



### **CALL TO ORDER:**

A quorum being duly present, Town Council President Shawn George called the meeting of the Bridgewater Town Council to order at 7:00pm, on March 9, 2021 via Zoom©.

### **PRESENT:**

Council members present via Zoom© were, Timothy Fitzgibbons, Francis Sousa, Matthew Rushton, Shawn George, William Wood, Fred Chase, Aisha Losche and Dennis Gallagher. Town Manager Michael Dutton and Town Attorney Jason Rawlins were also present.

### **ABSENT:**

District 5 Vacancy

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

### **MOMENT OF SILENCE**

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

President George announced: Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Bridgewater Town Council will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. There will be no in person attendance permitted. Citizens who wish to tune in to the meeting may do so via Facebook Live.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- March 9, 2021

**Motion:** Councilor Fitzgibbons made a motion to approve which was duly seconded.

**Discussion:** None

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

Fitzgibbons – YEA; VACANCY; Sousa – YEA; Rushton – ABSENT; George – YEA; Wood – YEA; Chase – YEA; Losche – YEA; Gallagher - YEA. The motion passed 7-0.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT - None**

**PROCLAMATIONS - None**

**CITIZENS OPEN FORUM**

- Marilee Hunt, 80 Austin Street: Ms. Hunt, speaking as the Town Clerk, provided an update on the upcoming Town Election and candidates.

**APPOINTMENTS – None**

*President George paused for 1 minute.*

### **HEARINGS**

- **7:10 p.m. (Continued from 02/23/2021):** Petition P-2021-004: New Lodging House License - 84 South Street, NormaJean Begley & William F. Saba dba, the South Street House  
President George opened the hearing at 7:10 p.m.

No petitioner was present

**Motion:** Councilor Fitzgibbons made a motion to continue the hearing to the first meeting in May at 7:10 p.m., which was duly seconded.

**Discussion:** Councilor Fitzgibbons noted he would like to be sure the Town continues to move forward ensuring zoning is in compliance.

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

Gallagher – YEA; Losche – YEA; Chase – YEA; Wood – YEA; George – YEA; Rushton – ABSENT; Sousa – YEA; VACANCY; Fitzgibbons - YEA. The motion passed 7-0.



## LICENSE TRANSACTIONS

- Petition P-2021-008: New Common Victualler's License - Matt Wood, dba Restoration Coffee, 23 Central Square  
**Motion:** Councilor Fitzgibbons made a motion to approve which was duly seconded.  
**Discussion:** None  
A roll call vote was taken with results recorded as follows:  
Fitzgibbons – YEA; VACANCY; Sousa – YEA; Rushton – ABSENT; George – YEA; Wood – YEA; Chase – YEA; Losche – YEA; Gallagher - YEA. The motion passed 7-0.

## PRESENTATIONS

- Police Department Update – *Police Chief, Christopher Delmonte*  
Chief Delmonte spoke about retired Officer Botelho who passed away yesterday.

*A moment of silence was held in Officer Botelho's memory.*

Chief Delmonte provided a detailed update on the Police Department, speaking about the staffing compliment in the Police Department, and highlighting the fact that they are a fully accredited Police Department. Chief Delmonte provided an update on the new out-building, the upcoming Civil Service exam and recruitment efforts, several grants and the K-9 Unit. Chief Delmonte spoke about the last 12 months at the Police Department, and the dedication of the staff during the pandemic stating he had no staffing issues. Chief Delmonte spoke about the department's reaction to the George Floyd tragedy enumerating efforts the department participated in. Chief Delmonte noted during the last year approximately 25% of the department contracted Covid and there were a few retirements. Finally, Chief Delmonte spoke about departmental promotions, praising and thanking all the men and women in the Bridgewater Police Department. Chief Delmonte answered several questions from Councilors, providing additional information on the department's accreditation, and differences noted in incidents over the past year. The Chief spoke about budgeting for upcoming staffing needs related to upcoming retirements stating he has spoken to the Town Manager and Finance Director. Finally, Chief Delmonte spoke about necessary staffing levels due to residential growth; stating the advice is the department should be approximately 50 officers for a town this size. He also confirmed the retirements were planned. Mr. Dutton added; sometimes retirements are due to the age requirement.

