

At a meeting of the Town Council holden in and for the Town of Gloucester on March 12, 2020:

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; Joseph DelPrete, Chief of Police; Diane Brennan, Finance Director; Karen Scott, Town Planner; Judy Branch, Human Services Director; Ken Johnson, Bldg./Zoning Official; Melissa Bouvier, Senior Center Director; Gary Trembl, Public Works Director; Gerry Mosca, EMA Director; Robert Shields, Recreation Director

III. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

IV. Open Forum - For Agenda Items:

1. Jeffrey Ryan: resident of 78 Stone Dam Road, spoke regarding Item. L. Hunting. Mr. Ryan spoke of the advertising and notice of the proposed ordinance that would allow hunting on the property located at Stone Dam and Snake Hill. Mr. Ryan felt the advertising was not clear enough because it did not include the address, just the plat and lot. Mr. Ryan also stated the name of the property was a new name that no one was aware of and a name that is not posted on the property. Mr. Ryan felt the residents in that area should have received notice. Mr. Ryan outlined the reasons why he does feel the property, in question, is not appropriate for public hunting. Mr. Ryan stated he felt deceived when he found out this use was passed by reading the newspaper.

Mr. Ryan handed out pictures and explained what they were.

Councilor W. Steere asked Mr. Ryan when he saw hunters entering the property. Mr. Ryan stated there was one this year and another a few years ago. Councilor W. Steere stated no hunting was allowed prior to February or is hunting allowed now.

Councilor W. Steere asked Mr. Ryan when he found the stand. Mr. Ryan stated his surveyor found it last spring.

Mr. Ryan asked the Council to reverse the amendment and put a new one in.

V. Citation -2020-01 Milken Foundation Award -
Teacher Jennifer Paolantonio

Councilor G. Steere stated that tonight, we have the honor of presenting a citation to Ponaganset Special Education Teacher, Jennifer Paolantonio. Councilor G. Steere stated that Ms. Paolantonio was recently presented the Milken Educator's Award by the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching. Councilor G. Steere stated that Ms. Paolantonio is one of only forty in the country and the only Rhode Island teacher to receive this award this year.

Councilor G. Steere stated this award is given to outstanding teachers at a point in their career when they have shown their excellence in teaching so far and show promise for future accomplishments

inspiring our students.

Councilor G. Steere stated the CEO of the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching stated that Ms. Paolantonio “is making excellence and inclusiveness” an everyday expectation for her students and her school and Ponaganset High School and our community should be proud of Jennifer.

Councilor G. Steere stated that the Town Council has prepared a Citation to commemorate this award and show our appreciation to Ms. Paolantonio for the work she has done:

Councilor Henry read the following:

The State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

Town of Glocester

Citation

Be it hereby known to all that:

The Town of Glocester

hereby offers its sincerest congratulations to:

Jennifer Paolantonio

in recognition of

receiving the highly acclaimed "Milken Educator Award"

We thank you and recognize your excellence in teaching, your work to grow inclusion initiative at Ponaganset High School, and being an inspirational advocate for our students and fellow faculty.

The Town Council, Town Clerk and citizens of Glocester are proud to honor
Special Education Teacher, Jennifer Paolantonio

Proposed this 12th day of March, 2020

Councilor William E. Reichert

Councilor George O. Steere, President, Glocester Town Council

Councilor Julian P. Forgue

Councilor Patricia Jean Henry

Councilor Walter M.O. Steere, III, Vice. Pres

Jean M. Fecteau, CMC, Town Clerk

seconded by Councilor W. Steere

Discussion: Councilor Henry remarked that Dr. Michael Barnes had received this award in when he was a teacher at Ponaganset.

