



### **CALL TO ORDER:**

A quorum being duly present, Town Council President Dennis Gallagher called the meeting of the Bridgewater Town Council to order at 7:33 pm, on April 7, 2020 virtually, via Zoom®.

### **PRESENT:**

Council members in attendance via Zoom were, Francis Sousa, Fred Chase, Mark Linde, Shawn George, Dennis Gallagher, Matthew Rushton, Aisha Losche, Peter Colombotos and Timothy Fitzgibbons. Town Manager Michael Dutton and Town Attorney Jason Rawlins were also present.

### **ABSENT:**

No Councilors were absent

*President Gallagher announced the meeting is being held virtually via Zoom® 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. He further announced all votes must be taken by roll call and outlined meeting etiquette.*

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

### **MOMENT OF SILENCE**

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

- Donald Bullock

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- March 10, 2020

**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:

Sousa – YEA; Chase – YEA; Linde – YEA; George – YEA; Gallagher – YEA; Rushton – YEA; Losche – YEA; Colombotos - YEA; Fitzgibbons - YEA. The motion passed 9-0.

- March 16, 2020 (Special Emergency Meeting)

**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; Colombotos – YEA; Losche – YEA; Rushton – YEA; Gallagher – YEA; George – YEA; Linde – YEA; Chase – YEA; Sousa - ABSTAIN. The motion passed 8-0-1.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT**

- Charter Review Committee

President Gallagher will be making appointments to the Charter Review Committee at the next meeting on 4/21/20.

### **PROCLAMATIONS** *None*

### **CITIZENS OPEN FORUM** – *None*

### **APPOINTMENTS**

### **HEARINGS**

### **LICENSE TRANSACTIONS**

- Petition P-2020-008: New Common Victualler's License - Ronald John Emma, DBA Ronnie Waffles, 1400 Pleasant Street

Mr. Dutton explained this was a s Common Victualler's license and there was no objection by staff.

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



**Discussion:** Councilor Fitzgibbons expressed his support for the business.

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

Sousa – YEA; Chase – YEA; Linde – YEA; George – YEA; Gallagher – YEA; Rushton – YEA; Losche – YEA; Colombotos - YEA; Fitzgibbons - YEA. The motion passed 9-0.

## PRESENTATIONS

### TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Dutton reported on information about various activities happening around town and highlighted meetings and events. Items of note included:

Thanked the Town Council and staff for their efforts and support.

- Mitchell School Update

Committee met last evening. The OPM had submitted design development documents to the MSBA on March 16<sup>th</sup>. We received comments back from MSBA on the last day of March. The Committee is formulating the responses. The designer, architect, OPM and representatives from the school district have been meeting virtually, reaching out to the town to refine the plans. The project is still on time and on budget. The demolition of the old school is on schedule and will go out to bid next week. If all goes well, look to award by May 19<sup>th</sup>. The construction of the new school should last approximately 18 months and we look to open September, 2022. The Building Committee meetings are typically held the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday's of the month. The next meeting is scheduled for April 27<sup>th</sup>. Information can be found at: [www.bridgewaterschoolproject.com](http://www.bridgewaterschoolproject.com).

- Councilor Fitzgibbons asked if the questions that came back were normal parts of the process and won't slow things down? Mr. Dutton confirmed that is correct.

