

BEACH STIPEND COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

AUG 27, 2014, 5:00 PM

OL TOWN HALL MEETING HALL

In attendance: BJ Bernblum ,Keith Coakley; Fred Callahan; Beth Cote; Rich Dakin; Wendy Gavin, and First Selectwoman Bonnie Reemsnyder.

- 1. Approval of Minutes:** Chairman Keith Coakley asked if there were any addition or changes to minutes from the August 21st meeting. The following two changes were recommended: "It was also stated that Point O' Woods gets one thing from this town:: Garbage (add pick-up after Garbage), "Mr. Evers answered that if it is a non- profit they do not charge. If it is a public affair they charge" (change non-profit to non-profit/public, and public affair was changed to private affair) Beth Cote made a motion to approve the minutes with the amendments. Fred Callahan seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with the amendments.
- 2. OLPD Role with Respect to Private Beach Associations:** Thomas Heinssen, police officer for the town of Old Lyme for the past five years was asked to meet with the committee. He oversees the budget, comes to the Board of Finance Meetings, and has taken a leadership role in making sure things happen. Officer Heinssen was asked to comment on previously stated comments by beach association spokespeople that if the private beaches did not provide their own security, it would cost the town a lot more money in policing. There was also reference to the fact that in the past constables were assigned to the beach associations. There was a comment made by a spokesperson that Old Lyme would have to hire two more police officers to provide for beach policing. Selectwoman Bonnie Reemsnyder asked Officer Heinssen to first speak about the change in policing over the years. Officer Heinssen explained that prior to 1992 police officers could work after the first 100 hours of training. This is no longer true. Constables used to be an appointed term. Selectmen could appoint people to be a constable and then they could start with 100 hours of training. Presently, a town police officer must be hired, not appointed, and they must attend the police academy for five months and meet all of the requirements. The town might need to pay for up to a few thousand dollars to have someone trained. When constables were allowed, the town had 25 part-time police officers dedicated to the beaches. Presently, they have 6 full timers and 2 part timers. There is no difference in training between a full time officer and a part time officer. Nobody can go to the police academy unless a town has hired him or her. It must be pre-approved. Selectwoman Bonnie Reemsnyder asked Officer Heinssen to speak to the benefit of beach associations having their own security. Officer Heinssen stated this is benefit to the police and the town in regard to the volume of calls, the nuisance calls. Once May comes around there are more people, hence more calls. Most of the beaches are private so people are very quick to call the police when there are trespassers. Officer Heinssen said that there would definitely be an increase in calls for service whether or not the calls were police related or police problems, he said we wouldn't know until we got there. The private beach security controls the amount of people going in and out of beaches. The security is able to stop people who do not have the legal right to be there. Crowding, illegal parking, and nuisance issues would all be calls to the police. Keith Coakley asked if Officer Heinssen could quantify the labor private security displaces. Officer Heinsenn stated that in the summer the police force increases by one depending on the night. Public beaches are overwhelming police calls. The calls get stacked depending on availability. When a car is

available they go. Sound View has a police officer there at all times. Otherwise it might get out of control. Officer Heinsenn said that if the car were pulled away, the police might lose control at Sound View. The question was asked, "How many people would we have to hire to fill a shift? One car during the day would be 2 people; one car at night would be 2 more people was the answer. Officer Heinsenn asked the question, "Would the police be treating every call as a police call?" And answered, "Maybe not." He said that they have to look at the nature of the calls. Some of what security takes care of is rules, not laws. Playing ball at the beach is an example. This is not an issue that the police are going to enforce. Parking issues is another: parking without a permit, not going to be a priority, people come by boats trespassing, he said they get that all the time. Selectwoman Reemsnyder asked if it is a police issues to keep people off of private roads? Officer Heinsenn answered that it depends on what else is going on in terms of priority. He stated that if it was a busy day or night, that it would not be a priority. He did say that if unauthorized people were on the beach you would have chaos. He said that you have to deal with the small things first. The small things lead to the big things. If you keep things orderly, it prevents big things from happening. It was stated that the services of police would be different then what the private guards provide. Mr. Bernblum asked, "In order to perform the normal array of services, how many additional officers do you think you would need? Officer Heinsenn said that you would have to have 2 full timers to create one shift. You couldn't get someone just for the summer. Part timers are difficult to get. The question was asked, "Does the fact that the private beach associations have security keep the town's cost down? Officer Heinsenn replied, "I would say absolutely. It prevents the small stuff, which prevents other issues." He went on to say that 2 additional police officers would cost \$100,000 per officer for a full year including car and insurance. We do respond to crimes at all beaches. Private security does not deal with crime. When there is one way in and one way out, it is easier to keep people off the beach. White Sands, Point O' Woods primarily one-way in one-way out. Miami, Center Beach, Old Colony, and Old Lyme Shores have road after road where people can come in. The closer you are to Sound View the busier you are. He stated that the Old Lyme police try and go through all the beaches once a shift.

