



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 April 6, 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 including:

- Ronald Rushton
- Enio Alberghini
- Thomas Curran
- Robert Smith
- Robert Cavicchi

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 23, 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 – D5; Sousa – YEA; Rushton – YEA; George – ABSTAIN; Wood – YEA; Chase – YEA; Losche – YEA; Gallagher - YEA. The motion passed 7-0-1.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

PROCLAMATIONS

CITIZENS OPEN FORUM

- Jill Sheridan, Pleasant Street: Ms. Sheridan spoke at length about the festival/political rally held on Legion Field asking how it was allowed to happen and asked who funded the Police presence there. Ms. Sheridan spoke about the backlash she and her family have encountered since that day.
- Mark Linde, 56 Michael Road: Would like to know if there will be answers to Ms. Sheridan’s questions asked at the meeting two weeks ago.
- Jeff Daniels, 20 Maple Avenue: Mr. Daniels reiterated his experience at the rally stating he and his children stopped by and had a very good experience.
- Suzi Robinson, 20 Holly Lane: Ms. Robinson echoed Mr. Linde’s question – how and when is the Town Council responding stating her opinion that it is incumbent on the Council to be responsive to the people you are representing.



APPOINTMENTS - None

HEARINGS - None

LICENSE TRANSACTIONS - None

PRESENTATIONS

• General Budget Presentation – *Town Manager*

Mr. Dutton spoke about the principles taken into account when doing the budget briefly explaining, cash, budget, long term, service level, reserve, and capital solvency. He then spoke about the value of the Budget Resolution the Council votes each year.

Mr. Dutton shared a Sources and Uses document (included in published budget materials) and gave a general overview of revenues; explaining the information in detail, highlighting areas increased in the State and Local receipts and funding from Transfers/Reserves. Mr. Dutton answered questions from Councilors relative to the 2.5% increase, the B-R debt exclusion. Finance Director, Anthony Sulmonte explained the change in New Growth due to a new protocol for providing New Growth actual data much earlier in the year, agreeing with Councilor Gallagher that the increase is an anomaly.

Mr. Dutton then gave a general overview of the expenses included in the budget, highlighting any areas of change within departments. He also spoke briefly about the health insurance benefits expense and liability insurance increase as well as the school assessments, and snow and ice deficit. Mr. Dutton then answered general questions from councilors.

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)

Foundation work continues. They are working on water lines and filtration systems. The project budget is down to \$67,647 which will positively affect our reimbursement rate from the state. However, those are tentative numbers. We are waiting for MSBA to confirm the numbers. We continue to be on track for 7/8/2022 finish. More information can be found at www.bridgewaterschoolproject.com.

• COVID-19 Update

There has been a very slight bump in infection rates. We continue to hover at a 3.1% infection rate with about 30 community cases. BSU has seven cases in quarantine. We continue to be diligent in Town Hall ensuring all wear masks. We are asking the public for patience if there are offices that are not open. Mr. Dutton then provided an update on a possible regional vaccination site on the BSU campus. BSU has put together a plan and are waiting for approval from DPH. If approved, BSU can get the site up and running in a day or two. The state asks 750 doses/day, which BSU can easily handle. At Councilor Gallagher's request, Mr. Dutton gave an update on COVID reimbursements. The Town has some outstanding amounts and a number of submissions under review, but it takes Plymouth County time to review and approve and send. Mr. Dutton has not received any guidance yet on the American Recovery Act process.

• Update on Town Common – WWI Memorial and Common Rail Repairs

The large concrete blocks are gone, and the rails are back in. It was difficult to source the granite posts, which accounted for the delays. The flagpole should be reset in a week and a half to two weeks. Mr. Dutton then provided an update on plans for WWI repairs advising mitigation funds from the Broad Street project (should it be approved) will help pay for the repairs. If that is not successful, the funding will be included in the next Capital request. Mr. Dutton noted the project has been very slow because all capital projects were frozen due to COVID. President George asked if monitoring could be implemented now that WIFI has been expanded at Academy Building to the Common.

• High Street Truck Traffic/Bridge

Mr. Dutton acknowledged we are aware of the concerns about heavy trucks on High Street. They have reached out to DOT about possibility of truck exclusion, but we will not be able to reach the stipulations required by DOT.



