



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 January 5, 2021 via Zoom©.

PRESENT:

Council members present via Zoom© were, Timothy Fitzgibbons, Peter Colombotos, 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: *No Councilors were absent.*

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MOMENT OF SILENCE

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

- John F. Good
- Patrick K. Gannon

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

- December 15, 2020

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

Discussion: None

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

Fitzgibbons – NOT PRESENT; Colombotos – YEA; Sousa – YEA; Rushton – YEA; George – YEA; Wood – YEA; Chase – YEA; Losche – YEA; Gallagher - YEA. The motion passed 8-0.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

- President George announced his intention to hold the annual joint meeting as required by Home Rule Charter Article IV, Section 6-1 on January 19, 2021.

PROCLAMATIONS - *None*

CITIZENS OPEN FORUM

- Marilee Kenney Hunt, 80 Austin Street: Ms. Hunt spoke as the Town Clerk, thanking Councilor Sousa for the coat tree made for the Town Clerk’s office. Reminded public that dog licenses are due now until end of February. Local Street list census has been mailed out just before Christmas. Papers are available for anyone wishing to run in the April town election. Ms. Hunt stated she has not received an answer on whether the District 5 (Councilor) vacancy should appear on the ballot and is hoping the Council can provide an answer this evening.

APPOINTMENTS - *None*

HEARINGS - *None*

LICENSE TRANSACTIONS

- Petition P-2020-035: Annual Renewal - Common Victualler’s - (no alcohol)
Mr. Dutton stated there are no issues with the renewals.

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:



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

- Petition P-2021-001: New Common Victualler's License - Geo & A Inc., dba Chessmen's Pizza, 16 Central Square Mr. Dutton explained this is a new license necessitated by a transfer of ownership.

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

Discussion: Mr. Wood wished the new owner good luck.

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

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

PRESENTATIONS - None

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)
Bids came in very favorably for the town and the district. The next meeting is January 11th to finalize numbers. We are still on track for completion date of July 8th, 2022. The town has worked very closely with the district on bonding scenarios and how that will work with the Town budget. They are moving forward with a bond for \$35MM with the town's support. More information is available at www.bridgewaterproject.com Councilor Fitzgibbons asked if the \$35MM being bonded – is the full obligation of the Town? Mr. Dutton responded that's the majority of the Town's obligation, noting you never want to over-bond. Councilor Fitzgibbons reminded all there is a tax calculator on the Town's website.
- COVID-19 Update
The community numbers are holding steady at approximately 100. BSU has fewer cases. DOC has escalated to 60-70. Mr. Dutton spoke about changes to CARES Act, noting much of it is the same for us, but reimbursements have been extended out to 12/31/21. We can continue to track expenses and seek reimbursement wisely but aggressively. Mr. Dutton spoke briefly about staff testing and the increase in quarantines due to family exposures. The Academy Building has moved to being open by appointment only. Staff are working from home or split schedules. January 11th is currently the date planned for staff to return to the building. Finally, Mr. Dutton stated there is a meeting tomorrow to review the inoculation site. He noted he hasn't been entirely pleased with the lack of communication/instruction from the state.
- FY2022 Budget (Standing Item)
Mr. Dutton spoke about the Budget Resolution, which is with Finance Committee for drafting. The Finance Director has been working with the Finance Committee's subcommittee. We are doing a more thorough analysis of Ambulance Receipts and looking at New Growth. The next step will be a thorough analysis of unbuilt properties in town and look at historical development rates. Updates to the indirect cost analysis. On the expense side, work will be focused on collective bargaining agreements. Councilor Fitzgibbons asked how revenues are tracking. Mr. Dutton responded, we anticipate in terms of revenue we may do better than expected, which would reduce the amount needed to take out of stabilization. Councilor Gallagher followed up on report from the State Auditor's Office relative to PILOT money. Mr. Dutton stated, we don't get a lot of PILOT money, but we do get some. He will follow up with the Assessor.
- Academy Building Update – Capital Items
Mr. Dutton spoke briefly about the installation of the automatic door openers on the Bedford Street side of the building stating pricing came in a little more favorably than expected and it will be included in the 2021 (b) Capital Appropriation. There will also have some selective re-painting in the spring and a lot of technological updates in the building.
- 2021 Committee Presentations Update



We ran through most of the list prior to COVID shutdown in March. We will get back to the presentations beginning with next meeting with Finance Committee. President George requested the Recreation Board present at the meeting after the 19th.

