

PORTSMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 18, 2021 (Saturday)
MINUTES

10:00 AM – UNION CHURCH, PRUDENCE ISLAND

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kevin M. Aguiar, Keith E. Hamilton, Andrew V. Kelly and J. Mark Ryan

MEMBERS ABSENT: Linda L. Ujifusa and Daniela T. Abbott

Time: 10:00 AM

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

SITTING AS THE PORTSMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

1. Roll Call

INTRODUCTION OF PRUDENCE ISLAND STATE LEGISLATORS

1. Senator Jim Seveney
2. Representative Susan Donovan

SITTING AS THE BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS

Directions to view licensing applications: 1) Click on [Viewpoint](#), 2) Click Records and then type in the record number which is listed on the agenda, 3) Click on the highlighted record to view the application

1. Peddler License – Mobile Food Establishment (MFE), New:
 - a. GottaQ Brands LLC d/b/a GottaQ Smokehouse BBQ, 2000 Mendon Rd Ste. 10, Cumberland, 1 vehicle (#1984)

Motion to approve made by Dr. Ryan, seconded by Mr. Hamilton. Motion passed 4-0.

ADJOURN – Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Hamilton, seconded by Dr. Ryan. Motion passed 4-0.

RESIGNATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

1. Resignations:

- a. Town Council – Motion to accept Mr. Buddeymeyer's resignation with regret and to advertise the open position made by Mr. Hamilton, seconded by Dr. Ryan. Motion passed 4-0.

OPEN FORUM (Discussion/Action)

1. Prudence Island Internet update. – Art Shenberger, American Broadband

- Mr. Shenberger says that the north tower is up and running and it is supplying service to the west side of the island. If all goes well the tower near the school will be up and running next week. American Broadband is going to be erecting a third tower at the end of Stevens Landing Lane to help cover the southern part of Prudence Island. Once all the parts have been received, the tower at the Portsmouth Transfer Station will be erected, hopefully this month. This will cover the east side of the island for those that do not have access to American Broadband's Bristol tower.

2. National Grid Update. – Rich Rainer, Town Administrator on behalf of Jacques Afonso, National Grid

Road Lighting

- Jacques Afonso spoke with DPW Director Brian Woodhead on 9/14/2021 and was asked to provide information on costs (bill impacts) to install new LED lights. He will work to get this information to Mr. Woodhead to assist the Town in making any decisions.

- Please note: National Grid can only upgrade an existing street light (change wattage or replace with LED) or install a new streetlight per the written request and direction of the Municipality (street light account owner). The Town will ultimately need to tell National Grid if and where a new light is to be installed, changed or removed. With the Town currently evaluating the purchase of streetlights, if any new light is installed or converted to LED, the Town would ultimately be buying these new lights at full cost (result in higher purchase price). Might be best for the Town to wait until they purchase all the lights and then install/change to new LED lights. Ultimately this will be the Town's decision.

Updates (PIPC)

- Nag Pond pole line relocation. – National Grid completed an overhead design to relocate the pole line (8 poles) currently next to Nag Pond. National Grid is currently working with the Prudence Island Conservancy on evaluating the feasibility of an underground option/design.
 - Summer Low Voltage. – National Grid installed a new 3 phase voltage regulator on Narragansett Ave at the end of 2020. NG is not aware of any low voltage issues from Summer 2021. Any resident experiencing a low voltage issue can call 800-322-3223 to report the issue. Let Mr. Afonso (jacques.afonso@nationalgrid.com) know if the low voltage issue is still occurring so he can bring this to engineering's attention.
 - New Contingency Plan/Site. – National Grid is working with the Prudence Island Conservancy to finalize an agreement to use a parcel of property (adjacent to the fire station) in case of an emergency (for example) where the undersea cable feeding the Island fails. They currently have the ability to use the Fire Station parking lot but need the new location due to an upcoming Fire Station project. The project team is currently developing a project estimate and scheduling a property survey. Once the survey is complete, they will then coordinate with the Conservancy and the Fire Station on access to the new site, finalize the agreement with the Conservancy and prep the site.
3. DPW update. – Brian Woodhead, DPW
- There is a 10-year paving plan for the roads on Prudence Island, we are in Year 2.
 - Scheduled for this year is to have Narragansett, Broadway and Landing Lane evaluated and scored so we can put this into our pavement management program. Last year when we fixed the bulkhead at Sand Point Dock, we poured a section of the concrete on Landing Lane roadway 20'x25' leaving a section of the concrete roadway 77'x 25' to be completed. We have budgeted to pour another section of concrete on Landing Lane 20'x 25' this year and the last 2 sections in Years 3 and 4.
 - In Years 3 and 4 we will be requesting the funding for Engineering services for the design, survey and permitting for Broadway. These services will be going out to bid. The cost estimate is between \$200K and \$300K.
 - Once those steps are completed, we will move onto Years 7 -10 that will be funding for the Broadway Paving project that is estimated at \$2.5 million and this will go out to bid. Also, in this time frame we are planning on crack filling Narragansett Ave in 2028.
 - One resident was surprised that there would be major improvements to Broadway. He felt a lot of people aren't looking to have it paved and it would save a lot of money.
 - A number of people, including Edward "Hap" Aldrich, chairman of the Prudence Island Planning Commission (PIPC), said that there had been extensive open discussions regarding the matter and that it has been settled that the road will be paved.
 - The Prudence Island Volunteer Firefighters also stated that the need for a paved Broadway, especially when it comes to medical emergencies and they are not able to go more than 15 miles an hour to avoid bumps so that further damage is not done to a patient.