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

NAYS -0

MOTION PASSED

MOTION was made by Councilor Forgue to add to our agenda IX. New Business, Temporary Closure of Senior Center, and moving up on agenda IX. New Business, M. Covid-19 Updates/Actions - Discussion and/or Action; seconded by Councilor W. Steere

Discussion: none

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

MOTION PASSED

ADDITION to AGENDA - N. Temporary Closure of Senior Center:

Councilor G. Steere read a letter from the Senior Center Director:

3/11/2020

The Honorable Town Council

I am writing to you today out of concern. We have been posting all the recommended literature about hand washing and how to properly contain sneezes and coughs and of course to please stay home when not feeling well. We have been sanitizing touch screens, computers, phones, door handles and all contact surfaces frequently. I have still been worried as to whether or not I am doing enough to keep my members safe. I was made aware of a couple, who normally plays cards here, who has stopped attending because they are in self quarantine after having been exposed to an infected child. This was too close to home.

The CDC has warned that this virus seems to mainly affect adults and more seriously older adults. The following is a quote from the CDC's web page:

"Starting at age 60, there is an increasing risk of disease and the risk increases with age. The highest risk of serious illness and death is in people older than 80 years. People with serious underlying health conditions also are more likely to develop serious outcomes including death.

The people who are at greatest risk are those older and who also have serious long-term health conditions like diabetes, heart disease, or lung disease.'

This morning it was brought to my attention that 2 of the local senior centers have closed indefinitely, Smithfield and Scituate. While listening to all the members discussing that, my phone rang and it was another member letting me know that she was self-quarantined because she had spent a week with family who has been exposed to the virus. This woman is also a card player. As we all know playing cards requires constant touching and passing Not good!

We also have a St. Patrick's Day luncheon scheduled for March 17th with 93 people signed up to attend. I no longer feel we should gather so many together nor is it recommended.

It is my recommendation that as the disease continues to escalate to pandemic status that we should close the center immediately until at least March 27th at which point we can reassess the situation. I would also like to make an exception on Saturday March 21 st we have volunteers scheduled to come and help those in need with their tax returns. This would involve 5 appointments per hour for 5 hours and could be separated in different rooms. I have already discussed this with my liaison, Jay Forge, who has spoken to Tim Kane about adding it to the agenda Thursday night under an emergency procedure.

Thank you for your consideration.

Melissa Bouvier

(end of memo)

M. Bouvier addressed the Council and explained her concerns and the concerns of the CDC as they apply to Senior Centers. Discussion followed on the use of the Senior Center. Discussion followed on the effects of the Covid-19 virus and how to mitigate the spread.

It was agreed that the employee at the Senior Center can continue to work during the closure.

Judy Branch, Human Services Director, spoke and stated she was not aware of the possible closure of the Senior Center. J. Branch stated that she is closing down the senior transportation program indefinitely. J. Branch also explained the safety protocol she is using for her office and the food pantry.

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to close the Gloucester Senior Center, effective immediately, for an indefinite period of time; seconded by Councilor Reichert

Discussion:

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

MOTION PASSED

IX. New Business, M. Covid-19 Updates/Actions - Discussion and/or Action

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to AUTHORIZE the Human Services Director to suspend the transportation program for an indefinite period of time; seconded by Councilor Henry

Discussion:none

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

MOTION PASSED

Gerry Mosca, EMA Director, addressed the Council and explained new state guidelines and the Rhode Island State of Emergency now in place, how as a town we should function, and how these guidelines effect Gloucester. G. Mosca explained the status on obtaining Personal Protection Equipment for police and fire. G. Mosca explained personal safety protocol that we should follow.

The Clerk stated that the only event she is currently aware of is the Foster/Glocester Regional Financial Meeting planned for March 17th at the High School. The Clerk stated planned workers are already expressing concerns about working with a crowd of people. Dr. Michael Barnes, Supt., was present and gave statistics of attendance for prior years. Dr. Barnes explained the precautions they are taking, such as, moving the meeting to a larger room at the school and practicing social distancing, per the guidelines.

G. Mosca spoke of ways we can take precautions as a town especially regarding public meetings, town hall, and any planned events.

Discussion followed on the current State of Emergency issued by the Governor and how it effects

local government going forward.