## 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)  
Construction has begun and some additional demolition has been done. They will be placing new foundation forms. Additional site clearings. Internally we have been very pleased with the work this firm does. Mr. Dutton spoke about the good news on the budget stating most of the savings on the budget will go to the Town. They have increased the technology in the FF&E budget lines, which primarily reflects COVID requirements. Mr. Dutton noted lately there have been some neighbor questions about lighting, water runoff and planned retaining wall. He reiterated they are still on target for a projected completion date of July 2022 and the next meeting is Monday, April 12<sup>th</sup>. More information can be found at [www.BridgewaterSchoolProject.com](http://www.BridgewaterSchoolProject.com). Mr. Dutton answered questions from Councilors clarifying the biggest cost savings is in total square footage.
- COVID-19 Update  
See good declining numbers in Bridgewater. The town is hovering around 30 active cases. BSU is at 7 cases. The town has been yellow for two weeks now. Town Hall is fully open for business following recommended protocols. There are a couple of departments who have been impacted by COVID. Mr. Dutton then spoke briefly about vaccines assuring the Council that the Town continues to try to find solutions for citizens who are home bound. He also provided additional information related to BSU having secured permission from state to have a clinic to vaccinate students and others related to BSU, however they don't have the vaccinations. If it comes to pass, then they would be a vaccination site over the summer. The town continues to work to ensure the people of Bridgewater have access to a vaccination site that is not Foxboro.
- FY2022 Budget (Standing Item)



The town is getting close to a balanced budget. The Finance Team has been working closely with the school district and their business manager. Mr. Dutton feels we'll be able to provide a budget that meets the proposed assessment. Additionally, we will hopefully also be able to fund a good chunk of the districts Capital ask. We continue to work with departments on staffing all departments. Mr. Dutton then spoke about funding strategy for departmental positions. At Councilor Fitzgibbons' request, Mr. Dutton spoke about the revenue sharing plan. At Councilor Wood's request Mr. Dutton spoke about the jump in tax revenue from medical marijuana, noting it's the phasing in of the mitigation agreements.

- Items for Next Meeting – *No items were noted at this time.*

#### **DISCUSSIONS**

- Open Meeting Law – Committee Presentations to Town Council  
President George explained he added this based on some feedback he had heard after the last meeting. After reaching out to the Town Manager and Town Attorney we've agreed that in the future when we have committee presentations, we will have committee post a meeting which will help cover all bases on potential OML violation. Councilor Wood asked; if we set up an agenda for a meeting and a quorum (of the invited committee) doesn't show, can the chair still present? Attorney Rawlins responded, yes, they can still present. Councilor Losche noted there is a Councilor Orientation, and this should be included in the orientation.
- Communication Between Town Councilors and Department Heads  
President George has spoken with Town Attorney and Town Manager to clarify whether it's a violation for Councilors to reach out directly to department heads. Mr. George would like to be working within the framework of the Character a little better; the free flow of information is critical. Mr. Dutton added; it doesn't really make sense for him to always be the filtering point. Councilor Wood noted; his practice has been if he has a conversation with a department head, he always lets the Town Manager know. Councilor Fitzgibbons and the Town Attorney had a brief discussion over how the communication fits with the Charter. Attorney Rawlins advised there are specific limitations in the Charter. However, there are circumstances where it's permissible or useful to talk with department heads.
- Adoption of Mission Statements by Town Council Committees  
Strategic Planning Committee Chair Chase explained the question came up in committee about what the proper purpose and focus of the Strategic Planning Committee should be. Through their discussion the question came up of whether there should be a purpose statement not only for Strategic Planning but for all council committees. Councilor Fitzgibbons suggested it would be good to amend the Council Rules & Procedures document to include a mission statement for each committee. Councilor Wood agreed; all committees should come up with some type of short mission statement which gets folded into the Rules & Procedures.