3. Review Board of Selectmen's charge for the committee to determine next steps:

Review Charge for the Private Associations Stipend Committee. See this document for specific wording, but basically 1. Research historical information and data: It was determined that stipends have been on going 20's or 30's, but that there is not a definitive reason for why the stipend have been given. 2. Research other municipalities: Committee has done this, has enough data. Fred Callahan will get more information about Lake Hayward stipend. 3. Make every effort to understand budgets and responsibilities of private associations: 2 Meetings - 7 associations presented to the committee. We need to determine if we understand and have enough information, as we look at the budgets in future meetings. 4. Should any of the budget items be the responsibility of the town? We need to determine this. 5. Determine if public stipends should require an accounting of the private use. 6. Assessing the impact of historical stipends on town budget and mil rate: We have all the data to do this. Discussion: We have all the data we are going to collect. We need to have discussion. Might we put together a spreadsheet for each beach association to determine what their major budget items are? What are the appropriate things to consider as justification for the stipend? We need to decide if amount of taxes that associations pay matter in deciding the stipend. We need to decide what is important in determining the

stipend. Selectwoman Bonnie Reemsnyder stated that it is important to have a good discussion about the pros and cons, and document, so it is clear how we made the decision about stipends. How do we allocate the money we give each association? What is fair? She said that we need to have this discussion. BJ Bernblum stated that step one should be: "What budget items should the town subsidize?" The second step should be, "What is a fair way to allocate the funds to those budgets?" Rich Dakin will look at the information we have and put together a table of information about each association we have information about, so we can look at all the data in an organized way. Bonnie will send information on the grand list to Rich.

4. **Communication:** Links to be regulations was sent to us by Scott Boulanger. It talks about an ordinance adopted by the town in 1960. It allows the police to support the rules and regulations of the beach associations. Listed nuisances allow the police to go into the private association and enforce these. This is different than the town agreeing that the police would do certain things and then not do them as was stated by a beach association spokesperson. Selectwomen Reemsnyder said she would have to have a conversation with the town attorney to see the impact of this. She will try and do that by the next meeting.
5. **Schedule future meetings:** November 1, 2014 was the deadline for making the committee to be ready to make recommendations. Next meeting is scheduled for September 4, 2014 at 5:00 PM.

Public Comment: Scott Boulanger: Federation of Beach Associations, Miami Beach: Miami Beach charter that defines nuisance for Miami Beach. He wanted committee to have it for its history. He said that the majority, at least 70% maybe even 80% to 90% depending on the beach are seasonal residencies. He said, "We define this as not being able to live there full time." He went on to say that these people are taxed like they are full time. He said they don't get a break at all. He said, "The little amount for security is all we get." He went on to say that people are coming down to the beach and we need help keeping people off the private beaches. If the associations did not do this, the cost to the town would be a lot more money. Rich Dakin asked, "What would be the hardship to the association if the association did not receive the stipend for the security?" Mr. Boulanger said that the cost would fall on the association members. He said that the beach associations assist the police with security and help to keep order. Mr. Coakley asked, "Could we recommend to give a stipend to The Federation of Beaches each year and let them split it up how they saw fit. Would that work?" Mr. Boulanger said that he doesn't know if they are ready to do that. He was not sure how they would divide it up. Mr. Bernblum added that the additional financial burden for association members would average to be about \$51.00 per association member.

Rogers Lake West Shore Association: Dave Evers President spoke next. He said that Dave Woolley from the Board of Finance had a good formula on how to divide everything up. He wanted to know if we had access to that. Mr. Bernblum let him know that we did. Mr. Evers said that the Lake Authority would like to have security down there. It was noted that the Lake Authority got a new boat for patrolling. The patrolling is paid for by the two towns to patrol the lake. Selectwoman Reemsnyder said that at the next meeting she would like to clarify how the appraisals and assessments in town are made.

6. **Adjournment:** Keith Coakley adjourns meeting at 6:34