



CALL TO ORDER:

A quorum being duly present, Town Council President Shawn George called the meeting of the Bridgewater Town Council to order at 7:00 p.m., on December 1, 2020 via Zoom©.

PRESENT:

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

ABSENT: *No Councilors were absent.*

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MOMENT OF SILENCE

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

- George E. Courcy

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 - *None*

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

- President George requested Councilors attend Council meetings virtually while there a curfew remains in place, simply out of an abundance of caution. Mr. George further requested Councilors get in touch with the Council Clerk to get their laptops set up in advance of returning to the Council Chambers for meetings.

PROCLAMATIONS

CITIZENS OPEN FORUM

APPOINTMENTS - *None*

HEARINGS -

- **7:05 p.m.:** Order O-FY21-016: Laying Out and Acceptance of a Private Way – Auglis Way

President George opened the hearing at 7:05 p.m.

President George noted the request received satisfactory recommendations from Town Departments and read committee dispositions and notice information.

President George asked if the petitioner was present and wished to speak. Mr. Michael Koska was present but experienced audio issues. At President George's request, Mr. Dutton gave a brief update stating any issues had been corrected.

President George invited any questions from the public – *None*

President George asked if there was anyone speaking in favor - *None*

President George asked if there was anyone speaking in opposition - *None*

President George entertained any questions from councilors - *None*

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

Motion: Councilor Losche made a motion to find the laying out is required by common convenience and necessity which was duly seconded.

Discussion: *None*

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

Fitzgibbons – YEA; Colombotos – YEA; Sousa – YEA; Rushton – YEA; George – YEA; Wood – YEA; Chase – YEA; Losche – YEA; Gallagher - YEA. The motion passed 9-0.



Motion: Councilor Fitzgibbons made a motion to accept the way 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 – YEA; Sousa – YEA; Colombotos – YEA; Fitzgibbons - YEA. The motion passed 9-0.

• **7:08 p.m.:** Order O-FY21-025: FY2021 Classification Tax Allocation-Adoption of Residential Factor

President George opened the hearing at 7:10 p.m.

President George read the committee dispositions.

Chief Assessor, Shelley McCauley presented financial information supporting the recommendation of adopting a residential factor of “1”. Estimated tax bill for a single-family home would be \$5,983 which is an increase of \$132. Estimated commercial bill would be \$11,015.

President George invited any questions from the public – *None*

President George asked if there was anyone speaking in favor - *None*

President George asked if there was anyone speaking in opposition - *None*

- Janet Hansen: Ms. Hansen asked for explanation of the information, stating she didn’t understand what was being decided. Ms. McCauley responded; the Council will decide if there will be a single tax rate or split tax rate. Mr. Fitzgibbons also responded to clarify the information and answer Ms. Hanson’s question.

President George entertained any questions from councilors:

- Councilor Sousa asked if the increase is because of all the new housing? Ms. McCauley responded; yes and because of new apartments.
- Councilor Wood asked if the Debt Exclusion for the school hits tax rates this year? Ms. McCauley responded, no. Councilor Wood followed up; asking if there is there anything we should do to be trying to change that ratio. Ms. McCauley responded; the only way would be to attract more business.
- Councilor Gallagher took a moment to clarify the terms business vs. commercial. It’s not necessarily the business that pays the tax, it’s the commercial property that the business is operating on that pays the tax.

President George closed the hearing at 7:26 p.m.

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 – YEA; George – YEA; Wood – YEA; Chase – YEA; Losche – YEA; Gallagher - YEA. The motion passed 9-0.

LICENSE TRANSACTIONS

PRESENTATIONS

• Financial Planning for the Future of Bridgewater – *Anthony Sulmonte, Finance Director*

Mr. Dutton gave a brief history on the financial status over the past 10 years. He spoke about the past practices and policies put in place including the Free Cash policy and the strategy of calculating Free Cash.

Finance Director, Anthony Sulmonte began his presentation with CARES Act funding. He spoke about allocated funds, funds requested by the town and reimbursements received. Mr. Sulmonte then outlined estimated requests to be submitted. Mr. Sulmonte then answered questions from Councilors relative to the reimbursement process and the CARES Fund established by the Town as well as the payment process for equipment.

Mr. Sulmonte then presented information on Capital Funding and Expenditures. He reviewed information on funding streams and debt paid within the levy limit and debt paid by adding debt service funding to the levy limit (i.e., temporary tax override). He then presented information on Capital Improvement projects. Councilor Fitzgibbons asked several questions about deferred maintenance and what type of deficit we’re facing stating his opinion that funding should be included in the operating budget. Mr. Sulmonte responded; at the very least \$600,000 is needed for building maintenance, noting we will have those answers as the Facilities Manager finishes



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his assessment. Councilor Colombotos pointed out; not taking care of the streets/infrastructure shows potential commercial businesses we may not be a good Town to invest in. Councilor Losche asked if these are items the Town Council could have enlarged in the budget in past years? Mr. Dutton responded, the Town Council has ultimate control over the budget; unfortunately there just isn't enough money to allocate to all the needs. Finally, President George stated, it's great to have a facilities director on board to get numbers around 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:

- **Mitchell School Update (Standing Item)**

Mr. Dutton stated they're still in a bid period, so there was not a lot to update on. The next meeting is 12/14/20 at 5:30 p.m. More information can be found at www.bridgewaterschoolproject.com Councilor Fitzgibbons asked if the bid documents will be posted on the website? Mr. Dutton responded; to the extent they're public documents.

- **COVID-19 Update**

As of today, 40 community cases. There have been several staff positive and several other exposures, but about 10 have come off quarantine. BSU has seven in quarantine and three in isolation. The Health Agent believes we'll be in the red later this week. Town Hall is open, but Mr. Dutton continues to ask for patience as some departments are not at full staff. Finally, Mr. Dutton noted; because of the pandemic – tomorrow's training will be held via GoToWebinar.

- **Items for Next Meeting – *No items were requested.***

DISCUSSIONS - None

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS - None

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION - None

OLD BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS - None

CITIZEN COMMENTS - None

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Councilor Fitzgibbons: Thanked President George for another good Zoom meeting acknowledging it can't be easy to run the meetings via Zoom.
- Councilor Colombotos: No comments.
- Councilor Sousa: Spoke about Veteran's Day, thanking the Boy Scouts who recognized the Veterans and gave out cards.
- Councilor Rushton: No comments.
- Councilor Wood: Thanked the volunteers who helped with the holiday decorations on the Common. On a financial note, Mr. Wood stated he always thinks there are one or two taxable sources we could tap.
- Councilor Chase: No comments.
- Councilor Losche: No comments.
- Councilor Gallagher: No comments.
- Councilor George: Went around town on Small Business Saturday. The businesses seem to appreciate everything the town has been doing. Finally, Mr. George noted; Elm Street looks great.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – *No Executive Session was held.*

ADJOURNMENT

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

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

Gallagher – YEA; Losche – YEA; Chase – YEA; Wood – YEA; George – YEA; Rushton – YEA; Sousa – YEA; Colombotos – YEA; Fitzgibbons - YEA. The motion passed 9-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m.



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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 15, 2020, to approve the aforementioned minutes, as submitted by a roll call vote (9-0).
A TRUE COPY ATTEST:**

Ann M. Holmberg
Town Council Clerk