

At a meeting of the Town Council holden in and for the Town of Gloucester on February 1, 2024

I. Call to Order

The meeting was Called to Order at 5:30 P.M. by Councilor W. Worthy, Town Council President.

II. Roll Call

Members present: Cheryl A. Greathouse; Jonathan E. Burlingame; Walter M. O. Steere, III; Stephen W. Arnold, Vice President; William A. Worthy, Jr., President

Also Present: Jean Fecteau, Town Clerk; David Igliozzi, Town Solicitor (arrived at 5:40 pm) ; Christine Mathieu, Deputy Town Clerk; Jane Steere, Interim Finance Director and Tax Collector; Jessica Parker, Tax Assessor

III. Seek to Convene to Closed Executive Session Pursuant to:

- A. R.I.G.L. 42-46-5(a)(2) Any discussions , considerations, vote or other actions by Town Council related to Sessions pertaining to potential litigation or work sessions pertaining to litigation - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Worthy stated that Council now needs a motion to Convene into Closed Executive Session Pursuant to: R.I.G.L. 42-46-5(a)(2) Any discussions , considerations, vote or other actions by Town Council related to Sessions pertaining to potential litigation or work sessions pertaining to litigation - Discussion and/or Action

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to Convene into Closed Executive Session pursuant to R.I.G.L. 42-46-5(a)(2) relating to potential litigation or work sessions pertaining to litigation; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame

Councilor W. Worthy asked the Clerk to Call the Roll

- Councilor Greathouse- Aye
- Councilor Steere- Aye
- Councilor Burlingame- Aye
- Councilor Arnold- Aye
- Councilor Worthy- Aye

Discussion: None

MOTION PASSED

IV. Reconvene Open Session - Disclosure of votes take in Executive Session & Consideration of the Sealing of Minutes - Discussion and/or Action

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to RECONVENE Open Session; DISCLOSE zero (0)

votes were taken in Executive Session; and to SEAL the minutes of Closed Session pursuant to R.I.G.L. 42-46-7.c; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse, J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

V. Pledge of Allegiance

Councilor W. Worthy asked for everyone to please stand and join us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

VI. Open Forum - For Agenda Items

Councilor W. Worthy stated that anyone wishing to speak on an agenda item to please step to the microphone and state your name when called on.

None

VII. Consent Items

- A. Approval of Town Council Minutes: Regular meeting of January 18th, 2024 - Discussion and/or Action

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Arnold to APPROVE the Town Council minutes of January 18, 2024; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse, J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

VIII. Unfinished Business

- A. Boards & Commissions
 - 1. Appointments - Discussion and/or Action
 - a. Economic Development Commission - Position #7, Unexpired term to expire 12/31/2024

Councilor W. Worthy stated that the Chair does not have a recommendation at this time. Councilor W. Worthy stated that Council can table or make an appointment.

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Arnold to TABLE the appointment to Position #7, Economic Development to the Town Council meeting of February 15, 2024; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse, J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

B. Citizen potential donation - Trolley - Discussion and/or Action
Councilor W. Worthy stated that Council was contacted about a potential donation.

Discussion:

A. Costantino, developer of 1-5 Money Hill Road, stated that he would not be able to restore the trolley (Purple Cat) as originally planned. A. Costantino explained that he has put a lot of money into the trolley especially in moving it to a storage building. A. Costantino stated his opinion that there is a lot of work to be done to restore the trolley. A. Costantino stated that he is not sure what the town may want to do but he is of the opinion that the historical presence is valuable to the town.

A. Costantino made suggestions for the town and stated that he would be willing to move the trolley to the Pavilion if the town built a concrete pad for it. A. Costantino stated that the trolley could then be restored on site.

Councilor W. Steere asked the cost to restore the trolley. A. Costantino stated that he wouldn't be surprised if it cost \$50,000 but he did not have a figure. A. Costantino stated that the right people and materials would need to be obtained.

