

PORTSMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 14, 2019 (Saturday) MINUTES

12:00 PM – UNION CHURCH, PRUDENCE ISLAND

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kevin M. Aguiar, Linda L. Ujifusa, J. Mark Ryan, Keith E. Hamilton

MEMBERS ABSENT: Daniela T. Abbott, Leonard B. Katzman, Andrew V. Kelly

ALSO, PRESENT: Senator Jim Seveney and Representative Susan Donovan

Time: 11:58 AM – Meeting of the Prudence Island Planning Commission called to order by Ed Aldrich, Chair. A quorum was not present. Art Schoenberger is working on island internet service. There is good coverage at a competitive price. Must have at least 50 people signed up to go forward. Mr. Aldrich also announced, with sadness and regret, the passing of the longest serving member of the Prudence Island Planning Commission, Ms. Thekla Snell. A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Time: 12:03 PM PIPC Meeting adjourned.

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**EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – The Pledge of Allegiance was followed by a Moment of Silence for our men and women serving around the world in harm's way.

**SITTING AS THE PORTSMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL**

INTRODUCTION OF PRUDENCE ISLAND STATE LEGISLATORS

1. Senator Jim Seveney
2. Representative Susan Donovan

**OLD BUSINESS (Discussion/Action)**

1. Current status update on the National Grid open action items for the 2018 meeting.
  - a. the procurement, provisioning and staging of a line truck for permanent deployment to Prudence Island

A line truck has been procured by National Grid. It is currently being outfitted. Once completed, the National Grid truck will be based at the Prudence Island Fire Department.

- b. The state of the pole relocations that currently span Nag Creek that feed points north of the Transfer Station. Will that new feeder also carry 220vac service to those residents?

The pole redesign has been approved. The poles will be removed from the swamp. 20 poles will be placed on Narragansett Ave and Neck Pond. The Voltage Regulator installation with current single phase power voltage seems to have fixed the problem. National Grid will continue to monitor the situation.

There is a power outage scheduled on Tuesday, September 24, 2019 from 8:30–3:30. The rain date will be Thursday, September 26, 2019. National Grid will be relocating a power line at New England Boat Works. They will be dredging and clearing the line that feeds Prudence Island. There will be a National Grid representative on Prudence during the outage.

2. Paving – continuing Narragansett Ave and adding to the 10 Year Plan. – A motion was made by Ms. Ujifusa and seconded by Mr. Hamilton to have DPW come up with a road construction plan to be included in the 10 Year Capital Improvement Plan. Motion passed 4-0.

3. Speeding on Narragansett Ave – A speed radar trailer was placed on Prudence Island on August 22<sup>nd</sup>. Between August 30<sup>th</sup> and September 11<sup>th</sup>, statistics were monitored. The average speed was 17.61 miles per hour. The fastest speed recorded was 43 miles per hour between the hours of 8:00-9:00 am. Most likely attributed to someone trying to catch the ferry.

4. Public Safety Officer staffing – Joe Tavernier, the Public Safety Officer, works 40 hours per week. Chief Peters did not wish to publicize his hours for the safety of the residents. There have been 10 incidents but nothing serious, 1 domestic and mainly vandalism. The Police are not seeing the number of breaking and entering and larcenies that they saw a few years ago. If Officer Tavernier needs backup, the Police are on their way immediately. New officers are being trained on the boat as soon as they start on the force. Mr. Rainer mentioned that the new fire boat is currently being built and should be put into service in the spring or summer of 2020. It will take a little bit of training to dock at the pier with the new boat. In the future there will need to be some modifications to the dock but that will need to be approved in a capital fund request in the next budget cycle.

