert Peacock, for their support and also all the Watch Hill volunteer fire fighters.

A full copy of Chief Simmons' report is attached and a part of these minutes.

**Report of the Park Commission – Chairman, Grant G. Simmons III**

Mr. Grant Simmons first thanked the Improvement Society for their hard work on plantings within the Fire District. He then described the upcoming Bay Street Storm Water Retention project. The water will go to two retention areas, both on Fire District property. Since Bay Street has to be dug up for the retention project and a new water line, the infrastructure for the Conservancy's underground utility project will be put in at the same time. The work will begin in October, after Columbus Day, and completion is estimated by April 15, 2012.

Mr. Simmons advised that repair work on the sea wall along Fort Road will also begin in October and that all is going well with the Merry-Go-Round and the horses.

Mr. Frederick Whittemore asked about the financing for these projects. Mr. Simmons replied that the Town of Westerly would pay for the storm retention work and new water line and that the Conservancy would pay for the underground utility infrastructure. Mr. Chaplin Barnes stated that the Conservancy's share is estimated to be \$1,000,000 and that to take down the wires once the infrastructure is in place would cost another \$1,000,000. He advised that all of this would be funded by private money.

Mr. Brockmann asked about the cost of the repair of the sea wall. Mr. Simmons said it is estimated at \$60,000 and that this is the first phase. A second phase costing approximately the same amount will take place in two to three years.

Mrs. Carolyn Westerfield said she was concerned about safety during the work on Bay Street. Mr. Whitman responded for Chief Simmons that the Fire Department was coordinating very carefully with the Town to be certain fire trucks would have access to every structure during the construction.

Mrs. Kopp said she was confused by the arrows on the pavement coming out of the Misquamicut Club Beach Club. They seem to send the cars around in a circle instead of straight out. Mr. Grant Simmons said it is better to follow the arrows but if you feel safe going straight out, you may do so.

Mr. Whittemore spoke about the Holdredge Garage parking lot, noting that long time operator John McVeigh had just died. The parking lot will continue to operate as is this season and there will be some modest reconstruction starting in the fall. He gave thanks to Mr. McVeigh for all his help in operating the lot in the past.

Mr. Simmons thanked the Lattner Foundation for their funding which allowed for safety rails at Fort Mansfield.

### **Report of the Finance Committee – Chairman, James T. Beale, Jr.**

Mr. Beale noted changes in account names going forward, cash received will be receipts and expenses will be expenditures.

In 2011 total disbursements were \$825,306 versus a budget of \$840,840. \$7,500 of the contingency fund was used for a new budget item, the training officer for the Fire Department. There were no other unusual expenses.

For 2011-2012 disbursements are budgeted at \$921,600 and revenue is budgeted at \$853,620, for a shortfall of \$67,980, \$60,000 of which is for the sea wall repair. The Finance Committee recommended and the District Council concurred that past year's surplus be used to cover this shortfall. Therefore the tax rate will remain as it is.

Mr. Beale reported that Mr. George Jenssen was leaving as bookkeeper and thanked him for his service. He introduced the new bookkeeper, William Horne.

Mr. Beale recommended keeping the current accountant, DiSanto Priest & Co.,

Finally, Mr. Beale thanked his committee for their support.

A full copy of Mr. Beale's report is attached and a part of these minutes.

APPROPRIATIONS – The Moderator introduced the Budget submitted by the Finance Committee, noting that its preparation reflects comments and recommendations received at the May 27, 2011 meeting of the Finance Committee. He reported that the Assessor of Taxes proposes a mill rate of \$0.385, a number that will be reviewed again before tax bills go out. He noted further that the budget has been circulated to the Voters in accordance with the Charter.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was

RESOLVED:

That the report of the Finance Committee be accepted and filed and the Appropriations for the fiscal year 2011-2012 be and the same are hereby approved.

The motion was seconded and approved.

### **TAX RESOLUTION - CLERK**

RESOLVED:

That the electors of the Watch Hill Fire District, hereby order the assessment and collection of a tax on the ratable property of said District in a sum not less than \$440,000 nor more than \$470,000. The Assessor of Taxes shall assess and apportion said tax on the inhabitants and ratable property of said District as of the 31<sup>st</sup> day of December, 2010 at 12:00 noon, according to law, and shall certify and deliver the same to the Collector of Taxes on or before the first day of August, 2011. The Collector of Taxes shall proceed to collect said tax; said tax to be due and payable on or before the 30th day of September 2011, and all taxes remaining unpaid on the 30<sup>th</sup> day of September 2011 shall carry interest until collected, a penalty at the rate of 12% per annum upon such unpaid taxes. To the extent that assessments as of the 31st day of December 2010 may be modified by the Assessor of Taxes, the Treasurer and the Collector of Taxes shall make adjustments as appropriate.

The motion was seconded and approved.

**TAX ANTICIPATION NOTES - CLERK**

RESOLVED:

That the District Treasurer be, and hereby is, authorized and empowered during the current fiscal year of the District, commencing June 1, 2011 and ending May 31, 2012, to borrow such sum or sums of money as shall be necessary for the payment of the current liabilities and expenses of the District, but not to exceed in the whole the sum of \$100,000.00, and to issue negotiable promissory note or notes of the District therefor, which shall be made payable not later than one (1) year from the respective date or dates thereof. Negotiable notes issued pursuant to the authority hereof shall be signed by the District Treasurer and countersigned by the District Clerk, and such counter signatures shall be conclusive evidence to all holders of such note or notes of the approval and consent of the District and the District Officers to the loan or loans evidenced thereby. The District Treasurer is hereby authorized and empowered to renew any of said notes from time to time, but any such renewal note shall be due not later than one (1) year after the date of the original note so renewed.

