

BARNEGAT LIGHT TAXPAYERS' ASSOCIATION
 General Meeting Minutes
 September 14, 2019

<u>Attending:</u>		<u>Excused:</u>	
Barbara Truncellito	Philip Kahn	Patty Francfort (Committee member)	
Rich Brodman	Kay McDonnell		
Bill Chernelich	Jack Byrnes		
Tom Zesk	Virginia Fitzsimons		
Mary Ann Crutchlow			
Betsy Aras			

I. President's Opening Comments

Barbara Truncellito called the meeting to order at 9:37 am with the Pledge of Allegiance. Barbara welcomed everyone to the meeting, and reviewed the agenda and the process for asking questions. This meeting will feature a discussion of the LBI School Board meeting regarding the school consolidation issue. We also will have the Captain of the Barnegat Light Beach Patrol, Megan Keller of the LBT Police Dept., and Mayor Larson. Barbara also welcomed our new members.

II. Reports

o Membership Report – Rich Brodman

Rich noted that we currently have 556 members for 2019, which is one of the highest membership totals in recent years. We ended 2018 with 549 members.

Rich then announced that the BLTA was making a donation of \$500 to the Barnegat Light Beach Patrol, to help pay for new equipment, and he gave the donation to Captain Scott Caffery, who is one of our featured speakers today.

Rich also announced that we have four new Trustees who have been with us since last October, who need to be formally approved for three year terms by the full BLTA membership. The group unanimously approved the new Trustees: Betsy Aras, Jack Byrnes, Virginia Fitzsimons, and Kay McDonnell.

o Treasurer's Report – Bill Chernelich

Bill presented an update to the financials as of September 13, 2019. During 2019, our fund balance increased from \$11,714 to \$14,461 as we collected \$10,385 in dues and additional contributions, less expenses (printing, postage, bicycle safety flyers, IT, insurance) of \$7,638. The expenses were similar to

last year, except that last year we funded benches and plaques for the Pavilion. We anticipate our fund balance to be approximately \$11,000 at year end.

o BLTA Website and Facebook Group – Tom Zesk

Tom informed the group that our website would continue to be updated each week throughout the year, with articles of interest from the Sandpaper. He also reminded the group of the new features that were added to our website. We have added a calendar of events which covers local events for the next few months, so our members can plan their weekends and not miss any events. The home page also has a Special Events section which lists the events in Barnegat Light that are upcoming in the next week or so.

Tom also discussed our Facebook Group, which is managed by Betsy Aras. It has continued to grow tremendously this year, and currently has over 200 members. He noted that we would like all our members to join the Facebook Group, and asked people to complete the questions when requesting approval so the approval process can go quickly.

o Special Report on the LBI School Consolidation and School Board – Virginia Fitzsimons

Virginia gave a report on the LBI school consolidation currently being discussed by the LBI School Board. Virginia started with some background on the two LBI school districts (Beach Haven and LBI). The LBI District has two schools, the LBI Grade School (grades 3-6) and the Ethel Jacobsen (EJ) School (grades K-2). The LBI School Board has been discussing consolidating the two schools into one school, and voted on a resolution to have a referendum in December to approve a consolidation into the LBI Grade School. The resolution was not passed, although they wanted to try another vote. (Subsequent to this meeting, the LBI School Board did hold another vote which approved a December 10 referendum to consolidate both schools into the LBI Grade School). Note that a similar referendum two years ago to consolidate into the EJ School was defeated.

Virginia gave some relevant facts about each of the schools. The LBI School is 20 years older, is in a flood zone and will require significant renovation costs, which have been estimated at \$7.5 million. The EJ School is not in a flood zone, and has more outdoor space and fields. .

The Barnegat Light representative to the LBI School Board, Marilyn Wasilewski, was in the audience, and she noted that she voted against the referendum resolution. She believes the EJ School is a better option for our students. Marilyn's term ends this year, and Marilyn and Nancy Spark are running for that seat in the November election. The BLTA will post statements from both candidates as an email distribution and on our website.

