

At a meeting of the Town Council holden in and for the Town of Gloucester on May 16, 2019:

I. Call to Order

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

II. Roll Call

Members Present: George O. (Buster) Steere, Jr., President; Walter M. O. Steere, III, Vice-President; William E. Reichert; Patricia Henry; and Julian (Jay) Forgue.

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

III. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

IV. Open Forum - For Agenda Items

Councilor G. Steere stated that those who signed up may speak now or wait until the agenda item is addressed. Councilor G. Steere noted that only Gloucester residents will be allowed to speak and they must state their name and address clearly. Councilor G. Steere further stated that speakers will be limited to four (4) minutes as many people have signed up. There was consensus to wait until the agenda item comes up.

V. Consent Items - Discussion and/or Action

- A. Approval of Town Council meeting minutes: May 2, 2019 Regular Meeting
- B. Tax Assessor's Additions & Abatements - April 2019
- C. Finance Director's Report - April 2019

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to APPROVE the Town Council meeting minutes of May 2, 2019; there are no Additions or Abatements to the 2018 Tax Roll for April 2019; and to ACCEPT the Finance Director's Report for April 2019; seconded by Councilor Forgue.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, W. Steere, Reichert and Forgue  
NAYS-0  
ABSTENTION - Henry

MOTION PASSED

VI. Unfinished Business

- A. Board and Commissions
  - 1. Appointments - Discussion and/or Action
    - a. Recreation Commission
      - Two year term to expire 1/2021

MOTION was made by Councilor Henry to TABLE the appointment to the Recreation Commission for a term to expire 1/2021; seconded by Councilor W. Steere.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, W. Steere, Reichert, Henry and Forgue  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

## VII. New Business

- A. Support of 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Rights - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor G. Steere read his statement as follows:

“ I asked to put this on the agenda because currently there is a lot of discussion at the State House about proposed gun bills with a wide and varied spectrum of regulations and restrictions. Some would seem to make almost everything other than a single shot rifle or shotgun illegal in Rhode Island. One would make it illegal to transport your rifle or shotgun in your vehicle. Another would red-flag an individual because they applied to buy a second firearm.

I do not intend to be insensitive to the victims and families of victims of recent tragic shootings across the country. They are horrific tragedies and my heart goes out to all the families of the victims. I agree there should be strict regulation to restrict certain people that are not suitable to have guns from obtaining them.

I do not agree however that law-abiding citizens should have to give up their guns or their 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment rights as part of a cookie cutter solution to this problem. Senator Elaine Morgan actually asked the towns in her district, which is in South County, to become 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment sanctuary towns because of her concerns of pending legislation at the State House. Hopkinton is one of those towns that has joined Burrillville, West Greenwich and Foster in adopting a 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Sanctuary Town Resolution.

These Resolutions recognize the following:

- 1) The 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment to the US Constitution protects inalienable and individual right of the people to keep and bear arms.
- 2) It recognizes that this right has been affirmed and upheld by the United States Supreme Court.
- 3) The RI Constitution states that “the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed”.

- 4) It acknowledges that RI gun sales require in-state residency, background checks, 8-day waiting period and a Blue Card certification for handgun purchases.

It also acknowledges prohibition of a person buying for another person, persons convicted of felonies, unlawful users of drugs or anyone found mentally defective or committed to a mental institution. Also prohibited to own guns are anyone dishonorably discharged from the military, people subject to restraining orders, anyone convicted of a misdemeanor, crime of domestic violence and anyone who has renounced their citizenship or is an illegal or unlawful alien.

The Resolutions also say:

- 1) That the town supports its Police Department to exercise sound discretion when enforcing laws impacting citizens' rights under the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment.
- 2) It states that the town will not spend taxpayer dollars for enforcement of legislation that unconstitutionally infringes upon the rights of citizens to keep and bear arms, including any funds for building space for storage of weapons seized due to the requirements of the new legislation.

It states that the town objects to the erosion of 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment rights caused by the passage of controversial legislation that continues to test the constitutionality of our 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment rights.

These Resolutions have made a statement of the town's viewpoint on an important constitutional issue for our legislators to consider at the State House.

These Resolutions do not circumvent existing gun purchase regulations or prohibitions. They do not prohibit town police from enforcing the law.

It is a statement. It is taking a stand and sending a message that they as towns support and uphold the US Constitution and the Constitution of the State of Rhode Island. We all took oath as elected officials of the town of Glocester to do just that.

“Sanctuary” is a controversial word right now. We have a Governor and Mayor of our capital city who have declared the state of Rhode Island and the city of Providence to be a sanctuary for illegal immigrants, protecting illegal activity, defying Federal Law. We also have a Governor who has made marijuana, which is illegal according to Federal Law, just legal enough in Rhode Island so she and her family can profit from it. I know the word “sanctuary” is very controversial, but these Resolutions talk about being a sanctuary for legal, law-abiding citizens' 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment rights. It is protecting that. Sanctuary is a safe house, a protective place, an oasis, and we as a town should be proud to offer a sanctuary, safe house or however you want to word it, for our law-abiding citizens' 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment rights. This is a positive action that is not being a sanctuary for illegal activity like some others have used that word.

(End of statement)

Councilor G. Steere asked if the Council members had any comments before anyone else gets up to speak. Councilor W. Steere suggested that the Council hear the public speak first. Councilor G.

Steere replied that we could do that, but it will probably take a while.

