



Town of Bridgewater

Town Council

April 4, 2023

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 7:00pm on Tuesday, April 4, 2023 in the Council Chambers.

PRESENT

Fred Chase, Dr. Kevin Perry, Mark Linde, Shawn George, Dennis Gallagher, Susan Robinson, Erik Moore, Bill Wood and Brad McKinnon. Also in attendance was Town Manager Michael Dutton and Town Attorney Jason Rawlins.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

a) March 21, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Councilor George made a motion to approve the March 21, 2023 meeting minutes, which was duly seconded.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows:

Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; George – Yea; Moore – Yea; Chase – Yea; Gallagher – Yea; McKinnon – Yea; Wood – Yea; Robinson – Yea. Motion passed 9-0-0

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

A moment of silence was held for Mr. Robert Smalley, United States Army who passed away on March 27, 2023 and Mr. David Asiaf, United States Army National Guard who passed away on March 25, 2023.

Council President Chase also noted that there is a Town Council Workshop scheduled for April 11th at BSU and that this workshop was for the Councilors to discuss downtown efforts. Councilor Chase noted that this is a public meeting but there will be no public comments or public participation at the workshop.

Bob Rulli, CED Director noted that the workshop will be live streamed on Facebook and public input will start right after the workshop.

PROCLAMATIONS

a) Arbor Day - April 28, 2023

Council President Chase read the proclamation into the record.

CITIZEN OPEN FORUM

Nicole Holmes, 80 Old Farm Road: Spoke on behalf of the Tree Committee and noted that the Arbor Day Proclamation is just one step in getting Bridgewater to be designated as a tree city. There are many benefits to being a tree city.

Rebecca Fleisch Cordeiro, 135 Deerfield Drive: Thanked the Council for the Arbor Day proclamation and asked that the word gay be removed from the Pride Flag resolution.

Laurene Powers, 41 Sunshine Drive: Noted that the BCCR would be having a standout in Central Square on Saturday, April 8th from 10am to 11am for gun violence. Invited all to attend.

Sam Baumgarten, 60 Short Street: Noted that Bridgewater has created a welcoming community and we need to continue by issuing more resolutions.

Carlton Hunt, Austin Street: Thanked the Council for the Arbor Day Proclamation and energy aggregation order.

APPOINTMENTS – None

HEARINGS – None

LICENSE TRANSACTIONS – None

PRESENTATIONS – None

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

a) Fire Station Update

Town Manager Dutton noted that the Fire Station planning was ongoing and there will be a September bid site package.

Councilor McKinnon asked that since the cost of materials has been going up can the materials be bought now and stored. Town Manager Dutton noted that this is what the contractor did with Mitchell School and the contractor will look into do this for the Fire Station.

b) High Street Bridge Closure

Town Manager Dutton reminded the Council and residents that High Street will be closed from June 15th to approximately October 15th. Notification, detour plans, releases and electric signs all being put into place.

Councilor Moore asked if the press release could be why and what the impact will be. Town Manager Dutton noted that the why has been pushed out and as the date gets closer the impact will be released.

c) Bristol-Plymouth Debt Exclusion Vote

Town Manager Dutton noted that the Town Election is coming up on April 22nd and the Debt Exclusion question is on the ballot. A yes vote would fund the \$1.2M per year with an approximate \$33 cost to each taxpayer and a No vote means the \$1.2M would have to be taken from the municipal budget which would mean cutting positions.

DISCUSSIONS – None

COMMITTEE REPORTS – None

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION

a) Petition P-2023-027: A Resolution in Recognition of Gay Pride Month

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

Councilor Moore made a motion to amend Petition P-2023-027 by removing the word “gay” where it appears two times in the Resolution. The amendment was duly seconded.

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

Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; George – Yea; Moore – Yea; Chase – Yea; Gallagher – Yea; McKinnon – Yea; Wood – Yea; Robinson – Yea. Amended passed 9-0-0

Councilor Moore made a motion to approve Petition P-2023-027, which was duly seconded.

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

Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; George – Yea; Moore – Yea; Chase – Yea; Gallagher – Yea; McKinnon – Yea; Wood – Yea; Robinson – Yea. Motion passed 9-0-0

b) Resolution R-FY23-006: Annual July 4th Community Celebration

This Resolution was not referred to any committee. 14 days has elapsed, therefore it may be finally considered this evening.

Councilor Perry noted that this Resolution would allow the 4th of July Committee to place a wooden thermometer in front of the Academy Building for the purposes of fundraising for the July 4th events.

Councilor Perry made a motion to approve Resolution R-FY23-006, which was duly seconded.

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

Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; George – Yea; Moore – Yea; Chase – Yea; Gallagher – Yea; McKinnon – Yea; Wood – Yea; Robinson – Yea. Motion passed 9-0-0

OLD BUSINESS- None

NEW BUSINESS

a) Order O-FY23-052: Municipal Electric Aggregation

Councilor Linde noted that this was a team effort which was brought on by the Presentation my Carlton Hunt. Would like the Town Manager to research.

Councilor Linde made a motion to refer Order O-FY23-052 to Rules and Procedures, which was duly seconded.

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

Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; George – Yea; Moore – Yea; Chase – Yea; Gallagher – Yea; McKinnon – Yea; Wood – Yea; Robinson – Yea. Motion passed 9-0-0

b) Order O-FY23-053: Town Clerk's Salary

Councilor George noted that this is being presented to bring the salary of the Town Clerk in-line with her step and grade.

