

March 14, 2012

The Stonington Board of Selectmen and the Borough Warden & Burgesses held a special joint meeting on this date at the Stonington Police Department at 6:00 p.m. Present were First Selectman Edward Haberek, Selectman George Crouse, Selectman Glee McAnanly, Warden Paul Burgess, Burgess Ed McCreary, Burgess Amy Nicholas and Burgess Robert Scala. Also present were Baker Salsbury, Steve Mansfield, Jennifer Muggeo from Ledge Light Health District, members of the public and press.

(1) Call to Order

Mr. Haberek called the meeting to order for the Town of Stonington at 6:07 p.m.

Mr. Burgess called the meeting to order for the Borough of Stonington at 6:07 p.m.

(2) Public Hearing

- Mr. Haberek gave a brief history of the Town of Stonington's health department.
- Mr. Salsbury explained what a health district is and what this means to Stonington. Mr. Salsbury and Mr. Mansfield explained their user fees. Mr. Salsbury explained about a 2011 Salmonella outbreak and how Ledge Light worked diligently to resolve the issue.

(3) Comments from the Public

- Ms. Candace Devindides, owner of Dev's on Bank stated that Ledge Light Health District takes a positive approach to restaurants and that they recently came up with a Food Advisory Board.
- Mr. Maury Pendleton, Chief of Police in Waterford, Connecticut stated he can call Ledge Light Health District day or night and has never been denied service.
- Mr. Bob Burns stated that there was a time when health districts were his adversary. He stated that he used to be on guard and cynical of health districts but as time passed he became more involved with Ledge Light Health District and is now on the Board of Directors.
- Mr. Ken Sistare stated that he was on the Board of Selectmen in East Lyme when he was introduced to Ledge Light Health District. Based on his own experience, he feels it is a good idea to join Ledge Light.
- Mr. Tim Murray, owner of John's Tavern, stated that he has concerns about Ledge Light's fees and that he is not in favor of the town joining Ledge Light.
- Mr. Jim Truscio, Executive Director of the Stonington Community Center, stated that he has a concern of the overall cost involved with Ledge Light Health District. Mr. Truscio asked several questions regarding the fee schedule. Mr. Steve Mansfield answered some of Mr. Truscio's questions.
- Mr. Ed McCreary asked what a QFO is and does it cost money to become one. Mr. Mansfield stated that you have to pass a test after taking a one day class that costs \$180.00 per person.
- Mrs. Stephanie Houlihan, owner of Water Street Café, stated that her restaurant employs 20 people and that she has been in business for 18 years and has never had a salmonella outbreak. Mrs. Houlihan asked if Ledge Light Health District was a non-profit. Mr. Baker stated that Ledge Light is neither a profit or a non-profit. They are unique under Connecticut General Statute. They are a stand-alone entity. Mrs. Houlihan asked what qualifications do inspectors have to have. Mr. Mansfield stated it is by state statute.

- Ms. Wendy Bury stated that she appreciated the sliding scale and asked if businesses would be charged a reinspection fee in the event of something like Hurricane Irene. Mr. Mansfield stated that the only time a business would be charged a reinspection fee would be if they failed their inspection and they need to be reinspected. Ms. Bury stated that the fees would have a huge impact on non-profits.
- Ms. Tricia Cunningham, Mystic Chamber, asked about the fees for food events and if a QFO would have to be presents at the event and at their respective restaurant. Mr. Mansfield stated he was not sure if a QFO has to be on sight at an event with a temporary license.
- Mr. Jeff Anderson, of St. Edmund's Retreat, stated that the fees were a concern and that for smaller business the fees should be in smaller increments over a longer period of time.
- Mrs. McAnanly asked if other towns' fees go down if we join. Mr. Salsbury stated that the per capita fee goes down.
- Mr. Salsbury stated that Chief Stewart told him the town spends thousands of dollars each year sending bat and raccoons to be tested in Hartford. Ledge Light does not charge a fee for this.
- Ms. Bury asked how many meetings has the Town attend with Ledge Light. Mr. Haberek stated that he attended 3 and other department heads have gone to meetings.
- Ms. Bury asked what is the state incentive. Ms. Jennifer Muggeo stated that if Stonington joins before May 1st, the state will pay the per capital fee of \$15,000.00 for this fiscal year.
- Ms. Bury asked Mr. Haberek what his criteria is for making this decision. Mr. Haberek stated that it was operationally. He said that he wanted to hear from the Selectmen, Warden and Burgesess as well businesses.
- Mrs. Houlihan asked if Karen Weiss would still be employed. Mr. Haberek stated that she would be employed by Ledge Light.
- Mr. Ed Hart stated that it seemed like it took Ledge Light a month to find out you had a problem. Mr. Salsbury stated that 98% of food borne illnesses goes undetected and it takes a while for the tests to get circulated.
- Mr. Bill Sternberg asked if we pay \$15,000.00 to the Health District, the town sanitarian becomes an employee of the health district and we're paying her salary now, where does the salary come from. Mr. Haberek stated it is about \$100,000.00 to do our current process and it is \$115,000.00 to joint Ledge Light.

(4) Adjourn

There being no further business to come before this Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kristine Bell

Recording Secretary