Councilor Henry stated that she would rather say her stance first, then everyone would be able to respond. Councilor Henry commented that a lot of thought has been given to this and the Council is grateful for all of the comments from the public. Councilor Henry made her statement as follows:

“This Resolution is written to make a statement that the town of Gloucester will uphold the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment of the United States Constitution. The Town of Gloucester upholds the laws of this nation, specifically the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment. It will not be a sanctuary town that protects laws or decisions that break the law. Unfortunately, the current use of the word “sanctuary” is negative and has become a hot divisive buzz word because it is being used by states and cities to protect those who are not following the laws of the land.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment reflects the framers’ fear of a standing army and their reliance on a citizen soldiery for defense. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment is written as follows: “A well-regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed”.

I took some time and did some historical research and found the following:

In accordance with federalist promises, James Madison, on June 8, 1789 introduced a number of amendments in the House of Representatives. He intended them to be inserted at appropriate places in the text of the Constitution, but Roger Sherman persuaded Congress to add them at the end, so that each amendment would stand or fall on its own merits.

The first ten amendments, which contain substantive and procedural guarantees of individual liberties and limit the government, are called the Bill of Rights.

In many of the conversations I have had these past few weeks, many believe that the framers could never have imagined that technology would advance what guns and arms would become and that we now need to do something to limit the use of the types of arms we allow and keep us safe from these violent guns.

It is a discussion and thought I have often had myself, but then I come back to this argument: Our framers were Visionaries, they certainly knew things would change. They didn’t put any limits on who could bear arms by sex, age, race, education or stature in society. The second amendment is one simple clear statement.

Guns and arms are not violent in their own state, it can sometimes be the users of these weapons that are violent.

I encourage those that are against the basic tenants of the second amendment to take these passions and fight for help for the mentally ill that use guns to cause harm and to end the production of violent video gaming that, in my opinion, has desensitized our society to a point that what is real and what is virtual has become indistinguishable.

With that being said, I will support the Town Council's decision to adopt this Resolution to support the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment in the hopes it will send a message to the State House that we are against any bills that infringe on the rights of our citizens to have and bear arms."  
(End of statement)

Councilor G. Steere stated that we will now go through the list of those wishing to speak:

**(Note: these minutes do not reflect complete statements and/or transcribed verbatim speeches. We have included, to the best of our ability, whether the speaker is for or against the agenda item. If you feel your opinions are not represented correctly, contact the Town Clerk to request her review of the sound recording)**

1. Allen Clawson, Gloucester resident and gun owner, stated that he is among the vast majority of Rhode Islanders who support sensible gun restrictions. A. Clawson stated that he is in favor of many of the bills that are currently under consideration in the House and the Senate. A. Clawson requested that the Town Council forego taking action on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Resolution on the agenda. A. Clawson asked the Council not to risk the safety of our citizens and tarnish the reputation of our community by engaging in behavior that fundamentally undermines the principles of democratic representation and the rule of law.
2. Elaine Fontaine, of 15 Tanyard Lane, stated that she is here tonight to voice her opposition to the proposal to become a 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment sanctuary town. E. Fontaine expressed her opinion that we should not be asking our police officers to decide when they are going to uphold the law. E. Fontaine further stated that something must be done about assault weapons. E. Fontaine urged the Council not to support this decision or she will work to vote them out of office.
3. Justin Pattison-Schmidt, of 48 Sandy Brook Road, read from the Gloucester Conceal Carry package as follows: "No one in the state has the right to obtain a pistol permit". J. Pattison-Schmidt stated that our founders and framers created a system to protect the individual. J. Pattison-Schmidt stated that when we have a right that is violated, we not only work to get it resolved, but we have the right and the duty to revolt and put in place a proper system of government that protects our individual rights. J. Pattison-Schmidt stated that this is the reason for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment; it is about making sure government is doing things in our best interest to protect our individual liberties. J. Pattison-Schmidt suggested creating a consortium of towns to have a voice at the State level so we can tell them "enough is enough".
4. Ralph Foxwell, of 1486 Snake Hill Road, stated that he served 13 years in the Marine Corps and will stand up for the Constitution, but will obey the laws we have on the books. R. Foxwell stated that he is a responsible gun owner and believes everybody has the right to bear arms. R. Foxwell stated that this is our way of standing up and showing the people at the State House that "we don't want this crap." R. Foxwell commented that the cities with the tightest gun laws have more murders than anybody else.

5. William Worthy, no address given, stated that he has been going to the State House to try to save our rights and to see it come to the town level is a whole different ball game. W. Worthy stated that they are law abiding citizens and in this part of the state it is a lifestyle. W. Worthy commented that people that don't know what they are talking about are having an effect on our State. W. Worthy quoted the phrase "shall not be infringed" and stated that he fully supports Gloucester hopefully being the sixth sanctuary town.
6. Linda Nichols, resident of Gloucester and chair of the Gloucester Democratic Committee, expressed opposition to this Resolution and finds it a dangerous threat to the rule of law and public safety. L. Nichols asked what kind of message are we sending to the younger generation. L. Nichols stated that no one is taking away anyone's right to bear arms. L. Nichols noted that in 2018, 113 people were killed or injured in school shootings. L. Nichols stated that instead of fighting back and forth, we need to come up with solutions and ideas for the sake of our children and our community. L. Nichols pointed out that none of the laws proposed by the Attorney General or the Governor would have the power to confiscate guns from law abiding citizens. L. Nichols urged the Town Council not to pass the Resolution.

When comments from the audience broke out Councilor W. Steere referred to the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment and asked that everybody be respectful of each other's opinions.

