



Town of Bridgewater
Town Council Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 4, 2017

CALL TO ORDER:

A quorum being duly present, Town Council President Dennis Gallagher called the meeting of the Bridgewater Town Council to order at 7:30 pm, on April 4, 2017 in the Academy Building Council Chambers, 66 Central Square, Bridgewater, Massachusetts.

PRESENT:

Council members present were, Sandra Wright, Peter Colombotos, Edward Haley, Timothy Fitzgibbons, Dennis Gallagher, Aisha Losche, William Wood, Kevin Perry (arriving at 7:32 p.m.) and Frank Sousa. Town Manager Michael Dutton was also present.

ABSENT:

- Town Attorney Mark Gildea

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MOMENT OF SILENCE

A moment of silence was held for all who have passed including:

- Larry E. Winger
- The Battistini Family of Bridgewater

APPROVAL OF MINUTES –

- March 21, 2017

Motion: A motion to approve was made by Councilor Fitzgibbons. The motion was seconded by Councilor Losche.

Discussion: None

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed 8-0.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

- April 13th at 6:00 p.m. the Nunkatessett Greenway Rally will take place at Bridgewater State University, Burnell Hall.

PROCLAMATIONS - None

CITIZENS OPEN FORUM – *No citizens came forward*

APPOINTMENTS - None

HEARINGS -

- **7:35 p.m. HEARING:** Order O-2016-029: Procure Services for Strategic Planning
President Gallagher opened the hearing at 7:35 p.m.

President Gallagher invited any questions from the public –

President Gallagher asked if there was anyone speaking in favor: No citizens came forward. President Gallagher spoke briefly on the order.

President Gallagher asked if there was anyone speaking in opposition: No citizens came forward.

President Gallagher entertained any questions from councilors: There were no questions or comments from Councilors.

Motion: A motion to close the hearing was made by Councilor Fitzgibbons. The motion was seconded by Councilor Losche.

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

President Gallagher closed the hearing at 7:38 p.m.

Motion: A motion to approve was made by Councilor Fitzgibbons. The motion was seconded by Councilor Losche.

Discussion: None.



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Wright – YEA; Colombotos – YEA; Haley – YEA; Fitzgibbons – YEA; Gallagher – YEA; Losche – YEA – Wood – YEA; Perry – YEA; Sousa – YEA. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion: A motion was made by Councilor Fitzgibbons to take agenda item L: Legislation for Action out of order. The motion was seconded by Councilor Colombotos.

Discussion: None

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION - None

Motion: A motion was made by Councilor Losche to take agenda item M: Old Business out of order. The motion was seconded by Councilor Fitzgibbons.

Discussion: None

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS - None

Motion: A motion was made by Councilor Wood to take agenda item K: Committee Reports out of order. The motion was seconded by Councilor Fitzgibbons.

Discussion: None

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Budget & Finance Committee: Councilor Wood spoke about the Budget & Finance Committee meeting, noting the meeting was meant to be a joint meeting with the Finance Committee, but they were unable to obtain a quorum. Mr. Wood pointed out the current vacancies need to be filled.
- Rules & Procedures Committee: Councilor Losche advised the Rules & Procedures committee will be meeting Tuesday, April 11th at 7:00 p.m. here in the Academy Building.

Return to regular order of business: Hearings.

- **7:40 p.m. HEARING:** Order O-2017-008: Laying out and Accepting a Private Way – Hartswood Way and Doe Brook Circle

President Gallagher opened the hearing at 7:40 p.m.

President Gallagher briefly outlined the history of the order.

President Gallagher invited any questions from the public.

President Gallagher asked if there was anyone speaking in favor

- Geoffrey Poudrier, 90 Hartswood Way: Mr. Poudrier expressed concerns over broken curbs which surround his property and provided photographs. Councilor Fitzgibbons clarified this was the portion of the hearing when citizens could speak in favor. Mr. Poudrier confirmed he was not speaking in favor.

President Gallagher asked if there was anyone speaking in opposition: None came forward.

President Gallagher entertained any questions from councilors:

- Discussion followed among the Councilors while they reviewed options available to them. The Council considered suggestions of: accepting the Way as presented since there are bond monies already being held, accepting the Ways with a condition to withhold bond funds to repair the curbing, and continuing the hearing pending follow up and recommendation by the Highway Superintendent.

Motion: A motion was made by Councilor Perry to continue the hearing to April 25th. The motion was seconded by Councilor Sousa.

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed 8-1 (Councilor Wright in the minority).

LICENSE TRANSACTIONS - None

PRESENTATIONS

- Town Manager's FY18 Budget Presentation
Mr. Dutton briefly introduced the process followed this year, noting they were presenting a balanced budget. The process was professional and involved the Department Heads. This budget was a challenge. The historical



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revenue is typically around 3.2% which is just about where we are this year. Mr. Sulmonte will point out areas that are outside the Council's Budget Resolution. On the expense side, set out a number of goals, including a balanced budget, no layoffs or reduction of hours and all employees on the compensation matrix, the addition of a maintenance staff person and an addition to the Highway Department, increased hours for the Animal Control Officer. There were many goals and need that could not be met due to lack of funding, notably road repair and improvements. Mr. Dutton spoke briefly about possible dramatic fixed increases in coming years: health insurance and retirement.