- A question was asked about a “bandaid for the winter” so that the school bus driver would be able to get the children to the ferry on time. There are times that the west side hill washes out in heavy rains. Mr. Woodhead promised to look into the matter.
 - All the permits have been approved and recorded for Mill Creek. We had a Geotechnical Engineer firm perform a boring on August 31, 2021. They found a clay layer down approximately 16 feet that is approximately 4 feet thick. The samples they’ve taken are being analyzed. The results should be in by the end of the month. Tighe & Bond, who performed the borings, will review the results and provide VHB with a geotechnical report highlighting the existing conditions and recommending potential solutions for the culvert(s). VHB will incorporate the recommendation into the plans and be ready to advertise the project. Based on the bidding process, the project will probably not be complete by the end of the year so we have asked DEM for a 1 year no cost extension for the grant and should know shortly if this has been approved. DEM doesn’t think that this will be a problem because it was a no cost extension.
4. Property tax credit in exchange for volunteer services performed by persons over age sixty (RI Senate Bill 2021-S 0103) -
- The act would authorize cities and towns to establish a program that allows people over 60 to provide volunteer services in exchange for a property tax credit up to \$1,500. The credit would be calculated by multiplying the number of volunteer services hours by the state minimum wage per hour. This bill is an enabling bill which does not mandate the cities and towns to enact the bill.
 - Senator Seveney was a sponsor of the bill. Representative Donovan said that law isn’t intended to give tax credits to people who volunteer for example, at an animal shelter but rather for those who serve on town commissions, such as zoning and planning boards, without a stipend.
 - Mr. Aguiar stated that the Council has not yet considered implementing the program and will have staff research the program and what the financial impacts would be if the Town implemented this program.
5. Recap of August 28, 2021 Hurricane Prep meeting.
- Mr. Perry in coordination with Linda O’Brien, a Prudence Island resident and Volunteer Fire Fighter, along with Chief Thurber and the Prudence Island Improvement Association are starting a new initiative, the Prudence Island Preparedness Committee, similar to the Common Fence Point Preparedness Committee. There was to be a kickoff meeting on September 23 at 6:30 pm.
 - Thanks was given to the Ferry Company for their prepping and communication of Hurricane Henri.
6. School Bond Referendum Update
- Superintendent Dr. Kenworthy explained that the school bond referendum is to finance a series of school facility improvement projects, with total costs not to exceed \$21.44 million. Portsmouth has a time-limited opportunity to receive 40% reimbursement (about \$8.6 million) from the Rhode Island Department of Education to offset the costs of the projects. More information can be found on the School Departments website <https://www.portsmouthschoolsri.org/>
 - Dr. Kenworthy was asked about the breakdown of the \$2 million in Covid related relief funds. 75% is to be devoted to educational learning and can use up to 25% for keeping the school building safe.
7. November 2, 2021 Election
- Jacqueline Schulz, Registrar of Voters, has left a book with information about the Special Referendum on Prudence Island at the convenience store. The information is also available on the Town’s website on the home page under Latest Announcements and Events. Please call the Registrar’s office at 401-683-3157 with any questions.

8. Additional Questions/Comments

- Praise was given to the Department of Public Works, by a number of residents as well as Mr. Aguiar, for their handling of the Fairview Lane collapse. Police Chief Peters and Fire Chief Ford were also thanked.
- Prudence Island Water and Fire District (PIWFD) was having a meeting at 1:00 pm following the Town Council meeting.
- The PIWFD is working on grants for chlorinization pretreatment of water on the island.
- Mr. Aguiar recommended they speak with the State MPA consultants to request proposals that have already been approved, so that it will help in getting things approved.
- PIWFD should also reach out to the Town Planner for help with grant writing.
- PIWFD should also reach out to Senator Seveney and Representative Donovan for any help from our legislation.

FUTURE MEETINGS

Sep 27 7:00 PM - Town Council Meeting
Oct 12 7:00 PM - Town Council Meeting (Tuesday)
Oct 25 7:00 PM - Town Council Meeting

ADJOURN – Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Hamilton, seconded by Mr. Kelly. Motion passed 4-0.

Time: 11:25 AM

Jennifer M. West, Town Clerk