D. Brennan explained that all tax exemptions are extended to April 30, 2020.

G. Mosca stated we need to work out a Continuity of Operations Plan and that we would like to meet with town departments next week to finalize plan. There was a discussion to hold a closed meeting to determine a plan for the Town. It was agreed to hold an Emergency Meeting with the Town Council and the Department Heads.

Councilor W. Steere brought up the Regions meeting and asked how it can be handled if people are uncomfortable attending. Discussion followed on the uncertainty of the next week and whether the States actions will limit the Town.

Discussion followed on the Town having the provision, in the Charter, to enforce an Emergency Declaration if needed.

G. Mosca gave the Council advise on ways to clean and protect the Town Hall on a daily basis.

After discussion, it was agreed to discuss the potential for an Emergency Declaration at the meeting on Monday night.

VI. Public Hearing

A. NEW Victualing License - Discussion and/or Action

1. Applicant: BlackForest Café
Location: 1195 B Putnam Pike, Chepachet
Applicant seeks new Victualing License at proposed location

Councilor G. Steere stated this application was advertised in the Valley Breeze/Observer on Feb. 13th, 20th, and 27th, 2020

Councilor G. Steere DECLARED the Public Hearing OPEN and asked if anyone wished to speak.

Discussion:

The Applicant, Susanne Haubrich, addressed the Council and explained her plans at that location. Councilor W. Steere asked if the proposal is open 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m The applicant answered in the affirmative. Councilor W. Steere questioned the number of parking spaces. S. Haubrich stated there are six spots in front of the building but there are additional spaces nearby. Councilor Henry questioned the number of days per week. The applicant answered six days per week with Mondays closed. S. Haubrich stated they would be open Sunday from 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 and the rest of week 12:00 to 7:00 p.m. Councilor Henry asked what the targeted opening date was. S. Haubrich stated May 22, 2020.

Councilor G. Steere DECLARED the Public Hearing CLOSED

MOTION was made by Councilor Reichert to GRANT a Victualing License to Applicant: BlackForest Café, Location: 1195B Putnam Pike contingent upon:

- 1) payment of all Town taxes;
- 2) Building/Zoning approval as needed;
- 3) Fire and/or Police approval as needed;
- 4) current Health Department approval;
- 5) current Food Manager Certificate;

and 6) current Rhode Island Permit to Make Sales; this license shall be for the interior of the premise only and is valid to November 30, 2020; seconded by Councilor W. Steere

Discussion: Council wished the applicant good luck.

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

MOTION PASSED

VII. Consent Items - Discussion and/or Action

- A. Approval of Town Council Regular meeting minutes of February 20, 2020 and Workshop with Budget Board meeting minutes of February 24, 2020

MOTION was made by Councilor Reichert to APPROVE the Town Council meeting minutes of February 20th, 2020 and the February 24th, 2020 Town Council and Budget Board Workshop ; seconded by Councilor Forgue

Discussion: none

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

MOTION PASSED

VIII. Unfinished Business

- A. Bds. and Commissions
 - 1. Appointment
 - a. Land Trust

- 1. One expired 1 year at-large term to expire 2/2021

Councilor G. Steere stated this appointment is for a Planning Board at-large appointment to the Land Trust and the Planning Board again recommends Janine Pitocco for this position.

MOTION was made by Councilor Forgue to REAPPOINT Janine Pitocco to the Land Trust for the 1-year at-large term to expire 2/2021; seconded by Councilor W. Steere

Discussion: none

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

MOTION PASSED

- B. Human Resource Administrator -Approve Dental Benefits &Waiver of Handbook, Health Insurance, Section 5. Part Time Employees, Two year minimum - Discussion and/or Action

MOTION was made by Councilor Forgue to REMOVE from the TABLE Item B. HR Administrator, Dental Benefits; seconded by Councilor Henry

Discussion: none

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

MOTION PASSED

- C. Personnel Handbook up dates rec'd from HR Administrator - Discussion and/or Action

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere **to REMOVE** from the TABLE Item C. Personnel Handbook updates; seconded by Councilor Reichert

Discussion: none

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

MOTION PASSED

- D. Authorization of Expenditure
 - 1. Repairs and/or rehabilitation of “Betty” the Elephant (Potato Head Statue)- Discussion and/or Action

Councilor G. Steere stated this item was tabled at Council’s last meeting. Councilor Henry stated she had reached out to Hasbro seeking funding or suggestions for funding. Councilor Henry stated she had put Karen Scott in touch with her contact and it was determined there were no funds available for that type of venture.

