



Town of Bridgewater
Town Council Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 2, 2016

CALL TO ORDER:

A quorum being duly present, Town Council President Kevin Perry called the meeting of the Bridgewater Town Council to order at 7:30 pm, on February 2, 2016 at BTV Studios, 80 Spring Street, Bridgewater, Massachusetts.

PRESENT:

Council members present were, Sandra Wright, William Wood, Peter Colombotos (arriving at 7:32 p.m.), Kevin Perry, John Norris and Dennis Gallagher. Town Manager Michael Dutton and Town Attorney Mark Gildea were also present.

ABSENT:

- Councilor Aisha Losche
- Councilor Timothy Fitzgibbons

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MOMENT OF SILENCE

A moment of silence was held for all who have passed since the last meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES –

- January 5, 2016

Motion: A motion to approve was made by Councilor Wright. The motion was seconded by Councilor Norris.

Discussion: None

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed 5-0.

- January 19, 2016 (Joint Meeting)

Motion: A motion to approve was made by Councilor Norris. The motion was seconded by Councilor Wright.

Discussion: None

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed 5-0.

**7:32 p.m., Councilor Colombotos entered the meeting.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

- President Perry reminded all that the next meeting is February 23rd.

PROCLAMATIONS - None

CITIZENS OPEN FORUM –

- Bernice Morrissey, Lakeside Drive: Ms. Morrissey expressed concern about the recent developments around the Plastic Bag ordinance and using Facebook to solicit feedback. Ms. Morrissey believes people should come in an express their opinion officially. She also spoke about the Resolution on this evening's agenda noting it is nowhere near the strength of the ordinance. The goal should be source reduction. Secondly, Ms. Morrissey wanted people to understand the Ordinance does not take plastic bags away, but reduces the single use bags.

APPOINTMENTS – None

HEARINGS - None

LICENSE TRANSACTIONS

- **7:35 pm hearing** - P-2016-002: New Class II Auto Dealer - Benedictions Energy, Inc. dba New England Auto Services, 724 Bedford Street
President Perry opened the hearing at 7:37 p.m.

Seeing no petitioner to present, President Perry invited any questions from the public – None came forward.

President Perry asked if there was anyone speaking in favor - None came forward.

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

President Perry entertained questions from councilors:

- Mr. Dutton explained this is a straight forward Class II License. There is no objection from staff and the taxes are paid.



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President Perry closed the hearing at 7:41 p.m.

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

Discussion: None

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed 6-0.

- Petition #P-2016-003: Change of Manager, Wine & Malt Package Store – Cumberland Farms

Mr. Dutton explained this is from Cumberland Farms on Pleasant Street to change their manager as any alcohol establishment is required to do, and there is no objection from staff.

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

Discussion: None

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed 6-0.

PRESENTATIONS -

- Skips Liquors Update

Yogi Patel came forward and explained they finally have approval from every single department. The Building Inspector suggested they get approval from MA Architectural Board (State). They will be filing for permits with the building department by end of February.

- Mid-Year Financial Update

Mr. Dutton referenced a General Fund Expense Report for each department of the town (included in materials) and walked through each department highlighting items. He noted; there is one negative line item in the Town Council's budget, which is advertising. We haven't touched anything in the reserve account yet, but Mr. Dutton anticipates we will at some point. Accounting: it's been a rocky year with staffing and explained the Professional Services line item, noting the Finance Director has some thoughts about addressing that. Assessors & Treasurer's areas are well under control. Mr. Dutton explained the reporting of part-time and full-time wages. There is an overage for Attorney's fees which we will adjust next year as we go after tax titles, etc. Information Technology (IT) is on track. Most of the IT for the Academy Building will come out of the Academy Building funding, not out of the general fund budget. Mr. Dutton will be asking for funding of a part-time or contract position for IT. The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) appears as though they've overspent their budget, but the staff is shared between Conservation Commission and ZBA. Town Buildings: this is a chronically underfunded area. Police & Fire are both under control. Mr. Dutton noted the grant funding that paid for additional firefighters does not appear on the report provided as it's not voted funds. Inspectional Services Department is on target. Highway Department is also on target. They have great budget controls. Regarding the Snow & Ice line item; we are still paying for last year's challenges. In terms of Veterans Services they are right on target. Mr. Dutton pointed out P. 27; State & County Assessments noting - this usually tracks pretty close to date and we are at 50% now. He also noted Insurance Group Medical is incorrect because we haven't allocated to the enterprise funds and haven't made the book entry to accommodate employee withholdings; otherwise we're in fine shape with that. Finally, Mr. Dutton stated overall; we seem to have a good handle on things, but are not flooded with cash.