Councilor S. Arnold stated that it is a very good idea to save history and while he appreciates the idea there are a lot of unknowns. Councilor S. Arnold stated that there may be grant opportunities and that he would not be surprised if the cost was \$100,000. Councilor S. Arnold stated his opinion that the execution of such a project is too unknown.

Councilor S. Arnold suggested reaching out to groups in town like the Heritage Society and inquire if these groups have any ideas. Councilor S. Arnold stated he would not like to see the trolley moved and then crumble because the trolley was not maintained.

A. Costantino stated he would pay the bill for moving the trolley to wherever the town wants if the town decides to take possession of the trolley.

No Action Taken

C. Citizen recommendation "dry fire hydrants in areas near water throughout town" -
Discussion and/or Action
Councilor W. Worthy stated that Council was contacted about an idea of "dry fire hydrants" being placed in Chepachet Village from Mr. Costantino.

Discussion:

A. Costantino stated that he would be installing a dry hydrant on the property he is developing in town. A. Costantino gave an detailed explanation as to how dry hydrants work; explained his opinion as to why the town should install dry hydrants through out town; and, how to fund such a project.

Councilor S. Arnold stated that A. Costantino has given Council a lot of information and the notion makes a lot of common sense . Councilor S. Arnold stated that he feels the fire departments should be involved in any discussion and that this issue would not be solved tonight.

Councilor J. Burlingame stated his opinion that this issue is more a fire department one. A. Costantino stated that ths issue would take years to implement and that he feels it should be a town wide project.

Councilor S. Arnold stated that the idea is good but agrees that the fire departments need to be involved. Councilor W. Steere stated that the fire departments currently have contingency plans to fill trucks and cisterns throughout town. Councilor W. Steere stated that cisterns are also required in new developments by zoning. Councilor W. Steere stated that any inquiry should start with the fire departments.

Councilor J. Burlingame stated that no fire department has brought this issue forward to Council. Councilor S. Arnold stated that a dialog with the fire departments would be good.

Councilor W. Worthy stated that the information from A. Costantino could be sent to the fire departments.

No Action Taken

IX. New Business

A. Gloucester Board of Canvassers - Discussion and/or Action

1. Nomination and vote on temporary appt of Alternate BOC member

Councilor W. Worthy stated that the Clerk is requesting Council extend the grant of the temporary Alternate to the Board of Canvassers for the month of February, to be called on only if a quorum is not met to meet a legal deadline. Councilor W. Worthy stated that the Clerk assures Council that only meetings required by law to meet deadlines will be held.

MOTION was made by Councilor J. Burlingame to NOMINATE Roy Najecki to serve as a Republican alternate member of the Gloucester Board of Canvassers for any potential meetings of the board to be held in February, 2024; seconded by Councilor W. Steere

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse, J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

2. Discuss and consider future 1st reading of proposed Code amendment, Chapter 63-2, to add the appt. of Alternate members to the Board of Canvassers to the Board's Charge

Councilor W. Worthy stated that the Town Solicitor has worked with the Clerk on a proposal for amending the Code of Ordinance, Chapter 63-2 Canvassing Authority, Bipartisan. Councilor W. Worthy stated that the proposal is to add two alternate members to the membership as allowed by state law. Councilor W. Worthy stated that this amendment would assist the Board of Canvassers in achieving a quorum for all meetings of the board.

Councilor W. Worthy stated that if Council is willing to consider a first reading one can be set for the February 15th Council meeting.

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Arnold to SET a first reading for the consideration of an amendment to the Code of Ordinance, Chapter 63-2 Canvassing Authority, Bipartisan; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame

Discussion: J. Fecteau, Town Clerk, stated that she is asking the Council to consider this amendment to the Code. J. Fecteau stated that in the past she was able to sit in as a member if there was a need to meet the quorum but that is no longer an option. J. Fecteau stated that amending the ordinance would provide the ability to meet a quorum and not have any issues with the many different deadlines that need to be met without having to ask Council to appoint an alternate each time one may be needed.