Councilor Henry stated she would like to get through the budget period before addressing this expenditure. It was acknowledged that K. Scott is currently working on a grant to procure the funds for this project.

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to REMOVE this item from the TABLE; seconded by Councilor Henry

Discussion: none

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

MOTION PASSED

IX. New Business

- A. Procedures and Protocols: Closed Session - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor Forgue stated he added this item to get clarity to the way executive session is supposed to work.

T. Kane stated closed session is privileged and confidential and there are only certain reasons that you can go into executive session per R.I. General Law. T. Kane stated the Council typically seals the minutes of executive session and then discloses whether votes were taken once in open session. T. Kane stated down the line if the situation allows those votes can be disclosed to the public. T. Kane stated anything that is discussed in closed session shouldn’t be discussed unless the minutes are unsealed by the Council.

Councilor Forgue reiterated whatever Council discussions in closed session should stay in closed session. T. Kane agreed.

B. Policy for access to Town Security cameras - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Steere stated the Town has cameras in place to protect the employees and residents and feels there should be a policy on the access of those cameras so that everyone feels comfortable that they will be used for that purpose. Councilor W. Steere felt that no one Councilor should be allowed to use these cameras for anything else than to protect the employees. Councilor W. Steere stated as there isn't a single person, such as a town manager, that is allowed to use these cameras for any other use there should be a policy. Councilor Henry stated that she doesn't understand the reference to a town manager and further that the subject of a town manager shouldn't be politicized. Councilor W. Steere stated he is not politicizing anything and that he is making the reference that there is no one person who can use the cameras. Councilor Henry questioned where it is written that the security cameras could only be used for the purpose stated. Councilor W. Steere stated he feels that employees feels it would be used for reasons besides security.

After discussion, Councilor W. Steere will draft a document and bring forward to Council.

MOTION was made by Councilor Reichert to AUTHORIZE Councilor W. Steere to submit a draft policy for the use of security cameras on town property; seconded by Councilor Forgue

Discussion: none

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

MOTION PASSED

C. HR Position

1. Declare position vacant - Discussion and/or Action

MOTION was made by Councilor Forgue to DECLARE the position of HR Administrator vacant effective February 21, 2020; seconded by Councilor Henry

Discussion: none

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

MOTION PASSED

2. Discussion and/or Action to fill position - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor Forgue stated that he had discussed this position with the Budget Board Chair and Ms. McNamara has a suggestion for Council.

Ms. McNamara, Budget Board Chair, stated she spoke with colleagues that run a consulting agency who expressed an interest in conducting an audit to determine what needs the town has in this area. M. McNamara stated this person has experience working with municipalities. M. McNamara stated she feels we could get a lot of value and, further, that person felt perhaps having a person on board one day a week could be sufficient.

Councilor W. Steere clarified this persons role would be solely to do the audit. M. McNamara

answered in the affirmative.

Councilor Forgue asked if this person would be willing to be part of the hiring process. M. McNamara answered in the affirmative.

After discussion, it was agreed to add this item to the next agenda after Council has reviewed the information they have received.

- D. Review and consider updates/samples to consider an amendment to Gloucester's Code of Ordinance, Chapter 399. Sexual Harassment Policy - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor Reichert stated he has presented to the Clerk several examples of sexual harassment policies used in other communities or places of employment. Councilor W. Steere stated workplace harassment was also included. Councilor Reichert stated Council can review and determine if any of the points could be added to our current policy.

