



Town of Bridgewater
Town Council Meeting – Virtual Meeting
February 1, 2022 Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER:

A quorum being duly present, Town Council President Matthew Rushton called the meeting of the Bridgewater Town Council to order at 7:00pm, on February 1, 2022, via Zoom.

PRESENT

Peter Colombotos, Francis Sousa, Fred Chase, Matthew Rushton, Erik Moore, Dr. Kevin Perry, William Wood, Shawn George and Dennis Gallagher. Town Manager Michael Dutton and Town Attorney Jason Rawlins were also present.

ABSENT

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MOMENT OF SILENCE

A moment of silence was held for Herbert A. Wolfer, a veteran who recently passed away. A moment of silence was also held for Assistant Town Clerk Jolie Martins mother, Mariann Sprague.

President Rushton announced: Pursuant to Section 20 of Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, An Act Relative to Extending Certain Covid-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency, this meeting of the Town Council for the Town of Bridgewater will be fully remote and accessible to the public through remote participation to the greatest extent possible. There will be no in person attendance permitted. Citizens who wish to tune in to the meeting may do so via Zoom or Facebook Live.

A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. January 4, 2022

Councilor Wood motioned to continue the January 18, 2022 meeting minutes to the next meeting, which was duly seconded.

Roll-call vote was taken with results recorded as follows:

Colombotos – Yea; Wood – Yea; Moore – Yea; Sousa – Yea; Rushton – Yea; Chase – Yea; Perry – Yea; Gallagher – Yea; George – Abstained. The motion passed 8-0-1.

B. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Council President Rushton noted that after the storm there were many seniors who were unable to shovel themselves out and clear off their cars. The Senior Center is looking for volunteers to help out in these situations and if anyone is interested they can call 508-697-0929 for information.

C. PROCLAMATIONS – None

D. CITIZENS OPEN FORUM – None

E. APPOINTMENTS – None

F. HEARINGS

a. Order O-FY22-033: Loan Order – For Upgrade of Wastewater Treatment Facility (Town Manager)

At their meeting held on 1/24/22 the Budget and Finance Committee voted 2-1 to recommend approval. The Finance Committee voted 7-0 to approve on 1/12/22.

Council President Rushton re-opened the Public Hearing at 7:09 p.m.

Councilor Rushton asked if there were any questions from the public – None.



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Councilor Rushton closed the Public hearing at 7:10 p.m.

Discussion: Councilor Gallagher is concerned that there has been two meetings and no citizens have asked questions and also asked why money was not put into a reserve since we knew this was coming. Town Manager Dutton noted that there was some increases which were put into reserves. Councilor Wood noted that this was discussed in detail at the Budget & Finance Subcommittee. Councilor Rushton asked if some type of flyer can be put into a bill notifying the residents of the upcoming change in their future water bills. Town Manager Dutton agreed that this was a good idea but needs to make certain that they are given solid estimates.

Councilor Chase made a motion to approve Order O-FY22-033, which was duly seconded.

Roll-call vote was taken with results recorded as follows:

Colombotos – Yea; Wood – Yea; Moore – Yea; Sousa – Yea; Rushton – Yea; Chase – Yea; Perry – Yea; Gallagher – Yea; George – Yea. The motion passed 9-0.

G. LICENSE TRANSACTIONS – None

H. PRESENTATIONS – None

I. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

a) Mitchell School Update

Work continues as planned and on schedule. Target completion date of July 2022. Next Mitchell School meeting will be on Tuesday, February 7, 2022 at 6:30pm via Zoom.

Discussion: Councilor George asked that the tour of the school that was cancelled due to a storm be rescheduled.

b) Covid-19 Update

The Town Manager reported that there are currently between 100 and 120 active cases (non hospitalizations) of Covid-19 within the Town of Bridgewater. 62% of residents are fully vaccinated and 70% have one shot.

c) FY2023 Budget

Town Manager Dutton submitted the preliminary budget and noted that there was a long way to go and lots of discussions ahead. Foresees bumps in local receipt, will tap ARPA funds for lost revenue and does not foresee any radical changes on the expense side.

Discussion: Councilor Wood asked if staffing were to expand, what and where would it do good. Town Manager Dutton noted that the Roadway Division would be the first priority but also HR and water/sewer department. Councilor George would like to see Department Head Overviews come back to the Town Council agenda. Would also like the Fire Chief and Police Chief to give updates.

J. DISCUSSIONS (Taken out of order)

a) Joint Meeting with Town Manager, Finance Committee and School Committee Chair (or Designee)

School Committee Chair, Rachel King opened the School Committee Joint Meeting at 7:09 p.m. and conducted roll-call. Finance Committee Chair, Nate Schofield opened the Finance Committee Joint Meeting at 7:10 p.m. and conducted roll-call.



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Town Manager Dutton gave a brief update of the need for this joint meeting. Superintendent, Derek Swenson spoke in detail about preliminary budget that was submitted which is a needs-based budget. Mr. Swenson outlined a need for a total of 29 new positions in the district and gave a brief detail of each.

