



CALL TO ORDER:

A quorum being duly present, Town Council President Shawn George called the meeting of the Bridgewater Town Council to order at 7:00pm, on October 20, 2020 via Zoom©.

PRESENT:

Council members present via Zoom© were, Timothy Fitzgibbons, Peter Colombotos, Francis Sousa, Shawn George, William Wood, Fred Chase, Aisha Losche and Dennis Gallagher. Town Manager Michael Dutton and Town Attorney Jason Rawlins were also present.

ABSENT:

Councilor Matthew Rushton

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MOMENT OF SILENCE

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

- Thomas P. Moran

President George announced: Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Bridgewater Town Council will be conducted via 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 Facebook Live.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- October 6, 2020

Motion: Councilor Fitzgibbons made a motion to approve which was duly seconded.

Discussion: None

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

Fitzgibbons – YEA; Colombotos – YEA; Sousa – YEA; Rushton – ABSENT; George – YEA; Wood – YEA; Chase – YEA; Losche – YEA; Gallagher – YEA. The motion passed 8-0.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

- Future Town Council Meeting Start Times

President George proposed beginning meetings at 7:00 p.m. for the remainder of 2020.

PROCLAMATIONS - None

CITIZENS OPEN FORUM

- Sam Baumgarten, 60 Short Street: Mr. Baumgarten recognized Police Chief Delmonte for the time he has spent with BCCR and his openness to share information and answer questions.
- Dr. Carlton Hunt, 80 Austin Street: Dr. Hunt offered to assist with answering any questions relative to the CPC transfer order later in the meeting as Vice Chair of the CPC.
- Rosemary Anderson, 25 High Pond: Ms. Anderson spoke about a letter she sent to the Council about the conditions of sidewalks and trash.

APPOINTMENTS - None

HEARINGS -

- 7:05 p.m.: Petition P-2020-019: Alteration of Premise to Class II Auto Dealer's License – 039 Auto Sales, Inc. 994 Bedford Street

President George opened the hearing at 7:08 p.m.

President George stated the petitioner has requested this hearing be postponed to the next scheduled hearing.

Motion: Councilor Fitzgibbons made a motion to postpone to November 10th which was duly seconded.



Discussion:

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

Gallagher – YEA; Losche – YEA; Chase – YEA; Wood – YEA; George – YEA; Rushton – ABSENT; Sousa – YEA; Colombotos – YEA; Fitzgibbons – YEA. The motion passed 8-0.

LICENSE TRANSACTIONS

PRESENTATIONS

- Quarterly Update – *Anthony Sulmonte, Finance Director*
Mr. Sulmonte offered a brief presentation on FY21 Revenues and Expenditures. Mr. Sulmonte spoke about property tax, state aid and local receipts. Mr. Sulmonte noted the Town is on track with property tax collection and are better than budgeted for state aid and local receipts due to conservative budgeting. Mr. Sulmonte then outlined expenditure highlights, noting we are better than budget on salaries, wages and benefits. Mr. Fitzgibbons asked questions relative to the quarter-by-quarter budgeting and the state aid received vs. what was budgeted, and the budgeting for local receipts. President George asked questions relative to hotel tax and meals tax deferral.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

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

- Mitchell School Update (Standing Item)
Still on track and on schedule. 100% design plans are being completed this month. Will go out to bid at end of month. It will come back, and an award will be made on December 7th. Once the bids come in and a contractor is selected, construction should begin in December. Mr. Dutton re-iterated they are looking at July 2022 completion date. The next meeting is Monday, 12/7 at 5:30 p.m. More information can be found at www.bridgewaterschoolproject.com
Councilor Fitzgibbons asked what the next important date is with the State. Mr. Dutton responded the plans have been submitted and we've responded to most of the important dates. Finally, Mr. Dutton briefly spoke about exploring the possibility of going to bond early due to the good rates.
- COVID-19 Update
Mr. Dutton stated we've seen a slight increase in active cases, but primarily holding steady but noted; some neighboring towns have moved into the red category. He spoke about building openings noting, Town Hall is currently open by appointment. After early voting is completed, we hope to reopen on November 2nd without appointment requirement.
- McElwain Property Update
Mr. Dutton explained, they were funded by DHCD in the first or second round which speaks to how DHCD sees this as a worthwhile project. Final construction plans are being finalized and priced out. Mr. Dutton spoke about the house next door, which is owned by the McElwain project. He concluded; overall hoping to have the financing in place and closing in April with construction starting in early May. He advised the Town will see their money in April.
- Trash Removal at Stiles and Hart Park
Mr. Dutton has put in a work request for the Highway Department to do some cleanup there, but the two windstorms have slowed it down. The plan is to secure the area temporarily with a chain or gate. Councilor Wood noted the trash is not only right at entrance, but further back. He also pointed out if the town needs volunteers, he knows people who would like to help. President George asked if there are volunteer groups; can the town make arrangements to pick up and move the trash? Mr. Dutton responded; we can definitely provide bags, a truck for hauling, etc.
- Town-Wide Sidewalk Maintenance
Mr. Dutton showed the streetlogix application which shows the analysis of sidewalks, stating, overall, the condition of sidewalks is not awful, but there are many areas that need improvement.



Mr. Dutton Showed examples of sidewalks and stated there is currently not a funding source. He then spoke about original plan for funding through a debt exclusion, however due to COVID and the downturn in the economy, that's probably not an option. Through the application, Mr. Dutton was able to show street level visuals and budgeting scenarios. Councilors asked questions and spoke about the conditions presented for specific roads. It was suggested that perhaps planning should be done each year. Councilor Colombotos asked what would it take to maintain the quality of sidewalks? Mr. Dutton responded he could figure it out but couldn't answer it right now. Councilor Losche noted while it's important to have the funding to have the sidewalks fixed and maintained, we need to have the staff to maintain.

- **Items for Next Meeting:**

Councilor Fitzgibbons requested a presentation following up on Mrs. Losche's comments. We need to understand sidewalks, roads and building maintenance. Need to know what we should be spending on all these items. Mr. Fitzgibbons would like the Town Manager and Finance Director to put something together. Not only a Capital Plan, but an ongoing maintenance plan.

DISCUSSIONS

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

- **Review Committee:** Committee Chair, Losche advised; all Councilors should have received the materials for the Town Manager's review. She requested everyone please fill out and return in a timely manner. Councilor Losche would like to hear how Rules and Procedures Committee is coming along with goals.

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION

- **Order O-FY21-017: Transfer Order - CPC Recommendation - Central Square Congregational Church**
President George read the committee dispositions.

Motion: Councilor Fitzgibbons made a motion to approve which was duly seconded.

Discussion: Councilor Colombotos expressed support for the transfer. Councilor Chase asked Attorney Rawlins about the some of the memorandums provided in the packets relative to the case in Acton. Attorney Rawlins explained; he does see a lot of similarities. He also stated he does not feel it fits the three-factor test and enumerated reasoning for each factor. Councilor Chase does see how it could open the town up to scrutiny but also noted his opinion that most of the items seem to be routine maintenance which may be the tipping point in the second factor.

Discussion followed as Councilors asked questions of the Town Manager, Town Attorney and CPC Committee Vice Chair, Dr. Carlton Hunt. Dr. Hunt was able to confirm the CPC Coalition was consulted. They do not give legal advice but pointed the CPC to the case in Acton. Dr. Hunt also confirmed when the CPC voted there was one dissenting vote. Councilor Fitzgibbons asked the Town Manager if we had funded something at the Unitarian Church in the past. Mr. Dutton believed we did, but that was before the decision on the case in Acton.

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

Fitzgibbons – YEA; Colombotos – YEA; Sousa – YEA; Rushton – ABSENT; George – YEA; Wood – YEA; Chase – YEA; Losche – YEA; Gallagher - YEA. The motion passed 8-0.

- **Order O-FY21-018: Old High School Purchase and Sale Agreement Ratification – Bridgewater, Raynham Regional School District**

President George provided the committee dispositions.

Motion: Councilor Wood made a motion to approve which was duly seconded.

Discussion: Councilor Fitzgibbons thanked the many people who made this finally happen. He specifically thanked the Town of Raynham, Selectman Pacheco, the School Committee and Chairman Dolan. Finally, Mr. Fitzgibbons thanked Councilor Gallagher for all his hard work. Councilor Wood echoed comments, noting a lot of people came together to resolve this.

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



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Gallagher – YEA; Losche – YEA; Chase – YEA; Wood – YEA; George – YEA; Rushton – ABSENT; Sousa – YEA;
Colombotos – YEA; Fitzgibbons - YEA. The motion passed 8-0.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

- Order O-FY21-019: Acceptance of a Grant - Center for Tech and Civic Life COVID-19 Response Grant
Motion: Councilor Fitzgibbons made a motion to refer to the Budget & Finance and Finance Committees which was duly seconded.
Discussion: None
A roll call vote was taken with results recorded as follows:
Fitzgibbons – YEA; Colombotos – YEA; Sousa – YEA; Rushton – ABSENT; George – YEA; Wood – YEA; Chase – YEA; Losche – YEA; Gallagher - YEA. The motion passed 8-0.
- Order O-FY21-020: General Fund Free Cash Allocation to Trust Funds
Motion: Councilor Fitzgibbons made a motion to take the next four items as one motion to refer to the Budget & Finance and Finance Committees without objection which was duly seconded.
Discussion: None
A roll call vote was taken with results recorded as follows:
Gallagher – YEA; Losche – YEA; Chase – YEA; Wood – YEA; George – YEA; Rushton – ABSENT; Sousa – YEA; Colombotos – YEA; Fitzgibbons - YEA. The motion passed 8-0.
- Order O-FY21-021: Transfer Order - Police Department Capital Items
Referred to Budget & Finance and Finance Committees per motion above.
- Order O-FY21-022: Transfer Order - Senior Center Capital Transfer
Referred to Budget & Finance and Finance Committees per motion above.
- Order O-FY21-023: Transfer Order - Capital - Complete Streets Engineering
Referred to Budget & Finance and Finance Committees per motion above.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

- Dr. Carlton Hunt, 80 Austin Street: Thanked Council for the vote on CPC transfer. He stated the Town Council needs to begin budgeting for road/sidewalk maintenance, suggesting the Council set an annual amount each year to invest in streets and sidewalks.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Councilor Gallagher: No comments.
- Councilor Losche: No comments.
- Councilor Chase: No comments.
- Councilor Wood: Suggested a possible low-cost effort might be to look at just streets that have no sidewalks. Mr. Wood pointed out there was a split Finance Committee vote on an order tonight. He reminded everyone of his suggestion to have Finance Committee at Council meetings. Finally, Mr. Wood commented on meeting in the Council Chambers stating there are four of us here, but he would have been more comfortable at home. We are quite a way away from being ready to be back in the room.
- Councilor Rushton: Absent
- Councilor Sousa: Hopes something can be done on the sidewalks and encouraged all to vote.
- Councilor Colombotos: Accessible and safe sidewalks are essential to any economic and development effort.
- Councilor Fitzgibbons: Glad to be back even if it's just the four of us. Thank you and shout out to teachers for their efforts to teach hybrid. Mr. Fitzgibbons spoke about Chief Levy's retirement and his stellar service to the Town.
- Councilor George: It's very different to be sitting in Council Chambers. Thanked Mr. Dutton, the IT Department and Council Clerk for making tonight happen. He noted; in the Town Manager's report, Town Hall is open by appointment, which is a step in the right direction, understanding we have to follow state mandates.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – *No Executive Session was held.*



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ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Councilor Fitzgibbons made a motion to adjourn which was duly seconded.

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

Fitzgibbons – YEA; Colombotos – YEA; Sousa – YEA; Rushton – ABSENT; George – YEA; Wood – YEA; Chase – YEA; Losche – YEA; Gallagher - YEA. The motion passed 8-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 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, November 10, 2020, to approve the aforementioned minutes, as submitted by a Roll Call vote (8-0-1) (Councilor Rushton abstained).

A TRUE COPY ATTEST:

Ann M. Holmberg
Town Council Clerk