III. Scott Caffery, Captain of the Barnegat Light Beach Patrol

Scott has been the Captain of the Barnegat Light Beach Patrol for the past 3 years, and was the assistant Captain for 21 years prior to that. His presentation covered a number of topics related to the Beach Patrol and lifeguard training:

- Scott discussed the logistics relating to the Piping Plovers, who have been habitating on the 22nd St beach. The Patrol is working closely with the State to be able to work around the Plovers. The new man-made lake in the Lighthouse State Park area should be helpful.
- The Patrol does significant training, including role plays simulating rip tide rescues, fainting, sand covering beachgoers, etc.
- The Patrol is a very tight-knit group who work together well, like a family.
- They have not been able to hold competitions this year because of the Plovers preventing access to the 22nd St beach.
- Scott looks to hire locally where possible, particularly since there is limited available housing. The Lifeguard in Training program has helped source a number of excellent hires.

Scott then discussed the Lifeguard in Training (LIT) program. The program is designed for kids ages 10-15, and many of them become full lifeguards after graduating from the program. It was started in 1990, and has evolved significantly since then. The training includes water safety, fitness, teamwork, and self-esteem.

Scott addressed the following during the Q&A section:

- Some beaches are left uncovered at the end of the summer as the lifeguards have to go back to school prior to labor Day.
- The BLTA \$500 donation will be used to replace destroyed equipment, and/or to acquire communication equipment which is critical for the Patrol.
- The Patrol is short-staffed by about 12 lifeguards. The Barnegat Light Patrol does pay less than other towns, but Scott does not believe that has an impact since all towns are short-staffed and the Barnegat Light group has a very strong vibe and rapport. He recommended attending Borough Council meetings to make the case for increases.
- There are only 2 beach badge checkers because they did not get enough applicants. Dorothy Reynolds of the Borough Council committed that they would post the beach badge revenue on the Borough website.
- There is a strong need for furniture, utensils, pots, pans, etc. for the living quarters. Scott agreed to post a 'wish list' on the Beach Patrol Facebook page.

IV. Officer Megan Keller, Community Officer, Long Beach Township Police Department

Megan Keller, Community Officer for the LBT Police Department, spoke on the opioid crisis, and made the following points:

- Opioids began being used in the 1990's and were designed for end of life pain. They were pushed out more broadly and addiction has become a major issue. 130 people a day pass away from opioid addiction in the U.S.
- Fentanyl is a particularly dangerous drug. It is extremely potent and cheap, and one use can be fatal. It has been spread by mixing it in with Heroin.

- The LBT Police carry Narcan, which can reverse the symptoms of Fentanyl and Heroin. It revives patients and allows them to be sent to the hospital. But it won't resolve the withdrawal symptoms which will follow. Withdrawal can be 10 times worse than the flu.
- Schools need to take the lead in teaching about the dangers of opioids. Megan and others are very active in the LBI schools, including the EJ school for younger students.
- The drugs that are dropped off at the LBT and Harvey Cedars Police Depts. are taken to an incinerator in Rahway and converted into power.

Megan also discussed additional items, including the need for coordination among the LBI towns for tracking stolen bikes that are stolen in one town and discarded in another. She also recommended that LBI property owners check the LBT Police Dept. website and listen to WBNJ for police updates.

V. Kirk Larson, Mayor of Barnegat Light

Barnegat Light Mayor Kirk Larson discussed a number of topics being considered by the Borough Council and fielded questions from the audience, including the following:

- Golf carts – The Borough would need County permission to have golf carts since Central Ave. and 4th St. are County roads. Without County permission, the carts could not be used on those roads, or even cross them except at a stop light. At this time, the Council is not moving forward with golf carts.
- Bay Beach – the high bacteria count at certain times this summer was caused primarily by a combination of heavy rains and dogs near the beach. A solution to this issue will be worked on over the winter.
- Water Pumps – the issues in certain parts of the Borough with water pumps was caused primarily by wipes and mopheads, as well as the heavy rains. The Mayor asked property owners to inform renters to use trash for such items. The damage cost \$75,000 to repair.

Mayor Larson also gave an update on water meters. Contractor bids for installation are being received. The contractor bids are coming in with a very high cost as a result of the uncertainty given the number of houses and location of the meter pits. It might be less expensive for homeowners to separately contract for their own property, with water meters provided by the Borough. The Mayor said he would be interested in getting more feedback from homeowners on these two alternatives. The BLTA has worked with the Borough Council and Borough CFO to prepare a survey for property owners, but the Mayor is not currently interested in a survey. The Borough deadline is December 31, 2021. The BLTA will keep members informed as more information becomes available on water meter installation.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 AM. The next BLTA Meeting is a Trustee meeting on October 12. Recorded and submitted by:

Tom Zesk
Recording Secretary
October 10, 2019