

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE WARDEN AND BOARD OF BURGESSES ON THURSDAY, MAY 16, 2019 AT NIBANG AVENUE, FENWICK, CT.

PRESENT: Warden Newt Brainard, Jonathan Gengras, Frank Keeney, David Savin, Ann Pulver, Arthur Wright, Pam Christensen (on phone until 5:45 PM,), General Manager Jeff Champion, Robert Gay, ZEO Marilyn Ozols.

OTHERS PRESENT: Cindy Patterson, Mimi Brainard, JD Rehm, Peter Bulkeley, Robert Boody, Suzie Stanners, Daryl Aresco.

The Meeting was called to order at 4:35PM by the Warden.

Approval of the Minutes

**A Motion was made by Arthur Wright seconded by Ann Pulver to approve the April 11, 2019 Minutes as presented.
PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Open Forum for Residents to Speak

The Warden read into the record a letter from Resident Ethel Davis regarding the Concerns Committee request for Funding. (Attachment #1)

Daryl Aresco, Superintendent handed out a letter concerning concerns about the upcoming Budget Cycle. (Attachment #2)

Daryl summarized his letter stressing the areas of his biggest concerns:

- Labor: the Borough accomplishes a lot with few employees and they reduce hours in the winter to assist with the Borough meeting their fiscal goals

- Equipment: forgone new equipment

- Workload: taking on more responsibilities without taking on more staff or increase in compensation

- Morale: concerned about long term consequences of not increasing wages and cutting out small perks, privileges and small education budget.

Daryl summed up his concerns with his appreciation of the Community, his commitment and desire to maintain the present work ethic of the employees and positive work environment.

Art Wright asked Daryl to forward the National Superintendent Survey to the Burgesses for their review.

JD Rehm asked the Warden for clarification concerning the subject matter of Ethel Davis's letter. The Warden applauds residents who provide insight and opinions and encourages residents to voice their opinions.

General Manager's Report

EZ Links: The installation of the EZ Links Program has been difficult and unexpected. It is not a user friendly system especially for individuals that are not familiar with technology which are the predominant users of the System (starters). General Manager Jeff Champion and Frank Keeney have been contacting the management at EZ Links and they are aware of the software glitches that need to be fixed as well as the Fenwick system being more complicated than most of their other clients. If the Program is not up and running within two weeks the plan is to pull the system until Fall and try again. It was stressed in the Meeting that the Borough clearly needs to be able to market to the golf community as well as be able to effectively communicate to Residents concerning the Golf Course thereby stresses the need for a "EZ Links" type website.

Golf Course: The Golf Course is in great shape and thriving.

Chart of Accounts: Due to the issues concerning EZ Links, the Chart of Accounts is behind and data entry is behind. It will be completed in June.

Summer Preparations: Everything is on schedule to open on time. The only delay has been the tennis courts due to rain. They should be ready for Memorial Day.

The Pier: Repair Work is necessary on the East side of the Swim Platform which will require the barge to come out. Also, there is some leftover repointing work from last year that needs to be completed otherwise the Pier is in good shape.

Budget: Bob Gay presented his thoughts concerning the upcoming Budget. The new Chart of Accounts will provide a clear picture of the Borough's finances as well as a place for every item in the Budget. Therefore, he believes that it is necessary to build a contingency for an operating surplus of \$50,000. He also noted that that he believes that due to the aging population of Old Saybrook and the saturation of the woman's golf market that Revenues for the golf course are reaching a maximum level. There is room for growth for the daily ticket market but not the season ticket holder. This again points to the need to "market" to the greater golf community to build the daily ticket revenue. Thus, the only flexibility in the Budget is the ability to "raise taxes". There is also concern moving forward next summer with the increase in the minimum wage whereby expenses will increase.