- E. Town Treasurer request for Authorization to hold "Low Value Sale of Properties" on properties where Tax Title held by Town) - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor G. Steere stated that Council has received a request from the Treasurer, Jane Steere, to authorize a Low Value Sale of Properties. Councilor G. Steere stated the terms of the sale with the company offering to conduct the sale is listed in the information provided to Council.

Councilor Henry, along with D. Brennan, explained the process and the benefits to the town. D. Brennan noted these are properties that have been off the tax roll for many years. D. Brennan stated these properties are not tax sale properties. (Multiple speakers)

MOTION was made by Councilor Henry to AUTHORIZE the Finance Director and Treasurer to work with Country Title LLC to prepare the plan for notification and sale per state law and prepare a contract for Town Council approval after review by the Town Solicitor; seconded by Councilor Reichert

Discussion: Councilor W. Steere questioned if this contract will come back for Council approval. The answer was in the affirmative.

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

MOTION PASSED

- F. Town Road Repair Priority List - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor G. Steere stated a list was discussed at the budget workshop. Councilor G. Steere asked G. Trembl if he had an actual list. G. Trembl stated he did not as the prioritization changes. Councilor Reichert stated years back when there was a big push to repair roads a plan was used (1998 road bond for high access roads). Councilor Reichert stated before the town could do their own paving a former Public Works Director would come to Council with a list of roads he needed fixed, especially non town roads. Councilor W. Steere stated he felt this list was thought by the Budget Board to be a plan for the future funding of road repairs.

D. Brennan stated she felt the concept was to come up with a five year plan to identify potential

roads keeping in mind that priorities change. The Budget Board Chair spoke from the audience (not audible)

No action.

MOTION was made by Councilor Henry to move Item L. on the agenda following Item G.; seconded by Councilor Reichert

Discussion: none

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

MOTION PASSED

G. Gloucester's Community Septic System Loan Program - Consideration of seeking additional funding for program: Discussion and/or Action

Councilor G. Steere stated the Council has received a request from the Finance Director regarding additional funding for this program:

To: Honorable Town Council Members
From: Diane L. Brennan, Director of Finance
Memo: Community Septic System Loan Program
Date: March 9, 2020

The Town of Gloucester has been advised the last allocation of \$300,000 set aside for Gloucester residents for the septic loan program has been nearly depleted. Council approval is required by the RI Infrastructure bank to secure additional funds for Gloucester residents experiencing failed systems. The recommended request is for \$500,000 to allow for the increasing costs to install and the number of applicants. The last request was in April of 2019. The amount of loans requested for the month of January was over \$80,000 with a balance of \$177,087 as of January 31, 2020.

I would recommend the council approve the authorization for the process to begin to better provide Gloucester residents with a loan option for failing septic systems. These funds are monitored by RI Housing based on criteria defined by the Gloucester Town Council.

(End of memo)

Discussion: Councilor Henry explained this is making funds available for people with failed systems. D. Brennan stated the last increase closed in August of 2019.

MOTION was made by Councilor Henry to APPROVE the Finance Director beginning the process to secure additional funds from the RI Infrastructure Bank to be allocated for the Gloucester Septic Loan Program which is monitored by RI Housing; seconded by Councilor Reichert

Discussion: none

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

MOTION PASSED

L. (Moved to this point by a motion) Hunting - Gloucester Veterans Memorial Recreation Area - (Stone Dam Rd.) Discussion and/or Action

Councilor G. Steere referred to the list of residents that signed up to speak:

1. Peter Ryan, 31 Stone Dam Road: stated he is not against hunting but that he was alarmed because the property was not set up for hunting. Mr. Ryan stated there are no signs and the concept that 50 permits for land is alarming. Mr. Ryan stated this property is surrounded by roads and houses. Mr. Ryan also commented that he feels misrepresented because he had no idea and he feels as though he should have been notified directly. Mr. Ryan asked the Council to think about their own home, their surrounding neighborhood and their families as they relate to hunters nearby.