Finance Director, Anthony Sulmonte presented the budget bottom line as \$53,096,701; which is an increase of \$2,012,354. This is a balanced budget. Mr. Sulmonte elaborated on the general fund, non-school increases in salary line item due to step and COLA increases, particularly in Police and Fire. The contractual step and COLA increases represent approximately 24% of the \$2MM increase. Mr. Sulmonte then noted a part time add to staff in Information Technology. On the expense side, there was a net decrease of approximately \$76,000, mostly driven by the reduction in debt service expense, general liability insurance policy and a realized savings in gas and oil expense line. The total educational assessments line item increased by \$822,518 (2.8%) which is 41% of the \$2MM. Benefits increased \$468,284 which is 23% of the \$2MM. Mr. Sulmonte advised it is important to have a methodology to determine what revenue we have to share each year. It was very helpful having it this year in working with the schools. Mr. Sulmonte outlined the methodology used this year in determining the revenue sharing. While the school district was disappointed their full assessment could not be met, they understood the methodology.

Councilor Questions:

- At Councilor Fitzgibbons' request, Mr. Sulmonte explained the term "fixed costs". He noted there really are no costs that are "fixed", but there are costs that the town is contractually obligated to (i.e., step and COLA increases). That the context of the term "fixed costs". The Town Manager added retirement assessments and Health Insurance are also considered "fixed". Mr. Fitzgibbons followed up by asking if there was a difference between the fixed costs that the school district has to absorb and the town's fixed costs. Mr. Dutton confirmed the town budgets for the town departments fixed costs; just as the school district budgets for their fixed expenses. Mr. Fitzgibbons thanked the Bridgewater Raynham School District Superintendent and School Committee for being great partners. Councilor Fitzgibbons then asked if it would behoove the town for the Council to adopt a policy requiring labor costs to be contained to 3%? Mr. Sulmonte responded it would and deferred to the Town Manager for follow up. Mr. Dutton explained; it's important for employees to understand that salary is only part of the labor expense. There is also Insurance and the retirement assessment. Finally, Mr. Fitzgibbons, referring to the methodology referenced earlier, noted the state does not have such a methodology and suggested if the state reduced funding in the future, the methodology would have to be adjusted. Mr. Sulmonte explained the thinking and reminded Mr. Fitzgibbons this is just a starting point.
- Councilor Wood pointed out that this is a balanced budget, but there are some items that are outside the resolution. He spoke about stress points as: Free Cash will not come in the same as last year. Stabilization is at \$1.6MM a good target would be \$5MM. The Firefighter SAFER grant will expire at some point and we will have to address that. Unfortunately, we couldn't accommodate the Police Chief's recommendation for a reorganization, we didn't add as much to the Highway Department.
- At Councilor Perry's request, Mr. Sulmonte confirmed the school district was getting 3.1%. Councilor Perry asked how the town is projecting for future health care expenses. Mr. Sulmonte explained while the town is currently taking a short-term view, they have begun to look at longer term projections.
- Councilor Gallagher confirmed the budget binders would be available to all Councilors and encouraged everyone to review it.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Dutton reported on information about various activities happening around town and highlighted meetings and events. Items of note included: There is a public meeting coming up on the South Coast Rail regarding a project change on April 13th at 6:30 p.m. at UMass Dartmouth. Once we have more information, Mr. Dutton can provide



written comments. Comcast has been around installing the critical infrastructure to improve picture and sound and to provide the linkage to broadcast from this space. DEP/EPA discussions are coming to an end. The town filed an appeal asking for 10 years to satisfy the demands. We have tentatively agreed to a 10-year timeline as part of an administrative consent order. Mass Housing conducted a site visit on the Claremont Project. Once the applicant receives an eligibility letter, they can file with the ZBA. Duxboro hearing resumes Wednesday, April 12th at 7:30 p.m.

DISCUSSIONS

- Review of the Northeastern University Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool, Next Steps
Councilor Colombotos expressed disappointment that more has not been done with this report. Mr. Colombotos briefly explained the purpose of the study, then referenced a summary page that points out areas where the town can improve. Mr. Colombotos would like feedback from the Council on ways to implement some of the suggestions and foster some discussion. Councilor Fitzgibbons suggested folding this into the Strategic Plan process that the Council voted funds for earlier this evening. Councilor Perry pointed out that we really don't have the money for the infrastructure to implement some of these recommendations. Councilor Colombotos noted the possibility of TIFs. Councilor Gallagher suggested a Strategic Plan will aid in this process. Councilor Wood reminded everyone that this is a good example of the many reports that have been completed over the years that were put on a shelf, which should be looked at as we move toward engaging the Strategic Planning consultant. Mr. Wood noted he would like to know when the Council can expect to have something back from the Strategic Planner. Councilor Fitzgibbons reminded everyone that some improvements had been accomplished in the past few years; citing the electricity on Elm Street. Councilor Losche requested an update from the Economic Development office to hear what they are working on.