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse, J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

- B. Resident request - Road work/possible repair - Joe Sweet Road - Discussion and/or Action

Discussion: G. Treml, Director of Public Works, stated that there are two issues to this matter. G. Treml stated that the first issue is the water in the road and the second issue is water in a front yard.

G. Treml stated that the water in the road could be taken care of by a 1400 foot trench that would direct the water downhill to a swamp. G. Treml stated that the total cost would be approximately \$287,000 which includes materials and blasting due to the amount of ledge in the area. G. Treml stated that another option would be to install an electric pump that would pump the water uphill to the land trust property. G. Treml stated that cost would be \$20,000. G. Treml stated that this issue only happens when there is a large amount of rain with cold temperatures right after. G. Treml stated that this issue is treated the same as all other similar issues in town.

G. Treml stated that the second issue is the water on the resident's front yard due to the pipe from another resident's property. G. Treml stated that he checked the deed and there is no drainage easement, right of way or anything that makes the town responsible for water in the resident's yard.

G. Trembl stated that the property was developed 38 years ago and a buyer assumes responsibility for anything on their land when they purchase it.

Councilor c. Greathouse stated she would inform the homeowner.

No action taken by Council

C. Potential Creation of the “Glocester 250th” Commission and Charge- Discussion and/or Action

Discussion: Councilor W. Worthy stated that Council has information sent by the Secretary of States office with some ideas for a potential charge.

Discussion: R. Najecki, resident, stated that he has organized large events in the past and would be happy to help with this commission if Council were to so decide. R. Najecki made some suggestions as to the types of events and as to the purpose of the events. R. Najecki stated his opinion that the events could showcase what happened, how it happened, and why the United States is different and also be educational.

Councilor S. Arnold asked if R. Najecki could put together a framework of a commission and give to J. Fecteau for the Council to consider. R. Najecki stated that he would be happy to do so. Councilor W. Worthy asked for this to be on the next agenda. Councilor C. Greathouse stated she would be happy to help.

D. Membership discussion - R.I. League of Cities & Towns - Discussion and/or Action
Councilor Worthy stated he requested this item on the agenda.

Discussion: Councilor W. Worthy stated that he requested this item to open a dialog as to whether or not the it is worthwhile to remain a member of the League. Councilor W. Worthy stated that he would like to know if the department heads receive a benefit from the League as a member. Councilor w. Worthy stated his opinion that he is not happy with the direction the League is going as it does not seem to address any concerns of the rural towns. Councilor W. Worthy suggested the Council invite the Director of the League to a council meeting for a discussion.

Councilor S. Arnold stated his opinion that in the past some department heads have received a benefit. Councilor S. Arnold stated the suggestion of asking the department heads for their view as to whether or not they receive any benefit.

Councilor S. Arnold stated his opinion that it feels rural towns are not being represented by the League. Councilor S. Arnold stated his opinion that it is not a one size fits all and that rural towns have completely different challenges than other larger municipalities.

Councilor W. Steere stated that he feels department heads should be contacted to see if they receive a benefit and that the rural communities are under served at the state legislature. Councilor W. Steere stated it is not due to our representatives.

Councilor S. Arnold suggested sending an invitation to the Director of the League to attend a future council meeting.

Councilor W. Worthy stated his opinion that the rural towns received nothing they ask for. Councilor S. Arnold stated that the town pays the League to lobby on our behalf. Councilor W. Worthy stated his opinion that the town lost on all accounts. Councilor W. Worthy stated he would just like to know if being a member of the League is worth the cost.

Councilor J. Burlingame stated that an email should be sent to department heads to see if they receive any value.

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Arnold to send a letter to E. Almonte, Director of RI League of Cities and Towns to come before the Town Council to answer questions; seconded by Councilor W. Steere

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse, J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold, W. Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

E. Municipal court - Consideration of formation- Discussion and/or Action

Discussion: Councilor Worthy stated that he requested this item. Councilor W. Worthy stated that Chief Delprete has information regarding the pros and cons on forming a municipal court.

Chief Delprete stated that whether the town has a municipal court or not that it would not eliminate going to the RI Traffic Tribunal. Chief Delprete stated that the town does not have a lot of issues that would be handled by the municipal court. Chief Delprete stated that the town has a good traffic enforcement program and that traffic issues are handled by the RI Traffic Tribunal. Chief Delprete stated that the town does receive revenue from the traffic court. Chief Delprete stated there would be costs associated with a municipal court such as an administrator. Chief Delprete stated that he does not feel there is a need for a municipal court as the town does not have significant issues that need to be handled by a municipal court.

No Action Taken by Council

X. Town Council Correspondence/ Discussion

Councilor W. Worthy stated that there is no Correspondence and asked if any Councilor has a discussion item or correspondence to share.

1. Councilor C. Greathouse stated that some constituents have raised concerns to her as to safety on main street of the food trucks. Councilor C. Greathouse suggested this item be on the next agenda to discuss the idea of the food trucks using the Pavilion instead of the street.

2. Councilor C. Greathouse stated her suggestion that the Council have a Facebook page which would be not interactive but only a recap of what the Council is doing. Councilor C. Greathouse asked for this item to be on the next agenda.
3. Councilor S. Arnold stated his thanks to the Budget Board for all their hard work as they have been meeting twice a week. Councilor S. Arnold also stated his thanks to the Councilors who attended the workshop with the Budget Board.

XI. Department Head Reports/Discussion

Councilor W. Worthy asked if any department heads had anything to report or if any Councilor had any questions for department heads.

Councilor W. Steere asked R. Shields, Recreation Director, if there was a response from the school regarding the letter sent by Council about the school charging town groups a use fee. R. Shields stated that the item was on the school agenda and that the town will be charged for the use of the building. Councilor W. Steere stated that the townspeople already pay for the building in their taxes. R. Shields stated that this year the fees will be paid out of the Recreation Department budget.

Councilor W. Worthy asked R. Shields about the ice rink. R. Shields stated that the ice rink was put up but that the weather has not cooperated.

XII. Bds. and Commissions Reports/ Discussion

Councilor W. Worthy asked if any boards or commission have anything to report or if any Councilors had any questions for boards and commissions.

1. R. Najecki, Conservation Commission, stated that they will be sponsoring Earth Day this year on April 22, 2024 and that they are also sponsoring a blue bird box give away event in May or June.

R. Najecki, Land Trust , stated that the work is continuing on the trails.

XIII. Open Forum

Councilor W. Worthy asked if a anyone has anything to discuss on any other subject and if so to please state your name when you come to the microphone.

1. G. Kain, resident, stated that he was speaking on behalf of the Harmony Fire Department . G. Kain stated that Harmony has 8 dry hydrants; cisterns in their area, and that the annual maintenance for the dry hydrants is a line item in the fire department budget. G. Kain stated that Harmony would like to have more dry hydrants. G. Kain stated that Waterman Lake is always drained down in the winter .
2. C. Wilson, resident, stated that he has to pay additional money for insurance each year because there are no fire hydrants.

C. Wilson, resident, stated his safety concerns due to food trucks and their customers parking on the narrow main streets .

3. Councilor C. Greathouse read the town ordinance pertaining to the allowed designated locations for food trucks. J. Fecteau stated that the ordinance also contains a reference to a time limit for food trucks at one location.
4. C. Clark, resident, stated he was before the Council regarding his tax issue where he is being taxed commercially in a residentially zoned parcel . C. Clark did state he has spoken to the tax assessor about the issue . Councilor J. Burlingame suggested C. Clark reach out to the tax assessor tomorrow and C. Clark agreed.

XIV Seek to Convene to Closed Executive Session Pursuant to:

- A. R.I.G.L. 42-46-5(a)(2) Potential Litigation - Discussion, vote or other action by Town Council

No discussion or action taken by Council

XV. Reconvene Open Session - Disclosure of votes taken in Executive Session & Consideration of the Sealing of Minutes - Discussion and/or Action

No discussion or action taken by Council

XVI. Adjourn

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to ADJOURN at 9:10 PM; seconded by Councilor C. Greathouse

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse, J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED