



Town of Bridgewater
Town Council Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 15, 2019

CALL TO ORDER:

A quorum being duly present, Town Council President Dennis Gallagher called the meeting of the Bridgewater Town Council to order at 7:31 pm, on October 15, 2019 in the Academy Building Council Chambers, 66 Central Square, Bridgewater, Massachusetts.

PRESENT:

Council members present were, Francis Sousa, Fred Chase, William Wood, Shawn George (arriving at 7:44 p.m.), Dennis Gallagher, Matthew Rushton, Peter Colombotos and Timothy Fitzgibbons. Town Manager Michael Dutton and Town Attorney Jason Rawlins were also present.

ABSENT:

Councilor Aisha Losche

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MOMENT OF SILENCE

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

- Allen Mann

Meeting being aired live and recorded.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- October 1, 2019

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

Discussion: None

A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed 6-0-1 (President Gallagher abstained).

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

- President Gallagher announced information on the Bridgewater Parks and Trails Orientations to be held in the Academy Building on October 17th and November 21st from 7pm – 8pm.

PROCLAMATIONS

CITIZENS OPEN FORUM

- Lee Neary 361 Flagg Street: Ms. Neary spoke about concerns over the noise on Flagg Street with the trucks. She cited the reason is their use of "jake-brakes".

APPOINTMENTS

- Robert Christian "Chris" Rue -*Veterans' Council*

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

Discussion: Councilor Fitzgibbons thanked Mr. Rue for his service.

A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed 7-0.

HEARINGS -

- **7:35 p.m.:** Order O-FY20-014: Transfer Order - High Street Dam & Bridge Preliminary Work
President Gallagher re-opened the hearing at 7:35 p.m. and explained Finance Committee had not met. President Gallagher then continued the hearing to 11/5/19.

LICENSE TRANSACTIONS

- Petition P-2019-023: Common Victualler's License - St. Maria's Pizza Inc. dba College Pizza 750 Bedford Street

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

Discussion: None

A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed 7-0.

PRESENTATIONS - None

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT



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Mr. Dutton reported on information about various activities happening around town and highlighted meetings and events. Items of note included:

- **Mitchell School Update**
Mr. Dutton advised; the election is October 19th; polls open at 7am. It will be held at Old High School. Absentee ballots are available. Mr. Dutton realized there had been a lot of interest in the history of the building, so documents have been added to the Town Managers page on the town's website. There is also a tax calculator on the Town's website that citizens can use to find an estimated amount. He reminded all that the President has scheduled a Special Meeting for 10/29/19. Mr. Dutton has been asked if there are exemptions available for people who may not be able to afford the tax increase. The short answer is "Yes", but they are primarily age and needs based and briefly explained.

**7:44 p.m. Councilor George arrived.*

Councilor Fitzgibbons asked; is it correct that if the ballot vote fails, we would not go through MSBA because it would take too long? Mr. Dutton responded; that would be the topic of discussion on the 29th if the vote should fail, but it seems clear that the Town would need to do something quickly. Mr. Fitzgibbons encouraged all to be educated on the information available to

At Councilor Sousa's request, Mr. Dutton reminded all that Council has appropriated \$80,600,000.00 and (should the vote pass), the MSBA will reimburse up to just shy of \$34,000,000.00

- **Noise Impact on Flagg and Auburn Street(s)**
Mr. Dutton stated; there's a lot of building going on around town. He spoke to the Community & Economic Development (CED) Director; realistically there is not much we can do. We can put up the signs "no jake-brakes" but it's not enforceable and he doesn't recommend it. Mr. Dutton has spoken to some of the companies that we know of and asked they use alternate routes. His opinion is the best solution is to try and encourage the use of main roadways. There's a process through DOT to limit use, but (the limitation) is not freely granted and are typically limited to structural deficiencies, bridges, etc. However, he will ask the CED Director to look at that possibility and is open to suggestions.

Councilor Chase commented; Ms. Neary's earlier comments help put it into perspective. He pointed out the three four-way stops (on Flagg/Auburn Streets) exacerbates the problem. Mr. Chase would appreciate exhausting all possible avenues including checking to see if limiting travel on those roads is possible. He further suggested traffic use Walnut Street. Finally, Mr. Chase asked if the Council passed an ordinance it would then be enforceable? Mr. Dutton stated he did not believe it would be. He stated he would have to check with the Police Chief and Mass. DOT.

- **Items for next meeting:**
Councilor Wood requested the (2017) Downtown Revitalization document signed relative to parallel parking.
Councilor Fitzgibbons requested an update on Broad Street
Councilor Sousa requested an update on North Street

DISCUSSIONS

- **Broad Street Improvements**
Mr. Dutton was told today that the owner of the properties was in and planning on filing a Planning Board application Friday or Monday. Councilor George pointed out; we have heard that many times. Mr. Dutton also noted his intent was to ask the Building Inspector to enforce the Vacant and Abandoned Properties Ordinance, which he can execute on that this week. Councilor George asked when the last time they were inspected was? Mr. Dutton responded; probably for annual licensing when the (old Friendly's building) had a liquor license.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

- **Budget & Finance:** Committee Chair Wood briefly touched on topics discussed in committee, noting none of the items are on the Council agenda this evening.