Ms. King outlined the school budget timeline and noted that the preliminary budget was presented to the School Committee on 1/26/22. Ms. King will send the Council President the Capital Plan for Infrastructure, preliminary budget and 5 Year Technology Plan.

Councilors thanked members of the school district for their dedication during the pandemic, several asking questions of the School Superintendent regarding hiring, anticipated retirements, track project timeline and the effectiveness of the budget today on the future.

Ms. King made a motion to close the School Committee meeting, which was duly seconded. A roll Call vote was taken and the motion to close the meeting passed unanimously. The School Committee meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m. Chris Blunt made a motion to close the Finance Committee meeting, which was duly seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously. The Finance Committee meeting adjourned at 8:41 p.m.

b) Using “City” vs “Town” in the Town Charter (Moore)

Councilor Moore would like to have a workshop on this topic to discuss the charter review request of changing “town” to “city” within the Charter. Councilors were in favor of having a workshop but do not see changing to city feels right. Councilor Rushton suggested a workshop on Tuesday, February 8, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

c) Charter Change Update and Approach (Moore)

Councilor Moore would also like to add this topic to the workshop.

K. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS - None

L. LEGISLATION FOR ACTION

a) Order O-FY22-034: Acceptance of Non Recurring Revenue to Capital (Town Manager)

At their meeting held on 1/24/22 the Budget and Finance Committee voted 3-0 to recommend approval. The Finance Committee voted 7-0 to approve on 1/12/22.

Councilor Chase made a motion to approve Order O-FY22-034, which was duly seconded.

Roll-call vote was taken with results recorded as follows:

Colombotos – Yea; Wood – Yea; Moore – Yea; Sousa – Yea; Rushton – Yea; Chase – Yea; Perry – Yea; Gallagher – Yea; George – Yea. The motion passed 9-0.

b) Order O-FY22-035: Contractual Buyouts (Town Manager)

At their meeting held on 1/24/22 the Budget and Finance Committee voted 3-0 to recommend approval. The Finance Committee voted 6-0 to approve on 1/12/22.

Councilor George made a motion to approve Order O-FY22-035, which was duly seconded.

Roll-call vote was taken with results recorded as follows:



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Colombotos – Yea; Wood – Yea; Moore – Yea; Sousa – Yea; Rushton – Yea; Chase – Yea; Perry – Yea; Gallagher – Yea; George – Yea. The motion passed 9-0.

c) Order O-FY22-036: Acceptance of Donation - Resident (Town Manager)

At their meeting held on 1/24/22 the Budget and Finance Committee voted 3-0 to recommend approval. The Finance Committee voted 7-0 to approve on 1/12/22.

Councilor George made a motion to approve Order O-FY22-036, which was duly seconded.

Roll-call vote was taken with results recorded as follows:

Colombotos – Yea; Wood – Yea; Moore – Yea; Sousa – Yea; Rushton – Yea; Chase – Yea; Perry – Yea; Gallagher – Yea; George – Yea. The motion passed 9-0.

d) Order O-FY22-037: Acceptance of Donation – Chuckran’s (Town Manager)

At their meeting held on 1/24/22 the Budget and Finance Committee voted 3-0 to recommend approval. The Finance Committee voted 6-0 to approve on 1/12/22.

Councilor George made a motion to approve Order O-FY22-037, which was duly seconded.

Roll-call vote was taken with results recorded as follows:

Colombotos – Yea; Wood – Yea; Moore – Yea; Sousa – Yea; Rushton – Yea; Chase – Yea; Perry – Yea; Gallagher – Yea; George – Yea. The motion passed 9-0.

e) Order O-FY22-038: Capital Plan Fall 2022 (Town Manager)

At their meeting held on 1/24/22 the Budget and Finance Committee voted 3-0 to recommend approval. The Finance Committee voted 4-2 to approve on 1/12/22.

Councilor Moore made a motion to amend Order O-FY22-038 by removing Project 300.27 and reducing the total by that amount, which was duly seconded.

Discussion: Councilor George, Councilor Gallagher, Dr. Perry, Councilor Colombotos and Councilor Rushton all noted they were not in agreement with the amendment. After a brief discussion, Councilor Moore withdrew his amendment.

Councilor Colombotos made a motion to continue Order O-FY22-038 to the next meeting, which was duly seconded.

Roll-call vote was taken with results recorded as follows:

Colombotos – Yea; Wood – Yea; Moore – Yea; Sousa – Yea; Rushton – Yea; Chase – Yea; Perry – Yea; Gallagher – No; George – No. The motion passed 7-2.

f) Resolution R-FY22-006: A Resolution Establishing the Town Council’s Vision for Bridgewater (Moore)

At their meeting held on 1/20/22 the Strategic Planning Committee voted 3-0 to recommend adoption.

Councilor Chase made a motion to approve Resolution R-FY22-006, which was duly seconded.

Roll-call vote was taken with results recorded as follows:

Colombotos – Yea; Wood – Yea; Moore – Yea; Sousa – Yea; Rushton – Yea; Chase – Yea; Perry – Yea; Gallagher – Yea; George – Yea. The motion passed 9-0.

