

TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER

Finance Committee

Nathan Schofield, Chair
Eric Langone, Vice Chair
Julie Scleparis
Christopher Blunt
MJ Spagone
Rigobert Noel
Lee Beane
Brian Glidden
Stephen Pace



Academy Building - 66 Central Square
Bridgewater, MA 02324

Bridgewater Finance Committee Minutes for the FinCom Meeting that Convened on February 16, 2023

Call to order: 5:00

Committee Members Present: Nathan Schofield, Julie Scleparis, Christopher Blunt, Rigobert Noel, Brian Glidden

Committee Members Not Present: Eric Langone, MJ Spagone, Lee Beane

Guests in Attendance: Councilor Bill Wood

Public Comment - None

Approval of Meeting Minutes – Jan 23, 2023

Christopher Blunt motioned to approve the meeting minutes from January 23, 2023 which was duly seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

New Business

Order O-FY23-044: Acceptance of Funds - Council on Aging Donation

COA Director, Emily Williams plans to set up a new coffee brewing station at the senior center and continuously improve and take care of the senior programs.

Christopher Blunt motioned to recommend O-FY23-044 which was duly seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Ordinance D-FY23-009: Capital Expenditure Policy

This policy will ensure that the request of funding from Bridgewater-Raynham, and the payments approved by the Town Council, and made by the Town of Bridgewater are tightly coupled so that no audit gaps or uncertainty of how the funds are used will exist. After discussion with Councilor Wood, the committee will be

taking time to further consider the policy once the Town Attorney has reviewed the ordinance and look to vote at the next meeting.

Order O-FY23-045: Ratification of Renewal Cable Television License Agreement: Comcast Cable Communication Management, LLC and Town of Bridgewater

With the assistance of the Cable Advisory Committee and the Town Attorney, the Town Manager has negotiated a franchise license agreement with Comcast. The proposed contract: Grants capital contributions to the Town of \$230,000; secured the maximum franchise fee of 5% for the Town and BTV; high definition for a local access channel; maintenance of the fiber connection from the Academy Building to the BTV studio as well as from BTV to Comcast; improved protection for private property owners; less costly underground line installations for some customers; credit for outages of longer than 24 hours; implements a new permitting requirement for any Comcast pedestals on Town road layouts; and the maximum senior citizen discount (negotiated as a side letter). It is important to note two things: One, Comcast does not have an exclusive franchise. Any other provider can negotiate an agreement with the Town. To date no other company is willing to enter into franchise negotiations. Two, the revenues that accrue to the benefit of the Town and BTV are derived from the cable television services and not from internet access. As more residents transition from traditional cable to streaming services only, the less the franchise fee will be.

Christopher Blunt motioned to recommend Order O-Fy23-045 which was duly seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Order O-FY23-046: Acceptance of Gift - Natural Resources Trust of Bridgewater

This funding, along with the recent vote of the CPA Funds last meeting FY23-042 of \$40k will fund the survey work by the state agency, DCAMM (Division of Capital Asset Management & Maintenance) for Phase 2 of the Old State Farm Trail Project. The \$25k represents \$15k approved by the Taunton River Watershed Council and \$10k from the Sheehan Family Companies.

Rigobert Noel motioned to recommend O-FY23-046 which was duly seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Order O-FY23-047 Election - Debt Exclusion Ballot Question

On March 5, 2022 voters approved the construction of the Bristol-Plymouth Regional Vocational Technical School. This ballot question deals with the payment of the Town's portion of the construction costs. A "yes" vote will allow the Town to pay its share of the new school by excluding the annual cost from the provisions of Prop 2 ½ . A "no" vote will require the Town to pay the cost through its general fund budget. It would force significant reduction of other municipal services. For FY2023, the median house would pay an additional \$8 per year. In the following 29 years, the median house would pay approximately \$33 per year. Since the calculation is based on the number of Bridgewater students attending Bristol-Plymouth, these number are approximate and based on this year's enrollment numbers.

Christopher Blunt motioned to recommend O-FY23-047 which was duly seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Adjourn – *Christopher Blunt motioned to adjourn the meeting of the FinCom at 6:11 p.m. which was duly seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.*