



Town of Bridgewater
Town Council
October 25, 2022
7:00 PM
MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being duly present, Town Council President Fred Chase called the meeting of the Bridgewater Town Council to order at 7:00p.m. on Tuesday, October 25, 2022, in the Council Chambers.

PRESENT

Fred Chase, Dennis Gallagher, Dr. Kevin Perry, Bill Wood, Erik Moore, Francis Sousa, Shawn George, Peter Colombotos (via Zoom) and Matt Rushton (Arrived at 7:09pm). Also in attendance was Town Manager Michael Dutton and Town Attorney Jason Rawlins.

ABSENT

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

a) September 27, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Councilor George made a motion to approve the September 27, 2022 meeting minutes, which was duly seconded.

Voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows:

Perry – Yea; Sousa – Yea; George – Yea; Moore - Yea; Chase – Yea; Gallagher –Yea; Colombotos – Yea; Wood – Yea; Rushton – Not present at the time of the vote. The motion passed 8-0-0.

a) October 11, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Since Councilor Rushton was not at the meeting at this time, the October 11, 2022 meeting minutes could not be voted on. These meeting minutes will be on the November 15, 2022 Council agenda.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Council President Chase held a moment of silent prayer for all of the veterans.

PROCLAMATIONS – None

CITIZEN OPEN FORUM

Carlton Hunt, Austin Street – Reminded residents of the CPC Public Hearing taking place on 10/26/22.

Sam Baumgarten, 60 Short Street – Supports the DEI and Tree Committee. Would like better updates for the community, suggested using Facebook pages and wants tow website to have less effort.

Ray Ajemian, 221 Aldrich Road – Noted that he agrees about the website and that the tree committee is important for the town.

Brad McKinnon, 86 Spring Street – Part of Fire for Effect Foundation. Will donate to help the town. Noted that there are 2 trees in the river that should be taken care of.

Rigobert Noel, 10 Garnet Place – Fully supports the DEI Committee, worked over the past year with a group to

create.

APPOINTMENTS

a) Cultural Council: Svetlozar Miloshev - 2022 to 2025

Councilor George made a motion to appoint Svetlozar Miloshev to the Cultural Council for the term 2022 to 2025, which was duly seconded.

Voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows:

Perry – Yea; Sousa – Yea; George – Yea; Moore - Yea; Chase – Yea; Gallagher –Yea; Colombotos – Yea; Wood – Yea; Rushton – Yea. The motion passed 9-0-0.

b) Zoning Board of Appeals: Daniel Greenberg - 2022 to 2025

Councilor Wood made a motion to appoint Daniel Greenberg to the Zoning Board of Appeals for the term 2022 to 2025, which was duly seconded.

Voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows:

Perry – Yea; Sousa – Yea; George – Yea; Moore - Yea; Chase – Yea; Gallagher –Yea; Colombotos – Yea; Wood – Yea; Rushton – Yea. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Wood noted that these two appointments were highly qualified candidates and was looking forward to what they will bring to the committees.

HEARINGS

a) Ordinance D-FY23-003: General Ordinance - Amend Administrative Code Article III - Section 11A Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEI&B) Committee

This hearing has been duly advertised in the Enterprise and on the Town's website. This measure may be considered this evening upon conclusion of the hearing.

Councilor Chase opened the public Hearing at 7:20pm.

Councilor Chase asked if there were any questions from the public – No questions were asked.

Councilor Chase asked if there was anyone from the public that wished to speak in favor:

Carlton Hunt, Austin Street – 100% behind the DEI committee

Councilor Chase asked if there was anyone from the public that wished to speak in opposition – No one spoke.

Councilor Chase asked if any of the Councilors had any questions:

Councilor Gallagher asked if there was a limit to the number of members. Town Manager Dutton noted that it would set up similar to other committees and would have 5 to 9 members.

Councilor Chase closed the public hearing at 7:24pm.

Councilor Rushton made a motion to appoint Daniel Greenberg to the Zoning Board of Appeals for the term 2022 to 2025, which was duly seconded.

Voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows:

Perry – Yea; Sousa – Yea; George – Yea; Moore - Yea; Chase – Yea; Gallagher –Yea; Colombotos – Yea; Wood – Yea; Rushton – Yea. The motion passed 9-0-0.

b) Ordinance D-FY23-004: General Ordinance - Amend Administrative Code Article III - Section 26A Tree Commission

This hearing has been duly advertised in the Enterprise and on the Town's website. This measure may be considered this evening upon conclusion of the hearing.

Councilor Chase opened the public Hearing at 7:25pm.

Councilor Chase noted that the Rules and Procedures Committee met on October 20th and made a few amendments to the Ordinance.

Councilor Chase asked if there were any questions from the public – No questions were asked.

Councilor Chase asked if there was anyone from the public that wished to speak in favor:

Carlton Hunt, Austin Street – In favor, important for the Town to have a Tree Committee.

Councilor Chase asked if there was anyone from the public that wished to speak in opposition – No one spoke.