7. Melissa Lavender, five-year Gloucester resident, expressed her opposition to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Sanctuary Resolution. M. Lavender noted that she wrote to the Town Council last week but did not hear back, so she felt she had to attend tonight to make sure her voice was heard. M. Lavender stated that the Resolution itself, if taken from Burrillville, is questionable and can be misconstrued and interpreted in different ways. M. Lavender stated that she believes this puts Police officers in danger, as well as the people of Gloucester. M. Lavender commented that this matter has brought so much division and ugliness to our town and she no longer feels supported by her community.
8. Lauren Niedel, vice-chair of the Gloucester Democrats and Democratic State Committeewoman for District 40, stated that she has been a Gloucester resident since 1992. L. Niedel stated that she appreciates Councilor Henry's opening statement, but she objects to Councilor Henry stating that she supports the Resolution when we don't even know if it will be voted on today. L. Niedel stated that she is not against the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment, however she feels that this Resolution is misguided and could be misconstrued, and is in bad taste. L. Niedel stated that we want to keep our doors open and be welcoming to visitors and this sends a poor message to the citizens of Gloucester and across the state.
9. Michelle Gallant, of 412 Lake Washington, stated that she has been a Gloucester resident for over 15 years, and for the first time, she does not feel safe anymore. M. Gallant stated that asking the Gloucester Police to not enforce the laws of our state is just plain dangerous. M. Gallant stated that since the mention of this Resolution, our town has not been very civil and comments on Facebook have been nasty and intimidating. M. Gallant stated that there would be financial ramifications if something goes wrong and the Town would be liable. M. Gallant asked what if there is retribution from the state with regard to school funding. M. Gallant

expressed support for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment and stated that it is never going away, but this Resolution will tarnish our town's reputation and potential. M. Gallant stated that we have so much more to lose than to gain and urged the Council to dismiss this.

10. David LaPlante, of Absalona Hill Road, stated that he was in law enforcement for 25 years and noted that the Police use discretion every day. D. LaPlante stated that he has heard many comments about assault rifles and explained that AR 15 means "Armor Light Rifle", which is the brand name. D. LaPlante pointed out that more people are killed with handguns than with rifles. D. LaPlante stated his opinion that the Government is over-reaching on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment. D. LaPlante stated that if we lose the Bill of Rights, we lose this country. D. LaPlante stated that he does not care how the Council votes on this; he will walk with them to get them re-elected.
11. Richard Tarlaian, of 51 White Pine Drive, stated that he is a gun owner, a Vietnam veteran, retired Providence Police officer, teaches criminology at CCRI and has a law degree from Boston University. (R. Tarlaian asked a member of the audience if he was filming the meeting. The response was yes. R. Tarlaian requested that he not be recorded. ) R. Tarlaian stated that he worked for the Samaritans, a suicide hotline, and has knowledge and experience of firearms, gun violence, suicide and Constitutional Law. R. Tarlaian expressed his strong opposition to this Resolution and requested that the Council table it until they have prepared a Resolution for the public to view. Tim Kane, Town Solicitor, stated that there is no Resolution that will be voted on tonight and the most the Council can do is to put a Resolution on for a future meeting. R. Tarlaian asked if there will be discussion at that time. Councilor G. Steere replied "possibly" and noted that this is a Resolution, it is not an Ordinance or a Public Hearing. Councilor G. Steere noted that he has never stopped anyone from speaking.
12. Brian Rea, of Brandon Street, stated that he is proud to be part of a town that is possibly going to pass something like this. B. Rea stated that he understands the fear of school shootings as he has three (3) children. B. Rea further stated that he is a trained, responsible gun owner. B. Rea stated that no one can prove that by taking these guns away, evil in public places is going to stop. B. Rea stated that we should be talking about what we need to do to secure schools.
13. Matt Burlingame, of 77 Cooper Road, resident of Glocester for over 40 years, spoke regarding mental health and stated that most of these shootings are the done by kids. M. Burlingame stated that guns haven't changed so we need to scrap all this and work on that part of it. M. Burlingame stated that the Resolution is a great statement to send to the State House.
14. Karen Bernstein, of 35 Rustic Acres Drive, stated that she has lived and paid taxes in Glocester for 39 years and has two (2) children who graduated from Ponaganset. K. Bernstein expressed her strong opposition to the Resolution the Council is considering passing. K. Bernstein stated that the Council members were elected to represent the interest of all the residents, not just the ones who own guns. K. Bernstein stated that the Council

should not impose its own political beliefs on everyone in the town. K. Bernstein stated that it would be helpful to hear from the Police Chief whether he agrees with this Resolution and what policies and procedures would change as a result.