NEW BUSINESS

- Ordinance D-2017-006: Zoning Ordinance - Repeal Demolition Delay Ordinance
Councilor Sousa explained the rationale for the repeal of the ordinance.
Motion: A motion was made by Councilor Fitzgibbons to the Planning Board and Community & Economic Development Committee for a public hearing. The motion was seconded by Councilor Wright.
Discussion: Councilor Sousa explained the rationale for the proposed repeal, citing it can slow down the process of potential buyers to purchase properties. Mr. Sousa noted there have been six cases since the initial ordinance was passed and all were of no historical value. Councilor Colombotos noted it seems like the six properties referenced went through the process and the process worked. He is in favor of retaining the Demolition Delay Ordinance. Councilor Losche asked that while this measure is being considered in committee, to verify it's not already covered by another ordinance.
A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.
- Order O-2017-011: Laying Out and Accepting Private Way(s) - Fern Hollow and Hillside Lane
Councilor Perry explained this is the procedure to move to approving.
Motion: A motion was made by Councilor Fitzgibbons that the Town intends to take the ways and to refer to the Planning Board for a public hearing and that it be a joint meeting with the Community and Economic Development Committee. The motion was seconded by Councilor Wood.
Discussion: Councilor Wood clarified Mr. Fitzgibbons intended that the Planning Board hold a hearing and the Council hold a later hearing. Councilor Fitzgibbons confirmed his intention that this follow the same process as the previous request.
A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.
- Order O-2017-012: Declaring Town Owned Buildings Available for Sale or Lease
Motion: A motion was made by Councilor Fitzgibbons to refer the Planning Board and Community & Economic Development for a joint public hearing. The motion was seconded by Councilor Losche.
A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

BUDGET ORDERS:

- **Motion:** A motion was made by Councilor Fitzgibbons to refer all budget orders to the Budget & Finance and Finance Committee. The motion was seconded by Councilor Wright.



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A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

- Order O-2017-013: Budget Order – FY18 Annual Town Budget (*Town Manager*)
Referred to Budget & Finance and Finance Committees per motion above.
- Order O-2017-014: Budget Order – FY18 Sewer Enterprise Fund Budget (*Town Manager*)
Referred to Budget & Finance and Finance Committees per motion above.
- Order O-2017-015: Budget Order – FY18 Water Enterprise Fund Budget (*Town Manager*)
Referred to Budget & Finance and Finance Committees per motion above.
- Order O-2017-016: Budget Order – FY18 Transfer Station Enterprise Fund Budget (*Town Manager*)
Referred to Budget & Finance and Finance Committees per motion above.
- Order O-2017-017: Budget Order – FY18 Olde Scotland Links Golf Course Enterprise Fund Budget (*Town Manager*)
Referred to Budget & Finance and Finance Committees per motion above.
- Order O-2017-018: Authorization of Revolving Funds (*Town Manager*)
Referred to Budget & Finance and Finance Committees per motion above.

CITIZEN COMMENTS - None

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Councilor Wright: Councilor Wright intends to be re-elected and looks forward to seeing everyone on the 25th.
- Councilor Colombotos: Will be running a sticker campaign. Was ill and unable to return nomination papers.
- Councilor Haley: Voting is really important. There is a huge sum of voters who don't vote. Councilor Haley encouraged all to get out and vote. Wished his son a Happy 5th Birthday.
- Councilor Fitzgibbons: Felt there were great discussions this evening. The next meeting is April 25th. Reminded all to vote on April 22nd.
- Councilor Losche: Reminded all that today is equal pay day.
- Councilor Wood: TJ2 goes to the. Light dedication at High and Broad Street will be April 30th at 1:00 p.m.
- Councilor Perry: Thanked Finance Director for the presentation. Looking forward to reviewing the document. Congratulated the 7th/8th grade Biddy Basketball team for their win last week.
- Councilor Sousa: BBA is holding a networking event at Sullivan Tire on 4/12/17 from 5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. All business owners and managers are welcome to attend.
- Councilor Gallagher: Thanked Town Manager and Finance Director for the presentation. Felt the discussion this evening was very good. April 22nd is the Town Election and encouraged all to vote.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – *No Executive Session was held.*

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: A motion to adjourn was made by Councilor Fitzgibbons. The motion was seconded by Councilor Wright. A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Ann Holmberg

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, April 25, 2017, to approve the aforementioned minutes, as submitted, by a voice vote (7-0) (Councilor Colombotos not present for vote, Councilor Wright absent).

A TRUE COPY ATTEST:

Ann M. Holmberg
Town Council Clerk