

**Board of Warden and Burgesses  
Borough of Stonington  
Minutes of Regular Monthly Meeting – March 17, 2014**

**Call to Order:**

A. The regular monthly meeting of the Borough of Stonington Warden and Burgesses was called to order in Borough Hall at 7:30 PM by Warden Jeffrey Callahan. Present were Burgesses Michael Adair, Michael Blair, Sibby Lynch, Amy Nicholas, Howard Park and Robert Scala.

**Approval of the Minutes:**

A. On a motion by Burgess Scala, seconded by Burgess Nicholas, acceptance of the minutes from the Board meeting held on February 18, 2014 was unanimously approved.

**Administrative Assistant's Report:**

A. Received tax collections for February: \$702.98

**Clerk-Treasurer's Report:**

A. No activity to report

**Review of Bills:**

A. The Feb 18, 2014 through Mar 14, 2014 report was reviewed and is on file at the Borough office. Bills for the period totaled \$47,143.39

**Review of Profit and Loss Statement:**

A. The July through March 14, 2014 Profit and Loss Budget vs. Actual Report was reviewed and is on file at the Borough Office. Net Income as of March 14, 2014 is \$248,536.65

**Correspondence:**

A. COMO Letters requesting consideration of \$5,000 support and two following letters supporting rationale for the request

B. Letter from ZBA candidate Anthony Inzero

C. Letters from P&Z candidate Ben Davol and another from P&Z candidate Stuart Schwartzstein

D. Letter from Clerk/treasurer candidate Lisa M. Coleman

E. Letter from Stonington Tax Collector

F. Application for filming in Borough in late March from NZK Productions

**Public Comment:**

A. Rachel Jones and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Megan Gaffit came to the meeting because Vice President Kelley Sullivan could not attend and asked to defer their comments until the subject of the request for support of the Ambulance Corps came up.

## **Warden's Report (Warden Callahan)**

- A.** Worked with Borough Attorney regarding zoning enforcement action.  
Worked on agreement with the new fire company structure.  
Signed up for Home Energy Solutions Audit for evaluation.  
Worked on Revisions of the 2014-15 Borough Budget.  
Continued transferring files and drawings to the new storage cabinets in the old Borough Hall Kitchen.  
Checked with Aquarion on status of the water main project. The construction contract is not yet awarded. So start date is not yet established. The project is limited to Wall and Broad Streets in the Borough
- B. Borough Clock:**  
Advanced clock one hour to Daylight Saving Time.

## **Streets and Roads (Burgess Park)**

- A.** 1. Salting and plowing have taken up an unusual amount of time and effort this winter. Snow was carted away from Trumbull St, Gold St. and the Firehouse.  
2. Took down "Stop Ahead" sign on Gold St. Replaced Stop signs on Main St and Harmony St., Replaced "No Parking" sign on Harmony and Grand Streets.  
3. Replaced worn out flags at both the Point and Canon Square.  
4. Inspected the West leaning flagpole at Cannon Square and will pursue working with SVIA's Kevin Bowdler to straighten the footing support.  
5. Replaced shift cable on the 1999 truck.

**B.** Burgess Park looked at replacement one-ton replacement diesel truck (Ford 350) with a 7 foot plow and a small sand spreader. This size truck would be more versatile and maneuverable on our narrow streets and the bed can be loaded by our cub cadet front end loader. (Current dump trucks are too high). The smaller truck, which is not equipped with a dump capability, could be retro fitted for this if needed at a later time. Pricing of various options is being sought.

**C.** Some potholes caused by this unusual temperature varied winter have been patched. More extensive patching will have to wait for the plant to open. Burgess Park has an extensive list of roads that need repaving, but depending on budgets, relative states of need of repair etc., recommendations as to which projects, when and what contractor to use will be studied and recommended as necessary.

**D.** Much catch basin cleaning has been done, but many of the 90 catch basins in the Borough have not been vacuumed in two years. Burgess Park is working with Tim Keena in getting estimates for repair of additional catch basins as well as re-grading and packing down the surfaces of both the point and Wayland's Wharf. He will make the necessary recommendations as the specific information is available.

## **Fire and Emergency Management: (Burgess Blair)**

**A.** Burgess Blair met the selection committee to evaluate and select officers for the new, consolidated company structure as approved by all the current companies. The other members of the interviewing committee were our Chief Hoadley, and two other fire chiefs from nearby

municipalities. Originally five people applied for the leadership positions. One dropped out prior to the interview process. At the conclusion of the evaluations, three were selected, For Captain, Teresa Hersh, for First Lieutenant, Everett Ponte, for Second Lieutenant Mike Ruffin. In addition, a Captain of the Fire Police Unit was also selected, John Delmhorst. Burgess Blair and the entire committee was impressed with the abilities and professionalism of the candidates. The new structure as staffed should add much to the operational efficiency, and organizational effectiveness of the Department.