Councilor G. Steere asked Mr. Ryan where the number of 50 permits came from. It was stated from the audience that it was stated as such in the newspaper.

Councilor G. Steere stated all that was done was that the stewardship was given to Conservation Commission and no numbers have been determined.

Councilor G. Steere stated he took exception to the statement that the Council was deceitful or unethical and that the hearing was noticed per the law.

Councilor Forgue stated perhaps in the future if the Town proposes to open a property for hunting a different process could be followed.

2. Kelsey Ryan stated she thought it would be safe for herself and her family. K. Ryan expressed concern that she did not know this was happening and that the Town did not prioritize over the safety of the community.
3. Adam Muccino stated he is not an anti-hunter and he is very concerned about the safety of his family and his neighbors. Mr. Muccino stated that D.E.M. has not been notified that hunting will be allowed on this property. Mr. Muccino stated he was concerned about opportunities cost in taxation, insurance issues, data regarding drop in hunting licenses, and the process. Mr. Muccino stated that the newspaper states the town has owned this property for four years and he pointed out that there has been no efforts to notify the town's residents they could use that property. Mr. Muccino asked the Council to remove the hunting from this property. Mr. Muccino stated he spoke with Councilor W. Steere and expressed in that conversation that he has never hunted the property. Mr. Muccino stated he mentions that to dispel rumors.

Councilor Forgue stated he went on Stone Dam Road and feels that needs to be looked at again.

Councilor Forgue stated there are houses close to this property. Councilor Forgue stated this is an infringement on property owners and they should have been notified.

Councilor Reichert stated the land was purchased for potential ball fields and recreational properties.

The residents stated they were not aware.

Councilor Henry stated it was included on a town referendum ballot in 2016 and prior to voting was explained in an advertisement as follows:

Question #2: Shall the Town Budget include an appropriation of \$100,000 from surplus, towards the purchase of recreational property for the town, this appropriation will come from existing surplus and will not increase the amount to be raised by taxes?

Explanation: The voters previously approved \$225,000 toward the purchase of recreational property. This additional amount requested will meet the appraised price of \$325,000 for 89.7 acres of fields, woodlands and ponds on the corner of Snake Hill Road and Stone Dam Road. This is truly a multi-use property and the Town will seek additional grant funding sources for the development of the property over a number of years. Approval of this question will not increase taxes.

Councilor Henry stated she feels the town was open when purchasing the property, but further stated perhaps she was wrong in not looking at the property before voting.

Councilor Henry stated is she not against hunting and she understands the concerns voiced, as she would be concerned for her grandchildren.

Councilor Henry stated perhaps the Council should make this right.

Councilor Forgue stated that he has to follow notification procedures when he does projects with his properties and he doesn't understand why the town didn't have to do that process when purchasing property.

Councilor Reichert stated that property was destined to be a big development and instead the town purchased it for recreational use for our children years ago. Councilor Reichert stated that he was against hunting on that property when it came up this year.

Councilor Forgue stated we should take another look at this and in the future we should look at how we purchase open space property.

Councilor W. Steere thanked all the residents for coming and noted it appears there would have been a different outcome if the residents had been at the original meeting. Councilor W. Steere acknowledged that the notice issues and all the points brought forward by the residents.

Unknown name: Owns a llama farm across the street and questions how the Council would feel if someone were shot.

Unknown name: If the ad has said "property at the corners of Snake Hill Road and Stone Dam Road" we all would have been at the hearing.

Roy Najecki addressed the Council (and the residents) to explain the considerations made by the Conservation Commission when considering rules and regulations for hunting. R. Najecki stated the Conservation Commission was assigned stewardship of this property in November of 2019. R. Najecki stated the commission has not yet made any determinations for this particular property. R. Najecki stated the Conservation Commission intends on walking the property to see what can be

done there safely. R. Najecki stated if hunting were allowed the property would be properly posted and all requirements met. R. Najecki again stated there are no rules prepared at this time and when they are the rules and regulations promulgated by the Conservation Commission those rules will be brought back to the Council for consideration. Councilor Henry asked R. Najecki if no hunting signs can be posted on this property now. It was noted that people have been hunting on this property for generations. R. Najecki stated those signs could be put up on that property. G. Treml will post no hunting signs.