Councilor Robinson asked if a benchmark study was done and Councilor George noted yes but could not remember by whom. Councilor Linde noted that the benchmark should be other Town Clerks with similar town population.

Councilor George made a motion to refer Order O-FY23-053 to Budget & Finance and FinCom, which was duly seconded.

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

Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; George – Yea; Moore – Yea; Chase – Yea; Gallagher – Yea; McKinnon – Yea; Wood – Yea; Robinson – Yea. Motion passed 9-0-0

c) Budget Order O-FY24-001: FY2024 Annual Town Budget

Town Manager Dutton noted that the FY2024 Annual Town Budget was balanced and there was a reduction in growth, local aid numbers are down. New growth is less, license and permits fees are flat and there is a slow down in building. Transportation costs and employee benefits have increased and no new hiring or dramatic changes.

Councilor Wood made a motion to refer Order O-FY24-001 to Budget & Finance and FinCom, which was duly seconded.

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

Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; George – Yea; Moore – Yea; Chase – Yea; Gallagher – Yea; McKinnon – Yea; Wood – Yea; Robinson – Yea. Motion passed 9-0-0

d) Budget Order O-FY24-002: FY2024 Water Enterprise Fund

Town Manager Dutton noted that there are very few changes. Income covers expenses and slightly higher salary increases so the employees would be in line with others in their grade and step.

Councilor Moore would like a copy of the benchmark used for the salary increases.

Councilor George made a motion to refer Order O-FY24-002 to Budget & Finance and FinCom, which was duly seconded.

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

Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; George – Yea; Moore – Yea; Chase – Yea; Gallagher – Yea; McKinnon – Yea; Wood – Yea; Robinson – Yea. Motion passed 9-0-0

e) Budget Order O-FY24-003: FY2024 Sewer Enterprise Fund

Town Manager Dutton noted that this budget was similar to the Water Enterprise Budget and that Finance is currently working on the new sewer rates.

Councilor George made a motion to refer Order O-FY24-003 to Budget & Finance and FinCom, which was duly seconded.

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

Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; George – Yea; Moore – Yea; Chase – Yea; Gallagher – Yea; McKinnon – Yea; Wood – Yea; Robinson – Yea. Motion passed 9-0-0

f) Budget Order O-FY24-004: FY2024 Transfer Station Enterprise Fund

Town Manager Dutton noted that residents pay a fee to dispose of their waste. That fee pays for final disposal and the revenues meet the expenses.

Councilor Wood noted that there is a volunteer at the transfer station that works many hours and wondered if they could be paid. Town Manager Dutton noted that it was not put into this budget but it could be looked at.

Councilor George made a motion to refer Order O-FY24-004 to Budget & Finance and FinCom, which was duly seconded.

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

Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; George – Yea; Moore – Yea; Chase – Yea; Gallagher – Yea; McKinnon – Yea; Wood – Yea; Robinson – Yea. Motion passed 9-0-0

g) Budget Order O-FY24-005: Authorization for Revolving Funds

Town Manager Dutton noted that this was a yearly order for the revolving funds. Income goes back into the fund.

Councilor George made a motion to refer Order O-FY24-005 to Budget & Finance and FinCom, which was duly seconded.

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

Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; George – Yea; Moore – Yea; Chase – Yea; Gallagher – Yea; McKinnon – Yea; Wood – Yea; Robinson – Yea. Motion passed 9-0-0

h) Petition P-2023-028: A Resolution Honoring Juneteenth

Councilor Moore read the petition into the record.

Councilor Moore made a motion to retain Petition P-2023-028 at Town Council, which was duly seconded.

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

Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; George – Yea; Moore – Yea; Chase – Yea; Gallagher – Yea; McKinnon – Yea; Wood – Yea; Robinson – Yea. Motion passed 9-0-0

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Lou Stone, High Pond Estates: Noted that he went to the transfer station for the first time and the workers were very friendly and helpful. Thanked the council for bringing an energy order forward.

Rebecca Fleisch Cordeiro, 135 Deerfield Drive: Thanked the council for inquiring about the flag choice.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilor McKinnon: Wished everyone a Happy Passover and Easter.

Councilor George: Excited about a packed house and all the events coming up. Encouraged people to explore Bridgewater and noted that he supported the debt exclusion and urged residents to get out and vote.

Councilor Perry: Good to see the Scouts here tonight. Reminded residents to vote on 4/22 and he supports the debt exclusion question. Extended his thoughts and prayers to the family of Madelyn Kubiak who passed away on March 31, 2023.

Councilor Moore: Noted that it is important to fund Bristol Plymouth and he is in full support of the debt exclusion. Also noted that he has received emails and from people how great the DPW, Council on Aging and Police Department are.

Councilor Robinson: Thanked everyone for coming to the meeting tonight.

Councilor Linde: Noted that citizen participation is important. Encouraged people to vote for the debt exclusion.

Councilor Gallagher: Noted that the Town election is 4/22 and encouraged residents to go out and vote. Fully supports the debt exclusion question. Also noted that the Town wide clean up is scheduled for 4/29.

Councilor Wood: Noted that the debt exclusion vote is critical, town support new school now we need to pay for it.

Councilor Chase: Productive meeting; important issues from citizen engagement.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

ADJOURNMENT

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

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows:

Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; George – Yea; Moore – Yea; Chase – Yea; Gallagher – Yea; McKinnon – Yea; Wood – Yea; Robinson – Yea. Motion passed 9-0-0

Meeting adjourned at 8:30p.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, January 10, 2023, to approve the aforementioned minutes, as submitted, by a Roll Call vote 7-0.