The motion was seconded and approved.

**RESOLUTION RE: EMERGENCY NEEDS - CLERK**

RESOLVED:

That the Treasurer is authorized to expend sums not to exceed \$30,000.00 in the aggregate, to meet the contingent and emergency needs of the Fire District and to carry out the duties and obligations of the officers and committees in accordance with the provisions of the charter.

The motion was seconded and approved.

**RATIFICATION AND APPROVAL OF ACTS OF COUNCIL, OFFICERS, FINANCE COMMITTEE AND PARK COMMISSION – AUDREY MOORE**

RESOLVED:

That each and all of the resolutions, acts and proceedings of the District Council (as shown by its records in the Minute Book of the District Council) and of its Officers, Finance Committee, and Park Commission in carrying out and promoting the purposes, objects, and interests of the Watch Hill Fire District, during the fiscal year ending May 31, 2011, be and the same are approved, ratified and hereby made the acts and deeds of the Watch Hill Fire District.

The motion was seconded and approved.

**AUTHORIZATION OF MODERATOR TO APPEAR AT HEARINGS - CLERK**

RESOLVED:

That the Moderator, or such other person or persons as the District Council or the Moderator shall designate, be and hereby are fully authorized and empowered to enter objections or legal actions on behalf of the Watch Hill Fire District in reference to any zoning matters, liquor licenses, legislative matters, or any other subject affecting the properties at Watch Hill.

The motion was seconded and approved.

**RESOLUTION RE: ASSISTANT TO THE TREASURER - CLERK**

RESOLVED:

That William D. Horne is appointed and employed as Assistant to the Treasurer for the year 2011 - 2012 and said Assistant is empowered to execute checks and make withdrawals from funds of the District in the same manner as the District Treasurer, subject to limitations requiring dual signatures and that the Assistant to the Treasurer shall be bonded in the same manner and amount as the District Treasurer.

The motion was seconded and approved.

**RESOLUTION APPOINTING AUDITOR - CLERK**

RESOLVED:

That DiSanto Priest & Co. be appointed Auditor of the District for the year 2011 – 2012.

The motion was seconded and approved.

**REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE  
ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Mr. Russell called on Jane O’Connell who reported that the Nominating Committee, in accordance with prior vote at the Annual Meeting of July 10, 2010, moved the election of the following slate of Officers:

- |                                    |                               |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Moderator                          | Charles S. Whitman III, 1 Yr. |
| Deputy Moderator                   | John M. Regan III, 1 Yr.      |
| Treasurer                          | William H. White, 1 Yr.       |
| District Council, Members at Large | Penelope B. Kelly, 1 Yr       |
|                                    | Andrew J. Parsons, 1 Yr.      |



Clerk	George C. Moore, Jr., 1 Yr.
Collector of Taxes	Ann L. Brockmann, 1 Yr.
Assessor of Taxes	Shelley S. Weier, 1 Yr.
Finance Committee	James T. Beale, Jr., 3 Yrs.
	Richard H. Sayre, 2 Yrs.
Park Commission	Grant G. Simmons III, 3 Yrs.
	Robert W. Richins, 3 Yrs
Fire Chief	Jason S. Simmons, 1 Yr.
First Assistant Chief	Scott Harold, 1 Yr.
Second Assistant Chief	Robert Peacock, 1 Yr.
Fire Department Members-at-Large	Walter J. Lentz, M.D., 1 Yr.
	Stuart W. Weier, 1 Yr.

Mr. Russell opened the floor to other nominations. There being no further nominations, the motion to approve the current slate was made, seconded and approved.

**APPOINTMENT OF NOMINATING COMMITTEE - CLERK**

RESOLVED:

That Jane B. O’Connell be appointed Chairman of the Nominating Committee, 2011- 2012 and that the following four people be members to serve thereon: Roberta Allardyce, W. Whitney George, Peter B. Griffin, and Robert E. Knisley, and that the Nominating Committee deliver to the District Clerk, at least three weeks before the next annual meeting, its proposed slate of officers. The Clerk shall give notice of the proposed slate in the call of the annual meeting.

The motion was seconded and approved.

**Citizen’s Service Award – Charles E. Royce**

Jane O’Connell presented the Watch Hill Fire District Citizen’s Service Award to Charles M. Royce in acknowledgement of his grand vision for and immeasurable contributions to Watch Hill and Westerly.

**Other Comments**

Mr. Russell introduced Mr. Ken Parilla, a resident of Watch Hill who is also a member of the Westerly Town Council. Therefore, Mr. Russell pointed out, Watch Hill is represented in Westerly.

As outgoing Moderator, Mr. Russell thanked the various committee heads, the two Fire District attorneys, the office staff and the District Council for their hard work and support during his tenure. He presented incoming Moderator, Charles S. Whitman III, with a Moderator’s badge.

Mr. Whitman, incoming Moderator, said he was proud to be here and pointed out that both he and Mr. Jason Simmons were in jobs that their father's had once held. Mr. Whitman said he looked forward to serving the Fire District and hoped to do as good a job as Mr. Russell has.

Upon motion made and duly seconded, it was

RESOLVED:

That the meeting be RECESSED to the call of the Moderator.

The motion carried.

Respectfully submitted:

Judith H. Kelley  
Office Manager