

Draft Minutes of the Westbrook Council of Beaches
Meeting of May 2, 2016

<u>Attendees</u>	<u>Beach Association / Affiliation</u>
Traver Steiner	Grove Beach Point
Steve Smith	Island View Beach
George Abraham	Island View Beach
Tony Cozza	Island View Beach
Diane Ammerman	Grove Beach Improvement
Patty Hubbard	West Beach
Carolyn Fish	Old Kelsey Point
Elaine Gilette	Middle Beach
Stephen Mason	Stannard Beach
Janice Shaw	Coral Sands Beach
Mary Jane Monahan	Coral Sands Beach
Michael Tosatti	Grove Beach Terrace
Jan Frederiksen	Little Stannard Beach
Keith Rich	Pointina Beach
Ed Gales	Chapman Beach
Noel Bishop	First Selectman
Paul Connelly	Town Board of Finance
Bruce Lawrence	Harbor Master

President Barbara Wolf being out of town, Vice President Traver Steiner called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM and distributed the sign-up sheet. A motion to approve the minutes of October 5, 2015 was made, seconded and approved by voice vote.

Steve Smith gave the Treasurer's report- The checking account balance was \$2,014.53 and \$6,387.06 was in the savings account. A motion to accept his report was made, seconded and approved by voice vote.

Noel Bishop gave the First Selectman's report. The Blight Committee has issued two reports and a proposed ordinance to date. The Board of Selectmen will likely schedule a Town Meeting on June 2 at 7:00 PM on the Blight ordinance.

The Board of Selectmen will also schedule a public hearing on Town policing on May 26 at 7:00 PM. We currently have three State Troopers and five constables. He noted that Tony Cozza, a member of the Board of Finance, was in attendance that night, and may be able to add information. Noel solicited those in attendance to join the appropriate committee to consider police staffing.

Noel noted that the Town budget process started in December for the Town, and earlier for the schools. Except for staffing, budgets have been flat for the past two years. Health care insurance costs were rising for municipal employees this year, but not school employees. A Town meeting will be held on May 11 to discuss and vote on the budget instead of a Town referendum, and he strongly encouraged attendance by those at this Council of Beaches meeting. The school budget came in with an increase of less than 2%, the lowest in years without potential State aid cuts incorporated. He noted that four groups discussed declining school enrollments and the projected continued decline. They covered whether it made sense to regionalize or stay independent and they chose to stay independent. Net migration of the younger cohort of adults out of State is part of the demographic picture, due to the cost of housing and the status of job opportunities. He noted we have a strong community and school system, and will go forward in good shape.

The Town receives \$427,000 from the State for education cost sharing, and also some \$200,000+ of revenue sharing, which would be eliminated under the Governor's proposal. The Town budget will incorporate any reductions in aid, and the Town's strong reserves of 15% of the budget will provide some flexibility. He anticipates the Town will not have to raise its mill rate.

Noel reported that the River COG's Route 1 Corridor Study was firmly on the back burner. There may be some activity in the future on the Town Center, but the boardwalk to the Town Beach and pop-up sales sites on Route 1 will not go forward.

Question from Ed Gales: With declining enrollments, why not regionalize to save money? What is the greatest impediment to regionalization? Small schools cannot provide the breadth of courses and programs that a larger school could. Noel responded that Superintendent Caccone will be at the Town meeting on May 26th, and Ed can ask her then. He suggested that perhaps she should address a Council of Beaches meeting separately.

Another attendee noted that they had moved from Avon for a smaller school with better student/teacher ratios, attention to students and small class sizes, and would resist regionalization. Noel pointed out that once regionalization occurs, the Towns participating have little control over the regional school district budgets, and that the cost of more administrative staff offsets cost savings.

Noel mentioned that the DPW can't share equipment because when it is needed, (i.e., for snow plowing) all Towns use such equipment simultaneously. Tony Cozza added that at the Town meeting on the budget, held on April 27, Superintendent Pat Caccone mentioned that there were several potential areas on which towns might coordinate, including transportation contracts.

Paul Connelly, the Chair of the Town's Board of Finance noted that Clinton and Old Saybrook have their own police departments, and don't want to regionalize. He made a comparison of the Town with the Council of Beaches structure, in which the representation of each association is preserved. He hopes to have better idea from Hartford on the status of State aid by the Wednesday before our Town budget vote.

Harbor Master Bruce Lawrence spoke about the Harbor Commission and Mooring Permits. They are trying to get a survey done of all moorings and to document them. Keith Richards mentioned that they may get the permit form on line, and there is no fee. One may get permit forms from Town Clerk Joan Angellini, who will forward them to Bruce. The goal is to renew permits every season, and to keep current records. Scott Mitchell of Old Saybrook (who is also their Harbormaster) has had three requests to install moorings in Westbrook. Bruce Beebe will also check and/or install mooring, but is likely more expensive. With moorings installed in over six feet of water, mushroom anchors may be used, but with less depth, pyramid anchors should be used. Q- Can abandoned moorings be pulled by Harbor Commission? The answer was yes. It was noted that the Harbor Master is an appointed position, approved by Governor, and may move to the DEEP. Traver suggested posting the permit form on the Council of Beaches' web site.

Traver next read Tony Fastaia's Traffic Commission report. Their recommendation was for 300 ticket forms to be printed, with fines set at \$50 for infractions on Town roads. Two portable speed monitors have been

effective, and will be deployed upon request. Given the many requests anticipated, Tony asked WCOB members to provide him with their requests ASAP. The Commission has requested DPW to install “No Parking” signs on either side of Striper Avenue, and a crosswalk to be painted at the intersection of Seaside Avenue and Route 1.

Noel added that Quality Data presented a program to collect fines through the Town’s Tax Collector’s office, which will likely be implemented. He reiterated that a public hearing on policing will be held May 26th at 7:00 PM.

Carolyn Fish then reminded Council representatives and attendees of the Garden Club’s May Sale on the 7th. The Club uses the proceeds to purchase plants for its flower boxes and containers around Town, and also funds a scholarship for a high school student each year. The sale will have annuals, member plants, a children’s table, and Mothers Day gifts. The Sale will be held rain or shine.

Referring to the next items on the Agenda, Traver mentioned that Zoning Regulations are being reviewed, and fees will be in next year’s budget. A Historic District is being pursued, but the territory to be included will not affect most beach associations. He had no information on sidewalk plans, but Tony Cozza suggested that attendees should contact Town Planner Meg Parulis for such information. Online permitting may be developed, but is not on the Town’s web site as yet.

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and approved at 8:03 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
William Fish
Interim Secretary