15. Gabrielle Bargeon, of 328 Lake Drive, stated that she is an Army veteran who served in Iraq and she appreciates the protection that firearms provide, however she is against this Gloucester becoming a sanctuary town. G. Bargeon stated that we say we are law-abiding citizens, but when we say we are not going to follow the law, we can no longer say we are law-abiding citizens. G. Bargeon stated that if you believe something is unconstitutional, you shouldn't be forced to follow it, but she does not think that trying to push for safety is unconstitutional. G. Bargeon urged the Council to think about it very carefully before making a decision.
16. Ellen Kellner, of 328 Evans Road, stated that she is a 50-year resident of Gloucester. E. Kellner strongly urged the Council to oppose this Resolution. E. Kellner spoke about the surviving family members of the victims of school shootings. E. Kellner stated that the best way to stop these tragedies is to get rid of weapons of war and she supports the RI State Legislature passing the assault weapons ban. E. Kellner further stated that we should do something about increasing funding for mental health to prevent this from happening. E. Kellner read from a 2008 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment ruling by conservative Justice Anthony Scalia and distributed copies to the Council.
17. Linda Onanian, of 539 Lake Washington Drive, stated that she has been a Gloucester resident for 14 years and she is here to protect her 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment rights. L. Onanian stated that politicians blame guns for violent crime, but protect the people who misuse them. L. Onanian stated that she will fight to retain the rights afforded to her in the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights. To convey her point, L. Onanian read a modified poem written during Nazi Germany. L. Onanian implored the Council to pass the Resolution and preserve the rights and freedom of everyone in this town.
18. Karina Lutz asked when does it end. K. Lutz stated that it is absurd to have an arms race with our own government. K. Lutz stated that when the framers wrote the amendment, no one had ever seen a non-violent revolution take back a country from a violent, oppressive regime. K. Lutz stated that we have a different way to solve problems and can find peaceful means of protecting ourselves from government-caused issues. K. Lutz stated that she would love to see our government not have weapons of mass destruction, and when that day comes, we might be able to revisit the question of guns.
19. Paula Bissell, of Welks Lane, stated that she is here to express her dismay that the Town Council is taking up time on a Resolution that carries no weight and puts the Police in an awkward position. P. Bissell stated that she and her husband own guns and she is a firm believer of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment but she does not feel this is where the Council needs to spend their time. P. Bissell stated that people are not safe anymore and it is not just guns, it is also mental health. P. Bissell stated that a Councilor stated that they don't like the fact that "Gina" has made the state a sanctuary state, yet the Council is doing the same thing, deciding to

disobey laws that the state might make.

20. Christine Hopkins-Spidell stated that under the Constitution, the U.S. Supreme Court has the authority to interpret the Constitution, not the town of Gloucester. C. Hopkins-Spidell stated that she has proposed a Resolution based on the Supreme Court's recent interpretation by Justice Scalia, clarifying the rights under the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment. C. Hopkins-Spidell stated that she understands people wanting to protect their constitutional rights, however there is a course of action that needs to be taken through the court system. C. Hopkins-Spidell stated that she believes the idea of a sanctuary city was based on immigration of undocumented citizens. C. Hopkins-Spidell commented that the sanctuary city is pushing against Federal Law, it is not pushing against the United States Constitution. C. Hopkins-Spidell distributed copies of her proposed Resolution to the Council members.

Councilor Henry stated that C. Hopkins-Spidell said that sanctuary cities are protecting the "undocumented citizens". Councilor Henry stated that in her mind, they are illegal aliens. C. Hopkins-Spidell stated that she understands Councilor Henry's position, but that was not her point. C. Hopkins-Spidell stated that her point was that it is pushing against Federal Law, not the U.S. Constitution. Councilor Henry stated that she will call them what she believes they are.

21. Tom Sanzi stated that this is an important issue. T. Sanzi stated that we have a Constitution and a Bill of Rights which we are all guided by and he feels they should remain as is. T. Sanzi stated his opinion that we can stand on our own. T. Sanzi thanked everybody for coming tonight and for keeping it civil.
22. Derek Brodeur stated that he goes to the State House every time there is a 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment fight and they are always outnumbered. D. Brodeur thanked the Council for creating this Resolution and getting the voice out that we are not going to get pushed around any more.
23. Dan Desautel, of 154 Douglas Hook Road, stated that he has lived in Chepachet the majority of his life. D. Desautel stated that he has not reviewed the bill but based on the words used by Councilor G. Steere, he would be in favor of the Resolution. D. Desautel stated that he purchased his first rifle in 2007 but did not make the choice to assault anyone, he just made the choice to enjoy his 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment right. D. Desautel stated that it is not the rifle, but it is people that hurt other people. D. Desautel stated that this is the best way to show Providence through civic disobedience.
24. Jessica Caparco, resident of Gloucester for 7 years, stated that she is not opposed to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment in and of itself, but she does oppose the Resolution to make Gloucester a 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Sanctuary Town. J. Caparco stated her opinion that it is symbolic and unnecessary and does not represent all the constituents of this town.
25. Ata Edizkan, of 223 Chopmist Hill Road, stated that we are losing some kind of common sense and our civility with each other. A. Edizkan pointed out that crime and violence does not happen just by guns and referred to Sept. 11, 2001 when terrorists hijacked four planes

and killed more than 2000 people in this country. A. Edizkan stated that they did not use AR 15's or assault rifles, they used box cutters. A. Edizkan stated that our government did not ban box cutters, they took necessary security measures at airports. A. Edizkan also referred to the Boston Marathon bombing, where pressure cookers were used. A. Edizkan stated that we must use common sense because the tool is not the problem.

26. John Luszczyk, of 369 Snake Hill Road, stated that in the Navy he was trained with an M-16 and also with a 45 caliber pistol and is proficient with those weapons. J. Luszczyk stated that he defended our country and then when he enters civilian life and wants to get the civilian version of that same weapon, they want to take them away. J. Luszczyk stated that it doesn't make any sense to him. J. Luszczyk stated that he is glad the Council brought this up and commented that most of the people in this town want to have a firearm.
27. Andre Mendes, of Edgewood Road, expressed his support for this Resolution and he hopes that the Council passes it.
28. Kai Goto, of 7 Evergreen Road, stated that he opposes this Resolution because we don't know what it is yet. K. Goto stated that we don't know what Providence is coming up with yet. K. Goto commented that he is not opposed to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment because it is in our Constitution and it is what we follow, but this seems like a knee-jerk reaction that we want to pre-empt whatever is going to happen, just in case it happens. K. Goto thanked the Council for their public service.
29. Jon Burlingame, Gloucester resident for 45 years, spoke in support of the Resolution, stating that it is an important statement.
30. Mark Coupe, of 551 Douglas Hook Road, expressed his support for this Resolution and thanked the Council for bringing it forward. M. Coupe stated that he moved to Gloucester three (3) years ago because it is a gun owning community and it makes him feel safer to be around firearms.
31. Joseph DeSarro, Jr., of 104 Chopmist Hill Road, stated that he is in favor of Gloucester being a sanctuary town. J. DeSarro stated that he owns an AR-15 and has a range at his house. J. DeSarro stated that he is a nurse and feels that obesity and psych issues are more of a concern than guns. J. DeSarro stated that he owns several guns, some of which would be considered "weapons of war". J. DeSarro expressed concern that these would be taken from him.