### **B. Pinning Ceremony:**

The badge pinning ceremony is scheduled for Tuesday April 1 at 6:00 PM. Chief Hoadley has invited all members of the Board of Warden and Burgesses to the full dress ceremony.

### **C. Effective Date of Reorganization to Take Place – April 1, 2014**

### **D. Firehouse Construction Projects and Status:**

The reorganization necessitates some reworking of the spaces on the second floor of the Firehouse. Some doors need to be moved or added. When this work is being done, the contractors will also execute repairs caused by a broken pipe leak which led to damage to wall, ceiling and heating system controls. Insurance will take care of some of this. Estimates have not been finalized as yet, but will be submitted and recommended when available.

### **E. Exercise Equipment in the Firehouse:**

Burgess Blair reported that the exercise equipment and the exercise room at the Firehouse needs renovation and is a subject that is constantly raised in Firehouse personnel meetings. Burgess Blair has recommended replacing many of the existing machines and expansion of the room to upgrade the functionality of the room. With the physical changes to the floor plan of the second floor, it appears to be a good time to combine all of the construction work needed to convert the Firehouse to the new, approved organizational plan to be effective April 1. A motion was made as stated below.

### **F. Motion:**

On a motion by Warden Callahan, seconded by Burgess Lynch, the Board unanimously authorized the allocation of up to \$10,000 for replacing the old exercise equipment in the Firehouse pending a study of the extent of interest and usage by fire department personnel and a specific recommendation of the items and costs involved. The money is to be taken from the undesignated portion of the Capital and Nonrecurring Account.

### **Parks, Trees and Rights of Way (Burgess Lynch)**

**A.** The lamp posts in Wadawanuck Square need some surface repair, particularly on the bases where weed whacker damage has resulted. A quote will be requested for repairs and some method to protect the bases will be recommended.

**B.** The Borough and SVIA have agreed to split the cost of laying a new electric line to the new fir tree in front of the Library. The SVIA has received one estimate from Southeast Electric for \$1,800, which involves digging an 80 foot trench, laying line under the sidewalk and installing a power post at the tree with a GFCI receptacle. Perhaps another estimate is needed.

**C.** The Friends of Wadawanuck Square (M. Revill) recommended to Burgess Lynch that we continue with the same lawn care service (Art Claspell) using the product SUSTAIN at \$357 and LIME at \$176. These treatments would be repeated in the Fall as well as aeration and over-seeding at \$490. Last year Mrs. Revill received a grant from the Garden Club which was used for the fall treatment. She will ask again.

### **Public Buildings (Burgess Adair)**

**A.** The new 500 gal oil tank at Borough hall has been successfully installed. The steam boiler, however, needs replacement. An estimate has been received from our heating contractor and is included in the budget for next year. (In discussion, Burgess Blair suggested considering geothermal heating as an alternative approach.)

**B.** Estimates for the Generator for Borough Hall and are included in the budget as well.

**C.** We are continuing to study alternative courses of action for the fogged panes of windows in the Firehouse overhead doors. This is a complex issue, but, because the doors are currently operational, is of lower immediate priority.

**D.** Estimates for the repair of water damage in the Firehouse to dry wall, pipes and electrical heating controls caused by a burst pipe in the kitchen are coming in. We have not yet received the insurance adjuster's report.

**E.** This winter, water has leaked into the top fill valves of the buried propane tank at the firehouse. This appears to be a relatively easy and inexpensive fix. The job has been assigned and will be corrected when the ground thaws.

**F.** This unforeseen and lengthy cold winter, and the inefficiencies of the current worn out boiler has put the heating cost of Borough Hall over this year's budget estimate. Next year's budget has been adjusted accordingly.

### **Sidewalks (Burgess Scala)**

**A.** Burgess Scala reported he had sent out a \$50 fine notice and bill for cleaning snow off a sidewalk on Bayview Avenue as required by Borough Ordinance.

### **Police and Public Affairs (Burgess Nicholas)**

**A.** During the month of February there were 52 incidents in the police report for the Borough including 11 door checks, 8 medical assists and 11 Fire/Burglar/Water Emergencies. There were 3 parking complaints, 3 keys in vehicles, 3 motor vehicle accidents, 2 red tagged vehicles, a disabled vehicle and an abandoned vehicle. The police responded to one animal control problem, 3 welfare checks and 3 reports of suspicious activity/threatening behavior.

### **Old Business**

**A. Parking on Water St:** Before the meeting Warden Callahan, Burgess Adair and Burgess Park visited the site to better understand the physical situation in Dr. O'Brien's second floor office in Stonington Commons accessed through a door off Water St. Additional characteristic of the situation and letters of interested parties are contained in last month's minutes. The Board discussed multiple alternatives in detail, but needed additional data before a final decision is made. One avenue that will be studied is whether the extent of the current yellow lines (no parking) painted on the curbs can be reduced to allow one or more additional

parking slots. The criteria for the lines is based on whether fire trucks can turn in the narrow streets in an emergency. Burgesses Blair and Park have agreed to meet with the fire personnel to evaluate the question. Results will be discussed in the next meeting. The issue is difficult, in that it pits the original agreements between the Commons and the Borough neighbors on the parking issue against the understandable dilemma of handicapped people not having adequate access ability to the Doctor's office. The Board will do its best to resolve the issue.

