

Minutes of BPBCA April 17th, Special Executive Session & Special Meeting - 04/17/25

Date and time: 04/17/25 7:00 PM to: 04/17/25 8:52 PM

Present: Brooke Stevens, Recording Secretary, Peter Baril, BOG Member, John Cellino, BOG Member, Peter Meggers, BOG Member, Jim Schepker, BOG Chair, Will Fountain, Emeritus, Bill Bayne, BOG Member, Arlene Garrow, BOG Vice-Chair, Absent:, Colleen Chapin, BOG Member

CC: Jim Moffett, Association Manager, Al Capozza, Treasurer, Colleen Hayes, Club Liaison & Tax Collector

Location: BP Clubhouse, 6 Sunset Avenue, Niantic, CT & Via Zoom

Topics

1. Call Meeting to Order

Note A Special Executive Session is scheduled for April 17th, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. A Special BOG Meeting will immediately follow the Executive Session, at 7:30 p.m.

Note Mr. Schepker called the Special Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and did roll call; a quorum was present.

2. Motion to Enter Executive Session for the Purpose of Discussing Employee Compensation Issues for 25/26 Budget Planning

Decision MOTION (1)

Mr. Cellino moved to Enter Executive Session for the Purpose of Discussing Employee Compensation Issues for 25/26 Budget Planning.

Mr. Bayne seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

Decision MOTION (2)

Mr. Meggers moved to invite Mr. Fountain to join them in Executive Session.

Mr. Bayne seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

3. Motion to Exit to Executive Session

Decision MOTION (3)

Mr. Bayne moved to Exit Executive Session at 6:30 p.m. with no action taken.

Mr. Baril seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

4. Zoom Info and Link

Note <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84404674056?pwd=zAOx1EsKXH0b71lmgX5CgnWbTvibOc.1>

Note Meeting ID: 844 0467 4056

Passcode: 052633

Note <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84404674056?pwd=zAOx1EsKXH0b71ImgX5CgnWbTvibOc.1>

5. Call Special Meeting to Order, Establish Quorum, & Pledge

Note Mr. Schepker called the Special Budget Meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and led those assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Schepker did roll call; a quorum was present.

6. Public Comments

Note There was none.

7. Discussion on 2025/2026 Budget Planning Details

Note see attachment.

 [Work Sheet for FY 2025-26 Budget Draft 2-Mill-2.00-Revised -4-13-25.pdf](#)

Note see attachment.

 [Work Sheet for FY 2025-26 Budget Draft 2-Mill-2.00-Rec Program-4-12-25.pdf](#)

Note see attachment.

 [Work Sheet for FY 2025-26 Budget Draft 2-Mill-2.00-LT Capital Fund--4-12-25.pdf](#)

Note see attachment.

 [Work Sheet for FY 2025-26 Budget Draft 2-Mill-2.00-ExhibitA-4-12-25.pdf](#)

Note Mr. Capozza stated that the review of draft two for next year will focus only on significant changes from draft one. Questions about other items will be addressed closer to the final stages.

Note The second draft differs from the first in that most line items now detail the major expenses supporting the budgeted amounts. This draft also includes a \$0.09 increase in the mill rate, bringing it to 2.00. This net increase is due to five specific line items, which will be discussed individually with opportunities for questions after each.

Note Mr. Capozza discussed the operations line item, specifically waterfront maintenance, noting the addition of \$7,500 for coastal water pipe repair and an additional amount for a special spring cleanup.

Note Mr. Baril is questioned the \$7,500 line item for coastal water pipe repair within the waterfront maintenance budget, which has increased from \$42,000 to \$54,500. He recalls the previous \$42,000 primarily covering seaweed removal and grading, not rock removal or off-site sand replenishment (The rest of the Board clarified this was a one-time cost last year).

He doesn't remember any prior discussions about this water pipe repair and also inquired about a new \$10,000 line item for a beach cleanup (wondering if it's for one or all beaches).

Note It's clarified in Board discussion that the repaired pipe at White Cap was a drainpipe, not a water supply pipe. The current concern is a disintegrating water pipe at Sea Spray, originating from the East Lyme's basin and emptying near the former fire dock.