Councilor Forgue read the following correspondence from Maureen Fontneau into the record:

Thank you for taking the time and consideration to make our town a 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Sanctuary. When discussing firearm legislation please keep in mind the many law abiding citizens of Rhode Island who participate in the shooting sports and/or have firearms for home protection. We come from all walks of life. We are the people you see in local restaurants, at church services and volunteering in our community.

In these troubling times when so many news reports are about the troubled people in our society and the ideology of hate, please keep in mind that many of the tax payers, voters and your constituents participate in the shooting sports. We are people who still believe in God and Country, raise our children to be respectful to all humanity and have a moral code by which we live. At our gun club we begin each meeting by pledging allegiance to our flag; which now almost seems politically incorrect. We also do a tremendous amount of charity work.

We are asking that you do not harm your law abiding citizens who legally own firearms and who participate in the shooting sports and have firearms to protect their homes/families because of the actions of criminals, thugs, the criminally insane and those who take part in the ideology of hate. We need to focus on punishing criminals and providing help or hospitalization for those who suffer from serious mental illness.

Our hearts break too when we hear of the tragedies and crimes committed against innocent people whether by firearms, stabbings, domestic violence, drunk driving, downed airliners, arson,, or by someone's bare hands.

Of course we are greatly concerned about our Constitution staying "intact" and about our Second Amendment. We all see how many of the people in our government are not "for the people" but have their own political agendas. Many Americans have lost faith and trust in our elected officials who take an oath to serve us and uphold the Constitution. It seems that politicians pick and choose who they serve and have no interest in the Constitution or rule of law as long as they have power.

When you take rights away from law abiding citizens, the only people you punish are your law abiding citizens. The others will continue to commit crimes, hurt, kill and hate. This is not what our Founding Fathers had in mind.

Many of us are members of the NRA; and we are not the "enemy" as many politicians and the media portray. We are all about firearm safety and welcome all Americans to join. We don't care about identity politics and putting people in categories or groups.

It is interesting that the people who want to take away our Second Amendment rights are our leaders and politicians who will always be surrounded by and protected by people who carry firearms. We live in a world where many politicians are elitists and hypocrites. Regular Americans to about their lives caring about their family, friends and neighbors and don't see others by identity politics or categories!

It is unfortunate that many of the people in power never take the time to actually meet the people of this State and not just the people they agree with. I think if everyone got off social media and didn't function through group think or tribalism they would be pleasantly surprised to learn that the majority of people are good, kind and caring.

We appreciate this opportunity to send a message to our State Government to uphold our Constitution. This is more than just about the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment. Once we open the door to changing our Bill of Rights we are in danger of eventually losing all of our liberties and freedom. Once we

lose our ability to live and speak freely we can never get these rights back.

We need to stop demonizing fellow Americans for political power and fund-raising. It would be nice if politicians could be role models of honesty and integrity. Most Americans have grown weary of the rhetoric, negativity and “soap opera” that State and Federal Government has become.

Thank you again for your consideration.

Respectfully,  
Maureen Fontneau  
(End of correspondence)

Councilor G. Steere stated that we have heard a lot of comments on both sides of the issue. Councilor G. Steere noted that this is just a Resolution of the Town Council, it not a bill or an ordinance. Councilor G. Steere stated that it is a statement and we are here tonight just to discuss it. Councilor G. Steere stated that the ones that have been done are not telling the Police not to obey the law; it says it affirms the support of the Police Department to exercise sound discretion when enforcing laws. Councilor G. Steere stated that the Police Chief has assured him that he does not have a problem with it and he will enforce the law no matter what. Councilor G. Steere stated that if we wait to see what happens in Providence, it will be too late; now is the time to make the statement and let the people in Providence know the way we feel. Councilor G. Steere stated that is just his opinion; he is one of five.

Councilor Reichert stated that he worked at the prison for nine years and commented that the mental illness at the Adult Correctional Institution is incredible. Councilor Reichert stated that the problem is that they closed down the state institutions where these people should be and put them in prison instead. Councilor Reichert stated that unfortunately they will have to make the schools like prisons to secure them. Councilor Reichert commented that if you take guns off law abiding people, the criminals will never turn them in. Councilor Reichert stated that he supports the Resolution 100%.

Councilor Forgue stated the he, like many in the audience, served in the military. Councilor Forgue stated that when he was 17 years old he had the fear of being drafted and sent somewhere that he didn't know where it was on a map. Councilor Forgue stated that when he finished basic training, he was handed an M-16 and a bayonet and was told he would need the equipment to fight and kill people. Councilor Forgue stated that he put in his head that he lives in a wonderful country, his father and grandfathers were veterans and he needed to step up and do it. Councilor Forgue stated that he is a “cowboy” and believes in the western way and if you don't know if something is legal or illegal, you have to ask yourself, is it right. Councilor Forgue stated that he feels this Resolution is right.

