



CALL TO ORDER:

A quorum being duly present, Town Council President Dennis Gallagher called the meeting of the Bridgewater Town Council to order at 7:30 pm, on January 7, 2020 in the Academy Building Council Chambers, 66 Central Square, Bridgewater, Massachusetts.

PRESENT:

Council members present were, Francis Sousa, Fred Chase, Shawn George, Dennis Gallagher, Matthew Rushton, Aisha Losche (7:33 p.m.), Peter Colombotos and Timothy Fitzgibbons. Town Manager Michael Dutton and Town Attorney Jason Rawlins were also present.

ABSENT:

1 Councilor Vacancy (District 6)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MOMENT OF SILENCE

A moment of silence was held for all who have passed.

President Gallagher announced the meeting is being recorded and aired live.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- December 17, 2019

Motion: A motion to approve was made by Councilor Fitzgibbons. The motion was seconded by Councilor George.

Discussion: None

A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed 7-0 (Councilor Losche not present).

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

- Bridgewater Citizens for Civility and Respect (BCCR) Proclamation

President Gallagher read the original BCCR proclamation as a reminder that we need to respect each other.

**Councilor Losche entered the meeting.*

- District 6 Vacancy

There is now a vacancy in the District 6. President Gallagher will follow the same procedure as when Councilor Perry resigned based on Ordinance written by Councilor Fitzgibbons.

President Gallagher announced: any qualified resident in District 6 interested in appointment to the vacancy should submit their letter of interest to the Council Clerk within 21 days. On February 4th the Council will review and possibly interview.

- There are two vacancies: one on Rules & Procedures and on Budget & Finance Committees. Councilor Gallagher is asking Councilors if interested contact him directly.

PROCLAMATIONS

CITIZENS OPEN FORUM

- Bill Wood, 388 Hayward Street: Mr. Wood has been appointed to the Finance Committee. Anyone in District 6 wanting to get in touch with him can email at wdwfincom@gmail.com. Mr. Wood can now talk freely about downtown. Mr. Wood announced he is building a Leadership Team to work on Central Business District Revitalization project. Anyone wishing to join, should contact at email wdwfincom@gmail.com
- John Donner, 261 South Street: Mr. Donner was at recent meeting on zoning redistricting and asked if there any updates or any big changes that may be coming?

Motion: A motion to take agenda item J: Discussions out of order was made by Councilor George. The motion was seconded by Councilor Rushton.

A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed 8-0.



DISCUSSIONS (*Taken Out of Order*)

• **Joint Meeting with Town Manager, Finance Committee and School Committee Chair (or designee)**

Mr. Dutton explained; this meeting is dictated by the Charter. It is far too early in the budget process to talk about actual numbers. The Town Manager’s office is striving to come up with a practical, balanced budget. The focus is on a sustainable budget. Mr. Dutton outlined the general objectives: support and promote economic development in town, transition into a true DPW, keep pace on stabilization accounts.

Revenue projections: have developed a better process for watching local revenues closely. Have seen some leveling off in terms of local revenue, but nothing to be alarmed about. They look at state-wide trends and local new growth as well as the Governor’s projections for local aid. Mr. Dutton thanked the Finance Team, and School District for their year-round work. He looks forward to working with the school district on capital needs.

Dr. Prewandowski opened the school committee meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Mr. Wood opened the Finance Committee meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Superintendent Swenson spoke about the school district’s budget process; noting the budget subcommittee meets next Tuesday at 5:30 p.m. The preliminary budget is submitted to the school committee on 1/22, then the school committee votes to accept the preliminary budget, then it becomes the school committee’s budget. The district depends on state aid based on the Governor’s budget which comes out in a few weeks. Mr. Swenson spoke briefly about the School Opportunity Act, which they are hopeful may provide some additional aid, however it seems the funds are geared towards districts that are under performing.

Mr. Wood (Finance Committee) stated he wants Finance Committee to look at year-end financials to study revenues. Mr. Wood always looked at: Public Safety (in terms of response time minutes), no layoffs and no operational override. Mr. Wood echoed challenges noted by Mr. Swenson, stating we don’t always know what the Governor’s budget will be, we don’t always know how many students will be leaving the district and we don’t always know what the growth number will be.

Questions:

Councilor Fitzgibbons asked Mr. Swenson; if state level funds the district, and you increase the spending by 2.5%, that equates to a much larger increase in the assessment to each town. Mr. Swenson agreed. Mr. Fitzgibbons pointed out the town’s assessment is kind of at the mercy of the state.

President Gallagher asked Mr. Swenson if the district received any help for the supplemental bill? Mr. Swenson responded; they don’t know yet. He believes communities with high special education and high population of English language learner students will probably be served a little greater than those who do not have high populations in those areas.

Councilor Fitzgibbons asked Mr. Dutton if the town has the same open book policy with contract negotiations so the CBAs can see what the finance team projects, we have an what will be a fair contract? Mr. Dutton responded; we start every contract negotiation with a review of where we see the next five years headed and where we see health insurance and step increases going.

Dr. Prewandowski closed the School Committee meeting at 8:05 p.m.

Mr. Wood closed the Finance Committee meeting at 8:05 p.m.

**8:05 p.m.: President Gallagher called a brief recess.*

**8:11 p.m.: President Gallagher called the meeting back to order.*

**Return to regular order of business E: Appointments*

APPOINTMENTS - None

HEARINGS - None

LICENSE TRANSACTIONS

- Petition P-2020-001: Annual Renewal - Taxicab License - A & A Metro Transportation - DBA Bill's Taxi

Motion: A motion to approve was made by Councilor Fitzgibbons. The motion was seconded by Councilor George.

Discussion: None



Town of Bridgewater
Town Council Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 7, 2020

A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed 8-0.

- Petition P-2020-002: Annual Renewal – Skips Liquors

Motion: A motion to approve was made by Councilor Fitzgibbons. The motion was seconded by Councilor George.

Discussion: Councilor Fitzgibbons would like to hear from the Town Manager on Certificate of Occupancy issues. Mr. Dutton explained; they have been addressed. The owner has dropped off and staff has approved his as-built. The business needs an inspection from Building Office, but he is on vacation this week. Mr. Fitzgibbons asked if business should be conducted? Mr. Dutton responded; because applicant would be appealing the lack of renewal; they can continue business. Councilor Colombotos stated his belief that no staff member signed off on drainage previously. Mr. Dutton responded; there was no drainage required by the Planning Board when they approved the original site plan. Councilor Colombotos is not comfortable approving this. He has heard from the Planning Board Chair that drainage was required. President Gallagher asked Mr. Dutton if he is comfortable with the Council approving this license? Mr. Dutton responded; yes, we are comfortable.

A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed 7-1 (Councilor Colombotos in the dissent).

PRESENTATIONS

- Bridgewater Citizens for Civility and Respect (BCCR) Update – *Raymond Ajemian*

Mr. Ajemian thanked President Gallagher for reading their proclamation. He explained the history and how the proclamation came to be. BSU, stepped in and helped out with the framing; which is a great community partnership. Mr. Ajemian then spoke about how BCCR came to be because of hate speech. He stated his opinion that things have gotten worse in terms of how diverse people are treated citing several examples. Sam Baumgarten came forward and spoke about his role organizing forums for BCCR. He spoke about the six forums held in the last year.

Beryl Domingo came forward and spoke about the Active Bystander Training which helps people recognize and empowers them to do something. BCCR has done three Active Bystander Trainings.

Vernon Domingo came forward, stating he has been a Bridgewater resident for 33 years. He organizes standouts. They stand out in Bridgewater Common with signs to start the conversation and encourage acceptance of people of different races, religions and ethnicities', which shows that Bridgewater has higher standards.

Mr. Ajemian returned to the podium and appealed to the Council to provide suggestions on how they can do a better job on getting their message out. He wants Bridgewater to be a better place.

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)

Mr. Dutton advised; planning continues. The architect and OPM are meeting with town department heads tomorrow to go over the prospective plan. Councilor Fitzgibbons asked if we are still on track for the next required filing? He asked if it's still a big game of hurry up and wait? Mr. Dutton responded – yes.

- Items for Next Meeting:

- Mr. Fitzgibbons asked for an update on Skips and to keep it as a standing item.
- Councilor George requested an update on the McElwain School
- President Gallagher requested an update on the Paid Parking Program

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION - None

OLD BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS

- Order O-FY20-044: Acceptance of Non-Recurring Revenue to Capital

Motion: A motion to refer to Budget & Finance and Finance Committees was made by Councilor Fitzgibbons. The motion was seconded by Councilor Losche.

Discussion: None



Town of Bridgewater
Town Council Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 7, 2020

A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed 8-0.

- Resolution: R-FY20-007: Amend September 2020 Town Council Meeting Date
This measure was not referred to any committee.

- Resolution: R-FY20-008: East Street Traffic

Councilor Gallagher explained, there have been some incidents on East Street and some banter on social media. He would like the Public Safety Committee to look at the traffic flow in the East Street area.

Motion: A motion to refer to the Public Safety Committee was made by Councilor Fitzgibbons. The motion was seconded by Councilor George.

Discussion: Councilor George noted he is also looking at overall traffic flow in his district. He would like to try to adopt what West Bridgewater has done for texting and take the same approach about speeding.

A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed 8-0.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

- Bill Wood, 388 Hayward Street: Spoke about crosswalk striping legislation. Last weekend Lions took down holiday decorations, had a lot of trouble crossing streets. Wrote frameworks language and sent to his councilors. Attended a CPC meeting a few weeks ago. Architects were in to present plans for Memorial Building. Encouraged council to stay involved in the process.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Councilor Fitzgibbons: Wished all a Happy New Year. Mr. Fitzgibbons thanked all fellow councilors stating; even though we don't always agree, he appreciates the nine different points of view.
- Councilor Colombotos: Wished all a Happy New Year.
- Councilor Losche: Wished all a Happy New Year. Thanked BCCR for coming in to present. Ms. Losche is happy to see they're having an impact in our town and others.
- Councilor Rushton: Gave a shout out to the Fire Department; who over winter break assisted in or delivered four babies in town. Mr. Rushton wished Paul Lameroux best of luck in his retirement.
- Councilor George: Wished all a Happy New Year. Mr. George spoke about an Eagle Scout Project Dedication he and President Gallagher at the VFW.
- Councilor Chase: Wished all a Happy New Year. Mr. Chase noted it is important for the Council to hear from Finance Committee and School Committee. After each of these meetings Mr. Chase always learn something new. Finally, Mr. Chase stated he was impressed by the presence and comments by BCCR.
- Councilor Sousa: Wished all a Happy New Year. There was a safety meeting where discussed putting flashing lights around stop signs. Mr. Sousa agrees we need to do something to make the common a little safer.
- Councilor Gallagher: Thinks this was a good productive meeting and set the tone for the new year.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: A motion to adjourn was made by Councilor Fitzgibbons. The motion was seconded by Councilor George. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed 8-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:51 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 21, 2020, to approve the aforementioned minutes, as submitted by a voice vote (6-0) (Councilors Losche and George not present, District 6 Vacancy).

A TRUE COPY ATTEST:

Ann M. Holmberg
Town Council Clerk