Note The Board wondered if this repair is East Line's responsibility, and Mr. Moffett said he is in contact with someone at East Lyme about it. He suggests striking the \$7,500 item if the town is responsible.

Note Mr. Cellino said while some funds for have been set aside for right-of-way projects he advises against completely removing the \$7,500 pipe repair budget. Instead, he suggests increasing the existing \$5,000 for other issues, citing incomplete steps near the Bourget house at Sea Spray (where temporary fixes have been made) and a hazardous drainpipe at the boat launch.

Note Mr. Baril expressed confusion regarding the \$7,500 budget for coastal water pipe repair. He believes the next step involves a structural engineering evaluation of the entire waterfront, which could potentially encompass this issue. He questions the basis for this specific budget item, asking if a quote was obtained, as it seems unexpected.

Note Mr. Cellino suggested consolidating the coastal water pipe repair and the existing right-of-way protection expenses into a single line item called waterfront right-of-way repairs. He clarified that the repairs he's referring to (like those at Bellaire) are minor and don't require engineering evaluations, unlike the larger waterfront structural assessment.

He emphasized the need to address these smaller issues before they worsen. While not proposing immediate action or assigning the work, the goal is to set aside funds. He asked Mr. Capozza about removing the \$7,500 line item for Coastal Water Pipe Repairs support and Mr. Bayne pointed out that they are not voting on this yet but are just allocating funds.

Note Mr. Cellino explained to Mr. Schepker that last year's budget included an extra \$10,000 for sand replenishment at the problematic South Beach, in addition to the normal cleanup costs. He asked Mr. Bayne about the current condition of South Beach and if more sand is needed this year.

Mr. Bayne replied that more sand isn't needed but that there's a 50-foot strip of rocks to be removed. Mr. Cellino then suggested budgeting \$6,000 for general beach cleanup this year, considering last year's \$10,000 expenditure (compared to a normal \$4,000) to account for debris and other tasks like installing racks.

Note Mr. Baril stated that the eastern shoreline is naturally "sand-starved," leading to rocks and cobbles on the beaches, particularly South Beach due to its proximity to the sound. He raised concerns about the potential for other beaches like Main Beach to develop similar rock issues and questioned if the Association is prepared to annually spend more on rock removal from all beaches. Mr. Cellino argued that maintaining the beaches is an important obligation.

Note Mr. Cellino acknowledged the geological issue of sand depletion as a natural occurrence. He suggested that a future waterfront analysis should include consulting experts and referenced a negative outcome at Ocean Beach where studies weren't done. He believes there's a responsibility to clean the beaches for the limited time residents are there.

Note Mr. Cellino observed that Mr. Bayne suggested consolidating two budget items, but Mr. Baril feels the resulting \$17,500 is too high. He then asked Mr. Bayne if they should reduce the combined amount to \$12,000 or \$13,000. He also mentioned that everyone should start referring to waterfront access points as "access ways" going forward.

Note Mr. Meggers confirms the proposed budget item should be increased from \$10,000 to \$17,500. Mr. Cellino said believes the town of East Lyme should handle the Blue Heron issue, as Mr. Moffett is in contact with town about it and is expected to be successful.

Note Mr. Cellino emphasized that while they have identified necessary work, a lack of funding is a major constraint. He stressed that the Board needs to increase funding across all categories to provide future Boards with resources and avoid depleting long-term capital reserves. He acknowledged that this will likely mean increased costs for everyone. He sees the current uncertainty around project specifics as an example of the need for better financial planning.

While respecting Mr. Baril's desire for detailed project information (a sentiment he believes Ms. Chapin would share), his primary goal is to secure available funds for upcoming projects, preventing a recurrence of past situations with long project lists and no money.

Note Mr. Baril pointed out that they spent months developing a capital expenditure to-do list for proper planning, which hasn't yet addressed recreational items or East Shore/kayak issues. He's concerned that new, significant expenses like \$10,000 for right-of-way repairs and another \$10,000+ for spring beach cleanup seem to have appeared recently without being on that list.

He emphasized that this \$20,000-\$25,000 is a substantial amount, especially considering they haven't yet discussed the other long-standing key issues.

Note Mr. Cellino explained that the beach cleanup budget into three components- \$10,000 for spring cleanup, \$25,000 for daily cleaning, and \$12,000 for installing and removing seasonal items, plus a \$5,000 miscellaneous amount.

