



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 December 15, 2020 via Zoom©.

PRESENT:

Council members present via Zoom© were, Timothy Fitzgibbons, Peter Colombotos (7:18 p.m.), 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:

- Eldon Souza

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

- November 24, 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 – NOT PRESENT; Sousa – YEA; Rushton – YEA; George – YEA; Wood – YEA; Chase – YEA; Losche – YEA; Gallagher - YEA. The motion passed 8-0.

- December 1, 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:

Gallagher – YEA; Losche – YEA; Chase – YEA; Wood – YEA; George – YEA; Rushton – YEA; Sousa – YEA; Colombotos – NOT PRESENT; Fitzgibbons - YEA. The motion passed 8-0.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

- President George reiterated that Town Council meetings would continue to begin at 7:00 p.m. into 2021.

PROCLAMATIONS

CITIZENS OPEN FORUM - *No citizens spoke.*

APPOINTMENTS

- Planning Board Associate Member – *Astrid Rojas*

Motion: Councilor Wood 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 – NOT PRESENT; Sousa – YEA; Rushton – YEA; George – YEA; Wood – YEA; Chase – YEA; Losche – YEA; Gallagher - YEA. The motion passed 8-0.

HEARINGS

- **7:05 p.m.:** Petition P-2020-024: New Class II Auto Dealer – College Motors, Inc., 365 Elm Street



President George asked if the petitioner was present. No petitioner raised their hand to speak. Present George asked Mr. Dutton to speak on behalf of the petition. Mr. Dutton explained this is an existing location, however the ownership is changing.

President George opened the hearing at 7:09 p.m.

President George invited any questions from the public – None came forward.

President George asked if there was anyone speaking in favor – None came forward.

President George asked if there was anyone speaking in opposition - None came forward.

President George entertained any questions from councilors – No Councilor questions.

President George closed the hearing at 7:11 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:

Gallagher – YEA; Losche – YEA; Chase – YEA; Wood – YEA; George – YEA; Rushton – YEA; Sousa – YEA; Colombotos – NOT PRESENT; Fitzgibbons - YEA. The motion passed 8-0.

LICENSE TRANSACTIONS

- Petition P-2020-025: New Common Victualler's License - Sugarcane, 180 Winter Street

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 – NOT PRESENT; Sousa – YEA; Rushton – YEA; George – YEA; Wood – YEA; Chase – YEA; Losche – YEA; Gallagher - YEA. The motion passed 8-0.

Annual License Renewals:

- Petition P-2020-026: Annual Renewal - Antique Dealer

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:

Gallagher – YEA; Losche – YEA; Chase – YEA; Wood – YEA; George – YEA; Rushton – YEA; Sousa – YEA; Colombotos – NOT PRESENT; Fitzgibbons - YEA. The motion passed 8-0.

- Petition P-2020-027: Annual Renewal - Pawn/Second-Hand Gold Dealers

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 – NOT PRESENT; Sousa – YEA; Rushton – YEA; George – YEA; Wood – YEA; Chase – YEA; Losche – YEA; Gallagher - YEA. The motion passed 8-0.

- Petition P-2020-028: Annual Renewal - Annual Entertainment (No Alcohol)

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:

Gallagher – YEA; Losche – YEA; Chase – YEA; Wood – YEA; George – YEA; Rushton – YEA; Sousa – YEA; Colombotos – NOT PRESENT; Fitzgibbons - YEA. The motion passed 8-0.

- Petition P-2020-029: Annual Renewal - Auto Amusements (No Alcohol)

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 – NOT PRESENT; Sousa – YEA; Rushton – YEA; George – YEA; Wood – YEA; Chase – YEA; Losche – YEA; Gallagher - YEA. The motion passed 8-0.

- Petition P-2020-030: Annual Renewal - Lodging Houses



*7:18 p.m., Councilor Colombotos joined the meeting.

