

GIANTS NECK BEACH ASSOCIATION

BOARD OF GOVERNORS – MEETING MINUTES

February 4, 2026 – 6:30 p.m.

East Lyme Town Hall, 108 Pennsylvania Avenue, Niantic, CT

Hybrid Meeting via Zoom

FINAL

Present: Chip Brienza, Julie Cameron, Paul Formica, Mary Ann Heenehan; Lou Piscatelli, Gerry Van Noordennen. Absent: Ernie Annibale.

The regular monthly meeting of the Giants Neck Beach Association Board of Governors was called to order at 6:45 p.m. by President Paul Formica.

1. President's Report

Paul welcomed Shari Whittaker and Danny Anselmo, Chair and Co-Chair of Giants Neck Heights Association, who attended to discuss possible areas of collaboration.

Paul reported that the Connecticut Port Authority administers a grant program for marina development and dock repair. John Wohler and Paul are reviewing whether GNBA can apply.

Paul asked who was receiving Comcast Security Edge notifications besides him. Mary Ann will look into it.

Paul addressed ongoing questions regarding GNBA's legal status and notice requirements. Attorney McNamara provided an initial analysis; however, multiple questions remained. GNBA has since consulted with Attorney Nick Kepple.

Paul noted that the lease for the driveway at the Association cottage at 214 Giants Neck Road, which Mr. Franzoni leases, expired in June and that the GNBA may need to consider more assertive measures.

2. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Lorie Carlson presented the following balances:

Operations Account: \$72,666

Tax Collection Account: \$100

Capital Reserve Account: \$51,686

Money Market Account: \$238,299

Total: \$362,751

Expenses since the prior meeting totaled \$10,548.

A motion to accept the Treasurer's Report was made by Mary Anne, seconded by Chip, and approved 6-0.

3. Approval of Minutes

August 6, 2025

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Lou, seconded by Julie, and approved 6–0.

November 5, 2025

Approval was postponed.

January 14, 2026

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Gerry and seconded by Mary Ann.

During the discussion, Joe Sparveri stated that the January 14 minutes omitted a statement Paul made at that meeting concerning member access to the Association’s membership list. “Per the attorney, access to the membership list is allowed, but only if each member gives prior permission to release their information.”

Joe stated that this should be included in the minutes. The Board withdrew the motion to approve, and no vote was taken.

4. Discussion Items

A. GNBA Legal Entity Status

Gerry reported that a question has been raised regarding whether GNBA provided proper notice when revising ordinances. A local attorney advised that GNBA, as a non-stock corporation, must meet a 10-day notice requirement.

Gerry disagreed and consulted Attorney Nick Kepple, who reviewed GNBA’s legislative charter. GNBA was created in 1941 through a special act of the Connecticut Legislature signed by the Governor. According to Attorney Kepple, GNBA is governed by its charter rather than by non-stock corporation law, and the applicable notice requirement is 7 days, not 10. A written opinion is expected.

Paul asked whether the charter requires mailed notice to members who do not have email. GNBA currently uses the website, newsletter, and Facebook. Page Hesland stated that the 2015 charter amendment authorizes both physical and electronic notice. Annah Perch maintains the Association’s email list. Lou noted that members must keep their contact information current. Mary Ann stated that if mailing becomes necessary, they are prepared to do so. Paul said the matter will remain on the agenda until resolved.

B. Giants Neck Heights Collaboration

Chip again welcomed Sherry and Danny and thanked them for their willingness to collaborate.

Sherry and Danny reported that in each of the past two years, Heights has experienced large nighttime crowds coming from the Rocky Neck campground—well over 100 individuals, and the prior year more than 500 youths—entering their beach area around the July 4th holiday. They met with the state park manager, East Lyme Police, the police chief, and the former first selectman regarding the issue. Because they may trespass individuals for only 24 hours under state rules, Heights hired police coverage at a cost of approximately \$4,000.

Heights will staff five monitors daily from July 3–6 this year, with additional police coverage on Saturday evening.