Councilor Questions:

Councilor Colombotos asked if group medical – that doesn't account for allocations needing to be made – what is the liability. Mr. Dutton clarified, when you allocate the employee contributions and enterprise funds, the number will go down.

Councilor Norris asked about page 4, the Postage line item, stating he is concerned that we have the MUNIS system and we're still not accounting the line item. Mr. Dutton explained once all features of MUNIS are active, you won't be able to overspend. He further explained, postage is carried from the Town Manager's office for most things. Mr. Norris followed up by asking about the Fire Department grant. Mr. Dutton confirmed it's a three year grant. He further stated it's an important grant as it transitions us through a number of retirements. Councilor Norris asked if there is a plan to incent people to retirement. Mr. Dutton responded; they must retire at 65. Councilor Wood requested the management reports be sent by the 10th of the month noting it's critical to have them. Mr. Dutton responded, we just set up a system where you'll get it by the 10th, if not before. Councilor



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Wood followed up by asking how the four enterprise funds are doing. Mr. Dutton responded he will give an update on Golf next, but the other three are fine.

- Golf Report

Mr. Dutton – there is good news. YTD (as of the end of January) we are about \$113K over last year in terms of revenue. However, that doesn't mean everything perfect. Mr. Dutton expects there to be a deficit this year, in FY17 and FY18 but we've got some ideas about how to get through those years. Mr. Dutton referenced a report (included in materials) Mr. Dutton provided a history of the Golf Course.

**8:15 p.m., Attorney Gildea left the meeting and did not return.*

On a yearly basis the golf course has transferred \$93,817 to the general fund, to pay for indirect costs, which is designed to pay for services provided by other departments. Since 2003, the course had a retained earnings balance of a little over \$700,000. Since 2003, the golf course has paid a little less than \$1.MM in indirect costs or payment in lieu of taxes. Between the years 2011 – 2015, the course has required as debt relief approximately \$577,000. Mr. Dutton explained why the debt relief continues stating; basically debt service is broken out into two major expenditures: the construction of the course and the clubhouse. We're paying just under \$410,000 in land principle and interest until July 2017. We will continue to spend money for the clubhouse; total principle and interest is about \$104,000, which won't be retired until 2025. Mr. Dutton provided information on peer golf courses and surmised; it's safe to say our course is suffering from a structural deficit. After 2018, that structural deficit disappears because the debt will be paid off and should be able to live within own limits. There are some critical needs. We previously leased 43 carts and now need to lease another 43, but Mr. Dutton has asked that the golf course come up with a number to retro-fit the carts. There are also equipment issues. There are three funding options: 1) continue as is. 2) Request legislative authorization to extend the debt for two or three more years to get a lower interest rate, however, our financial advisors and Moody's don't think that's the wise thing to do as it doesn't reflect well on the town's bond rating. 3) Beginning in FY16 document a plan to allow OSLGC to borrow from general Fund at the fiscal year end to cover any operating deficits with a repayment plan spanning FY19, 20 and possibly 21. Mr. Dutton is inclined to suggest the third option. He would come back with a written agreement/plan so everyone knows how that's supposed to work. The DOR will allow you to do this. As long as we go with the third option and come up with a three year plan which is fairly conservative, they should buy into it fairly easily.

Councilor Questions:

- Councilor Colombotos asked about the critical needs and how they correlate with 5-year capital plan? Mr. Dutton responded he provided the Capital Plan as an example of their wish list. Councilor Colombotos followed up, asking if the General Fund expects to be paid back on the funds which have been transferred to them in the past. Ultimately, he would like to see an overarching capital plan that is doable. Mr. Dutton responded; long term, once we get over the hump, revenue earned can go towards other recreational areas.
- Councilor Gallagher thinks this is a good plan to have in place. The sooner the debt is paid off the better. Councilor Gallagher asked if the revenues on the sheet inclusive of clubhouse? Mr. Dutton responded; we're not maximizing the clubhouse for a number of reasons. People will tell you the parking lot needs to be paved; the kitchen is undersized for the space. For events, the food is brought in, not cooked on site.
- Councilor Norris noted in FY12 did 35,000 rounds, but revenue was meager, was there a reason? Mr. Dutton responded he would have to dig into that. Councilor Norris followed up by asking if there a specific trend that keeps them under the line so they need the end of year transfer? Mr. Dutton confirmed; the debt is the biggest part.
- Councilor Wright asked if there is a company we can call that would help direct us in how we can grow? Mr. Dutton – yes. A couple of years ago, we entertained two companies. One disappeared and the other suggested there wasn't a whole lot they could do better than we're doing right now, which tells Mr. Dutton we're doing all we can.
- President Perry asked Mr. Dutton if he needed anything formal from the Council in terms of direction. Mr. Dutton responded he thinks he has what he needs based on this discussion.