- Items for Next Meeting - *No items were put forward at this time.*

DISCUSSIONS

Councilor George requested a discussion item be added to the next agenda for guidance related to the District 5 Vacant seat as he was unaware there was any lack of direction. Attorney Rawlins responded, he doesn't think it's an issue that the Council votes on, and was unaware there was confusion. Based on the fact that the seat is vacant, although being filled by Councilor Colombotos as a holdover, there should be a candidate to be put forward for the next election to serve out the remainder of the term. There should be availability for people to pull papers for District 5.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS - None

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION

- Ordinance D-FY21-003: Zoning Ordinance - Zoning Map Amendment - Pleasant Street
President George read the committee dispositions.

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

Discussion: Councilor Wood is hoping in the future there is some vetting before it comes before the council. Councilor Losche clarified that this is something the council has been working on for quite some time and had been vetted. She thanked the Planning Board and Community & Economic Development team. Councilor Wood then explained the issue that needed to be worked out in committee.

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

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

OLD BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS

- Order O-FY21-026: Laying Out and Acceptance of a Private Way - Stonehill Lane

Motion: Councilor Fitzgibbons made a motion to declare the Council's intent to lay out the way which was duly seconded.

Discussion: Councilor Fitzgibbons explained he sponsored this order as the road is in his district.

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.

Motion: Councilor Fitzgibbons made a motion to refer to the Planning Board for a non-binding recommendation 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 – YEA; Sousa – YEA; Colombotos – YEA; Fitzgibbons - YEA. The motion passed 9-0.

- Order O-FY21-027: Transfer Order – Employee Contractual Buyout

Mr. Dutton explained this is for employees who have already left.

Motion: Councilor Fitzgibbons made a motion to refer to Budget & Finance and Finance Committees which was duly seconded.

Discussion: Councilor Fitzgibbons asked the Town Manager if we are trying to spread these out over fiscal years? Mr. Dutton responded, not the ones in front of you, but some of the upcoming requests will be.

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

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

- Order O-FY21-028: Acceptance of a Private Donation



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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:

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

CITIZEN COMMENTS - None

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Councilor Fitzgibbons: Mr. Fitzgibbons thanked Jennifer Burke (CED Director) for some constituent service.
- Councilor Colombotos: No comments.
- Councilor Sousa: No comments.
- Councilor Rushton: No comments.
- Councilor Wood: Mr. Wood’s New Year’s Resolution is to speak slower during comments. He spoke about the holiday lights which were taken down Saturday, thanking Councilor Gallagher and other Lions who helped. If people have ideas on ways to enhance the lights, he is more than happy to hear about it.
- Councilor Chase: No comments.
- Councilor Losche: Wished all a Happy New Year. Ms. Losche welcomed all constituents in District 1 to pull papers. Ms. Losche cannot run because she will be moving. Finally, she encouraged people to get involved and volunteer for any of the open spots.
- Councilor Gallagher: Wished all a Happy New Year.
- Councilor George: Wished all Happy New Year and encouraged people to inquire if interested in any council seat.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – *No Executive Session was held.*

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:48 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 19, 2021, to approve the aforementioned minutes, as submitted by a Roll Call vote (8-0) (Councilor Colombotos not present).
 A TRUE COPY ATTEST:**

Ann M. Holmberg
 Town Council Clerk