- COVID-19 and Budget Impact

Mr. Dutton walked through the efforts to date, noting there is an emergency team meeting every morning to assess the situation. Bridgewater is looking at 15 active cases (active meaning potentially infectious cases). Employees have been equipped with technology to work from home as best we can. Mail/package processing is challenging but working. Treasurer/Collector's office is processing payments. Bills are being paid and inspections are taking place and permits are being issued. The Library is currently closed, the golf course and recreation fields are closed. Veterans office is closed, but available by phone. Police and Fire are working relatively normal hours. Fire Department has added an ambulance and paramedics dedicated specifically to COVID-19. Elder Services closed to the public but is delivering Meals On Wheels. At Councilor George's request, Mr. Dutton advised the communication between the Town and the Department of Corrections is dramatically improved. Mr. Dutton also confirmed that the Transfer Station is open regular hours and practicing social distancing and safety precautions. Mr. Dutton went on to advise on the budgetary impacts the Town is facing. Fiscal year 20 and 21 need to be reworked, which the Finance Director is working on. For the balance of this fiscal year we will likely see a significant drop in local receipts, meals and lodging revenue, golf revenue. The DOR has advised there will be no 9C cuts. We have frozen discretionary spending and hiring and identified several savings opportunities across all departments. The goal is to do everything we can to finish the year without any stabilization transfer. There will be some inter-departmental transfers, which we do at the end of every year. Back in January, the Governor indicated local aid would increase by approximately 2.8%, but now we're anticipating no increase or a slight reduction in local aid, but we don't know yet. In terms of local receipts, we're looking at the second motor vehicle commitment and new growth. We're keeping careful tabs on projects in pipeline to see if they will continue. Previously Mr. Dutton reported an approximate deficit of \$200K on the FY21 budget, but that will be different now. We will not have solid projections for 4-5 weeks. Normally Mr. Dutton would be submitting a balanced budget now, but he is now projecting a 5/19 submission at the earliest.



- Councilor Fitzgibbons asked; for FY21; the best-case would-be level services i.e., keep everyone employed; is that the plan? Mr. Dutton responded; he thinks that's the best we can hope for. Councilor Fitzgibbons asked if that might mean dipping into stabilization funds which have been grown for just this type of scenario? Mr. Dutton agreed, that was correct, but if that happened, it would be a very broad and robust discussion.
- President Gallagher will be calling a Budget & Finance Committee meeting soon. However, he does not think there will be a reduction on what the state has promised for 2021. He hears there will be some type of formula for reimbursement of costs related to COVID-19.
- Councilor Colombotos asked; since many things are shut down, are there any costs that down? Mr. Dutton responded; at this time, we've committed to paying staff, however, if this goes on longer than is currently projected, we'll have to take a hard look at that. Virtually everyone is doing something. Mr. Dutton's charge is making sure people are engaged and have work to do.
- Memorial Building Office Space  
Mr. Dutton displayed visual of the Memorial Building. He outlined some of the history and discussed plans for future use noting it would house, the Water & Sewer Superintendent, DPW Director, Town Engineer, two staff and meeting space. He then spoke about the suggested use of the Highway Barn and the viability, stating that location is not an appropriate workspace. Ultimately, they are looking to create some semblance of a campus.
  - Councilor Colombotos asked if Mr. Dutton would share the plan or relevant documents. He then stated is opinion that it looks like there is no public use, which was not its original use. Mr. Colombotos is concerned about using CPA funds.
  - Councilor Sousa agreed with Councilor Colombotos, voicing his strong opposition to the plan.as the building was originally set up as a memorial to the veterans and this plan is for office space.
- Items for Next Meeting – *No items at this time.*

## DISCUSSIONS

- Annual Town Election
  - District 5 and 6 Councilor Status  
President Gallagher stated he confirmed with the Town Attorney, that should the Council vote to postpone the election to June 27, 2020, the terms for District 3, 5 and 6 will extend to that date.  
President Gallagher acknowledged the Town Clerk's presence at the meeting, stating he would invite her to speak. He explained they had a meeting yesterday and it is her wish that the Council adjust the time of the election.  
**Motion:** Councilor Fitzgibbons made a motion to allow the Town Clerk to speak which was duly seconded.  
A roll call vote was taken with results recorded as follows:  
Fitzgibbons – YEA; Colombotos – YEA; Losche – YEA; Rushton – YEA; Gallagher – YEA; George – YEA; Linde – YEA; Chase – YEA; Sousa - YEA. The motion passed 9-0.

Town Clerk, Marilee Kenney Hunt explained; she is asking for reduction of hours for the election. There is no state mandate of what the hours must be, except the election needs to be four hours. Our current hours are from 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.; staff is there prior to the election start and after the close. It seems like a lot for a fairly small election. We have permission to extend early voting by mail and restrictions on absentee ballots have been greatly reduced. Ms. Hunt plans to promote vote by mail as much as possible. Ms. Hunt suggests the hours be set at 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Ms. Hunt noted June 27<sup>th</sup> is the Saturday before July 4<sup>th</sup>. Shortening the hours could also save money by not needing to provide breakfast and lunch for the volunteers.

Councilor Fitzgibbons noted the election needs to be coordinated with Raynham due to the School Committee election. Mr. Fitzgibbons believes at this time; this may be warranted.

- April 21, 2020 Town Council Meeting Time Change



President Gallagher explained, with the virtual environment he wondered if there would be an interest in moving the meeting of 4/21/20 to a 7:00 p.m. start.

**Motion:** Councilor Fitzgibbons made a motion to move the start time to 7:00 p.m. for the meeting of April 21st which was duly seconded.

**Discussion:** President Gallagher noted there are hearings that evening, this will allow time to handle business before those hearings.

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

Sousa – YEA; Chase – YEA; Linde – YEA; George – YEA; Gallagher – YEA; Rushton – YEA; Losche – YEA; Colombotos - YEA; Fitzgibbons - YEA. The motion passed 9-0.

#### **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS - None**

#### **LEGISLATION FOR ACTION**

- Ordinance D-FY20-002: General Ordinance - Dumpsters in Residential Zoning Districts  
President Gallagher read the committee and advertising information.

**Motion:** Councilor Fitzgibbons made a motion to continue to April 21, 2020 which was duly seconded.

**Discussion:** None

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

Fitzgibbons – YEA; Colombotos – YEA; Losche – YEA; Rushton – YEA; Gallagher – YEA; George – YEA; Linde – YEA; Chase – YEA; Sousa - YEA. The motion passed 9-0.

- Petition P-2020-011: Annual Town Election Warrant - Date Change - June 27, 2020  
President Gallagher read the

**Motion:** Councilor Fitzgibbons made a motion to move the election to June 27th which was duly seconded.

**Discussion:** President Gallagher asked Attorney Rawlins to advise on how to proceed and consider changing the time of the election. Attorney Rawlins stated; the warrant should specify the time. Before you vote the warrant, you should figure out if you want to change the time. Because of the timing, if you want to change the time legislation would have to put on as emergency measure, at the next meeting where you could vote the emergency and vote the time change issue first, then vote the warrant. In essence, you would continue the vote on the warrant, then next meeting have emergency measure before you relative to the time period of the election. If that is voted in the affirmative, you would vote the warrant with the new time. If the emergency measure if voted down, you would vote the warrant with the current Town Code time. Councilor George would like to continue the matter to consider changing the hours.

Councilor Fitzgibbons withdraw the motion to change the date to June 27th.

Councilor Fitzgibbons asked Attorney Rawlins if the Council can postpone the election four days before the currently scheduled election. Attorney Rawlins confirmed the new law allows municipalities to postpone up to the day before.

**Motion:** Councilor Fitzgibbons made a motion to continue to next meeting which was duly seconded.

**Discussion:** President Gallagher stated his opinion that While he respects the position of the Town Clerk, he does not think the hours need to be changed. We are complicating things at a late hour. However, he may be agreeable to changing the hours to mirror Raynham's (10:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.). Attorney Rawlins advised someone should put forward an emergency measure that should go before the vote of the warrant. Councilor Fitzgibbons stated he will sponsor that Order and asked Mr. Rawlins to please assist with the language.

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

Sousa – YEA; Chase – NO; Linde – NO; George – YEA; Gallagher – NO; Rushton – YEA; Losche – YEA; Colombotos - YEA; Fitzgibbons - YEA. The motion passed 6-3.

#### **OLD BUSINESS - None**



## NEW BUSINESS

- Order O-FY20-048: Acceptance of a Gift - Howard Foundation for Council on Aging  
**Motion:** Councilor George made a motion to refer to the Budget & Finance and Finance Committees which was duly seconded.  
**Discussion:** None  
A roll call vote was taken with results recorded as follows:  
Fitzgibbons – YEA; Colombotos – YEA; Losche – YEA; Rushton – YEA; Gallagher – YEA; George – YEA; Linde – YEA; Chase – YEA; Sousa - YEA. The motion passed 9-0.
- Order O-FY20-049: Acceptance of a Gift - Council on Aging  
**Motion:** Councilor Fitzgibbons made a motion to refer to the Budget & Finance and Finance Committees which was duly seconded.  
**Discussion:** None  
A roll call vote was taken with results recorded as follows:  
Sousa – YEA; Chase – YEA; Linde – YEA; George – YEA; Gallagher – YEA; Rushton – YEA; Losche – YEA; Colombotos - YEA; Fitzgibbons - YEA. The motion passed 9-0.
- Order O-FY20-050: Home Rule Petition - Town of Bridgewater Charter Amendment - Councilor Term Limits  
Councilor Losche explained; this is to help clarify what the Charter is saying by removing one word.  
**Motion:** Councilor Fitzgibbons made a motion to refer to the Rules & Procedures Committee which was duly seconded.  
**Discussion:**  
A roll call vote was taken with results recorded as follows:  
Fitzgibbons – YEA; Colombotos – YEA; Losche – YEA; Rushton – YEA; Gallagher – YEA; George – YEA; Linde – YEA; Chase – YEA; Sousa - YEA. The motion passed 9-0.

## CITIZEN COMMENTS - None

## COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Councilor Sousa: Thanked the first responders for their hard work during this time.
- Councilor Chase: Echoed Mr. Sousa's sentiment. Mr. Chase acknowledged people who are volunteering to make masks.
- Councilor Linde: Thanked the people who made the masks. He went on to thank the town employees for their work.
- Councilor George: Echoed previous comments. Mr. George acknowledged the outpouring of neighbors helping neighbors.
- Councilor Rushton: Thanked Mr. Dutton and the team of Town employees. He appreciates all the updates. Mr. Rushton thanked all employees, in particular, the public safety staff. He also thanked the President of BSU for housing for our public safety staff.
- Councilor Losche: Echoed all previous sentiments, thanking everyone for the effort of working from home. Ms. Losche thanked the School District. She has child who is learning online and doing well.
- Councilor Colombotos: Quoted Queen Elizabeth and ascribed it to Bridgewater, "I hope in the years to come everyone will be able to take pride in how they responded to this challenge. Those who come after us will say that the [Bridgewaterites] of this generation were as strong as any. That the attributes of self-discipline, of quiet, good-humored resolve, and of fellow feeling still characterize this [town]. The pride in who we are is not part of our past, it's part of our present and our future."
- Councilor Fitzgibbons: Stated "Together we can". We can get through this. Mr. Fitzgibbons thanked President Gallagher for running a good meeting. He noted; he's been out driving, and asked people to be careful when out driving around. There are a lot more kids on bikes these days.
- Councilor Gallagher: Echoed previous comments, noting he appreciates the Town Manager keeping us all up to date on this issue. We are all in this together.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION** – *No Executive Session was held.*



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

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

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

Fitzgibbons – YEA; Colombotos – YEA; Losche – YEA; Rushton – YEA; Gallagher – YEA; George – YEA; Linde – YEA; Chase – YEA; Sousa - YEA. The motion passed 9-0.

The meeting adjourned at 9:08 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, April 21, 2020, to approve the aforementioned minutes, as submitted by a roll call vote (9-0).**

**A TRUE COPY ATTEST:**

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Ann M. Holmberg  
Town Council Clerk