Councilor W. Steere thanked those who came to the meeting tonight and stated that it shows a lot of courage. Councilor W. Steere stated that those who go to the State House, no matter what side they are on, are always outnumbered by the people who make the decisions. Councilor W. Steere stated that ultimately, this is about a political statement, telling the State House and the Governor that they don't listen to us. Councilor W. Steere stated that he did not plan on speaking tonight, but he has heard a lot of poignant and passionate thoughts from both sides of this. Councilor W. Steere

stated that he found out from the newspaper that this was going to be on the agenda. Councilor W. Steere stated that Councilor G. Steere was right when he said we don't have anything tonight to vote on because the Council has not had a discussion as a group to decide what we want to do. Councilor W. Steere stated that he believes in the Rule of Law, the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of the State of Rhode Island and the Charter of Glocester, Rhode Island. Councilor W. Steere stated that he swore on oath to uphold and support those. Councilor W. Steere stated that he is a gun owner and does not believe that people should be trying to take away his Constitutional rights.

Councilor W. Steere stated that of the approximately 50 people he has spoken to, about 70% support this Resolution. Councilor W. Steere noted that every conversation he had was thoughtful and respectful and he appreciated that. Councilor W. Steere stated that many people asked why the Town Council is talking about this. Councilor W. Steere stated that he is more worried about taxes and public safety, including protecting our schools and public buildings, so he takes all that into account. Councilor W. Steere spoke about the Boston Marathon and stated that he and his wife were there. Councilor W. Steere stated that in the aftermath, we did not ban pressure cookers, but we took more approaches to safety. Councilor W. Steere stated that he has gone back several times since then and has never felt unsafe. Councilor W. Steere stated that his point is that we cannot legislate evil; there are evil people out there and if they want to do something evil, they will do it. Councilor W. Steere stated that he supports the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment whole-heartedly and also believes in responsible gun laws, such as background checks. Councilor W. Steere noted that his brother is a police officer and has to deal with people that should not have firearms on a day to day basis.

Councilor W. Steere spoke about the word "sanctuary" and stated that in many parts of this country it applies to illegal immigrants. Councilor W. Steere stated that if we do something with the word "sanctuary", we are doing the same thing, ignoring the laws. Councilor W. Steere noted that the western part of the state is not well-represented and left out of a lot of things, such as schools and roads. Councilor W. Steere stated that he wants to do something to let people know that Glocester is here and we value all of our Constitutional rights. Councilor W. Steere stated that he does not agree with using the word "sanctuary" and does not want to put our Police Department in the position where they have to make choices they should not have to make. Councilor W. Steere also spoke regarding unfunded mandates, stating that we already deal with them every day. Councilor W. Steere stated that he feels we should do something but does not feel comfortable with the word "sanctuary", but also feels that a message must be sent to our legislators. Councilor W. Steere noted that the Governor has been invited to many worthwhile events in Glocester but has never showed up to any, and that bothers him.

There was Council discussion regarding how to proceed. Councilor W. Steere pointed out that the clerk has been taking notes and the meeting is being recorded, so the Council could consider the information when coming up with something.

Councilor G. Steere asked Tim Kane, Town Solicitor, if a vote is necessary to move forward and come up with a Resolution for the next meeting. T. Kane replied that any Council member has the right to put something on an agenda, but for clarity, they could vote to authorize the Town Clerk to work with one or two Council members and to present a Resolution at a future Town Council

meeting.

Councilor W. Steere stated that he does not want to copy any other town's Resolution but to come up with something that fits our town.

Councilor Henry stated that she also is uncomfortable with the word "sanctuary" and wants to go on record that she has never held a gun, is not a gun owner and has no firearms in her home, but she understands the rights of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment. Councilor Henry noted that she does allow somebody to hunt on her property.

Councilor G. Steere stated that he agrees that we should come up with our own. Councilor G. Steere stated that he has looked at the others, and we can pick and choose a few points and come up with our own language that everyone agrees on.

MOTION was made by Councilor Reichert that Councilors G. Steere and Forgue draft a Resolution for the June 6, 2019 Town Council meeting; seconded by Councilor Forgue.

Discussion: None

VOTE:           AYES- G. Steere, W. Steere, Reichert, Henry and Forgue  
                  NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

Councilor G. Steere called for a five-minute recess.

B.     R.I. Legislation Update - Support or Opposition of pending bills- Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Steere stated that it is the end of the legislative session and legislators will be trying to push things through. Councilor W. Steere stated that the Council needs to be cognizant of anything that could positively or negatively affect the Town. Councilor W. Steere commented that the Council needs to look at the reforms and what they will cost, as they will probably result in more unfunded mandates.

Councilor W. Steere stated that there is one that may impact our Building and Zoning Department, where if we do not respond within 48 hours, a developer could have a third party perform an inspection. Councilor W. Steere noted that we don't have that issue because our Building/Zoning Official is on top of things, but we should consider this bill just in case. Councilor W. Steere noted that we would have to pay for that third party.

Councilor G. Steere stated that another one pertains to a resource officer in schools, but it refers to a new hire so it may not affect us now but in the future. Councilor Henry stated that we currently have one SRO officer who goes between the middle and high schools and she feels that we should look at the importance of getting somebody in the elementary schools. Councilor Henry referred to Sandy Hook Elementary School, stating that elementary school children are just as much at risk.

