

GIANTS NECK BEACH ASSOCIATION  
BOARD OF GOVERNORS – MEETING MINUTES

March 4, 2026 – 6:30 p.m.  
East Lyme Town Hall, 108 Pennsylvania Avenue, Niantic, CT  
Hybrid Meeting via Zoom

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

1- Call to Order

The regular monthly meeting of the Giants Neck Beach Association Board of Governors was called to order by President Paul Formica at 6:30 pm.

2- President's Report

Paul reported that most of the current initiatives of the Board would be addressed later on the agenda, under discussion items and committee reports.

3- Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Lorie Carlson reported that as of March 3 the Association's balances were as follows:

Operations Account: \$74,803  
Tax Collection Account: \$100  
Capital Reserve Account: \$51,688  
Money Market Account: \$238,915

Total Association funds: \$365,506.

Lorie Carlson reported that all taxes had been collected. Revenues since the previous meeting totaled \$3,618. Six invoices were submitted for payment totaling \$997.

Projected future revenue was reported at \$7,564 with projected upcoming expenses estimated at \$71,935.

A motion to accept the Treasurer's Report was made by Chip and seconded by Gerry. The motion carried unanimously.

4- Approval of Meeting Minutes

November 5, 2025 - Paul noted a correction to the spelling of John Wohler's name in the minutes. A motion was made to approve the November 5, 2025 minutes as corrected. The motion carried 5-0.

January 14, 2026 - Paul explained that these minutes had been tabled at the previous meeting due to a question regarding whether his comment about access to the Association membership list had been recorded.

Paul clarified that the minutes should include a statement that the association may release membership information upon request only if individual members have provided prior permission for their information to be shared, consistent with counsel's guidance.

A motion was made to approve the January 14, 2026, minutes as amended. The motion carried 5-0.

February 4, 2026 – Chip noted that the spelling of Shari Whittaker's name is incorrect. A motion was made to approve the February 4, 2026, minutes as presented. The motion carried 5-0.

#### 5- Items for Discussion

##### A- Giants Neck Heights and GNBA Collaboration

Chip Brienza reported that discussions between the Giants Neck Beach Association and the Giants Neck Heights Association are continuing. The purpose of the discussions is to review the historical relationship between the associations and to develop potential policies and budget considerations for collaboration.

Chip reported that the Beach Committee has become involved in the discussions and will assist with developing recommendations and possible budget proposals.

Chip explained that the Heights Association has offered to include GNBA in its planning for the July 4 weekend, particularly regarding police coverage and management of fireworks and large gatherings. Heights has indicated a willingness to absorb some existing costs while working with GNBA on potential additional expenses.

Chip also suggested organizing a joint gathering of board members and committee chairs from both associations to strengthen communication as the collaboration develops.

Mike Heenehan reported that he and Chip will attend an upcoming Giants Neck Heights Ordinance Committee meeting so that Mike can be introduced and discussions can continue.

##### B- Legal Services Update- GNBA Legal Status/ Franzoni Lease

Paul reported that questions have been raised regarding GNBA's legal status and the interpretation of the Association's charter. Following a discussion with Page Heslin, Paul Formica explained that Robinson & Cole drafted GNBA charter revisions in the past and may therefore be best positioned to provide guidance on charter interpretation and related issues. The Board will consult Robinson & Cole regarding these matters.

Paul reported on the status of the Franzoni lease. Paul stated that the lease for the driveway access area had been in place for approximately thirty years and expired on June 30, 2025. Prior to the expiration of the lease, Paul and Lou3+ met with Mr. Franzoni several times to discuss renewal or other arrangements, but no agreement was reached.

Paul explained that the situation currently remains unresolved. He stated that the Association cannot allow continued use of Association property without documentation because doing so creates potential liability and property rights concerns.

Paul reported that the Association's previous counsel, Attorney McNamara, had begun reviewing the matter but did not complete the process. Paul Formica stated that he had recently spoken with Attorney Nick Kepple about potentially taking over the matter in order to move the process forward and work toward a resolution.

Paul also stated that Mr. Franzoni is represented by legal counsel and that the Association will likely need to communicate with that attorney in order to resolve the issue.

Paul reported that he has been billing Mr. Franzoni \$650 per month since the lease expired to avoid any claim of adverse possession arising from continued use of the property.

Paul stated that if the matter cannot be resolved promptly, the Association may need to pursue other actions, which could include legal remedies or securing the property. Paul noted that the Association previously received an estimate of approximately \$3,000 to install fencing if access needs to be restricted.

Paul concluded that the Board will continue working with counsel to resolve the matter.

## 6- Committee Reports

### Beach Committee

Mike Heenehan reported that the Beach Committee met on February 17 and that all committee members attended either in person or remotely.

Mike reported that the beach continues to narrow due to erosion. Measurements will be taken between the seawall and survey markers to estimate sand loss and determine whether additional sand should be added during spring maintenance.

Mike reported that the committee recommends issuing a tag to limit beach storage to one vessel per household. He explained that multiple kayaks and other vessels stored along the seawall interfere with beach maintenance equipment and reduce usable beach space.

The committee also discussed issuing vehicle placards to association households to assist in identifying vehicles associated with GNBA members, particularly during busy holiday periods.

Mike Heenehan reported that the committee plans to install a gabion step structure near the Griswold right-of-way to address erosion and improve beach access.

### Dock Committee

John Wohler reported that the dock is approximately thirty-five years old and approaching the end of its expected lifespan.

John reported that the Dock Committee has raised approximately \$220,000 to date, with additional funds expected from remaining participants. Total available funds currently exceed \$300,000.

Preliminary estimates suggest that replacing the dock may cost approximately \$350,000, although final costs cannot be determined until design plans are complete and bids are received.

John stated that the Dock Committee is requesting up to \$100,000 in financial support from the Association to complete the project and establish a reserve for future maintenance.

John reported that the permitting process will likely delay construction until fall 2027 because a submerged vegetation survey required by DEEP cannot be conducted until June.

John also reported that the Connecticut Port Authority administers a grant program that may reimburse up to fifty percent of eligible marina improvement costs, up to a maximum of \$400,000. If successful,

the BOG wouldn't have to spend its committed funds. Gerry and Mike both offered to help with the permitting process as they both have a good deal of experience.

#### Insurance Committee

Andrew Young continues to recommend requiring event insurance for any private use of the clubhouse that is not an official Association event. Under the proposal, individuals hosting events would obtain their own insurance coverage and provide proof of coverage.

The Board agreed to continue discussion of this proposal at a future meeting.

#### Recreation Committee

Julie Cameron reported that several events have been scheduled for the upcoming season, including the Kentucky Derby and other summer activities.

Julie also reported that the Recreation Committee is considering purchasing additional Mahjong sets and offering lessons due to increased interest.

#### Pond and Wildlife Committee

Gerry van Noordennen reported that the committee has been addressing vegetation issues in the pond. DEEP has recommended placing a large mat over affected areas early in the spring to suppress vegetation growth and improve fishing access for children.

Gerry also reported that the committee continues to explore ways to reduce freshwater discharge from the pond onto the beach so as to deter geese.

#### 7- Public Comments

Mary Jean Agostini asked whether Robinson & Cole has been hired to review ordinances and governing documents. Paul said yes. Mary Jean also asked about the Saturday construction-hour regulation, asking whether the ordinance should be removed from the website until the matter is resolved.

Paul responded that the Saturday construction hour restriction has been adopted, but that its legality has since been questioned by some members of the Association. Until Robinson & Cole provides formal guidance, Paul stated that the Board's approach is to avoid strict enforcement unless the situation becomes disruptive.

Paul further explained that Robinson & Cole has been asked to review the broader set of issues related to the Association's charter, including charter amendments, notice requirements, and procedural requirements for public hearings and votes. Paul stated that the goal is to receive clear legal guidance so that any future action on the ordinance will be taken in full compliance with the charter, bylaws, and applicable procedures.

Paul indicated that the Board hopes to receive that guidance in time to address the matter before the June meeting, when any necessary vote could be properly noticed and conducted in accordance with the Association's governing documents.

Mike Heenehan expressed his irritation regarding Mr. Franzoni's refusal to cooperate with the Association regarding the lease of the driveway space.

#### 8- Board Comments

Paul noted that the Board will likely need to schedule a special meeting to review the Association budget in preparation for the June membership meeting.

#### 9- Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm.

The next regular Board of Governors meeting will be held on April 1, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Annah Perch  
Recording Secretary

### **Giants Neck Beach Association**

#### **Board of Governors Meeting**

**March 4, 2026**

#### **Dock Committee Update & Request for Funding**

The Dock Committee would like to update the Board as to its fund-raising activities for the replacement of the dock, the projected costs to rebuild & operate the dock, and the timeline to replace the dock.

As of today, the Dock has raised \$ 260,000 in funds (by increasing the annual dock slip usage fees and asking dock slip users to prepay either 2 years or 10 years upfront.) When added to our current cash balance, the Dock has \$ 300,000 (net of \$ 25,000 to cover the cost of operating the dock in Fiscal Year 2026/2027 including \$ 20,000 in insurance on the dock itself.) Based on preliminary project construction costs (provided by several marine contractors orally), we expect to incur \$ 362,000-\$400,000 in costs (including the cost of the construction of the dock and \$ 12,000 for the costs for the CT DEEP permit on the project) plus set aside funds towards the replacement of the outer pilings in approximately 15 years. We are still in the process of

obtaining updated construction quotes once Coastline completes the design phase of the permit process.

We are asking the Board to consider covering up to \$ 100,000 of these costs. We have noted below the projected timeline for the project including the timing of when any GNBA funding would be needed.

