

Open house

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ers are women. "You don't have to be a guy" to do this, Hicks said.

"A lot of people are turned off," by the thought of having to run into a burning building, Hicks said, but she pointed out that volunteers can also serve as drivers, pump operators or equipment packers. "Not everyone has to fight fires," Hicks said.

Volunteers must live in Jamestown, Hicks said, noting that with the newly established "pay-per-call" incentives, recipients of the benefit must be island residents.

Among the longest serving

volunteers is Valmont "Bucky" Caswell, who has been an active volunteer firefighter for 57 years. He said the younger members of the force treat him "like a grandfather" now and won't let him get near a fire. But he still serves on the tanker company and is stationed at the nearest water source or "wherever they set up" for every event. Now 78, Caswell said he started hanging around the fire station in about 1942, and this Tuesday he was installing rechargeable hand-held flashlights in Tanker 1.

Caswell is seen nearly every morning, along with his longtime partner Dalton Brownell, who together replace and maintain the department's fire-call lines all over

town. "We do three hours every morning and that's it," Caswell said about his self-imposed schedule.

About being a volunteer, Caswell said it was sort of a family affair. His father was a volunteer in the early years of the company, and his son Kenny is also a longtime volunteer. His son Andy was a volunteer for a time. Caswell said that his late wife, the former Barbara Hull, was the daughter of a former fire chief, Merton Hull. "She put up with a lot," Caswell said about his wife. "All the women do," he added.

He's made a lot of friends through the fire department, Caswell said, and he's enjoyed the camaraderie and "the excitement" that comes with being a first responder.

"I really enjoy it," Caswell said, noting that he has no plans to retire from his volunteer job.

One of the department's newest recruits, Jodie Woodside is so enthusiastic about her choice to join, "I can't stop talking about it," she said.

A senior at North Kingstown High School, Woodside, 17, said she is the only member of her family to be a part of the fire department, and "I love it!"

Woodside said that since joining the JFD in January she has been trained in how fires spread, use of firefighting tools, and the proper procedures for searching a house. She was recently assigned to her first piece of equipment, Ladder 1, and will eventually get a chance to serve on all the trucks before becoming a full-fledged member of the department.

Being a volunteer "has improved my communication skills," Woodside said about having to interact with the rest of her company on Ladder 1. "It's made me a better member of my community," she added.

Tower

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"You get credit for what you do," Councilman William Kelly noted. Councilman Michael Schnack asked about water pipe improvements in connection with the new water storage tower. Goslee told him the town is replacing pipe to the curb and homeowners have the option to upgrade the pipe connection on their properties. He noted that the town does not do any work on private property.

Extension asked

Stephen Masso of 15 Weeden Lane is seeking a sewer service connection to his home. His engineer told the council that he needs a new septic system because his current one has failed, but the size and other factors of his lot mean that the separation between the system and his water well would only be about 25 feet.

The councilors said the request

might be valid but insufficient data was submitted with it. They suggested Masso and his representative discuss the requirements with Goslee and his staff. The councilors emphasized that they are tough about new water service connections because of the island's limited municipal water supply.

They recalled a somewhat similar request they denied during the past year because the property owner did not submit the required proof that no other water source was available. They noted that the Masso property apparently is the only parcel in the neighborhood not connected to the town system that includes a fire hydrant near his lot, and they wanted to know why the property was not connected before tougher regulations were adopted several years ago.

Council

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The talks also led to Bolles' decision to retire early, effective Nov. 10.

The council last month called for an appointed board or commission, as recommended by Keiser, to advise on recreation needs and programs.

In directing Keiser to revise his recommendations, Council President David Long said, "This (appointing a commission) is not a pressing matter. We need to take the time to do it right."

Last month, Long said that he was distressed by the way that Bolles' performance has been discussed publicly.

Teen center

In a related matter, the council heard a report that a summit

meeting last month on teen needs focused on a long-term, permanent center for youth, but did not address any current, ongoing needs.

Councilwoman Barbara Szeplatowski has tried to address immediate teen needs with several temporary options for a center that were rejected for various reasons. The council formally voted to withdraw its consideration of her latest proposal, for use of a second-floor office space as a temporary youth center because of zoning, cost, and possible safety issues.

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