

At a meeting of the Town Council holden in and for the Town of Gloucester on January 21, 2016:

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Members Present: Walter M. O. Steere, III, President; George O. (Buster) Steere, Vice-President; William E. Reichert; Edward C. Burlingame; and Steven A. Sette.

Also present: Jean Fecteau, Town Clerk; Tim Kane, Town Solicitor; Joseph DelPrete, Chief of Police; Susan Harris, Deputy Town Clerk; Diane Brennan, Finance Director; Gary Treml, Director of Public Works; and Judith Branch, Director of Human Services.

III. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

IV. Open Forum - For Agenda Items

Mike Ahnrud, Chair of the Conservation Committee, stated that he will speak under "Boards and Commissions".

V. Consent Items - Discussion and/or action

- A. Approval of Town Council Reg. meeting minutes of January 7, 2016
- B. Tax Assessor's Additions & Abatements - December 2015
- C. Finance Director's Report - December 2015

MOTION was made by Councilor G. Steere to APPROVE the Town Council minutes of January 7, 2016; to APPROVE the Tax Assessor's Additions to the 2015 Tax Roll in the amount of \$1,160.16 and Abatements to the 2015 Tax Roll in the amount of \$750.00; and to ACCEPT the Finance Director's Report for December 2015; seconded by Councilor Sette.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES: W. Steere, G. Steere, Reichert, Burlingame and Sette.  
NAYS: 0

MOTION PASSED

VI. Unfinished Business

- A. R.I. EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer) Card - Eligibility Waiting Period - Discussion and/or action

Councilor Burlingame stated that the Council is waiting for information from Rep. Chippendale and asked to table the matter until the next meeting.

MOTION was made by Councilor Burlingame to TABLE until the next regular meeting R.I. EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer) Card - Eligibility Waiting Period; seconded by Councilor Reichert.

Discussion: None.

VOTE:       AYES:       W. Steere, G. Steere, Reichert, Burlingame and Sette.  
              NAYS:        0

MOTION PASSED

B.     Personnel

1.     Appointment: Public Works

a.     Driver/Laborer I position - Discussion and/or action

Councilor W. Steere noted that the Public Works Director has asked for this item to be tabled.

MOTION was made by Councilor Sette to TABLE the appointment of: Public Works, Driver/Laborer 1; seconded by Councilor G. Steere.

Discussion: None.

VOTE:       AYES:       W. Steere, G. Steere, Reichert, Burlingame and Sette.  
              NAYS:        0

MOTION PASSED

C.     Boards & Commissions

a.     Conservation Commission - Discussion and/or action

1.     Two 3-year expired terms to expire 1/2019

2.     One alternate 1-year term to expire 2/2017

Councilor W. Steere stated that the Chair of this commission (Michael Ahnrud) has requested that he and Kyle Swanton be reappointed to these positions. The Chair has also asked the Council to consider tabling the Alternate position until his board has time to make a recommendation.

Discussion: None.

MOTION was made by Councilor Sette to REAPPOINT Michael Ahnrud & Kyle Swanton to the Conservation Commission for 3-year terms to expire 1/2019, and to TABLE the appointment to the Conservation Commission for the Alternate 1-year term to expire 2/2017; seconded by Councilor G. Steere.

Discussion: None.

VOTE:       AYES:       W. Steere, G. Steere, Reichert, Burlingame and Sette.  
              NAYS:        0

MOTION PASSED

Mike Ahnrud, Chair of the Conservation Commission, stated that the Commission recently elected their officers as follows: Mike Ahnrud was re-elected as Chair, Albert Aubin is the Vice-Chair, and Roy Najecki is the Secretary. Regarding the Alternate position, M. Ahnrud stated that he will be

contacting two people from the Town's talent bank and will hopefully have a recommendation at the next Council meeting. M. Ahnrud stated that the Commission has chosen Roy Najecki to serve as their representative on the Gloucester Land Trust. M. Ahnrud noted that the Conservation Commission will continue to meet at 7:00 on the first Thursday of each month.

## VII. New Business

### A. Budget & Financial Town Referendum - Scheduling & processes - Discussion and/or action

Discussion: Jean Fecteau, Town Clerk, explained that the second Town Council meeting in March has always been the date that the Budget Board submits the proposed budget to the Town Council. J. Fecteau further stated that she and the Finance Director used Charter requirements, advertising deadlines and other information to devise a calendar from which the Council can choose their date for the Financial Town Referendum. J. Fecteau stated that the calendar has dates which extend to the year 2025. J. Fecteau stated that she doesn't know if the Council wishes to adopt the process tonight, but at the very least, she needs the Council to set the date for the Referendum to allow her to begin preparing for it, adding that in 2016 we will have three (3) elections as well as the Regional Financial Meeting.

Councilor Sette commented that he feels that the formula works well and recommended that the Referendum be scheduled for May 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> because it allows two (2) full weeks afterward for the Finance Director to prepare and submit the Budget to the State. It was stated that people are used to Elections being held on a Tuesday, therefore the 17<sup>th</sup> would work better. Councilor Sette stressed the importance of a Public Hearing and stated that in addition to Saturday, April 16<sup>th</sup>, a second Public Hearing could be scheduled for the April 21<sup>st</sup> regular Council meeting. Councilor Sette added that this would allow the Council to make adjustments prior to May 5<sup>th</sup> when the Budget is adopted. J. Fecteau pointed out that if the Financial Town Referendum is held on May 17<sup>th</sup>, the latest that the Council could adopt the Budget would be May 3<sup>rd</sup>, to allow the State two (2) weeks to print the ballot. Discussion followed regarding holding a special council meeting if necessary.

There was discussion concerning where the Public Hearings will be held. Councilor W. Steere stated that the Saturday one should be held at the School and the other one at the Town Hall. The Councilors were in agreement.

MOTION was made by Councilor Sette to Set the date of the 2016 Financial Town Referendum for May 17, 2016; to set dates for Public Hearing of April 16 and April 21; and to set a date for a Special Meeting to adopt the Budget for May 3, 2016; seconded by Councilor G. Steere.

Discussion: Jean Fecteau, Town Clerk, stated that she would prefer the Special Meeting to take place by May 2<sup>nd</sup> instead of May 3<sup>rd</sup>, to allow her to send the Budget to the State on May 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Councilor Sette amended his MOTION to change the date of the Special Meeting to adopt the Budget to May 2, 2016; seconded by Councilor G. Steere.

Discussion: None.

VOTE:           AYES:           W. Steere, G. Steere, Reichert, Burlingame and Sette.  
                  NAYS:           0

MOTION PASSED

Councilor Sette suggested that the Council formally adopt the formula at the next Town Council meeting.

B.     Transfer Station - Create Subcommittee to review current processes & the amount of waste brought to Transfer Station - Discussion and/or action

Councilor W. Steere stated that at the last meeting, the Council discussed ways to reduce the amount of waste which comes into our Transfer Station and there was consensus to appoint a sub-committee for this purpose.

Councilor Reichert noted that he has someone who will take all the computers and electronics on a weekly basis. Councilor Reichert stated that he cannot take the TV's but will take the other items.

Councilor Burlingame stated that he is willing to work on the sub-committee. Councilor Sette asked if Town residents could serve, adding that members of Town boards and commissions may also be interested. Councilor Burlingame replied that he was thinking more of a Council sub-committee to work with the Director of Public Works. Councilor G. Steere also offered to serve on the sub-committee.

MOTION was made by Councilor Sette to create a sub-committee to review current processes and the amount of waste brought to the Transfer Station, two (2) members of the Town Council to include Councilor Burlingame and Councilor G. Steere; seconded by Councilor Burlingame.

Discussion: Tim Kane, Town Solicitor, noted that the Director of Public Works should also be included on the sub-committee.

Councilor Sette WITHDREW his motion and Councilor Burlingame WITHDREW his second.

Councilor Sette restated his MOTION to include the Director of Public Works; seconded by Councilor Burlingame.

Discussion: None.

VOTE:           AYES:           W. Steere, G. Steere, Reichert, Burlingame and Sette.  
                  NAYS:           0

MOTION PASSED

C.     Appointment & Authorization: E-911 Coordinator - Discussion and/or action

Councilor W. Steere stated that the Rhode Island Executive Department overseeing the E 911 Uniform Emergency Telephone System has asked the Town to update their records as Gloucester currently has the former Building/Zoning Clerk listed as the E-911 Coordinator/Liaison. Councilor

W. Steere stated the Building Official has asked that the current clerk be appointed to that position and Council would also need to authorize the Council President to sign the E-911 Municipal Liaison form required by the State.

Discussion: None.

MOTION was made by Councilor G. Steere to APPOINT Denise Cadoret to the position of Gloucester E-911 Coordinator/Liaison and to AUTHORIZE the Town Council President to sign the E-911 Municipal Liaison Form; seconded by Councilor Reichert.

Discussion: None.

VOTE:           AYES:           W. Steere, G. Steere, Reichert, Burlingame and Sette.  
                  NAYS:           0

MOTION PASSED

D.     Police Department - Amend 2016 Intern terms of employment - Discussion and/or action

Councilor W. Steere stated that Chief DelPrete has requested consideration of the following in regards to the Intern hired November 2015:

Extend the intern hours from 10 to up to 25 hours a week concluding during the week of February 12. The original request was for 10 hours a week concluding during the week of 1/31.

Discussion: Joseph DelPrete, Chief of Police, explained that the intern is assisting in the accreditation program and is doing an excellent job. Chief DelPrete added that an assessment is coming up next month and he needs the intern's help. Councilor W. Steere asked if the extra hours will be covered in his current budget. Chief DelPrete replied in the affirmative.

MOTION was made by Councilor Sette to amend the terms of appointment for Brendan Morgan to the position of paid-intern on the Gloucester Police Department to increase hour per week to 25 and to extend end date to February 12, 2016; seconded by Councilor G. Steere.

Discussion: None.

VOTE:           AYES:           W. Steere, G. Steere, Reichert, Burlingame and Sette.  
                  NAYS:           0

MOTION PASSED

VIII. Council Correspondence/Discussion

A.     Councilor Burlingame stated that he would like to add to the next agenda a Resolution in opposition of the Governor's proposal regarding truck tolls. It was noted that the town of Narragansett has already done so and Councilor Burlingame stated that the Town Clerk has modified their Resolution to refer to specific areas of congestion on Routes 44, 102, 6 and 101.

- B. Councilor Sette suggested that we invite our Representatives and Senator to the next Town Council meeting to discuss what it would take to develop legislation for the Region to become its own taxing authority. Councilor Sette stated that the Council has asked repeatedly to have a joint meeting to discuss the budget, but has been unsuccessful. Councilor Sette commented that if the Region wants to be their own entity, they should tax the people and have to deal with them when they aren't happy.

Councilor Sette noted that for some reason, the Region does not want Foster and Gloucester to be in the same room. Councilor W. Steere clarified that the Region does not want to meet with both Towns at the same time to have the same discussion. Councilor Sette stated that he received a response from the Superintendent which indicated that State Law allows them to meet individually with the Towns. Councilor Sette stated that the attorney who represents the Region also represents the Chariho Region, adding that Chariho's three Towns meet together all the time.

Councilor Burlingame stated that he agrees with Councilor Sette's comments. Councilor Burlingame stated that it is a problem that the Regional Financial Meeting takes place before the Town's Referendum because we are already locked in and the only place to cut the budget is on the municipal side.

Councilor W. Steere also concurred and stated that while we have minor increases at the municipal level, the majority of the increases are on the Regional level. Councilor W. Steere stated that the only opportunity to control that is the Regional Financial meeting which nobody attends.

Councilor Sette stated that the maximum level of increase is 4%, adding that a 4% budget increase every year is not feasible. Councilor Sette stated that the Town employees would have to cut their hours or have layoffs, which would cause services to suffer. Councilor W. Steere stated that we cannot afford 4% increases every year.

There was Council consensus to invite the State Representatives and Senator to the next Town Council meeting.

- C. Councilor W. Steere stated that correspondence was received from the Budget Board stating that they unanimously voted to accept the first and second fiscal quarters of fiscal year 2016.
- D. Councilor W. Steere stated that a letter was received from Rep. Chippendale regarding Rhode Island's school funding formula.
- E. Councilor W. Steere stated that a letter was received from FEMA regarding the Quinebaug Watershed, which includes more than 40 communities across Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island.

- F. Councilor W. Steere stated that correspondence was received from the chair of the Planning Board concerning the Comprehensive Plan 10-year update which was approved by the Planning Board on Jan. 16, 2016. Councilor W. Steere stated that final edits will be prepared within 3 to 5 weeks after which the Town Council has 2 options regarding what they submit to the State; either a draft comprehensive plan or plan amendment; or an adopted comprehensive plan or plan amendment. There was Council consensus to place this on the agenda for the next meeting.

Tim Kane, Town Solicitor, stated that if the Council approves the plan first, and the State sends it back with comments, it will have to be amended. Councilor G. Steere asked if we would have to amend the plan just because of their comments. T. Kane replied in the affirmative, stating that we would never get approval on the State level.

IX. Department Head Report/Discussion

- A. Gary Trembl, Director of Public Works, reported that the new setup at the Transfer Station seems to be working, however there have been several complaints about pickup trucks not being able to back in.

X. Bds. and Commissions/Discussion

- A. Walter Steere, Jr., School Committee member, stated that he recently attended a Capital Projects meeting at which time the Region's 5-year plan was reviewed. W. Steere stated the 2017 Budget will include \$380,000 for a field at the Middle School and \$40,000 to re-seed the leach field to be used as an athletic area. W. Steere, Jr. stated that the following year, \$400,000 will be planned for more fields at the Middle School, for a total of \$780,000. W. Steere, Jr. also stated there are plans to soundproof the gyms at both the Middle School and High School at a cost of approximately \$85,000. W. Steere, Jr. Stated in the third or fourth year of the 5-year plan, they have indicated \$150,000 to pave the parking lot, as well as \$275,000 for lights at the football field and in the fourth or fifth year, the windows will be replaced at an estimated cost of \$300,000. W. Steere, Jr. Stated that outside of the 5-year plan, there are plans for artificial turf which is estimated at \$800,000.

W. Steere, Jr. noted that only five (5) of the eight (8) members were present (at the Capital Projects meeting) and he was the only one who was not an administrator. W. Steere, Jr. stated that the projects will be sent to the State for approval but unfortunately, most of them are not eligible for Housing Aid reimbursement at this time.

Councilor G. Steere asked if these items will be added to the Operating Budget which will increase the maintenance of effort every year. W. Steere, Jr. replied that this year, many items were put in under Gov. Raimondo's 20 million dollar school fund. W. Steere, Jr. stated that under Local Appropriations, there is \$224,000, which will be split between the two towns.

Councilor G. Steere stated that he has heard that the Region is looking for Gloucester to contribute to the development of the field at the Middle School. W. Steere, Jr. stated his opinion that he would like to see the Town and the schools get together with regard to ball fields.

There was discussion concerning lacrosse. W. Steere, Jr. stated that there has not been much interest in coaching the team and he thought we should wait until next year, however \$60,000 was budgeted for it, \$20,000 of which was a grant.

Councilor W. Steere stated that he has no problem spending money on education, but many of these items are unnecessary and we cannot afford it.

- B. George Charette, Planning Board chair, spoke regarding the Comp Plan Update, stating that he does not agree that it should go to the State before the Council has reviewed the plan and had a public hearing. Tim Kane, Town Solicitor, noted that the Council has not decided which option to choose and the matter will be on the next Town Council agenda.

#### XI. Open Forum

- A. Edna Kent, Town Historian, stated that she wished to go on record as opposing the relocation of the 220 year old Evans Homestead, a landmark in our community and better known as "The Elms". E. Kent gave a brief history of the property and its past owners, the Hopkins family.
- B. Richard Ventrone, expressed agreement with Edna Kent, stating that by moving this important building from its original site, something is permanently lost. R. Ventrone further stated that if something is developed there, it will be sad.

R. Ventrone stated that the reason he wanted to speak tonight is because at the next HDC meeting, there will be a proposal to demolish the former State Police barracks.. Regarding the Kent house, R. Ventrone stated that the Town is empowered to do something about it and stated that Preserve Rhode Island has offered a no-interest loan in the amount of \$5,000 to be used for repairs to make the building weather-tight. R. Ventrone stated the only condition would be for the Town to exercise a lien on the property so that it can be fixed.

Regarding the State Police barracks, R. Ventrone stated that if it comes down, a box with parking in front will be built there. R. Ventrone commented that the building is a handsome structure which could be adaptively reused for another purpose. R. Ventrone expressed concern that Gloucester will eventually become like Greenville.

Councilor Reichert commented that it would cost much more than \$5,000 to repair the Kent house and we cannot hang this on the taxpayers. Regarding the State Police barracks, Councilor Reichert stated that it could not be used because it is full of

asbestos. R. Ventrone replied that the asbestos could be abated. Councilor Reichert stated that at first, people complained about CVS, but it is a nice looking building. Councilor Reichert stated that the Council and the Town's Boards and Commissions will not allow somebody to put a "box" on the property. Councilor Reichert spoke about Dunkin Donuts and Navigant Credit Union, stating that they were built to fit in with the Village. R. Ventrone stated that they are still new buildings, which makes it no longer a historic place. Councilor Reichert noted that he has been on the Council for a long time and they look at all proposals thoroughly and put a lot of thought into them.

- C. Odete McMahon stated that she has been a resident for 38 years and remembers the Elms when she first moved in and it was beautiful and well-maintained. O. McMahon expressed hope that Gloucester does not become like Greenville. O. McMahon commented that the previous owners of the building tried to develop the back part of the property, but DEM stopped them for some reason. Councilor Reichert stated that they were not developing the property, they cut all the trees down to have a used building materials yard, causing havoc for the neighboring properties.

Regarding CVS, O. McMahon stated that she was opposed to it and only goes there because it is the closest pharmacy.

- D. George Charette spoke regarding the Region and what they are planning to do. G. Charette stated that he attended the School Committee meeting and asked questions, but was not given the truth. G. Charette stated that Chepachet is being run over by the Region. G. Charette commented that the Superintendent gets what he wants and they are spending money like it's water. Councilor W. Steere stated that the only way things will change is if people attend the Regional Financial Meeting. G. Charette stated that the majority of the general public is not aware of the time and place of the meeting and suggested that it be widely publicized. G. Charette added that the only way we can get people to attend is to state in the ad that money will be taken out of their pocket.

## XII. Adjourn

MOTION was made by Councilor Burlingame to ADJOURN at 9:00 p.m.; seconded by Councilor G. Steere.

VOTE:       AYES:       W. Steere, G. Steere, Reichert, Burlingame and Sette.  
              NAYS:        0

MOTION PASSED