Note Mr. Schepker and Mr. Bayne clarified that the detailed breakdown of line items, including beach cleanup costs, was extracted from the base budget for transparency. Mr. Schepker explained that the "to-do list" Mr. Baril referred to was never intended to include routine annual expenses like beach cleanups. Instead, it was a list of new projections or suggestions from members or Board members, not a comprehensive itemization of regular operational costs. Therefore, routine expenses like beach grooming wouldn't appear on that particular list.

Note The Board discussed how the East Shore surveys and the next three East Shore-related items (waterfront condition assessment, drawings, and deep analysis) were part of previous extensive discussions and the East Shore permitting applications, developed with significant effort from the waterfront committee. The dock survey results have just been received, and Mr. Cellino pointed out that these two items, with a potential total cost now estimated at double the initial \$80,000, have not been voted on by the Board. He argued that a kayak dock is a major expenditure requiring a vote by the entire membership, and that kayaks are rarely used and parking is limited. He expressed strong opposition to spending potentially \$200,000 on this, stating they don't believe they have unlimited funds. Mr. Schepker replied that the \$200,000 is a wild projection without vendor quotes, while the \$6,000 is an anticipated cost to reach the point of obtaining a contract, and will serve as a means of determining what can actually be done there.

Note Mr. Baril argued that spending \$5,700 for the initial steps (not \$6,000) is necessary to gather information and make an informed decision about engaging contractors for the kayak dock project. This would allow them to obtain accurate costs to present to the members for a vote. He questions why they would approach the DEEP (Department of Energy and Environmental Protection) and incur costs without first determining the project's feasibility.

Note Mr. Schepker said that while they voted on an initial step (likely the survey), they haven't committed funds for the full kayak dock project.

Note Mr. Cellino questioned whether they should first gauge membership interest before spending more money, citing potential high costs and logistical challenges like parking and the hill.

Note Mr. Schepker said the budget approval at the Annual Meeting will be the time for a vote and that a well-attended kayak committee presentation that generated enough enthusiasm to warrant initial spending this year and modest spending next year to reach a point where a concrete proposal can be presented to the members for a final decision.

Note Mr. Capozza and the Board discussed compiling all the capital items into a spreadsheet to assess the impact on the mill rate before any are rejected.

Note The Board discussed the quote for the Clubhouse doors at \$15,000. Larry Connors obtained multiple bids and favors one bidder. The current estimate is around \$14,000, potentially increasing to \$15,000.

Note Mr. Capozza explained that three specific items caused an increase in the mill rate. To offset this, they reduced two other budget items: capital asset purchases were lowered from \$30,000 to \$13,000 (a \$0.09 reduction in the mill rate), and the annual contribution to the long-term fund was decreased from \$75,000 to \$50,000 (a \$25,000 reduction).

Note Mr. Schepker stated he requested Mr. Capozza to set the long-term fund contribution at \$50,000 after observing the mill rate increase.

Note The Board discussed the long-term fund contribution and some of the following was highlighted: Mr. Schepker's concerned about a mill rate increase during current economic conditions and members' potential resistance, especially when considering a possible \$200,000 kayak dock (though that's for a future year).

Mr. Cellino emphasized the priority of waterfront maintenance (beaches) over other amenities and the need for reserves given past storm damage.

Mr. Schepker cautioned against relying on the current \$360,000 reserve, as members might question the need for mill rate increases with that balance.

He fears a budget rejection if the mill rate is too high.

While acknowledging they've passed increases before, he worries about the cumulative effect of annual increases.

Mr. Bayne supports the need to articulate the significant upcoming capital expenses (potentially over a million dollars) to the membership and suggests a possible special assessment staggered over a few years. They agree with a responsible annual budget but stress the need for a separate plan for the capital needs. They also point out that special assessments aren't unprecedented.

The discussion returns to the previous Lombardo Commission's \$85,000 recommendation, suggesting the current need is likely much higher.

The idea of smaller, regular assessments versus large, infrequent ones is raised.

The question is posed whether there's a consensus to stick with the \$75,000 long-term capital fund contribution.