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: We have some interested candidates in the Affordable Housing Trust. There will be a Downtown Association meeting 3/1/16. The Council's Complete Streets Policy will give us a leg up on grant funding and Mr. Dutton will be sending staff to a required workshop. Mr. Dutton provided a brief update on the Academy Building noting, they are currently trying to work on the technology. Mr. Dutton worked with Bridgewater Citizens for Civility and Respect to identify a date for a public information session.

**9:00 p.m., Councilor Norris left the meeting, returning at 9:08 p.m.*

Regarding the Mitchell School; initial steps have been completed in applying to MSBA. They will require a number of studies. Mr. Dutton has met with Mr. Conroy and Brian Penny about the Transfer Station and explained there should be no dramatic changes. There is a rumor floating around that the Administrative Code does away with the Enterprise Funds, but that is not true. Mr. Dutton has spoken with the owners of Styles & Hart about possibly purchasing the land. It would be a Conservation purchase. Finally Mr. Dutton explained the RFP for engineering for Carver's Dam is going well.

Councilor Questions:

Councilor Wood asked about the change of sign at the gas station at corner of Spring Street and Broad Street. He asked if the Council voted it.

DISCUSSIONS

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Rules & Procedures: In Councilor Losche's absence, Councilor Wood provided a brief update on the Rules & Procedures committee's meeting where they discussed the General Bylaws.

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION - None

- Resolution R-2016-001: Plastic Bag Reduction

Councilor Wood briefly explained this is in support of having a statewide ban on plastic bags.

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

Discussion: None

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed 6-0.

OLD BUSINESS

- Ordinance D-2015-012: Zoning Amendment – Remove Section 5-6 from Zoning Bylaws

Councilor Colombotos explained the Planning Board unanimously recommended that this ordinance be withdrawn. The Town Planner recommended we wait for a more comprehensive overview of the Zoning Bylaws.

Motion: A motion was made by Councilor Colombotos to withdraw the measure. The motion was seconded by Councilor Norris.

Discussion: Councilor Colombotos stated it makes sense to him to remove the bylaw, but the general consensus seems to be doing the comprehensive review is more effective.

A voice vote was taken and the motion to withdraw passed 6-0.

NEW BUSINESS

- Ordinance D-2016-004: Wireless Communications Facilities License Ordinance

President Perry explained this language is being brought about by Mr. Delonno. President Perry then summarized the legislation.

Motion: A motion was made by Councilor Wood to refer to the Rules & Procedures Committee. The motion was seconded by Councilor Norris.

Discussion: Councilor Colombotos stated he is concerned about the visual impact of these and asked if there is language regulating the visual impact? Mr. Dutton responded; yes, there is language regulating the visual and aesthetic aspects. There's also an incentive to make them as discreet as possible. Councilor Colombotos asked if might also may make sense to send to the Community & Economic Development Committee. A brief discussion followed regarding the merits of having the legislation reviewed by two committees. At the conclusion, it was determined; Councilor Colombotos could send comments to the Rules & Procedures Committee or attend their meeting.

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed 6-0.



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- Order O-2016-002: VFW Post 2125 Lease Ratification

**9:21 p.m., Councilor Colombotos left the meeting briefly.*

Mr. Dutton explained this is pursuant to the special legislation requested by the Town Council. This measure was not referred to any committee.

- Order O-2016-003: Presidential Primary Warrant
This measure was not referred to any committee.

- Resolution R-2016-002: Energy Aggregation Resolution

Mr. Dutton explained this resolution shows the Town Council's support of efforts to support energy aggregation through home grown solar or power purchase. This measure was not referred to any committee.

CITIZEN COMMENTS - None

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Councilor Wright: None
- Councilor Colombotos: None
- Councilor Wood: None
- Councilor Losche: Absent
- Councilor Norris: None
- Councilor Gallagher: None
- Councilor Fitzgibbons: Absent
- Councilor Perry: Reminded all we'll be meeting again in three weeks.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – *No Executive Session was held.*

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: A motion to adjourn was made by Councilor Norris. The motion was seconded by Councilor Gallagher. A voice vote was taken and the motion passed 6-0.

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 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, March 8, 2016, to approve the aforementioned Minutes, as submitted by a voice vote (6-0) (1 Councilor vacancy, Councilor Fitzgibbons abstained, Councilor Colombotos not present for vote).

A TRUE COPY ATTEST:

Ann M. Holmberg
Town Council Clerk