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Mr. Dutton's office has had conversation with BRS requesting their drivers use main roads. They've been pretty accommodating. President George asked if we need to go to DOT if we wanted a weight limit sign or only if we want to restrict vehicles. Mr. Dutton responded, either. He is not sure where the signs went but it is possible DOT removed them. The bridge is assessed (by DOT) every couple of years for weight limit.

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

DISCUSSIONS - None

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION

- Petition P-2021-009: Rescind and Revote Annual Town Election Warrant - 2021

Mr. Dutton briefly explained the need for the re-vote being due to a seat being mistakenly omitted from the original warrant.

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 – YEA; Sousa – YEA; VACANCY – D5; Fitzgibbons - YEA. The motion passed 8-0.

OLD BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS

- Ordinance D-FY21-007: General Ordinance - Amend Administrative Code, Part II, Chapter 157

Councilor Chase explained the ordinance in detail.

Motion: Councilor Fitzgibbons made a motion to refer to the Rules & Procedures committee which was duly seconded.

Discussion: Councilors expressed support for sending to committee.

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

Fitzgibbons – YEA; VACANCY – D5; Sousa – YEA; Rushton – YEA; George – YEA; Wood – YEA; Chase – YEA; Losche – YEA; Gallagher - YEA. The motion passed 8-0.

- Order O-FY21-033: Acceptance of a Gift - Howard Foundation for COA

Motion: Councilor Fitzgibbons made a motion to refer to Budget & Finance and Finance Committees 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 – YEA; Sousa – YEA; VACANCY – D5; Fitzgibbons - YEA. The motion passed 8-0.

- Order O-FY21-034: Acceptance of a Grant - MAPC Transportation Partnership Grant

Mr. Dutton briefly explained the order.

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

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

Fitzgibbons – YEA; VACANCY – D5; Sousa – YEA; Rushton – YEA; George – YEA; Wood – YEA; Chase – YEA; Losche – YEA; Gallagher - YEA. The motion passed 8-0.

- Order O-FY21-035: Acceptance of Gift - Claremont Lakeside Gift for Tree Planting

Mr. Dutton briefly explained the order.

Motion: Councilor Fitzgibbons made a motion to refer to 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; VACANCY – D5; Fitzgibbons - YEA. The motion passed 8-0.



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- Order O-FY21-037: Transfer Order - CPC Parks & Recreation Pickle Ball Court Project
Motion: Councilor Fitzgibbons made a motion to refer to the Budget & Finance and Finance Committees which was duly seconded.
Discussion: Councilors expressed their support of the measure.
A roll call vote was taken with results recorded as follows:
Fitzgibbons – YEA; VACANCY – D5; Sousa – YEA; Rushton – YEA; George – YEA; Wood – YEA; Chase – YEA; Losche – YEA; Gallagher - YEA. The motion passed 8-0.
- Order O-FY21-036: Transfer Order - Elm Street Capital Fund Replenishment
Motion: Councilor Fitzgibbons made a motion to refer to Budget & Finance and Finance Committees which was duly seconded.
Discussion: Mr. Dutton briefly reminded the Council of the history behind this replenishment.
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; VACANCY – D5; Fitzgibbons - YEA. The motion passed 8-0.
- Order O-FY21-038: Transfer Order - Completed CPC Legion Field Fencing Project
Mr. Dutton briefly explained the order.
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:
Fitzgibbons – YEA; VACANCY – D5; Sousa – YEA; Rushton – YEA; George – YEA; Wood – YEA; Chase – YEA; Losche – YEA; Gallagher - YEA. The motion passed 8-0.
- Order O-FY21-039: Acceptance of One-Time Revenue - Claremont Lakeside Viva for Public Safety
Mr. Dutton briefly explained the order.
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; VACANCY – D5; Fitzgibbons - YEA. The motion passed 8-0.

FY2022 Budget Orders

President George requested the Council Clerk to schedule the budget hearing for 5/11/2021.

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

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

Fitzgibbons – YEA; VACANCY – D5; Sousa – YEA; Rushton – YEA; George – YEA; Wood – YEA; Chase – YEA; Losche – YEA; Gallagher - YEA. The motion passed 8-0.