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

Discussion: At Councilor Wood's request, Mr. Dutton elaborated, stating there are no really significant issues. In years past, there have been a high volume of calls for service at several of the lodging houses. The Police and Fire Chiefs have had conversations with all the owners of those lodging houses. There have been calls for service, but nothing raised to the level of a revocation hearing at this time. At Councilor Fitzgibbons' request, the Town Attorney confirmed the annual license renewal process is not the correct time to take action against any licenses. Rather it should come through a revocation process with due notice. Attorney Rawlins confirmed that was correct. A separate revocation process is much cleaner. Councilor Wood asked if the Council could turn the annual process over to the Town Manager requiring a detailed report. Attorney Rawlins will look into it.

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.

- Petition P-2020-031: Annual Renewal - Common Victuallers (No Alcohol)

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.

- Petition P-2020-032: Annual Renewal - Auto Dealers – Class I, II, III

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:

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

- Petition P-2020-033: Annual Renewal - All Alcohol and Related Attendant Licenses

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.

- Petition P-2020-034: Annual Renewal - Taxicab License - A & A Metro Transportation - DBA Bill's Taxi

Motion: Councilor Sousa made a motion to approve 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.

PRESENTATIONS - None

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)



Bids were returned there were six general contractor bids received. The Committee met and reviewed the bids last night. Based on the bids received, we will be able to save over \$12MM. The projected winning bidder is Bacon Construction. They're well versed in School Building Construction. School Building Committee meet again 1/11/21. Mr. Dutton outlined the next steps and stated he believes it will come in under budget and there is no reason to believe it won't be on time. The School District is planning a \$30-35MM bond in January. He reminded all that more information can be found at www.bridgewaterschoolproject.com

Councilor Fitzgibbons congratulated all involved and asked if we share the savings with the state? Mr. Dutton responded, proportionally, yes. Mr. Fitzgibbons would like a breakdown on reimbursables vs. non-reimbursables once the numbers are in. Councilor Wood asked when will we know impact to real estate taxes? Mr. Dutton responded, maybe at end of FY22, but he will know more after 1/11/21. Discussion followed briefly about the cost and what is voted in a debt exclusion. Attorney Rawlins clarified; you don't vote a specific number in the debt exclusion.

- COVID-19 Update

Currently at 110 cases. The town has seen a dramatic uptick in staff cases, which are being tracked very carefully. The town will be in the red again this week and are looking at a substantial trend. DPH is expecting a couple of prolonged spikes after Christmas and New Year's. In terms of staff cases, we have had relatively minor symptoms. We have reverted to appointment only access in Municipal Buildings, which shouldn't have a huge impact in community. Several offices have been impacted; therefore, Mr. Dutton asks for patience. We will ask that the state allow water and sewer operators be included in early round of vaccinations. Councilor Wood asked if the town is testing sewer flows? Mr. Dutton responded, we test water and sewer every day. We know that COVID can't survive in water supply but can survive in sewer. Councilor Wood followed up asking if they had tested as a measure of occurrences in town. Mr. Dutton did not know if that type of analysis had been done. Mr. Rushton requested something be put on website about building availability. The impact to the School District was then briefly discussed.

- Memorial Building Update

The Ad Hoc committee met last week to review some of the recommended changes to the design: adding a mechanical lift inside building and retaining and re-configuring the stairs. We are also looking to eliminate main level restrooms. The committee has asked to retain the handicapped parking space and add a ramp to the front entrance. Mr. Dutton briefly outlined next steps and noted; we will be going back to CPC with revised upkeep plan and look to secure second phase of funding.

- Diversity & Inclusion Ad Hoc Committee Reminder

We are looking for up to 10 residents to join the Town Manager's Ad Hoc Committee, which we hope to get up and going in January.

- Items for Next Meeting:

Councilor George requested an update on Capital Improvements in Academy Building. He also noted; he'd like to get back to including committee presentations.

Councilor Fitzgibbons requested a standing item for Budget Updates

DISCUSSIONS - None

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION

- Order O-FY21-024: Waive Annual Licensing Fees – 2021

President George read the committee dispositions.