Councilor W. Steere stated that there is another bill concerning affordable housing, stating that the municipality could raise the amount of taxes from 8% to 10%, but the difference would have to go directly to public schools. Councilor W. Steere asked Karen Scott, Town Planner, for her input about this. K. Scott replied that there are five (5) bills at the House and Senate and she has sent a letter to our delegation expressing support for two (2) of them that would raise the percentage we tax, without restrictions. K. Scott stated that we probably would not support the ones with restrictions regarding how we spend the money or how much of a percentage we have to have for affordable housing in order to raise the percentage.

Councilor G. Steere stated that the Council will have to look at those bills and decide whether to support them or not.

C. Approval of Expenditure: Advertising letter of Thanks - Discussion and/or Action  
Councilor Henry stated that Judy Colaluca from the Sand Dam Association had written up a thank-you ad for the Bargain Buyer. Councilor Henry stated that she is looking for support from the other Council members if they think we can run the ad. Councilor Henry stated that a full-page ad would cost \$336 but she feels that a ½ page would be sufficient. Councilor Henry noted that about 90 families showed up the day of the Earth Day celebration and it was a great day.

MOTION was made by Councilor Henry to run a half-page black and white ad in the Bargain Buyer, thanking the citizens of Gloucester for making our Earth Day Celebration a huge success. Funding will come from the Council Contingency Fund; seconded by Councilor Reichert.

Discussion: Jean Fecteau, Town Clerk, stated that she will get the ad ready and send it to Councilor Henry for review.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, W. Steere, Reichert, Henry and Forgue  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

D. Discussion and/or Action RE: Plan for Gloucester Memorial Park Recreation Fields  
Councilor Henry suggested that this item be tabled because the Recreation Director is not present. Councilor W. Steere stated that a representative from the Little League is here to speak on the subject.

Steve Arnold, from the Gloucester Little League, stated that he is here because this was on the agenda. S. Arnold commented that he is not talking about field maintenance and asked Councilor Henry if she and the Recreation Director communicate about this matter. Councilor Henry replied that she is the liaison to Recreation but in this instance, she was not going to get involved in this issue. Councilor Henry stated that it was going to be S. Arnold, Councilor W. Steere and Bob Shields, Recreation Director that were supposed to meet at the Little League field.

Councilor G. Steere stated that B. Shields is not here tonight but it was discussed at the last meeting. Councilor W. Steere stated that instead of having a Council sub-committee, perhaps we can have a

Councilor and the Recreation Director discuss what is going to happen.

S. Arnold stated that he wants to know where the Little League stands regarding support and what the vision and the plan is. Councilor W. Steere stated that we need both sides to come together to make a plan and then go forward. S. Arnold stated that there has been a lack of communication and he does not want to keep “kicking this down the road” because we will be back here next year unable to host games. S. Arnold commented that we are so close to getting something we can be proud of. S. Arnold stated that there needs to be a meeting with a Council member, DPW, the Recreation Director and himself, representing the league. Councilor W. Steere offered to represent the Council and will keep Councilor Henry up to date on what is happening.

E. Police Department: Improvements/Repairs/Replacement/Feasibility for Future Plans  
- Discussion and/or Action.

Councilor Forgue stated that he put this on the agenda because we are talking about spending a lot of money on the Police Department and he believes that a study would be appropriate to see where this town would be five (5) years from now and to be sure that any improvements to this building are going to be feasible. Councilor Forgue asked the Council to consider having a feasibility study done rather than spend a lot of money on a building that may be inadequate seven (7) years from now. Councilor Forgue stated that he would rather “nip it in the bud” and think about doing something different rather than continue investing money into something that might not be adequate in the future.

Councilor G. Steere stated that the HVAC has to be almost totally replaced, the communications tower has been deemed structurally deficient and must be replaced, there are drainage problems, the septic system has failed and has to be replaced, they are really cramped for space, there is no more record storage space. Councilor G. Steere stated they have outgrown the space. Councilor G. Steere stated that certain things have to be done, such as the heat and the tower, and we have a grant to pay for a new emergency generator. Councilor G. Steere stated that if we have to put an addition on, we would have to take some land from behind the Police Station to add to town land. Councilor G. Steere stated there are a lot of elements and understands what Councilor Forgue is saying.

Councilor Forgue stated that we may be able to put some of the things on life support, but it would be a shame to invest close to a million dollars on an addition and find in a few years that the Police Station is inadequate. Councilor Forgue stated that we must ensure that the people that enforce our public safety have the tools they need to do their job to the best of their ability. Councilor Forgue noted that we are limited because there is not much property to continue to do these things.

Councilor W. Steere stated that Councilor Forgue has made some good points and as Councilor G. Steere noted, there are some things that need to be done now and hypothetically, if we were to build a new station, it would not be for a few years.

Joseph DelPrete, Chief of Police, agreed and stated that we are in the pipeline for grant money and will lose it if we get hung up on things. Chief DelPrete stated that the heating has to be re-engineered for the whole building as opposed to life support. Chief DelPrete stated he would like to add the needed 3000 square feet of space. Chief DelPrete stated that we also have a major flooding

problem and the parking lot is collapsing.

Councilor G. Steere stated that Councilor Forgue's point is if we go ahead with an addition a year from now, will that suffice for another 10 or 15 years. Chief DelPrete replied if we do a land acquisition, that would put us in a better position for an addition. The Chief discussed other areas that need attention.

There was discussion concerning a feasibility study and what it would cost.

Councilor Forgue stated his concern is that there seem to be more negatives than positives at the current location. Councilor Forgue stated that if the Council approves researching a feasibility study, he feels it would be a good investment. The Chief agreed we could use professional advice.