#### **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:**

#### **LEGISLATION FOR ACTION**

- Order O-FY21-031: Establish Town Manager Goals  
President George read the committee dispositions.  
**Motion:** Councilor Fitzgibbons made a motion to approve which was duly seconded.  
**Motion:** Councilor Fitzgibbons made a motion to amend as presented which was duly seconded.  
**Discussion:** Councilor Wood requested the document be available on the website with amendments viewable.  
A roll call vote was taken with results recorded as follows:  
Gallagher – YEA; Losche – YEA; Chase – YEA; Wood – YEA; George – YEA; Rushton – ABSENT; Sousa – YEA; VACANCY; Fitzgibbons - YEA. The motion passed 7-0.  
**Discussion (on main motion):**  
A roll call vote was taken with results recorded as follows:  
Fitzgibbons – YEA; VACANCY; Sousa – YEA; Rushton – ABSENT; George – YEA; Wood – YEA; Chase – YEA; Losche – YEA; Gallagher - YEA. The motion to approve, as amended, passed 7-0.



Town of Bridgewater  
Town Council Meeting – Virtual Via Zoom©  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, March 9, 2021

- Resolution R-FY21-005: SERSG Inter-Municipal Agreement Reauthorization and Amendment

**Motion:** Councilor Fitzgibbons made a motion to approve which was duly seconded.

**Discussion:** None

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

Gallagher – YEA; Losche – YEA; Chase – YEA; Wood – YEA; George – YEA; Rushton – ABSENT; Sousa – YEA; VACANCY; Fitzgibbons - YEA. The motion passed 7-0.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

- Ordinance D-FY21-006: General Ordinance - Amend Administrative Code, Part II, Article III, Sections 7 and 16  
President George read committee dispositions.

**Motion:** Councilor Sousa made a motion send to advertising which was duly seconded. MT send to advertising:

**Discussion:** None

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

Fitzgibbons – YEA; VACANCY; Sousa – YEA; Rushton – ABSENT; George – YEA; Wood – YEA; Chase – YEA; Losche – YEA; Gallagher - YEA. The motion passed 7-0.

#### **NEW BUSINESS - None**

#### **CITIZEN COMMENTS**

- Keith Buohl, 10 Fieldcrest Road: Thanked Chief Delmonte for his presentation and the accolades he offered to his department and noted Chief Delmonte should also be recognized for his leadership. Mr. Buohl then spoke about the lodging house hearing stating his opinion that the legality question raised by citizens should have been addressed.
- Dr. Carlton Hunt, 80 Austin Street: Dr. Hunt's comments could not be heard due to audio issues.

#### **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

- Councilor Gallagher: No comments
- Councilor Losche: No comments
- Councilor Chase: Thanked Chief Delmonte for his presentation and reminded all to remain cautious as COVID protocols being relaxed.
- Councilor Wood: Congratulated Councilor Losche and her family. Mr. Wood spoke about holding committee meetings via Zoom; noting they are very productive, and he appreciates the videos being on YouTube. He would like to consider asking to do committees virtually, once in person meetings are available again.
- Councilor Rushton: Absent
- Councilor Sousa: Thanked Chief Delmonte for his presentation.
- Councilor Fitzgibbons: Thanked the Chief for his presentation, stating the best vote he ever cast was to appoint Chief Delmonte. Mr. Fitzgibbons then spoke about the passing of Officer Botelho.
- Councilor George: Thanked Chief Delmonte for his presentation and congratulated Councilor Losche and noted the passing of Councilor Rushton's father.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Motion:** Councilor Fitzgibbons made a motion to enter into Executive Session under MGL, Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(6) To consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body and to adjourn from Executive Session, which was duly seconded.

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

Gallagher – YEA; Losche – YEA; Chase – YEA; Wood – YEA; George – YEA; Rushton – ABSENT; Sousa – YEA; VACANCY; Fitzgibbons - YEA. The motion passed 7-0.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Open session adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

Minutes submitted in draft form by: Ann Holmberg



Town of Bridgewater  
Town Council Meeting – Virtual Via Zoom©  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, March 9, 2021

**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 23, 2021, to approve the aforementioned minutes, as submitted by a Roll Call vote (6-0) (Councilor Rushton abstained, Vacancy – District 5, Councilor George absent).**

**A TRUE COPY ATTEST:**

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Ann M. Holmberg  
Town Council Clerk