The budget issues led to the discussion of some form of assistance and/or relief from the town of Old Saybrook concerning upcoming capital projects. The Warden then stated that he met with the town First Selectman last week specifically to discuss such joint projects. The Warden felt that the Entrance to the Borough was the optimal project to work with the Town for their assistance. Mr. Fortuna felt that the town could potentially assist with engineering costs (design and build out) and in-kind servicing (equipment). The Project would be controlled by the Borough and the goal would be to have the town provide some funding. The preliminary Plans for the Project were done four years ago and would need to be updated. The Warden is going to put together a

meeting with: the First Selectman, Department of Public Works, Jeff Champion and Jeff Jacobson to discuss further steps in planning. The goal would be to have the Project done in later winter/early spring.

Playclass will have more oversight with the Budget and a discussion will take place stressing the requirement that the budget be balanced.

P. Christensen arrived at this time.

Board, Commission and Committee Reports

P & Z: Art Wright reported that the Commission will be proposing the following Regulation to the issue of Short Term Rentals in the Borough:

- Rentals would have a minimum of seven days with no more than three distinct rentals in the calendar month.
- The Enforcement agent is the ZEO
- Tentative date for Public Hearing is July 20th

Discussion took place concerning whether to consider an Ordinance. The Warden is going to request that Mike Zizka provide a two page summary of the Pro/Cons of an Ordinance vs Regulation and he will distribute to the Burgesses when received.

Park Commission: Frank Keeney reported that the Playscape is fine for this summer but that it will need to be replaced the following summer. He believes that there is opportunity for some donations from parents and grandparents and that the need to plan for the design should be started this summer as there may be a large contingent of opinions. The Warden asked Frank to put together a planning committee for the Playscape Project. He also noted that Saturday, May 18th the golf course would be closed from 8-2 for the Old Saybrook Fire Department Fundraiser.

Concerns Committee: Pam Christensen presented her proposal to hire Mike Zizka to provide legal research up to \$25,000. After much discussion, concerning what details were anticipated from the research and how this research would differ from past research the Burgesses voted.

A Motion was made by Jonathan Gengras seconded by David Savin to authorize up to \$10,000 for the Concerns Committee to hire Attorney Michael Zizka to provide a legal document on the feasibility, viability and variety of uses of a CIOC (Common Interest Ownership Community) to address its benefits to the Borough.
FOR: Gengras, Christensen, Pulver, Savin, Keeney
AGAINST: Wright
MOTION PASSES.

Warden Report:

Appoint and Approve P & Z Commission Member

A Motion was made by Jonathan Gengras seconded by Ann Pulver to appoint Ralph Keeney to the Planning and Zoning Commission to fill the alternate vacancy.

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Commission Appointee Discussion for 2019-2020 Term

-No discussion

Other Business

-None

NEXT MEETING: Saturday, May 25, 2019 at 9 AM.

Executive Session: Employee Compensation

At 7:07 PM, a Motion was made by Frank Keeney seconded by Arthur Wright to move into Executive Session to discuss employee compensation and invite Jeff Champion General Manager to attend.

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

At 7:30 PM, A Motion was made by Jonathan Gengras seconded by Frank Keeney to come out to Executive Session.

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

At 7:31 PM, A Motion was made by Jonathan Gengras seconded by David Savin to adjourn the Meeting.

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully Submitted,

Julie G. LeBlanc, Clerk

Attachment #1

I am sorry I am unable to attend the meeting but would like to comment on the Concerns Committee agenda item.

The Fenwick community has reviewed the question of limiting access to the Borough many times over the past 15 years, twice in depth. It is a divisive issue and has caused a great deal of turmoil, plus expense. I am listing the reasons I do not feel the Borough should spend money on this issue at this time.

1. Elected municipal officials should not spend tax payer dollars which support limiting access to and usage of public lands.
2. Relative to the beach areas, access may be limited to resident fee payers and anyone else willing to pay an individual \$50 /per person fee.
3. A few years ago we privatized a number of road endings and sold some abutting property to interested property owners for an appraised value. These transfers went with protections either by deed or already existing easements. The access to these properties is limited to residents and their guests. The land transfers were stopped because of complaints from the LPLT, but there is no legal reason why this can not be continue.
4. Traffic on the roads may be an issue at times, but the offenders of traffic/speeding rules can be controlled with help from the O S police.
5. 95% of issues are only present during the summer months.
6. The Borough has a number of rules/laws which were put into place to ensure a pleasant quality of life and safety for all our residents. Historically we do not enforce these rules. An example is "no food, juice, glass, dogs etc at the beach. Typically there are dogs on the beach, pizza parties etc.
7. We have had conversations about privatizing and making Fenwick an association, yet when the opportunity to privatize an area is brought to the attention of the residents affected, they do nothing; ie Wilson Ave. area or the Scum Beach area. The seawall sidewalk could have limited access if all the seawalls were owned by abutting owners, but they have refused to take ownership even though they are responsible for repairs. Do you realize that in front of those houses where the land is owned by the Borough it is totally public and anyone can sit and eat a picnic lunch.

