

PORTSMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 10, 2022 (Saturday)
MINUTES

10:00 AM – UNION CHURCH, PRUDENCE ISLAND

Time: 10:03 AM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kevin M. Aguiar, Linda L. Ujifusa, Keith E. Hamilton, Leonard B. Katzman. Andrew V. Kelly and J. Mark Ryan

MEMBER ABSENT: Daniela T. Abbott

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

SITTING AS THE PORTSMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

1. Roll Call

INTRODUCTION OF PRUDENCE ISLAND STATE LEGISLATORS

1. Senator Jim Seveney
2. Representative Susan Donovan

OPEN FORUM (Discussion/Action) – No votes taken at this meeting.

1. [Community Electricity Aggregation Plan](#) update.

At the time of this writing, the Town of Portsmouth has signed its agreement with one of the finalists from our Request for Proposals to serve as the electricity supplier for its electricity aggregation program. Similar agreements were signed by the other communities in our buying group: Barrington, Central Falls, Newport, Providence, and South Kingstown. These agreements were sent to the supplier for countersignature and full execution on the afternoon of September 8. Currently, we are waiting to receive the executed documents back from the supplier before making a public announcement about the selection.

This agreement will create an electricity supply product for the programs of these communities with an expected launch date of May 2023. The agreement commits the supplier to deliver a price for our default product at launch that will be a minimum of \$1 per MWh below Last Resort Service at the time of launch.

Goals:

- Allow individuals and small businesses to benefit from the competitive electricity market
- Provide rate stability
- Use and support clean energy
- Expand consumer choice for electricity supply options

Participant Experience:

- Voluntary participation with automatic enrollment
 - No penalty or fee to leave the program, ever
 - Leave before the program begins or anytime during
 - Customers who have not chosen a third party supplier
- National Grid continues to handle billing and maintenance (e.g. power outages)
- Does not affect net metering or any low-income discount rates

2. Police updates.

a. Public Safety Officer coverage – When the Public Safety Officer is on vacation, or is off, please contact the Portsmouth Police Department for assistance.

b. CodeRED – CodeRED is an emergency notification service that allows emergency officials to notify residents and businesses by telephone, cell phone, text message, email and social media regarding time-sensitive general and emergency notifications. Only authorized officials have access to the CodeRED system. You can go to the Town website <https://www.portsmouthri.gov/1611/CODE-RED> for more information and there is a link at the bottom of the page to sign up for CodeRED.

3. Implementation of the [Southeast New England Program Network \(SNEP\)](#).

SOUTHEAST NEW ENGLAND PROGRAM NETWORK – or SNEP for short. In the fall of 2019, the US Environmental Protection Agency awarded a five-year cooperative agreement to the New England Environmental Finance Center to establish a technical assistance network for the Southeast New England region. This is SNEP. The Network brings together 16 partner entities who work collaboratively to provide access to free training and technical assistance to advance storm water management and ecological restoration goals across the region. SNEP partners include, among others, Brown University, URI, the Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy, and Throve Environmental.

After learning more about the network and after assessing our own needs, we submitted a request for SNEP technical assistance in developing a town-wide Climate Resiliency Planning and Financing strategy, the final deliverable of which effort would be a Resilience Capital Improvement Plan tailored to the needs of Portsmouth.

Our application was approved in May 2020.

The deliverable was presented to the Town Council at the February 12th Council meeting and is available on our website.

In a nutshell, the meat of the report identified and analyzed Resiliency Capital against various objectives and metrics. A number of projects were identified which are specific to Prudence Island:

- Landing Lane / Sand Point Dock Improvements
- A second generator for the PI Pump Station
- PI firefighting equipment
- Generator for the PI Transfer Station

- PI Shelter Assessment, and
- Neighborhood Preparedness Programs

A number of these are either finished, underway, or in the planning stage.

4. Status of the [Portsmouth Comprehensive Community Plan](#).

The Town Council adopted the updated Comprehensive Community Plan on April 11, 2022. Former Town Planner Gary Crosby officially submitted the entire plan and maps to Statewide Planning/Department of Administration for their review and approval on May 11, 2022. The DOA has a deadline of October 1, 2022 to respond to us regarding our Comp Plan – they are currently synthesizing all the comments they received about the Plan and will send their decision to us by Oct 1st.

5. Budget timeline process.

The budget process essentially never ends. As soon as one budget is finished, work begins on the next fiscal year. General timeline, subject to Town Council approval will look something like this:

- We start in the fall with a review of the CIP.
- In November, we present the proposed Transfer Station Enterprise Fund to the TC for approval
- CIVIC Support requests are due at the beginning of December
- In December, we will also distribute Budget Worksheets to each department and finalize the updated CIP
- The Finance Director reviews budget requests with Departments starting the second week in January, and a Joint TC / School Committee Budget meeting is held the second TC meeting after the first of the year
- The TC reviews and approves Civic Support requests the first meeting in February and Department Budgets are finalized with the Town Administrator
- A draft budget is distributed to Department Heads for challenge and review by mid-March; after which, the Town Administrator proposed budget is finalized and submitted to the TC
- Budget meetings are held the fourth week of April and the TC adopts a provisional budget in early May.
- A public hearing is held in early June, and the TC adopts the new budget by the end of the month.
- Then... the process starts all over again.