- Order O-FY22-001: Budget Order - FY22 Annual Town Budget
Referred to Budget & Finance and Finance Committees per motion above.
- Order O-FY22-002: Budget Order - FY22 Water Enterprise Fund Budget
Referred to Budget & Finance and Finance Committees per motion above.
- Order O-FY22-003: Budget Order - FY22 Sewer Enterprise Fund Budget
Referred to Budget & Finance and Finance Committees per motion above.
- Order O-FY22-004: Budget Order - FY22 Transfer Station Enterprise Fund Budget
Referred to Budget & Finance and Finance Committees per motion above.
- Order O-FY22-005: Budget Order - FY22 OSLGC Enterprise Fund Budget
Referred to Budget & Finance and Finance Committees per motion above.



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- Order O-FY22-006: Authorization of Revolving Funds
Referred to Budget & Finance and Finance Committees per motion above.
- Order O-FY22-007: CPA Reserve Accounts - FY22
Referred to Budget & Finance and Finance Committees per motion above.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

- Vernon Domingo, Saddle Drive: Spoke in support of ordinance to allow flags to be flown.
- Rebecca Cordeiro, Deerfield Drive: Ms. Cordeiro spoke in support of the ordinance to allow flags to be flown. She also expressed thanks to Mr. Chase for putting the ordinance forward.
- Jill Sheridan, Pleasant Street: Ms. Sheridan spoke about the rally two weeks ago. She would like the Town Council to answer the question of how the rally was funded. Ms. Sheridan is concerned that she is having threats to family and feels she has had no response from Public Safety. She feels this needs to be addressed here, tonight.

President George briefly responded; stating the Council has to follow the Open Meeting Law. Attorney Rawlins advised the matters will be discussed in Executive Session.

- Keith Buohl, Fieldcrest Drive: Mr. Buohl asked why the Council didn't call executive session two weeks ago stating the longer questions go unanswered the fire gets bigger and bigger.
- Cleonie Mainvielle, Curve Street: Ms. Mainvielle supports the ordinance for the Flag. Ms. Mainvielle stated what has happened to Ms. Sheridan can happen to anyone. She then spoke about "Turtle Boy". Ms. Mainvielle feels the questions should be addressed.
- Suzi Robinson, 20 Holly Lane: Shared the same sentiments as Ms. Mainvielle. We put ourselves out there as volunteers and need our leaders to act. Ms. Robinson agrees with Mr. Buohl. She would like to see something on next agenda. Ms. Robinson also wants to support the ordinance around the flag process.
- Sam Baumgarten, 60 Short Street: Agrees with previous speakers and would like answers. He thanked Councilor Chase for bringing forward the ordinance relative to flags. Mr. Baumgarten hopes this will appear on the next agenda.
- Janet Hanson, Pleasant Street: Reiterated request for answers to citizens and quoted the Council Rules & Procedures.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Councilor Gallagher: We do want to comment, but we as a board have not been briefed. We want to get appropriate information before we comment. Mr. Gallagher reminded all that we have a Town Election on 4/24 and hopes he'll be back on 4/27.
- Councilor Losche: No comments.
- Councilor Chase: Appreciates all the comments this evening. He feels confident we will receive answers people are looking for this evening. Mr. Chase noted we are bound by certain laws and regulations but believes we're committed to providing responses to public.
- Councilor Wood: Councilor Wood stated the ban on retail marijuana sales has failed citing several informational sources. Mr. Wood has no tolerance for under-aged consumption. However, based on the information he has gathered the ban does not seem to be the solution.
- Councilor Rushton: Supports comments of Councilor Chase. After listening to citizens comments, he feels he has personally failed in representing the citizens. When he chaired meeting last week, he was following policy. He hopes we don't wait three weeks before addressing this whether personally or with a public statement.
- Councilor Sousa: Is hoping to get answers tonight during Executive Session to get answers.
- Councilor Fitzgibbons: Thanked President George for another good meeting. Mr. Fitzgibbons spoke about his previous idea to take each citizen comment at beginning or end of meeting.
- Councilor George: Offered no comments.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion: Councilor Fitzgibbons made a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares which was duly seconded.



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Gallagher – YEA; Losche – YEA; Chase – YEA; Wood – YEA; George – YEA; Rushton – YEA; Sousa – YEA; VACANCY – D5;
Fitzgibbons - YEA. The motion passed 8-0.

ADJOURNMENT

Open session adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Minutes submitted in draft form by: Ann Holmberg