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

Discussion: Councilor Colombotos asked what the cost to the Town is. Councilor Gallagher responded, the Finance Director advised the cost to the town would be \$80-100K. Councilor Colombotos followed up asking; what's not going to happen now that we'll be foregoing that money. Mr. Dutton explained, because we did very



conservative revenue estimating in local aid at the beginning of COVID. We're not seeing as dramatic cut as anticipated, so that will allow us to pass on the benefit to the licensees. Discussion followed briefly as it was pointed out that this is a one-time waiver to help businesses during this time, which also shows Bridgewater is business friendly. Councilor Colombotos pointed out; another way we can extend hospitality is to improve our roads and sidewalks.

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.

- Resolution R-FY21-004: Early Voting Location Resolution

President George read the committee dispositions and legislation history.

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

Discussion: Councilor Wood reiterated the Town Clerk's office did a great job during early voting. This resolution reinforces the notion that the voting should be kept close to the Clerk's office. Councilor Sousa echoed the sentiment and spoke about the importance of the security of having it in the building. Councilor Colombotos stated he agrees with the spirit of the resolution but pointed out the term "shall" may not be appropriate for a resolution. Attorney Rawlins agreed.

Motion: Councilor Fitzgibbons made a motion to amend by changing "shall" to "ought" 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 to amend passed 9-0.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion to approve, as amended, 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 to approve, as amended, passed 9-0.

OLD BUSINESS

- Ordinance D-FY21-003: Zoning Ordinance - Zoning Map Amendment - Pleasant Street

President George read the committee dispositions and legislation history.

Motion: Councilor Sousa made a motion to accept the amendments which was duly seconded.

Discussion: Councilor Wood suggested we need to work with the Town Attorney on the Zoning process. He then recapped the history of the joint hearings and committee dispositions. Mr. Wood also spoke about the amendments presented and the reasoning.

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 to amend passed 9-0.

Motion: Councilor Sousa made a motion to send to advertising 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 to send to advertising, passed 9-0.

NEW BUSINESS - None

CITIZEN COMMENTS

- Steve Rogan, 36 Howard Street: Mr. Rogan spoke about his outreach and contact with Councilors in Bridgewater, England. They have created a group called "Bridgewater Unite"
- Carlton Hunt, 80 Austin Street: Dr. Hunt would like an update on the Central Sq design, specifically he would like to see where the town is on getting 20% design as well as Traffic Design. There was a good public meeting last week on the MPC Update. He would like public to know what next steps are.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Councilor Gallagher: Councilor Gallagher read from a prepared statement recapping successes and highlights of 2020.



Town of Bridgewater
Town Council Meeting – Virtual Via Zoom©
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 15, 2020

- Councilor Losche: No comments.
- Councilor Chase: Wished all happy holidays. Mr. Chase hopes all remain safe with COVID and with the upcoming storm.
- Councilor Wood: Wished Happy Holidays to all. Mr. Wood cautioned; now's not the time to let your guard down with COVID.
- Councilor Rushton: It's been a pleasure to work with everyone over the last year. He wished a Happy and safe holiday to all.
- Councilor Sousa: Thanked Councilor Gallagher for his comments and echoed their sentiment. Mr. Sousa also cautioned; we must take the virus very seriously. He encouraged all to be safe and wished everyone Happy Holidays.
- Councilor Colombotos: No comments.
- Councilor Fitzgibbons: Wished Happy Holidays to all. Thanked President George for running a great virtual meeting.
- Councilor George: Thanked Councilor Gallagher for his comments and agreed with Councilor Sousa. We must take this (virus) seriously. Mr. George then spoke about supporting small business and hopes people are shopping local. Finally, Mr. George spoke about the storm this week asking citizens to look in on their neighbors.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – *No Executive Session was held.*

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Councilor Losche 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 8:27 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, January 5, 2021, to approve the aforementioned minutes, as submitted by a Roll Call vote (8-0) (Councilor Fitzgibbons not present).

A TRUE COPY ATTEST:

Ann M. Holmberg
Town Council Clerk