The Concerns Committee was asked by me a year or so ago to look into lighting some of the dark spots in the Borough, since we still have lights in storage, specifically Neponset where residents are divided on wanting or not wanting lights.

It continues to be scary dark especially during the fall and winter months. We continue to have underage golf cart drivers and adults driving with no lights at night. We continue to have blind spots on some of the Borough roads. People continue to complain about lawn services and the noise.

In the past few years many houses have changed hands. Last summer we had workers on a daily basis. Historically when rules/ laws/ordinances are passed by the Burgesses they are done for the benefit of the community after opportunity for public comment. Presently this process is in place with a rental issue. It is then the responsibility of the Burgesses to educate, support and enforce these rules. If they are not to be enforced, then get rid of them. We are a municipality, which has many benefits compared to associations, but that also means both public and residents have to be treated the same on public property. Someday the Borough may no longer be a municipality but until that happens I suggest the Concerns Committee and the Burgesses work to better our relationship with Old Saybrook (tax issues, limiting non resident auto access to certain hours as in most parks) and privatizing as much as possible.

Dear Newt, Bob and Board of Burgesses:

I have some concerns I would like to share with you. For 11 years now I have been working here and the last 9 have been in my current position of Superintendent. While my job has changed a lot over that time and I feel that together we've been making steady improvements and collectively raising standards for the Borough.

Here are some items I want to address and have you consider as we move forward together into the budgeting season.

- Labor – We are able to accomplish a lot with few employees, comparatively speaking, “nation average employees for solely a golf course is 10 full time during peak” I rely heavily on my team, especially the 3 full time/year-round people. In the past 3-4 years we've started a trend of cutting their hours back from 40 to 32 during the winter months. This can equate to a team member being reduced by almost 90hrs a year. This year hit them harder than most due to a light year of snow removal.
- Equipment – For the past 3-4 years we have foregone buying new equipment that we need to maintain the golf course(s), parklands, tennis courts, beaches, pier, trash pickup, road repairs, etc.
- Workload –Year over year we are taking on more responsibilities and are staffing and compensation doesn't reflect the addition. We are not just a 9-hole course, we are really 14 holes with a lot of extras, tennis courts, pier, beach, roads, parklands.... From a golf course point of view, according to GCSAA statistics, we run a smaller crew than most golf courses and everyone is paid below the average salary. I bring this up to reinforce the fact that we are in a position where we have more responsibility, pay less and are at risk of losing the people we've invested so much in.
- Morale – I am very concerned about the long-term consequences of not giving out raises and cutting the small perks we have like possibly taking away golf privileges and reducing an already slim education budget. If we are looking at ways of saving money and going to make cuts to the employees I am worried that as job satisfaction lowers from run down equipment, low pay, heavy workload, and other perks being removed that we are at great risk to lose the people that make the Borough all it is. We have also strayed from growing our employees with in by continuing to educate them and aligning there wages to work load and responsibilities.

In conclusion, I want to tell you all how much I love my job and working for the Borough. All the people here have been like a second family to all of us and in the past several years it is starting to feel more and more like we're losing that. Part of what makes the Borough what it is has been its steadfast commitment to the way things used to be. You all like to know your neighbors, you like to leave your doors open, you like to give Sean the keys to your house so he can get your garbage, you like to call me up and ask me to help with projects or advise on plants and trees.

I am worried if we continue down this path we could stray from the established family values that are the Borough.

Respectfully submitted – Daryl Aresco, Superintendent