M. OLD BUSINESS – None



N. NEW BUSINESS

a) Order O-FY22-041: Transfer Order – Contractual Buyouts (Town Manager)

Town Manager Dutton noted that this order was to fund paid contracts.

Councilor George made a motion to refer Order O-FY22-041 to Budget and Finance and Finance Committee, was duly seconded.

Roll-call vote was taken with results recorded as follows:

Colombotos – Yea; Wood – Yea; Moore – Yea; Sousa – Yea; Rushton – Yea; Chase – Yea; Perry – Yea; Gallagher – Yea; George – Yea. The motion passed 9-0.

b) Order O-FY22-042: Acceptance of Fire Safety Equipment Grant (Town Manager)

Town Manager Dutton noted that this is a grant that was awarded to the Fire Department to purchase safety equipment.

Councilor George made a motion to refer Order O-FY22-042 to Budget and Finance and Finance Committee, was duly seconded.

Roll-call vote was taken with results recorded as follows:

Colombotos – Yea; Wood – Yea; Moore – Yea; Sousa – Yea; Rushton – Yea; Chase – Yea; Perry – Yea; Gallagher – Yea; George – Yea. The motion passed 9-0.

c) Order O-FY22-043: Acceptance of Grant COA - MCOA (Town Manager)

Town Manager Dutton noted that this is a grant that was awarded to the Council on Aging for a new initiative entitled Cohesive Bridgewater.

Councilor Chase made a motion to refer Order O-FY22-043 to Budget and Finance and Finance Committee, was duly seconded.

Roll-call vote was taken with results recorded as follows:

Colombotos – Yea; Wood – Yea; Moore – Yea; Sousa – Yea; Rushton – Yea; Chase – Yea; Perry – Yea; Gallagher – Yea; George – Yea. The motion passed 9-0.

d) Order O-FY22-044: Acceptance of Grant COA - (Town Manager)

Town Manager Dutton noted that this was a duplicate of Order O-FY22-043.

e) Order O-FY22-045: Acceptance of Grant COA – BPD (Town Manager)

Town Manager Dutton noted that this is a grant that was awarded to the Council on Aging by the Police Department for the purposes of replacing the tent that was destroyed in the Nor'easter.

Councilor George made a motion to refer Order O-FY22-045 to Budget and Finance and Finance Committee, was duly seconded.

Roll-call vote was taken with results recorded as follows:

Colombotos – Yea; Wood – Yea; Moore – Yea; Sousa – Yea; Rushton – Yea; Chase – Yea; Perry – Yea; Gallagher – Yea; George – Yea. The motion passed 9-0.

f) Resolution R-FY22-006: A Resolution Establishing the Town Council's Vision for Bridgewater (Moore)



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Councilor Moore noted that the town website is the primary source of information for residents. He would like to sponsor an annual clean-up day of the website so that the residents can have up to date information.

O. CITIZEN COMMENTS – None

P. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilor George: commended the town employees for doing a great job on the blizzard. Asked residents to be patient with the snow removal.

Councilor Gallagher: commended the town for a great job on keeping up with the snow during the blizzard.

Dr. Perry: thanked all those that worked hard during the blizzard.

Councilor Chase: thanked the School committee, Superintendent and FinCom for joining the meeting tonight.

Councilor Sousa: reminded residents to dig out the fire hydrants and storm drains near their homes.

Councilor Moore: thanked the School Committee, Superintendent and FinCom for joining and was impressed with the storm clean-up.

Councilor Wood: thanked the town for doing a great job clearing the roads. Would like to know if there is a Private Roads Policy; would like an update on the ordinances that were sent to the State and would like the train station moved to downtown.

Councilor Colombotos: mentioned that the Senior Center is helping seniors get dug out and they are looking for volunteers.

Councilor Rushton: pleased that the reorganization of the Fire Department is working so well.

Q. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilor George motioned to enter executive session at 9:58 p.m.

A roll call vote was taken with results recorded as follows:

Colombotos – Yea; Wood – Yea; Moore – Yea; Sousa – Yea; Rushton – Yea; Chase – Yea; Perry – Yea; Gallagher – Yea; George – Yea. The motion passed 9-0.

Councilor George motioned to adjourn at 10:21 p.m.

A roll call vote was taken with results recorded as follows:

Colombotos – Yea; Wood – Yea; Moore – Yea; Sousa – Yea; Rushton – Yea; Chase – Yea; Perry – Yea; Gallagher – Yea; George – Yea. The motion passed 9-0.

R. ADJOURN

Minutes submitted by Debra Ward In accordance with the applicable provisions of the Town of Bridgewater Home Rule Charter and Town Council Rules and Procedures, the Town Council assembled voted, at their meeting on Tuesday, February 15, 2022, to approve the aforementioned minutes, as submitted by a Roll Call vote.

A TRUE COPY ATTEST:

Debra A. Ward

Town Council Clerk