Note Mr. Meggers, drawing on his experience as an attorney for homeowners' associations and corporations, argues that the current \$360,000 long-term capital reserve is insufficient. He calculates that this amounts to roughly \$642 per homeowner. He believes it's crucial to have more funds readily available ("war chest") for potential disasters like hurricanes.

While he understands the idea of accessing the reserve if needed in the future, he anticipates greater dissatisfaction if they haven't adequately planned and saved for such contingencies. He prefers the peace of mind of having funds built up over time rather than facing homeowners with a large, unexpected assessment after a disaster.

Note Ms. Garrow said she agrees with Mr. Cellino and Mr. Meggers, stating that having readily available funds is more acceptable for the Association than facing a large assessment. She believes increasing the long-term capital reserve is beneficial for handling catastrophic events. Given rising costs, she anticipates that the current plans won't cover future expenses and that they will be significantly short if they don't plan for it now and in the future.

Note Ms. Garrow agrees with the idea of annually increasing the long-term capital reserve, referencing a previous target of \$100,000. When asked for clarification on whether to increase from the speaker's \$50,000 recommendation or last year's \$75,000, she confirms the recommendation is to go to \$100,000, aligning with Mr. Cellino's consistent suggestion over the past four years to increase it by \$25,000 annually.

Note Mr. Schepker asked Mr. Meggers for a quick calculation of the per-home cost. Mr. Meggers provided the figure of \$45 more per house.

Note Mr. Bayne said he's sensitive to the budget but given the large impending capital improvements they have to address, he'd vote with Ms. Garrow and the others.

Note Mr. Schepker said he thinks this economic year is very different and Mr. Cellino detailed how they had no reserves during Storm Sandy.

Note Mr. Capozza noted that the Rec Program remains unchanged from last year.

Note Mr. Capozza said for the long-term capital fund he did put a disbursement line in, in case any of these projects meet the criteria of we're able to pull money out of this fund.

Note Mr. Bayne states that the proposed budget reflects the priorities outlined in the community Master Plan, justifying the significant increase by highlighting the value being received. He suggests reviewing the list to understand how it aligns with those priorities

Task ☐ Mr. Schepker requested Mr. Capozza to review the suggestions made during the meeting and incorporate edits into the presented budget details. He recommended that an updated budget version be shared with the Board and members when the agenda for the next regular meeting, scheduled for Thursday, April 24th, is posted on the website.

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8. Further Public Comments

8-1. Skip Guzy of 17 Woodland

Note Mr. Guzy argued that of the \$32,000 allocated to the tennis courts, \$20,000-\$22,000 would be necessary for basic maintenance even without pickleball, meaning only about \$10,000 is truly for the additional amenity of pickleball.

Note Regarding the estuary project, he recalls a presentation with 60 attendees who expressed interest in broader access to the waterway beyond just kayaking, including activities like painting, birdwatching, and enjoying the scenery. He believes there's significant interest in kayaking if proper access is provided, noting his own frequent kayak use and that others would likely participate given the opportunity.

Note Mr. Cellino clarifies that he is not against the kayak dock idea and would support it if they had sufficient funds through fundraising and assessments. However, he believes that a parking lot should take priority over the kayak dock. He emphasized the need to prioritize based on available resources and catch up on essential needs first.

8-2. Larry Connors of 50 Indianola Road

Note Mr. Connors states that regardless of whether the kayak dock project happens this year or next, the permitting stage is essential to determine what is feasible and the actual cost. He notes that current figures are just estimates. He believes the public interest demonstrated last August justifies allocating funds to complete the study phase.

9. Chair's Closing Remarks

Note Mr. Schepker highlighted Mr. Connors' significant effort in obtaining seven or eight estimates for the Clubhouse doors project, including multiple trips from Harlington to meet with local contractors. He notes that the bids range from \$24,000 to \$14,000, and Mr. Connors has confirmed that several are compatible with his design concepts and meet engineering standards. Mr. Schepker also acknowledges Mr. Connors as a key advocate for the EGI project, alongside Mr. Guzy and Mr. Walsh.

10. Adjournment

Decision MOTION (1)

Mr. Baril moved to adjourn the April 17th, 2025, Special Budget Meeting at 8:52 p.m.

Mr. Meggers seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

Note Respectfully Submitted,
Brooke Stevens,
Recording Secretary

Task Summary

New Tasks

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