Sherry explained that when Heights staff turn away cars or individuals, those people often continue directly toward GNBA, increasing traffic at GNBA's turnaround and rights-of-way. She regularly observes these traffic patterns and said that GNBA ends up receiving the overflow when Heights increases enforcement.

Heights beach staff includes 13 employees, all but one of whom are association residents, primarily teenagers, supervised by an on-site parking lot manager.

Sherry described Heights' badge system. Members may purchase one hang tag for \$10 when they pay their association taxes. Each household receives two window decals. A decal is required to pass the turnaround; a hang tag is required for parking.

Lou noted that GNBA faces additional complexity because it has multiple beaches and multiple access points.

Mike Heenehan reported that he counted 175 people on GNBA's main beach on July 4 last summer and stated that regular monitoring would be necessary for effective access control. Julie asked who would check rights-of-way; Mike said it would require consistent staffing.

Paul asked whether GNBA contributing to payroll might allow Heights employees to rotate through GNBA access points. Danny suggested using the small pie-shaped chained access area as a joint monitoring point.

Chip said he would continue discussions with Page regarding past GNBA beach monitoring efforts.

Lisa asked about Heights' budget for beach employees and police; Sherry reported approximately \$35,000 for staffing and \$9,000 for police.

C. Committee Reports

Zoning Committee

Gerry reported on the Zoning Commission's discussion regarding possible adjustments to the noise ordinance. He and Julie asked the Commission for its position following GNBA's last meeting. The majority of Zoning Commission members indicated they would support maintaining the current restrictions from Memorial Day to Labor Day, but would like to see changes that allow contractor work on Saturday afternoons for the remainder of the year. The Commission would also like the noise ordinance to state that contractors whose work does not produce construction noise, such as painters, plumbers, or electricians, should be permitted to work at any time, as the concern relates to noise rather than activity. Gerry and Julie will gather feedback from the Board on whether to pursue any changes.

Maintenance and Grounds

Tom Doggart reported that the Raft Beach handrail is broken.

Paul asked whether GNBA pays for snowplowing at the Association Cottage. Lorie confirmed that GNBA has not historically paid for plowing.

Beach Committee

Mike recommended purchasing a gabion for the Griswold right-of-way to create a temporary stair. The estimated cost is \$1,400 for the steps plus \$400 for the gabion.

Mike also recommended purchasing four swim buoys for the upcoming season at an estimated cost of \$1,600. Lou confirmed these are for the swim area and noted that a no-wake buoy is also needed. Paul reminded all committees that budget submissions should begin.

D. Meeting Notice Procedures

Lou reported that a draft letter and permission form for mailing regarding the sharing of membership information have been prepared. Per the attorney's guidance, GNBA may distribute member information only with the member's affirmative written consent. The mailing would include the consent form and the full annual meeting schedule. Mary Ann confirmed they are ready to mail if necessary.

5. Public Comments

Joe Sparveri stated that if you search the Connecticut Secretary of State's records for Giants Neck Beach, two separate entities appear: GNBA, Inc. (1939) and the Giants Neck Improvement Corporation (1941). Joe said both entities remain validly existing within the state and asked that Attorney Kepple address several governance implications related to this dual-entity structure in the legal review.

MJ Agostini noted that two attorneys have provided differing opinions on the sharing of membership information and questioned the requirement that members sign a consent form. Lou responded that the first and second reviews were preliminary and not a formal legal opinion, and that GNBA is awaiting definitive guidance. Paul reiterated that GNBA is not seeking to change its underlying status; the review concerns the requirement of notice for the Association Membership meetings only.

Page Heslin asked whether GNBA was considering altering its chartered status. Paul replied that it is not. Page suggested consulting John Casey of Robinson & Cole, who has longstanding familiarity with GNBA.

6. Board Comments

There were no additional Board comments.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

The next regular Board of Governors meeting will be held on March 4, 2026, at East Lyme Town Hall.

Respectfully Submitted,

Annah Perch
Recording Secretary