#### **NEW BUSINESS (Discussion/Action)**

##### 1. Transfer Station/Solid Waste

a. Operating Hours – Because the Transfer Station is no longer in the Enterprise Zone, the budget is now included under DPW. The hours have already been allocated. No additional hours were included in this year's budget. DPW will keep track of the vehicles going into the station right now to see if the request for additional hours is warranted.

b. Orange Bags – When purchasing the bags, included is a yellow piece of paper with contact numbers for both Ray Antaya, the Recycling Coordinator for the Town, and Waste Zero, the manufacturer of the bags. They are very accommodating. When you call they may ask for the bar code number listed on the paper in order to track the effected batch. Once notified, Waste Zero responds quickly. They are aware of the issue with the quality of the bags and have improved the quality.

12:30 PM The meeting paused briefly as Councilor Ryan, who was on call, needed to respond to a call. No Council business could take place until there was a quorum once again.

c. Trailer Policy – Safety is the reason for the policy, not for quantity or for monitoring the trash. Greg Gempp, 0154 Atlantic, asked if DPW could reverse the flow of traffic so that there will be no turning at the start. The Town hears your comments and will look at the circulation and see if there's something that can be done.

d. Short-term access passes – Currently 4 month passes are sold until September 30, so that they expire at the end of the grace period. A resident asked if there could be a 6 month pass instead. Mr. Woodhead stated that the sales of the passes would end in July, as to expire at the end of the grace period. He will look into it.

e. Yard waste – DEM is unaware of any restrictions regarding yard waste and combustion. The Town is unaware of any restrictions. We still accept yard waste. On August 5<sup>th</sup> this year we had a deficiency from DEM of 15 yards of yard waste being on the ground for more than 48 hours. Please do not leave it on the ground put it in a barrel. DEM will only accept yard waste that is chipped to be on the ground. RIRRC restricts the dimensions of yard waste to bundles of 3 feet in length and 2 inches in diameter, if larger it is considered trash not yard waste. If RIRRC gets yard waste that exceeds the parameters, the load gets treated as regular trash and it goes against our cap and is put into the landfill with the regular trash. Charlie Worcester, 059 Atlantic Ave, asked what the basis for the rule is. Mr. Aguiar said that maybe someone will be able to look into it. You can still apply for burn permits if the yard waste is too large or if you can't cut it down to size.

2. Parking at the Homestead ferry landing, monitoring/enforcing parking restrictions – As of April there is a new law in effect that will no longer allow tires to be chalked/marked as it has been deemed unconstitutional by the 6<sup>th</sup> District Court. Chief Peters is exploring options and is open to listen to any suggestions for parking. One idea would be to make an arrangement with the ferry operator to issue parking passes that would be stamped with the time and the expiration date. So for example, if you were parked in a 72-hour parking space your ticket would be stamped for 72 hours showing the date, time stamped, and expiration date. You would then place the ticket on your dashboard. Officers would then be able to see if there were any violators and take action. Someone asked if that meant someone from the ferry service would need to be present for every boat? It is still in the planning stages. It was an option to dealing with the overcrowding. Robin Weber, 0119 Hillside Rd, mentioned that it would be too challenging to wait for the ferry to dock, people get off the ferry to move their car out of the way, then find a parking space, get a ticket, put the ticket in the car and get on the ferry. It would be very tight timing. As an alternative she suggested a picture series, where every day you literally take a photo and you'd know when the car was left. The Police will look into that option. Mr. Dan Antaya, owner of the ferry company, said they have no interest in issuing parking passes. Let the Police know if you think there is not an issue and want to keep the parking status quo. It is one of the questions Chief Peters received and wanted to address the concerns. Ken Garlick, west side, mentioned that he was not aware of any problems. Ms. Weber mentioned that at times there can be a problem. Mr. Aguiar stated that we still have some work to do to try to figure out what can be done to try to mitigate any problems. We don't have any answers today but it is something that we'll need to continue working on. Charlie Worcester said that 10-12 spots have been wiped out on Narragansett Ave. Jerry Cutter, 025 Bay, asked who makes the parking decisions because there are now No Parking signs on the embankment. Chief Dragon stated that people were parking on a cistern, "consider it a fire hydrant." In case of a fire the Fire Department needs a 40' buffer for the fire trucks to pump water. Carol Graves, 029 Edda Ave, thinks that parking stripes should be painted in the ferry parking lot. Mr. Hamilton explained that it would disappear after it rains since the parking lot is gravel. Mr. Woodhead stated that the Town has nothing to do with the parking lot, the land is leased to the Antayas. The Antayas said that they have nothing to do with the parking lot. This will be looked into.

3. Open forum for discussion an Q & A for Prudence Island issues –
  - a. William Silvia, 0341 Mt. Pleasant Ave, asked for more speed traps, wants one on his street. It worked for him to slow down when the radar was on. Officer Tavernier mentioned to the Chief that most of the offenders are local people not visitors and that we should be policing ourselves.
  - b. Raymond Masse, 0830 Narragansett Ave, concerned with the parking situation in Bristol. He would like to see a long term lot. Are there any plans to develop Weaver Cove? Mr. Aguiar said we current do not have any plans, a feasibility study was done a few years ago and there were a number of issues with Weaver Cove. Mr. Rainer said that the only feasible area in Portsmouth was on the other side of the island.
  - c. Joann Kennedy, 0357 Narragansett Ave, was concerned that there is no room for Prudence Island residents to park in Bristol.
  - d. Denise DiIorio-Javery, 1070 Narragansett Ave, drove all over Bristol looking for parking spots for visitors. There is no parking left for non-residents, not even at the cemetery. We are getting squeezed out.
  - e. Robin Weber, 0119 Hillside Rd, said that the federal granting agency is probably unaware of the parking problem.
  - f. Barbara Williams, 037 Atlantic Ave, asked if Portsmouth can lease or purchase available space in Bristol and charge people to park there.
  - g. Janet Brown, 025 Bay Ave, said that parking is talked about every year and respectfully requests the Town Council have regular talks with Bristol to remind them the Prudence Island residents are here. Someone said you can park at City Hall, there is lots of space, and then walk to the ferry.
  - h. Beth Pressard, 0346 Narragansett Ave, also lives in Bristol, asked if it's because of Prudence Island that Bristol keeps making more resident parking? Rep. Donovan said it is because of all the apartments in the area and these people have nowhere to park. Parking is an issue downtown.
  - i. Cathy Homan, 0369 Narragansett Ave, wished to discuss the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and the Prudence Island School Foundation. PISF requested changes and additions regarding the MOU. Item 3 of the MOU states "During the 2019-2020 school year the School Committee(Committee) shall work with the parents or guardians of elementary aged students to resolve the issue of educating the elementary age students in the future." The PISF wishes to be included in this item and have yet to sign the MOU. The PISF received an email from the Committee Chair that states "We are emailing and mailing the revised MOU to Allen Barse today for his signature. We took all of your revisions except the last one which added the PISF to the future agreement. The reason for this is that having spoken to RIDE they suggested that the agreement should be with the families as is the norm with all students. As soon as we receive the signed copy in the office (email or regular mail), we can transfer the funds." Sen. Seveney mentioned that this use to be a 3-part agreement between the Committee, the Council and the PISF and is it still this way? Mr. Hamilton said by State law, the Council can't get in the way of the education process once the money has been allocated to the School Department. The Committee says that until the MOU is signed the money will not be released.
  - j. Anna Deschamps, 016 Alta Vista Ct., since the notices to boil water 2 years ago, she has had a skin reaction which she contributes to the water for bathing. She has enlisted a drilling company to drill a new well but keeps getting put off by the contractor. She wanted to know if the Town could help with contractors' names. Robin Weber, chair of

the PI Water District stated that there are iron and manganese problems with the water. Drilling a new well will be using the same water because it is the same aquifer. The Department of Health recommended to go to a chlorination system, which is not terribly expensive, but because of the iron and manganese problems there would need to be a water treatment plant and that is very expensive. It would be over a million dollars and only 300 customers to pay for it. They have been looking into efforts to mitigate the problem but have no answers yet. Dr. Ryan said I see three problems. The first problem is there's coliform in the water, if you drill a well, you would probably not have coliform in your water, that's just from that system. The second problem is there are minerals in the water and they are positively charged ions if you try to chlorinate the water it binds with the salt and drops right out of the water and you're not doing any good. The third problem is you're getting rashes and you don't know what's causing it. That is something you should speak to an allergist about to figure out what you are reacting to, because there are any number of reasons, environmental, something in your house. Mr. Aguiar said that as a Council, he's not sure that they can address the water issue, but as stated earlier Portsmouth does not even have a water system, we have four or five districts. It is a separate entity.