6. Prudence Tax Revenue Synopsis.

- For every \$1.00 of Prudence Island Revenue the Town expends \$1.337
- The median tax bill for Prudence Island property is 57.11% lower than the median tax bill for the entire Town
- The average tax bill for Prudence Island property is 65.10% lower than the average tax bill for the entire Town

- The median Single Family tax bill for Prudence Island property is 43.76% lower than the median Single Family tax bill for the entire Town
- The average Single Family tax bill for Prudence Island property is 50.58% lower than the average Single Family tax bill for the entire Town
- Property taxes are an ad-valorem tax, which means it is based on value. Your portion of the burden is determined by the market value of the property.

Additionally:

- \$300K to PI Water
- \$1.35M in Congressional Mandated Spending – managed by the Town – to PI Water
- Mill Creek

7. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds update.

Municipal FY21	\$	901,510	
Municipal FY22	\$	901,510	
County FY 21	\$	1,672,974	
County FY 22	\$	1,672,974	
	\$	5,148,969	
<u>Respond to the pandemic / necessary investments</u>			
Town Hall-Council Chambers A/V System Upgrade	\$	(102,868)	
Support Portsmouth Business Campaign	\$	(50,000)	
Desktops Replacement (Police, Fire, DPW) (ARPA Funded)	\$	(14,000)	
Fire Records & Dispatching Software and Equipment (ARP.	\$	(77,000)	
Life Line Ambulance	\$	(320,000)	
Fiber line (DPW to Fire building) (ARPA Funded)	\$	(20,000)	
EMA: EOC Upgrades (ARPA Funded)	\$	(8,000)	
EMA: Mobile CMD Post (ARPA Funded)	\$	(5,300)	
Dispatch Console (ARPA Funded)	\$	(200,000)	
	\$	(797,168)	
Remaining	\$	4,351,801	
<u>Recommended Priorities</u>			
Emergency Apparatus / CIP	\$	(1,500,000.00)	
PI Water System	\$	(300,000.00)	
Island Park Storm Drain Repair	\$	(120,000.00)	
Portsmouth Park Storm Drain and Catch Replacement	\$	(700,000.00)	
Resilience Program	\$	(76,748.00)	
Hog Island Firefighting	\$	(23,252.00)	
Cesspool Replacement Grant Program	\$	(500,000.00)	
DPW Water main extension	\$	(61,190.93)	
PWFD Water Infrastructure (Sakonnet River Pipeline)	\$	(383,812.50)	
Hathaway Elementary School Water Main Pipe	\$	(20,000.00)	
Street Sweeper	\$	(248,055.00)	
Jet Trailer	\$	(65,535.00)	
Clamshell Bucket	\$	(9,000.00)	
DPW 800Mhz Radios	\$	(142,316.61)	
Police Tasers	\$	(25,700.00)	
Public Safety IT Servers	\$	(20,000.00)	
Broadband: planning work and enhancing GIS solutions	\$	(50,000.00)	
	\$	(4,245,610.04)	
	\$	106,191	Remaining

8. DPW updates.

a. Installation of Road Signs – We have installed 34 street signs on roads that were not previously posted to help identify these roads for first responders.

b. Hazardous Waste and Electronics pick-up dates on Prudence Island – Eco depot will not be coming to the Island or to Portsmouth as they are trying to set up events by Area locations. There is a scheduled event in Newport at Easton’s Beach on October 15, 2022, from 8am to 12 noon. Appointments are needed and we have some flyers we placed on the back table. E-waste is something that Paul Rodrigues, the Deputy director of Public Works, is working on. Our next event will be November 19th at the Portsmouth High School from 9am to 12 noon. We have talked to Indie Cycle who conducts these events and with the limited amount of collection; they predict that they will collect on the island they will not be coming over. The Town is going to schedule one of our work trucks be placed at the transfer station for anyone who would like to drop off electronic waste the week before the 19th starting on Saturday November 12th, Sunday 13th, Tuesday 15th and Thursday 17th, during normal transfer station hours. This will give us time to have the truck back for the November 19th collection. We have printed out what will be allowed for collection during those times, and these are on the back table.

c. Mill Creek – We have gone out to bid for this and had a non-mandatory pre-bid on September 6th. The bid opening will be September 30th at 1pm. We will be reviewing the bids and presenting them to the Council in October. We did have to change the completion date to December 15, 2023, due to the timing of the award. In the bid they may be working in October 2022 and finished by May 31, 2023 and begin again September 5th and finish by December 15, 2023. They must ensure the road is open to all traffic from May 25, 2023 to September 4, 2023. We are working with DEM for another no cost extension for this project and they do not see a problem with this.

