

## **Mason's Island Fire District BOD Meeting – October 4, 2018**

**Attending:** Jim McAuley, David Krupp, Ethan Tower, John Parry, Tom Cooke and Lee Hisle. Tax Collector Lydia Herd also attended. Not in attendance: Board members Bill Taylor, Kristin Foster, and Bob Banas. Roads Manager Rufus Allyn also did not attend. President Jim McAuley called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. A quorum was present.

**Clerk's Report:** M/S/P approving the minutes from the previous meeting, September 18, 2018.

**President's Report:** (1) Emergency Calls -- The Mystic Fire Department has not sent information on Emergency Calls in September yet.

(2) Masons Island Company Update – At this point Jim McAuley and Bob Martin's Working Group has more questions than answers. They plan on asking Rufus Allyn to meet with the Group on his return from vacation. They have received numerous questions from property owners. For example, the Group was questioned about a rumor that undeveloped land behind Cormorant Road is being split into lots for future sale. At this point, there is no status or any answers.

(3) Paving Roads – The original plan was to pave next week (October 8 – 12) but there were scheduling problems with a number of residents. So Jim contacted Ed French and the work was re-scheduled to the following week. As of today, the plan is as follows: on Wednesday October 17<sup>th</sup> Bayberry and Huckleberry will be milled; on Thursday October 18<sup>th</sup> Money Point and Skiff Lane will be milled; and on Friday October 19<sup>th</sup> all these roads will be paved.

(4) Meeting with Mystic Fire Department Chief – Jim McAuley was contacted via phone by Russ Carver, a representative of the Insurance Service Organization (ISO) who covers Connecticut. This organization provides information to insurance companies on the status and rating of Fire Districts regarding their fire-fighting capabilities. A rating of '1' is the best, and a rating of '10' is the worst. Currently, the Mystic Fire Department has a split rating; neighborhoods with hydrants are now rated '6' (though they had previously been rated a '5', the Chief is unsure why this change occurred), and neighborhoods without hydrants are rated a '9' or '10.' Insurance companies get letters from ISO about re-ratings of neighborhoods, and then these companies may, based on their methodology, change their insurance pricing to their customers in those neighborhoods. Russ Carver had been contacted by the Mystic Fire Department regarding the installation of hydrants on the island, so Russ phoned Jim and visited MIFD, driving and walking around, inspecting the location of hydrants, etc. After that, Jim McAuley and Bob Martin met with the Mystic Fire Chief about next steps to getting a re-rating for MIFD. This process is just beginning and will take months to complete. At this meeting they learned that the Fire Chief, at a property owner's request (via email or letter), will provide a letter to their insurance company saying that their neighborhood is now serviced by fire hydrants, and their property or residence is within a specified distance from a hydrant. This information will be provided to property

owners via an upcoming MIPOA newsletter. Finally Jim mentioned that he learned in these meetings that annual fire inspections are required at the MIYC, and Tom Cooke agreed to take this information to them as he now sits on their Board of Directors.

**Treasurer's Report:** (1) Ethan Tower distributed updated Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual and Balance Sheet reports. There was not much change since the previous meeting. The only bills paid were tick and Lyme disease program bills. M/S/P approving the Treasurer's reports.

**Tax Collector's Report:** (1) Lydia Herd provided the first quarter Tax Collector's reports. There are only two bills outstanding from previous years. Both of these bills are MV, owed by the same individual, an attorney who rented property on the island a number of years ago. This person moved to Stonington Borough but left their car registered at the address here and has since refused to pay MIFD's tax (they never moved the vehicle to the Borough, so they do not pay that Fire District tax either). The State Marshal was not successful in collecting these bills. Lydia has contacted Rossi Law, a credit collection company used by the Town of Stonington, and asked for their assistance in collecting these bills. For the current year, there are only 3 delinquent bills, all MV, and Lydia plans to hand-deliver (if not available, then mail) them this coming weekend. (2) Ethan Tower spoke about the meeting Ethan and Lydia had with Linda Camelio Tax Collector for Stonington. Ethan had sent an email with details and a copy of the Town contract. The cost will be \$2.50 per bill, though advertising and postage costs will be pro-rated and split. Ethan has estimated the cost of this service will be \$1500 to \$2000 annually. There was discussion on various open questions: Should MV continue to be billed or not? There is work required twice each year to review the detailed Town MV listing and identify vehicles registered within MIFD. While this work can be done manually, it is much easier if it is done using Microsoft Excel's sorting functions. Should the limit be \$5 or \$10 or even \$25? Lydia will bring information on the number of bills by amount for the next meeting to help the Board answer this question. What will QDS require of MIFD? In the contract, QDS provides systems, applications and database capabilities to the Town. Currently, MIFD does not use QDS products. The contract requires MIFD to work with QDS but we do not know what this means or what this will cost, if anything. How will the Tick Tax be billed by MIFD? MIFD can continue to do the billing or instead, MIFD can provide the vendors with property owner names and addresses who have signed up and then the vendors can bill property owners directly. Who will be the interface to the Tax Collector and Assessor's Office? This can be someone on the Board or another property owner who picks this up this responsibility as a volunteer. There was no decision made on any of these questions at the meeting.

**Unfinished Business:** (1) John Parry spoke about the Road Ordinance and its implementation. Per John, the Town does not use standing permits for utility companies. Instead, the Town

allows utility companies to perform emergency work and then apply for a permit within 24 hours. John plans on writing a letter to our utility companies, enclosing a copy of the ordinance, technical standards, and process, and asking them to apply for permits going forward. John plans to send this to five utility companies who work in our neighborhood, Eversource, CT Water, Comcast, Thames Valley, and Frontier. What is the Town's process if work is done and a permit is not applied for? The Town writes a letter to the property owner, enclosing a copy of the permit application, requesting them or their contractor to complete the application and process. We will follow the same process. Since the Annual Meeting when the Road Ordinance was passed, there have been 3 property owners who have done work within the road right-of-way who have not completed the process. But the Road Ordinance is not effective until 15 days after publication of its approval in the local paper The Day. This has not yet been done, so these three instances are considered grandfathered. The next steps on this project are to 1) publish the approval of the Ordinance in The Day, 2) send a letter with all the information to the utility companies named above, 3) follow-up with Tommy Thomason to ensure the MIPOA website is updated with the permit application, technical standards, and process details for the property owners, and 4) finalize snow-plowing guidelines with Rufus Allyn and Allied, our snow-plowing contractor.

(2) John Parry spoke about the Speed Limit Committee. Lydia Herd followed up with Chief Stewart about our request to install the speed limit display/monitor on Chippechaug Trail next spring for 2-4 weeks during April and early May. He thought this was possible, did not see a problem with this timeframe, and asked for a follow-up in early March to schedule and confirm this.

**MIFD Meeting Calendar:**

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday November 1, 5:30 pm at 18 Money Point Road.

Meeting Adjourned – 6:23 pm

Respectfully submitted

Lydia Herd