Councilor G. Steere stated that we could get a consensus on trying to find some prices and companies that do it to get an idea of what it would cost.

Tim Kane, Town Solicitor, stated that the Council could make a motion to direct him to work on it. T. Kane noted that there are States law regarding the hiring of these professionals. However, T. Kane stated that the State also has a Master Pricing Agreement with engineers and architects. T. Kane will determine if we can operate under the state's MPA. Councilor Henry asked where we would get the money for a feasibility study. Councilor G. Steere replied that we have to find out the cost first, but it won't cost us anything to get the ball rolling, and then Council will decide whether to go forward with the study depending upon the cost.

T. Kane stated we have to figure out what we want them to do a feasibility study on, the scope of the study and what the cost for the study would be.

There was discussion regarding the tower. Councilor Forgue stated that a tower that is adequate might not fit there. Councilor G. Steere stated that the EMA Director is trying to get a ruling on whether it is grandfathered in to that location because it exists already.

F. Town Council Meeting Schedule - Summer 2019 - Discussion and/or Action  
Councilor G. Steere stated that the first meeting of July would fall on July 4<sup>th</sup>, which is a holiday. Councilor G. Steere asked if Council wishes to reschedule that meeting or hold one meeting in July, the regular meeting scheduled for July 18<sup>th</sup>.

Discussion: Councilor Forgue recommended having one (1) meeting in July because many people go on vacation.

MOTION was made by Councilor Forgue to AMEND the annual meeting schedule by cancelling the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of July; seconded by Councilor Reichert.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, W. Steere, Reichert, Henry and Forgue

NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

Councilor Henry asked about August, stating that in the past we have had just one (1) meeting. There was Council consensus to wait to address it.

VIII. Town Council Correspondence and/or Discussion

- A. Councilor Henry spoke regarding Ponaganset High School students who are members of DECA, which stands for Distributive Education Clubs of America. Councilor Henry noted that in the two (2) years since Ponaganset joined, they have increased their membership by over 300 %. Councilor Henry stated that this year, they went to the national competition in Orlando, Florida where some of our students placed in the top ten in the United States. Councilor Henry stated that we should be proud of these students and suggested that the Council invite them to the next meeting and recognize them with a Citation. After discussion, there was Council consensus to place this on the agenda for the June 20<sup>th</sup> Town Council meeting. Councilor Henry stated that she will inform the DECA advisors.
- B. Councilor G. Steere stated that we have correspondence from the League of Cities and Towns regarding contract continuance and overtime for firefighters, but that bill has already been signed by the Governor.
- C. Councilor G. Steere stated that the Council received correspondence from a group in Burrillville regarding a rally on May 30<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. at the State House opposing the power plant. Councilor G. Steere stated that he received a phone call from the head of that group asking if Gloucester wants to be included. Councilor G. Steere noted that the Town Council had done a Resolution supporting Burrillville's findings. Councilor Forgue pointed out that the power plant would result in many water trucks coming through town and he feels that this needs to be looked at. Councilor Henry concurred. Councilor G. Steere commented that Burrillville has Gloucester on their sign because we supported their Resolution. Councilor G. Steere stated that the invitation stands for volunteers to attend and/or speak at the rally.
- D. Councilor G. Steere stated that the Council received the May newsletter from the Senior Center.
- E. Councilor G. Steere stated that the Council received several calls and emails regarding the Second Amendment and some of those people were here tonight to speak.

IX. Department Head Reports/Discussion  
None.

X. Bds. and Commissions Reports/ Discussion

- A. Walter Steere, Jr., School Committee member, stated that they are trying to redo

education in the General Assembly, some of which he does not agree with. W. Steere, Jr. stated that they want to take power away from the Superintendent and School Committees and give a lot of it to the principals, who already have plenty to do. Regarding Resource Officers, W. Steere, Jr. stated that we have a small department and things can go wrong if we don't get the right person.

W. Steere, Jr. spoke regarding student proration at the Region, stating that there will be a committee formed to look into doing away with it because it causes problems. W. Steere, Jr. stated that it would be a Charter change, but we could do it at a Financial Town Meeting where each town would vote on it. Councilor Henry commented that is not just the swing that happens, but the formula that is used is tied to our housing boom and evaluation. Councilor Henry stated that someone should look at that aspect too because it is not fair. W. Steere, Jr. stated is opinion that it is a good idea to eliminate student proration and he expressed hope that we can get it done soon. Councilor G. Steere stated that it would stabilize things for both towns without a big swing, but he does not know how it can be kept fair and equitable. W. Steere, Jr. replied that we will get more or less students, but the percentage for each town does not change very much.

XI. Open Forum  
None.

XII. MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to Seek to Convene to Executive Session Pursuant to:  
A. R.I.G.L. 42-46-5 (a)(2) Collective Bargaining - Discussion and/or Action  
B. R.I.G.L. 42-46-5 (a)(5) Acquisition of Land - Discussion and/or Action  
C. R.I.G.L. 42-46-5 (a)(2) Potential Litigation- Discussion and/or action  
seconded by Councilor Fergie.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, W. Steere, Reichert, Henry and Fergie  
NAYS-0  
MOTION PASSED

XIII. Reconvene Open Session  
MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to seal the minutes of Executive Session and to disclose that no votes were taken; seconded by Councilor Reichert.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, W. Steere, Reichert, Henry and Fergie  
NAYS-0  
MOTION PASSED

XIV. Adjourn  
MOTION was made by Councilor Reichert to ADJOURN at 10:23 p.m.; seconded by Councilor W.

Steere.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, W. Steere, Reichert, Henry and Forgue  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED