



Town of Bridgewater
Town Council Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 19, 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 7:30 pm, on November 19, 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, 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:

- Richard Sproules
- Donald E. Libby

President Gallagher announced the meeting is being aired live and recorded.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- October 29, 2019 (Special Meeting)

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 7-0-1 (Councilor Colombotos abstained)

- November 5, 2019

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

- President Gallagher announced January 7th he'd like to hold the Joint Budget Meeting with Finance Committee and School Committee.
- President Gallagher announced information for Christmas on the Common to be held December 1st.

PROCLAMATIONS

CITIZENS OPEN FORUM

- Jim Candito, Stetson Street: Thanked Mr. Dutton, Ron Ladue and Councilor Wood for having Stetson Street paved. Mr. Candito would like to see speed tables on Stetson Street. He then spoke about open dumpsters. Mr. Candito agrees with the idea of a study for a Pedestrian Tunnel. The South Coast Rail expansion project will have a major impact on Bridgewater. He requested the Town Council work with the State Representative and Senator to get the location of the Train stop changed.

APPOINTMENTS

HEARINGS

- **7:35 p.m.:** Order O-FY20-030: FY2020 Classification Tax Allocation-Adoption of Residential Factor
President Gallagher opened the hearing at 7:42 p.m.

President Gallagher read committee dispositions and publication information.

Mr. Dutton summarized; this hearing is held each year to set the tax rate, which has historically been set to "1".

He introduced the Chief Assessor, Shelley McCaulley who presented detailed financial information supporting the recommended tax factor of "1" across all categories (Chief Assessor's notes with meeting materials).



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President Gallagher invited any questions from the public – None

President Gallagher asked if there was anyone speaking in favor - None

President Gallagher asked if there was anyone speaking in opposition - None

President Gallagher entertained any questions from councilors:

- Councilor Wood asked if the Tax levy and debt on top of the levy includes the latest debt exclusion? Ms. McCulley responded; no, it does not. Mr. Wood then asked if BANS become part of the calculation at some point? Ms. McCaulley responded; yes.
- Councilor Fitzgibbons asked if we are taxing residents as much as we can without an override? Ms. McCaulley responded; yes. Mr. Fitzgibbons asked which of the towns around us use all their levy capacity. Ms. McCaulley was not sure but would look into it. Councilor Fitzgibbons then asked Mr. Dutton; if we adopt a different factor, we can lower taxes by approximately \$433 essentially offsetting the increase from school - why is that a bad idea? Mr. Dutton responded; shifting the burden to businesses at this point has been shunned. We still don't really have a large enough commercial business base to do that. At this point, our tax rate is an incentive to businesses to look at Bridgewater.

President Gallagher closed the hearing at 7:56 p.m.

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

Discussion: None

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

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

LICENSE TRANSACTIONS

- Petition P-2019-027: Change of Officer – Bridgewater Citizens Club

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

Discussion: None

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

PRESENTATIONS

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
Mr. Dutton stated there is not a lot to update but recapped the recent ballot vote for a debt exclusion. As we move forward with the timeline; we are entering design development phase. They are looking for students to be in building by 9/2022. Councilor Fitzgibbons briefly recapped the history and asked if the Town and District have moved through the process as expeditiously as possible. Mr. Dutton agreed.
- Update on Development of Parking Permit Ordinance (*Councilor George*)
Mr. Dutton stated he has asked Jennifer Burke (Community & Economic Development Director) to give some ideas on types of ordinances we can look at to address the use of private property (which may not be parking lots) being used as paid parking during events as it causes a number of safety and congestion issues. Options being looked at are: do nothing, adopt an ordinance requiring some type of permit for paid parking, or a zoning ordinance. Councilor George stated this is generated by safety; he clarified, it is not an effort to raise money. Councilor Fitzgibbons suggested the matter go to public safety.
- Stripping of Private Parking Lots Update (*Councilor Colombotos*)
Mr. Dutton contacted both CVS and Walgreens and they have made some improvements. He also spoke with Community & Economic Development Director, who pointed out technically if the paint wears off over time it



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could be considered in violation of site plan approval, though shutting down a business for this is not the best course of action.

- Town Hall Updates (*Councilor Colombotos*):

- Inclusion on National Register

- We have a scope of services out to consultants. The procurement process is not the same for this. The bids are due back the 2nd week in December. Mr. Dutton doesn't anticipate any issues and will be able to give a more robust update once a consultant is on board.

- Progress on Removal Second Floor Partitions

- Mr. Dutton briefly reviewed the process to date stating; we're slowing down now as they may be historical pieces. At Councilor Chase's request, Mr. Dutton spoke about winterization efforts on the building noting; while the roof looks bad from the outside, there are no leaks currently. One of the incentives for the feasibility study is for Capital Funding. If we can secure capital funding for the building we can apply for state funding that would go towards a new roof, bathrooms, inside improvements, handicapped accessibility. There is temporary heat and the water is shut off. The second floor is cleaned out. At Councilor Wood's request, Mr. Dutton explained regarding files in the basement, we will get guidance from Secretary of State's office as there are some records that date back quite a long way. He also spoke about the Bulletin Board outside stating at this point, we'd remove the plastic doors and try to straighten it. Though the sign may need to be removed until it can be cleaned and reused.

- Items for Next Meeting

- Councilor Fitzgibbons requested an update on Broad Street

DISCUSSIONS

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION

- Resolution R-FY20-006: Supporting the Reduction of Underage Vaping in Bridgewater Schools

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 8-0.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

- Order O-FY20-034: Transfer Order – Collective Bargaining Agreement Obligation – United Steel Workers

Motion: A motion to refer items a-c to the 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-FY20-035: Transfer Order – Collective Bargaining Agreement Obligation – Bridgewater Firefighters Association

Referred to Budget & Finance and Finance Committees per motion above.

- Order O-FY20-036: Transfer Order – Collective Bargaining Agreement Obligation – Bridgewater Administrative Association

Referred to Budget & Finance and Finance Committees per motion above.

- Order O-FY20-037: Order of Taking – Property on Elm Street

President Gallagher asked the Council Clerk to schedule a hearing for 12/17/19.

Mr. Dutton explained; you've already voted a version of this, but it has to be done within a certain number of days. The amount noted in the order has already been appropriated.

CITIZEN COMMENTS - None

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Councilor Sousa: None



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- Councilor Chase: None
- Councilor Wood: The Lions will be setting up decorations on common the Saturday after Thanksgiving. Mr. Wood stated he is now allowed to discuss downtown as his mother's property is no longer in her possession.
- Councilor George: Looking forward to Christmas on the Common.
- Councilor Rushton: None
- Councilor Losche: Absent
- Councilor Colombotos: Spoke about the pedestrian who was hit on Plymouth Street. He is not assigning blame, but he continues to be concerned about pedestrian safety.
- Councilor Fitzgibbons: Wished fellow councilors a Happy Thanksgiving.
- Councilor Gallagher: Thanked everyone who participated in Veteran's Day Parade noting we will be the hosts next year. Mr. Gallagher spoke about the Senior Center event, then wished a Happy Thanksgiving to all.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion: A motion to move into Executive Session under MGL, Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(6) To consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body) was made by Councilor Fitzgibbons. The motion was seconded by Councilor George.

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

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

ADJOURNMENT

Open Session adjourned at 8:37 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, December 3, 2019, to approve the aforementioned minutes, as submitted by a voice vote (6-0) (Councilors Fitzgibbons and Sousa absent, Councilor Losche not present).

A TRUE COPY ATTEST:

Ann M. Holmberg
Town Council Clerk