### **Projected Timeline 2026**

**March 15<sup>th</sup>**-Under the contract recently signed by Paul Formica on behalf of GNBA, Coastline Consulting & Development, LLC is currently working on the CT DEEP permit application for the dock rebuild project. Part of their work is to produce drawings of the replacement dock. The drawings will incorporate an extension of the far end of the dock (the southern/water end) to improve boater and swimmer access, increase the height of the dock to account for increasing sea levels, make the end slips safer, and correct the design errors on the existing dock. We also hope to potentially add a few amenities to the dock including permanent sitting area(s), adding a step to get down to the catwalks to make it easier to access the boats, a fish cleaning station, and solar lighting. We also hope prepare the dock for the

someday when we add power to the dock in anticipation of electric boat motors becoming mainstream.

**April 15<sup>th</sup>**-Utilizing the Coastline design, we will get written proposals from at least 3 marine contractors for project costs, their construction timing and project length (likely 2 months depending on weather). The Dock Committee can then update the Board as to our final funding ask. At this juncture, we hope we are in a financial position to get on the calendar of the Marine Contractor for the dock rebuild, pending receipt of the permit from CT DEEP. At this point, we are likely looking at Spring 2027 for the construction project, weather permitting.

**June 15<sup>th</sup>**-Part of the DEEP permit application is for an updated Waterside Topographic & Hydrographic Survey, which includes a Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Survey. This survey cannot begin until the growing season for aquatic vegetation has begun. A member of the Dock Committee will prepare this survey (at no cost to the Association). This survey is expected to be completed by early July.

**July 15<sup>th</sup>**-Coastline completes the CT DEEP Permit application and Giants Neck Beach Association applies for the permit.

### **2027**

**January 31<sup>st</sup>**-Dock Committee gets updated written proposals from at least 3 marine contractors.

**February 20<sup>th</sup>**-Giants Neck Beach Association, via the Town of East Lyme, applies for a Small Harbor Improvement Projects Program (SHIPP) grant from the CT Port Authority. This assumes that the CT Port Authority has funds available to make these grants in 2027. (This program has been funded annually by the state of Connecticut each year for the past 5 years with \$5 million granted in both 2025 and 2026.) There is no guarantee our project will qualify for and receive a grant even if the CT Port Authority receives additional funding from the state next year.

**March 25<sup>th</sup>**-CT Port Authority announces the winners of the grants for the year which are payable **after** the contractor has been paid (thus, in arrears).

**June 1<sup>st</sup>**-Dock makes a deposit with the selected Contractor for the materials needed for the project. The Dock Committee has sufficient funds to cover this amount in full.

**July 1<sup>st</sup>**-CT DEEP issues permit(s) for construction project. Contractor is notified of any restrictions or changes to the construction design pursuant to the CT DEEP permit.

**October 1<sup>st</sup>**-Contractor begins reconstruction of the dock. We expect a significant payment will be due to the contractor at this time. The Dock Committee expects to be able to fund this amount in full.

**October 15<sup>th</sup>**-Begin annual property insurance coverage for the dock, assuming construction has commenced and is finished/nearly finished. The Dock Committee has sufficient funds to cover this amount, expected to be between \$15,000 and \$ 20,000 per year, in full.

**December 1<sup>st</sup>**-Contractor completes reconstruction of the dock. Final payment on the contract will be due at this time. The funds from Giants Neck Beach would be needed at this time.

**December 31<sup>th</sup>**-Assuming a grant is awarded to GNBA for our dock project, final repayment from the CT Port Authority should be received assuming timely application for such reimbursement. Note- Reimbursements may have already been received by this time from the Port Authority depending on the timing of the reimbursement requests.

### **CT Port Authority (SHIPP) Grant Program** state residents

As mentioned above, the state of Connecticut has provided funding to the CT Port Authority to issue grants towards strengthening access to the Connecticut shore for state residents and to improve its shoreline infrastructure. The year 2026 will mark its 5<sup>th</sup> year of issuing these grants. For the first time in 2026, the Port Authority can entertain grant requests from private businesses. Prior to 2026, only municipalities could apply for the grants. The awarded grants cannot exceed 50% of the total project costs with a maximum cap of \$400,000 (thus, projects of \$800,000 or more) for municipalities (\$250,000 for private businesses.)

For the 2026 grant process, all applications needed to be filed online with the Port Authority by February 20, 2026. As we were not prepared at that time, we had to pass on applying for a grant

this year (2026). However, we expect to apply in 2027 assuming there is funding available from the state and the Port Authority's rules for awarding grants remain the same.

Once a project has been approved by the Port Authority, the recipient must remit quarterly project updates and will be paid by submitting a request for reimbursements for invoices actually paid on a quarterly basis.

SHIPP Grant Application Requirements include:

1. Completed SHIPP application
2. Complete project narrative
3. Proof of financial ability to cover project costs **including Board minutes approving project & financial statements of municipality**
4. Project Budget
5. Applicable permits (CT DEEP permit, in our case)

As noted above, our application will have to be made by the town of East Lyme on our behalf. We believe we will have support from the town as needed.