Councilor Chase asked if any of the Councilors had any questions:

Councilor Wood asked if this would be municipal trees only. Mr. Ajemian noted that it would only be public trees.

Councilor Chase closed the public hearing at 7:35pm.

Councilor Wood made a motion to amend Ordinance D-FY23-004 by changing the word “Commission” to “Committee” in the title and to add “The Committee shall advise town officials and the Town Council, as the appropriating authority, on the use of monies collected through any tree cutting mitigation funds the Town may receive.” as the last sentence in Paragraph B. This motion was duly seconded.

Voice vote on the amendment was taken with the results recorded as follows:

Perry – Yea; Sousa – Yea; George – Yea; Moore - Yea; Chase – Yea; Gallagher –Yea; Colombotos – Yea; Wood – Yea; Rushton – Yea. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor George made a motion to approve Ordinance D-FY23-004 with the amendments, which was duly seconded.

Voice vote on the motion was taken with the results recorded as follows:

Perry – Yea; Sousa – Yea; George – Yea; Moore - Yea; Chase – Yea; Gallagher –Yea; Colombotos – Yea; Wood – Yea; Rushton – Yea. The motion passed 9-0-0.

LICENSE TRANSACTIONS - None

PRESENTATIONS - None

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

a) Fire Station Project

Town Manager Dutton noted that the OPM was being finalized and it would be about 6 to 8 months on the plans and then it would be put out to bid.

b) Marathon Park Condition

Town Manager Dutton noted that the park was donated to the town and it has been a struggle with keep it clean. Dumpster was placed their and new trash company did not realize they had to pick up the dumpster. New signage will be posted “carry in, carry out”.

Councilor Wood asked how Town trash is handled at all town locations, ie. Legion, Field, Marathon Park. Would like a broader discussion.

Councilor George asked that an update be given about the Mobil Station at the next meeting.

DISCUSSIONS

a) Common Decorations

Councilor Chase noted that there has been discussion on Facebook regarding the common decorations. There is a wide spread misconception. It was not the Town or Town Councils decision to stop the decorations, it was an internal decision by the Lions.

Councilor Wood noted that he is looking forward to the lights. Thanked Don Swarce for his involvement with decorating the common over the years. He was the driving force.

Councilor Gallagher thanked the Lions for their efforts over the years. Wanted to know if there was a permission process.

Town Manager Dutton noted that a new event has an approval process with public safety and building, but a

routine matter like Christmas on the Common does not.

Dr. Perry noted that there has been some discussion on keeping the Lions decorations. The Lions meeting on Wednesday and the BIA will meet next week.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilor Gallagher spoke on behalf of the Rules and Procedures committee and noted that they met tonight and vote 3-0 to recommend the three financial orders under Legislature for Action.

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION

a) Order O-FY23-023: Acceptance of MEMA Grant

Budget and Finance meeting prior to Town Council meeting on 10/25/22. FinCom voted 5-0 to recommend at their meeting on 10/19/22.

Town Manager Dutton noted that the funds received were for the purchase of a generator for the senior center.

Councilor George made a motion to approve Order O-FY23-023, which was duly seconded.

Voice vote on the motion was taken with the results recorded as follows:

Perry – Yea; Sousa – Yea; George – Yea; Moore - Yea; Chase – Yea; Gallagher –Yea; Colombotos – Yea; Wood – Yea; Rushton – Yea. The motion passed 9-0-0.

b) Order O-FY23-024: Transfer Order - Prior Fiscal Year Bill

Budget and Finance meeting prior to Town Council meeting on 10/25/22. FinCom voted 6-0 to recommend at their meeting on 10/19/22.

Town Manager Dutton noted that this was a prior year bill that was not received.

Councilor George made a motion to approve Order O-FY23-024, which was duly seconded.

Voice vote on the motion was taken with the results recorded as follows:

Perry – Yea; Sousa – Yea; George – Yea; Moore - Yea; Chase – Yea; Gallagher –Yea; Colombotos – Yea; Wood – Yea; Rushton – Yea. The motion passed 9-0-0.

c) Order O-FY23-025: Transfer Order - Contractual Buyouts

Budget and Finance meeting prior to Town Council meeting on 10/25/22. FinCom voted 6-0 to recommend at their meeting on 10/19/22.

Town Manager Dutton noted that this transfer order was for legacy employees who qualify for buybacks.

Councilor George asked at what point will all of the buybacks be completed. Town Manager Dutton noted that there is a major cost now but it will drop and should be completed in 5 to 7 years.

Councilor George made a motion to approve Order O-FY23-025, which was duly seconded.

Voice vote on the motion was taken with the results recorded as follows:

Perry – Yea; Sousa – Yea; George – Yea; Moore - Yea; Chase – Yea; Gallagher –Yea; Colombotos – Yea; Wood – Yea; Rushton – Yea. The motion passed 9-0-0.

d) Petition P-2023-010: 2022 State Election Warrant

This Petition was not referred to any committee. 14 days have elapsed, therefore it may be fully considered this evening.

Councilor Wood made a motion to approve Petition P-2023-010, which was duly seconded.

Voice vote on the motion was taken with the results recorded as follows:

Perry – Yea; Sousa – Yea; George – Yea; Moore - Yea; Chase – Yea; Gallagher –Yea; Colombotos – Yea; Wood – Yea; Rushton – Yea. The motion passed 9-0-0.

OLD BUSINESS – None

NEW BUSINESS

a) Order O-FY23-026: Transfer Order - Town House Roof Project

Town Manager Dutton noted that the cost estimates showed a shortfall and CPC has recommended this project.

Councilor George made a motion to refer Order O-FY23-026 to the Budget and Finance Committee and Finance Committee which was duly seconded.

Voice vote on the motion was taken with the results recorded as follows:

Perry – Yea; Sousa – Yea; George – Yea; Moore - Yea; Chase – Yea; Gallagher –Yea; Colombotos – Yea; Wood – Yea; Rushton – Yea. The motion passed 9-0-0.

b) Order O-FY23-027: FY2023 Classification Tax Allocation - Adoption of Residential Factor

Town Manager Dutton noted that this is the annual tax classification allocation to set the residential factor.

Councilor George made a motion to refer Order O-FY23-027 to the Budget and Finance Committee and Finance Committee which was duly seconded.

Voice vote on the motion was taken with the results recorded as follows:

Perry – Yea; Sousa – Yea; George – Yea; Moore - Yea; Chase – Yea; Gallagher –Yea; Colombotos – Yea; Wood – Yea; Rushton – Yea. The motion passed 9-0-0.

c) Order O-FY23-028: Acceptance of Gift - BSU \$55,000

Town Manager Dutton noted that this is a gift that is given to the Town annually by BSU.

Councilor George made a motion to refer Order O-FY23-028 to the Budget and Finance Committee and Finance Committee which was duly seconded.

Voice vote on the motion was taken with the results recorded as follows:

Perry – Yea; Sousa – Yea; George – Yea; Moore - Yea; Chase – Yea; Gallagher –Yea; Colombotos – Yea; Wood – Yea; Rushton – Yea. The motion passed 9-0-0.

d) Order O-FY23-029: General Fund Transfer Order

Town Manager Dutton noted that this is for additional services in fire services and parks and recreation.

Councilor George made a motion to refer Order O-FY23-029 to the Budget and Finance Committee and Finance Committee which was duly seconded.

Voice vote on the motion was taken with the results recorded as follows:

Perry – Yea; Sousa – Yea; George – Yea; Moore - Yea; Chase – Yea; Gallagher –Yea; Colombotos – Yea; Wood – Yea; Rushton – Yea. The motion passed 9-0-0.

e) Order O-FY23-030: Transfer Order - Sewer Enterprise Fund

Councilor George made a motion to refer Order O-FY23-030 to the Budget and Finance Committee and Finance Committee which was duly seconded.

Voice vote on the motion was taken with the results recorded as follows:

Perry – Yea; Sousa – Yea; George – Yea; Moore - Yea; Chase – Yea; Gallagher –Yea; Colombotos – Yea; Wood – Yea; Rushton – Yea. The motion passed 9-0-0.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Rigobert Noel, 10 Garnet Place – Thanked the councilors for the 9-0 vote. Looks forward to being a contributor.
Carlton Hunt, Austin Street – Requested that an Energy Committee member be part of the Fire Station Project; noted should get the trash compactors back from regional high school and put them at the parks and that the common is in the historic district and the use must be approved by the historic commission. Reminded everyone about Early Voting.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilor Perry: Thanked the two new appointments for volunteering and noted that new lights will be good but also want to see tradition.

Councilor Sousa: Noted that more volunteers were needed for committees.

Councilor George: Noted that getting information out with technology can be a blessing and a curse, not everyone

uses Facebook or social media. Reminded residents to take advantage of early voting. Attended the Farmers Market and it was a great event.

Councilor Moore: Excited DEI Committee passed. Noted that the website is a challenge to find information and need to encourage people to learn more.

Councilor Gallagher: Excited about holiday season. Thanked the Fire for Effect Foundation for a great event. Also reminded the residents about early voting and that there is a town election coming up in January.

Councilor Colombotos – No comment.

Councilor Wood: Noted that two crosswalks were wiped out and a railing put up in Central Square without a discussion or announcement. Noted that the Lions club now meets at the Veterans Club and anyone can join.

Councilor Rushton: Recognized six Bridgewater residents who recently graduated from the State Police Academy.

Councilor Chase: Noted that there were important appointments tonight and that the Common social media comments were helpful and quick to blame and glad there was a discussion.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor George made a motion to adjourn, which was duly seconded.

Voice vote on the motion was taken with the results recorded as follows:

Perry – Yea; Sousa – Yea; George – Yea; Moore - Yea; Chase – Yea; Gallagher –Yea; Colombotos – Left the meeting; Wood – Yea; Rushton – Yea. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40p.m.

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 15, 2022, to approve the aforementioned minutes.

A TRUE COPY ATTEST:

Debra Ward, Town Council Clerk