Giants Neck Beach Association

Board of Governors Meeting Minutes

June 3, 2026

Helen Lena Clubhouse

Present: Ernie Annibale, Chip Brienza, Julie Cameron, Paul Formica (President), Mary Ann Heenehan, Lou Piscatelli, Gerry Van Noordennen

Call to Order

President Paul Formica called the regular monthly meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

President's Report

Paul introduced John Casey, a partner at Robinson & Cole, to provide the board with an overview of his recent legal findings on statutory notice compliance and the disclosure of membership records under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

John stated that GNBA is historically a special act community established by the state legislature. As such, courts view GNBA as a "quasi-municipal corporation" or a "body politic and corporate" that wields explicit municipal powers such as taxation, structural bonding, zoning oversight, and sanitation maintenance, and operates differently from standard commercial or private non-stock corporations.

Chip Brienza asked whether it is accurate to say that the association operates as a municipal district when using the phrase "quasi-municipal corporation". John answered that different terms can be used, but the state created many of these beach and fire districts in the early 20th century and granted them explicit municipal powers, such as taxation and zoning.

Chip Branza asked for further confirmation to ensure there is no confusion regarding the distinction between a quasi-municipal corporation possessing municipal authority and a common non-stock corporation. John answered that they are completely different entities, noting that terms like "body politic and corporate" are specific terms of art used because the legislature directly established them.

Lou Piscatelli asked about the notice requirements contained in Article 1, Section 3 and how those requirements interact with zoning matters. John explained that meetings of the BOG require notice stating the time, the place, and purpose of the meeting, and that zoning regulation amendments require additional notice, including publication.

Paul asked whether a public records request must explicitly invoke the Freedom of Information Act to be legally valid. John answered that there are no magic words a requester needs to use; if a person goes to a public agency and requests a copy of a record that exists within the files, the agency must provide it if it is subject to disclosure. A public record is something that exists, not something you have to create.

A board member asked where the legal disclosure line falls regarding targeted resident requests for designated member representatives and legal entities, noting that cell phones and emails have been the primary point of contention. John answered that if the association collects that information to actively establish a voter role or determine who is permitted to cast a ballot, it inherently constitutes a public record under the law.

Paul stated that the list of members had been shared earlier that day, but feedback was received stating it was insufficient, noting that GNBA is operated by a group of volunteers. John answered that if a specific document reflects the actual, existing membership list that the association maintains, then providing that document satisfies the obligation, as a public agency is not required to perform custom research or compile new lists.

Annah Perch asked if data on Mailchimp are considered public. John answered that if a contact database is fully hosted on a third-party application and is neither actively managed, downloaded, nor directly held within GNBA's immediate physical or corporate possession, it may not trigger public disclosure requirements under Connecticut FOIA, though he would follow up with definitive confirmation.

Treasurer's Report

Lorie Carlson stated that GNBA is financially stable and pacing ahead of initial fiscal projections.

Lorie stated that the Operations Account (Primary Checking) balance was $61,634, the Tax Collection Account balance was $100, the Reserve Capital Fund balance was $51,693, and the Money Market Account balance was $240,882, bringing the total cash assets on hand to $354,309.

Lorie stated that non-tax revenues totaled $1,115, consisting of standard bank interest payouts and two zoning application fees. Recent operating disbursements totaled $9,885 since the prior month for routine mowing, beach preparation, and seasonal cleanup logistics, with no capital expenditures processed during the current cycle.

Laurie stated that end-of-month projections through June 30 estimate future operational revenue of $3,165, including June rental income from the GNBA-owned association cottage. With projected remaining June expenditures calculated at $51,274, the association remains in a healthy net surplus position.

A motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as distributed was voiced, seconded, and approved unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

There was a motion to accept the meeting minutes as drafted. The motion was seconded by Julie Cameron, and the motion carried unanimously.

Committee Reports

Budget Committee

Costa Loukellis reviewed the financial scenarios established during the preliminary budget presentation on May 24, 2026. Costa stated that baseline operational cost parameters remain steady at $184,281 in total operating expenses, offset by $42,950 in miscellaneous non-tax revenue, setting the fundamental "need to collect" tax benchmark at $166,331. This baseline creates a corresponding mill rate of 1.84.

Costa stated that the primary point of debate concerned structural options for funding emergency repairs to the association dock. The Dock Committee confirmed a total projected refurbishment cost of $100,000, intended to be allocated in equal $50,000 components over the next two sequential fiscal years. Costa stated that under the recommended baseline ballot scenario, the board would hold the mill rate tight at 1.84. To achieve this, the board will reverse an unused $10,000 allocation from beach capital accounts back into the general reserve pool, while simultaneously withdrawing the immediate $50,000 dock allocation from the existing reserve fund. Costa stated that this strategy leaves a healthy reserve balance of $201,000 to maintain long-term association protections.