### **Stonington Ambulance Request for Support**

**A.** The Stonington Ambulance Corps has requested Borough support for their efforts and presented several tables indicating the percentage of calls they have made to various locations (Westerly, Pawcatuck, Borough, Mystic etc.), their budget needs, their costs and their financial support (which has fallen off a bit this year). They have averaged about 80 calls for service every year from the Borough alone. They provided written request for Borough support this year of \$2,500.

Burgess Blair, Burgess Nicholas and Warden Callahan voiced appreciation for the positive role of the Ambulance Corps in the community. The Board was in general support of the proposal, but did not take a final vote on the request because the total budget for 2014-2015 is currently being worked on and whether there is room to supply all or a portion of the request needs to wait until the total budget is presented.

### **Tweaking the Budget for 2014-2015**

#### **A. Overall Budget 2014-2015:**

After several weeks of all members of the Board working on their responsible sections of the budget, it appears that we will be able to present a budget to the public that lives up to Warden Callahan's stated "personal goal to present a budget to Borough residents that does not require raising the mill rate." The balanced budget to meet this goal requires a transfer of approximately \$35,000 from the General Reserve Fund to the operating Fund. However, increased additions to the Reserve Fund not only are expected to replenish this transfer, but our accountants recommend that such a transfer should be made.

#### **B. P&Z:**

A question was raised about the wide discrepancy between the income generated by fees paid to the P&Z and the costs of providing that service. It was pointed out that the P&Z is structured as a necessary and required service to the community and would never be a self sustaining entity. However, a review of the fee structure established by Borough Ordinance has not changed in four years and must be renewed in January of next year, suggests that a review of any changes to the fee structure be considered by P&Z and the Board.

#### **C. Line Item 364 – Fire Marshal**

A question was raised about the near doubling of the Fire Marshal line item. Burgess Blair explained that after discussion with other local Fire Chiefs, the legal and anticipated workload for inspection and reports is vastly greater than the capabilities in the Borough currently. There is an indication that we must change, restructure and approach this function differently. Specific recommendations will be made subsequently by Chief Hoadley and Burgess Blair.

#### **D. Truck Fund:**

It has been known for some time that two of our fire trucks are getting old and need to be replaced. A "Truck Fund" has been established and will continue to be funded over time. Replacement of two new trucks at the same time is not realistic in the Borough budget, but if purchases are spread out, the scenario can be realistic. Burgess Blair in discussions with Chief Hoadley will begin to pull together a proposal outlining costs and timing in order to have a long range plan.

## **New Business**

### **A. Nomination to the Zoning Board of Appeals**

On a motion made by Warden Callahan, seconded by Burgess Scala, Anthony Inzero was unanimously appointed as an alternate to ZBA for a term expiring on Dec 31, 2016.

### **B. Nominations for the Board of Planning and Zoning**

On a motion by Warden Callahan, seconded by Burgess Nicholas, Stuart J.D. Schwartzstein was unanimously appointed as an alternate to P&Z Commission for a term expiring Dec 31, 2016.

On a motion by Warden Callahan, seconded by Burgess Nicholas, Ben Davol was unanimously elected as an alternate to P&Z Commission for a term expiring in Dec 31, 2016.

### **C. Interim Appointment Replacing Brian Kraffack, who Resigned as Clerk Treasurer**

On a motion by Warden Callahan, seconded by Burgess Scala, and following the public posting for candidates, Lisa M. Coleman was unanimously appointed to complete the remainder of Mr. Kraffack's term as Clerk/Treasurer to the Board of Warden and Burgesses.

### **D. Transfer of Uncollected Property Taxes to the Suspense Tax Book:**

On a motion by Warden Callahan, seconded by Burgess Nicholas, three items recommended by the Borough Tax Collector to be transferred to the Suspended Tax Book totaling \$118.14 was unanimously approved.

### **E. Dates for Public hearing on the 2014-2015 Budget and the Annual Meeting**

On a motion by Warden Callahan, seconded by Burgess Nicholas, the date of the Public Hearing on the Budget was scheduled for Monday 7:00 PM on April 7, 2014 at Borough Hall.

The date of the Annual Meeting was scheduled for Saturday 10:00 AM on April 26, 2014 at Borough Hall. Both dates were unanimously approved.

## **Adjournment**

On a motion by Burgess Scala, seconded by Burgess Nicholas, adjournment of the meeting at 9:35 was unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Michael H. Adair, Burgess