9. Rhode Island Energy updates.

a. Pole relocation of feed from Transfer Station to North End around salt marsh –RI Energy has been coordinating with the Prudence Island Conservancy and RI DEM on the relocation. All parties have agreed on the project details and the project is currently with RI Energy, where we are drafting easement agreements for the relocation. Once the easement agreements have been processed, we will apply for the proper permits and schedule the work. Hoping to complete this work before next summer season. Updates to the Town will be provided once a schedule has been established.

b. Update on new power management infrastructure added south of PIVFD on Narragansett – The PI Fire department needs an existing pole removed from their property. This pole is the connection point for RI Energy in the event of an emergency where we need to provide backup generation for the Island. A new location for the pole/connection point has been found and RI Energy is working on an easement. The goal is to remove the pole within the Fire Department property as soon as the new pole/connection point has been installed. Again, this pole/connection point is only needed in the event of an emergency.

10. Emergency Management update.

a. Prudence Island Preparedness – Congratulations to the entire P.I. Preparedness Committee and Linda O’Brien as the chairperson whose leadership has driven forward many of your accomplishments. The first meeting of the committee was held September 25, 2021. Do we need an Emergency mass sheltering for the Island? Yes, it is necessary. An assessment needs to include as to what should be its capability. Look at a hierarchy of events, i.e. an advance notice

event such as a hurricane or immediate need without notice. Should we look at a band-aid solution or a more permanent solution? Should it be certified or not? Strategies being looked at are; 1) a possible Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Narragansett Bay National Research Reserve (NBNERR), 2) a fully certified shelter with Red Cross support if not what is the liability exposure, 3) a “safe room concept”, such as concrete bunkers with at least 2 exits and any other possible ideas.

b. Shelter – Possible Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Narragansett Bay

National Research Reserve (NBNERR) – The P. I. committee would like assistance in creating a Memorandum of Understanding or Agreement but they would need to provide the EMA director with the content as to what they want, would like, or agree upon. Risk would need to be considered and what our exposure would be getting into an MOU on a facility that is not “Shelter Certified”. Mr. Perry is in contact with RIEMA, FEMA and RIIB to explore funding, grant possibilities, establish operational view “needs assessment” from RIEMA, and for FEMA guidance on design strategies and grants as well. It has been slow moving, in part due to COVID backlog in RIEMA and Red Cross’ focus on Regional Shelter certification throughout the State taking precedence.

c. Map Your Neighborhood – The Map Your Neighborhood program guides you and your neighbors through simple steps to help enhance your preparedness for an emergency. These steps will help you to quickly, and safely, take actions that can minimize damage and protect lives. It is designed to improve disaster readiness at the neighborhood level, 15-20 homes or a defined area that you can canvas in 1 hour. It teaches neighbors to rely on each other during the hours or days before fire, medical, police or utility responders arrive.

d. Firewise – no discussion

e. Communications Connectivity – Volunteer EM Communications Team (five people) transported by PFD to P.I. to perform resilient communications work with members of the P.I. Planning Committee. Pat Strong and Nolan Byrne had just received their radio licenses. The trip had three objectives: 1) help Pat and Nolan become comfortable with communicating via radio with the Portsmouth EM Communications (comms.) Team and other Radio Operators around the State, while the focus was on 2m repeater use, we practiced a simplex connections too; 2) use Repeater and scope out locating one on the island; 3) to test Mesh Network, which moves data, is cheap and easy to set up after an event where comms. systems are damaged.

Note: P.I.’s great location for State Wide comms. linkage/relay point.

f. DAT Teams / Red Cross – If members train to work on behalf of the Red Cross, a requirement is you must deploy to other places in the State if coverage is needed. EMA director may look into the situation to see if people on Prudence Island would be required to do that.

11. Additional Questions.

There were concerns with people camping and having fires on the T Wharf and it not being patrolled by DEM police. There is a lot of trash left there. The sign saying it is closed from Dusk to Dawn is down as well. The Safety Officer was going to try to set up joint surprise visits to the property to see if they could catch anyone having fires on the dock. No one has received any burn permits through the Fire Chief.

Is the Town still looking for a docking location in Portsmouth for the ferry to go to instead of Bristol where there would be parking available? The Town continues to do research. There is not a spot on the Westside that we could. An ideal spot that the Navy owns is contaminated and unfortunately, it is financially out of the question to remediate. Representative Donovan said that Bristol residents are having the same parking problems.

FUTURE MEETINGS

Sep 12 7:00 PM – Town Council Meeting
Sep 26 7:00 PM – Town Council Meeting
Oct 11 7:00 PM – Town Council Meeting (Tuesday)
Oct 24 7:00 PM – Town Council Meeting

ADJOURN – Motion to adjourn made by Dr. Ryan, seconded by Mr. Kelly. Motion passed 6-0.

Time: 12:18 PM

Jennifer M. West, CMC Town Clerk