The proposed format for separating the operational budget line items and specific capital projects for the printed ballot layout was approved by the board for presentation at the June 20 meeting.

Costa and Paul confirmed that the base operating budget vote would be formatted as a distinct lineitem question on the printed ballot layout.

The board established that the specific capital items—including Dam Maintenance, Causeway Wall Capping, and Association Cottage upkeep—would be explicitly presented as separate questions for the general membership vote.

There was a discussion about how to ask the community to fund the emergency repairs to the dock. The board deliberated on whether to ask a single comprehensive question or break it into alternatives. They ultimately agreed that "Approve rebuilding of the association dock" would stand as its own distinct, separate question on the ballot. This would be paired with a simple checkbox choice for the membership to vote on the financial mechanisms—specifically, choosing between a mill rate increase and a fund transfer using the existing reserve pool to back the immediate $50,000 allocation.

Nominating Committee

Wick Mallory presented the Nominating Committee's candidate slate to fill three upcoming vacancies on the Board of Governors. Wick stated that the slate includes candidate names to replace outgoing board members, along with necessary updates to the expiring terms on the Zoning Board of Appeals. Wick stated that the formal openings will be explicitly listed on the agenda for the upcoming annual meeting to facilitate further direct nominations from the floor.

Beach Committee

Mike Heenehan stated that the beaches had been cleaned. He said that he and other members had observed several horseshoe crabs on the beach. Mike stated that during each full moon, at least two pairs of horseshoe crabs had been observed and that he had submitted his report to the State.

Mike stated that West Beach remains a problem area. Two weeks after cleaning, West Beach looked as though it had never been cleaned.

Mike said that Jim Beaulieu and Andy would take care of the swim lines.

Gerry Van Noordennen stated that weekly sampling had begun and the first set of samples had passed.

Lou Piscatelli stated that the Association needed to solve the West Beach problem because it is an asset that members can't fully use.

Mike stated that if access could be obtained at or below the high-water line, there was a gap he believed was Association property.

Public Comments

A member asked how capital infrastructure projects, such as the wall capping, are initially determined, initiated, and prioritized by the leadership. Paul answered that capital infrastructure ideas typically originate directly from the individual committee level, where a chair identifies a specific field hazard or maintenance need. Paul added that the board has been actively working for many months to establish a formal, long-term capital-forecasting committee composed of neighborhood volunteers. This committee will systematically evaluate future liabilities—such as the eventual replacement of the clubhouse roof—and earmark funds incrementally to insulate the community from sudden financial spikes.

A member stated that separating the funding mechanisms into fragmented ballot choices could cause confusion during the voting process and risk immediate pushback from the general membership. Costa clarified that the operational expenses, separate fund transfers, and distinct capital items are structured transparently so that neighbors understand exactly which baseline mill rate is being protected and where reserve funds are being deployed.

Laurie Corona asked for clear engineering details and transparency regarding the specific quotes obtained for the $10,000 dam maintenance item before citizens are asked to cast their votes. Paul answered that a thorough, itemized project breakdown and formal presentation would be delivered directly to the membership by Lisa Dogger during the session on June 20.

Joe Spaveri stated that because GNBA operates as a quasi-municipal corporation, its underlying voter registry—derived from the East Line Assessor's grand list—is inherently public record. Joe Sparberry noted that while personal emails and phone numbers can be omitted at individual discretion, the base list of property tracks and official owners remains essential for verifying the integrity of the voting process. Joe Sparberry also asked if John could draft a simple organizational chart or overview for the public to explain why the community maintains three overlapping legacy entities (the GNBA special act charter from 1941, the GNBA Incorporated non-stock entity from 1939, and the GNIC. Paul stated that the board would coordinate with legal counsel to provide appropriate clarifications on function.

John Makiaris shared a historical perspective from his previous tenure as tax collector, stating that the official grand list has always been an entirely public document accessible at Town Hall. John Makiaris stated that traditional winter contact sheets were compiled strictly for local emergency safety notifications and emphasized that official grand lists do not include email addresses or telephone numbers.

Vickie Piscatelli reminded attendees that the PWC 100 community celebration is scheduled for July 11, 2026. It was stated that 45 tickets have been sold to date against a target goal of 100 attendees. Members were reminded that tickets must be purchased in advance via the links in the weekly newsletter, as no ticket sales will be permitted at the door.

The Zoom connection was dropped, and the secretary could no longer take minutes or know when the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Annah Perch
Recording Secretary

The Annual Meeting of the Membership and formal 2026/2027 Budget Vote will take place on Saturday, June 20, 2026, at 9:00 AM at the Helen Lena Clubhouse.