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION

- **Resolution R-FY20-004:** 2020 Town Council Meeting Dates



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

Discussion: None

Motion: A motion to amend by adding the attached memo was made by Councilor Fitzgibbons. The motion was seconded by Councilor Wood.

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

A voice vote was taken, and the motion to approve, as amended, passed 8-0.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

- Order O-FY20-030: FY2020 Classification Tax Allocation-Adoption of Residential Factor
President Gallagher directed the Council Clerk to schedule a public hearing for 11/19/19.

Motion: A motion to refer to Budget & Finance and Finance Committees was made by Councilor Fitzgibbons. The motion was seconded by Councilor Wood.

Discussion: None

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

- Order O-FY20-031: Town River Landing Improvements
Councilor Gallagher explained; he put this in to piggy back on the parklands meeting scheduled for Thursday. He would like the Town Manager to move forward with the Town River Landing portion of it and would like cost estimates.

Motion: A motion to refer to the Community & Economic Development Committee was made by Councilor Fitzgibbons. The motion was seconded by Councilor George.

Discussion: Councilor Fitzgibbons stated he is not against the idea, but it needs to be flushed out a little bit and asked; if we want to talk about a budget limit? Councilor Colombotos stated he is weary of this type of piece mail approach and pointed out; the Downtown Redevelopment Plan identified this property for commercial use. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed 8-0.

- Order O-FY20-032: Declaring the Highway Barn Surplus Property
President Gallagher explained; this goes along with everything we've been talking about. He understands the building has been emptied and would like to see it torn down. Before it's torn down, we need to declare it surplus property. He suggested the matter be referred to Community & Economic Development Committee.

Motion: A motion to refer to the Community & Economic Development Committee was made by Councilor Fitzgibbons. The motion was seconded by Councilor George.

Discussion: Councilor Colombotos asked Mr. Dutton if the building can be knocked down without declaring it surplus? Mr. Dutton responded - correct. Councilor Colombotos will push to amend to remove the line about paving. Councilor Wood stated he hopes the committee considers Spring Street like a second economic downtown as there's a lot of opportunity there because of the location.

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

CITIZEN COMMENTS

- Dr. Hunt, 80 Austin Street: Regarding Flagg Street truck issue; do we know they're construction or are they taking alternate route to the landfill.
- Mike Dolan, 20 Cheryl Drive: Thursday there is a final presentation (on the proposed school) in the lecture hall. Mr. Dolan pointed out the tax calculator gives the tax rate for the first year only. The committee planned for the lack of internet access and put out binders around town. Mr. Dolan then read from a prepared statement expressing it is disheartening that the School Building Committee has done everything correctly and some of the members of the board are questioning the work of the committee. It behooves everyone if people would stay off Facebook and stick to the meetings. He implores all to educate themselves on the project. It's fine if you don't agree with the project, but please stop spreading mis or half information
- Mark Ferreria, 274 Oak Street: Mr. Ferreira supports the debt exclusion for the school. He is advocating for the children. Mr. Ferreira feels it's unfortunate that after so much time and effort, a some council members do not support to the project and seem to act against it.

COUNCIL COMMENTS



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- Councilor Sousa: No comments
- Councilor Chase: Echoed the President's comments on the Parkland meeting this Thursday.
- Councilor Wood: Last week he spent time in Washington DC. When his kids were in school couldn't travel out of state and hopes for the sake of the children, those regulations are relaxed.
- Councilor George: There is a big decision to be made on Saturday. The social media aspect can be very negative. People have to make their decision on the information, not something they read on social media. He supports the project because it will address our needs today and for the future. We need to reinvest in civility. Finally, Mr. George encouraged people to take the time over the next few days to go over the information.
- Councilor Rushton: Wants to publicly acknowledge the work of the building committee. He has refused to participate in social media discussions and hopes people show up to vote on Saturday who are making educated votes. Mr. Rushton reminded all that October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Police and Fire Departments are selling pink patches. Thanked Firefighter Richard Smith who retired after 15 years of service. Thanked the Fire Department who had an open house at Station 2.
- Councilor Losche: Absent
- Councilor Colombotos: Thanked the work of the building committee. Mr. Colombotos stated; while he appreciates the moral argument about the school, schools are very important to drawing business. He then spoke about his decision and reasons for adding "community" to Economic Development Committee.
- Councilor Fitzgibbons: Echoed previous comments. Encouraged all to be informed voters. Relative to councilor George's comments. Mr. Fitzgibbons thanked all councilors for serving with him.
- Councilor Gallagher: Saturday is very important to the citizens and voters in this community. It's a project that is well overdue. There are more laws and regulations in place to prevent what happened before from happening again. An elementary school for our children is needed and he will be supporting it on Saturday. Mr. Gallagher is proud of his colleagues on this board. The discussions have been mostly civil.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – *No Executive Session was held.*

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: A motion to adjourn was made by Councilor Fitzgibbons. The motion was seconded by Councilor George. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed 8-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:38 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, November 5, 2019, to approve the aforementioned minutes, as submitted by a voice vote (7-0) (Councilor Losche absent, Councilor Colombotos not present).

A TRUE COPY ATTEST:

Ann M. Holmberg
Town Council Clerk