- k. Carol Graves, 029 Etta Ave, 10 years ago or so PI had coupons that they passed out to Bristol to show them the economic impact PI has on their town. Mr. Hamilton says it is on Bristol to do research to see what they would lose if PI residents weren't there. John Worcester, 050 Providence Ave, recommended everyone on PI stop going to Bristol, so that Bristol could see the impact.
- l. Jack Hagopian, 018 Madison Ave, I feel like a redheaded stepchild. He wants to know what he's getting for his money? He doesn't believe the Town is giving PI enough attention. Ms. Ujifusa asked staff to look into the question of what PI is getting for their contribution to taxes. It might have been true in the past that PI was contributing more in taxes but over the last several years that is not true. Mr. Helfand, the tax assessor, says that for every \$1.00 PI contributes, the town is spending a \$1.20. Mr. Hamilton reminded everyone that with the taxes paid, approximately 60% right off the top goes to educating children. So we collected \$1.7 million as a base, then 60% of that for education, that leaves us working with somewhere between \$700,000 to \$800,000. Then we have all the other services which are: DPW approximately \$110,000 a year, which is probably more than that because you are paying for transportation back and forth for two employees. Special services over the past few years is \$110,000. Firefighting services in our current budget is \$180,000 for the PI Volunteer Fire Dept. Every year we go through the numbers and they just don't come out in the wash. We do not consider PI a cash cow. We all respect and want to work with everybody here and we want to do everything we can to make your lives easier.
- m. Robin Weber has seen a major change in the way that the Town addresses the needs of the community and thinks the Town is doing a great job.
- n. Joann Kennedy, 0357 Narragansett, is concerned about the serious pot holes on PI and the possible danger.
- o. Greg Gempp, 0154 Atlantic Ave, thinks the Broadway paving project should be in the 5-year plan not the 10-year plan. It becomes quick sand in bad weather. Also said that the DWP employees often work alone and that is against OSHA regulations and it can be dangerous. With regards to the new Fire boat he believes that it will be too big, difficult getting to the ramp. He suggests bow thrusters for easier swinging in and out especially at dead low tide. Thank you for the funds for the fire dept.

- p. Robin Weber spoke about the Mill Creek project on behalf of the PIWD. She stated that they got a \$433,000 grant from Green Bond for flood mitigation. New culvert, raise the road bed and allow for flood storage inland. There is a difference of opinion with the engineering design plan between the PIWD and the design that CRMC and the Town designed. Ms. Weber does not want to spend money if she doesn't believe in the design. Mr. Woodhead said that 4 people need to sign off on the permit and if we went with a 3' raised road bed we would be flooding out the neighbor to the south. If we wanted to get a permit from CRMC we would not be able to do that. The new design is 1 ½' above and a wider culvert. Robin is worried they won't have the pressure to blow out the water, storm surge is not considered. Ms. Ujifusa said we are lucky that we are one of 4 or 5 communities that are Infrastructure Bank for money to go towards resiliency programs. Ms. Ujifusa also introduced our EMA director Ray Perry. Mr. Aguiar is familiar with the road engineering and plans and would be willing to speak to Ms. Weber and Mr. Woodhead after the meeting to answer any questions.

**FUTURE MEETINGS**

Sep 23 7:00 PM - Town Council Meeting  
Oct 15 7:00 PM - Town Council Meeting (Tuesday)  
Oct 28 7:00 PM - Town Council Meeting

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

Time: 2:40 PM

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Jennifer M. West, Town Clerk