J. Fecteau stated, as a resident, the ordinance should be repealed as in her opinion hunting doesn't belong on this property.

Harry Andrews, 140 Stone Dam Road, as a long time resident expressed his enjoyment of a new generation of active young families, with a lot of children, on this road. Mr. Andrews stated he would be concerned about parking.

Council discussed a resolution to this situation.

T. Kane advised Council repealing this ordinance would require further future action but Council could send that message to Conservation Commission in the meantime.

It was agreed to send direction to the Conservation Commission to not allow hunting on the property known as Gloucester Veterans Memorial Recreation Area.

H. Budget FY 2020-21

1. Items to be discussed and voted for inclusion in proposed budget for voter approval:

Councilor G. Steere stated at the Budget Board workshop with the Council changes to employee benefits, hours, and new positions were brought forward by the Budget Board as part of the budgets submitted by Department Heads. Councilor G. Steere stated Council typically approves new positions, and changes to benefits and we are now being asked to discuss and decide whether to approve these items to include in the proposed budget.

- a. Proposed changes to employee benefits/hours: Planner, IT Office, Recreation Director - (submitted to Budget Board) Discussion and/or Action

D. Brennan stated when the department heads turn in their budgets they discuss these types of personnel issues with the Budget Board but we need to follow the procedure of recognizing Council's authority as in hiring and firing to get those items in the budget. D. Brennan stated going forward she is open to opinion on a different time or way to present these items.

Council discussion followed on the proposed changes to the budget.

Planner: D. Brennan explained the Budget Board discussed the justifications rec'd from the Town Planner for additional hours to bring the Planner up to 24 hours weekly.

IT: M. Floor's request for additional hours (approx. 5 hrs.), due to work load, was discussed.

Recreation Dept.: D. Brennan stated the Recreation Director requested additional salary (\$7,000) due to the increase in events and additional programs.

Councilor W. Steere stated Council does not have to made decisions on these personnel issues at this point. Discussion followed the items are only being approved for inclusion in the Budget Boards proposed budget.

- b. Proposed new additional positions: Police Dept. & Public Works - (submitted to Budget Board) Discussion and/or Action

D. Brennan explained there were requests made for new positions for the Police Department and the Public Works Department.

- c. Change in position title: GIS Consultant to GIS Analyst (clarify consultant/employee payroll status)- Discussion and/or Action

D. Brennan explained why the request to change this status was received. D. Brennan stated it was felt that a consultant would be paid much higher as a payroll employee. Councilor Henry questioned if we could just change the line item title. Councilor G. Steere stated this person has always been considered an employee.

Discussion followed on potential impact from the Covid-19 virus for the completion of budget process. Councilor W. Steere questioned the process we would follow if the budget process is affected and is not passed in time.

B. Shields, Recreation Director, explained his request to Council and discussed comparisons of compensation for Recreation Director’s statewide.

J. Fecteau addressed the issue of assigning a title to Matt Floor in regards to his IT work. J. Fecteau explained that M. Floor often needs to sign on behalf of the Town especially with the increased amount of cyber security work. There was Council consensus to assign a title with a vote on their next meeting.

D. Brennan and J. Fecteau explained the timing and process going forward to pass the budget.

- I. Authorization to apply for a RI Foundation Community Grant seeking funds for repairs to “Betty the Elephant”- Discussion and/or Action

Karen Scott explained that she had done considerable outreach and found some interest from the RI Foundation regarding her fund raising to repair Betty the Elephant, Potato Head. K. Scott would now like to submit a no match grant application.

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to AUTHORIZE Karen Scott, Town Planner, to submit a grant application to the RI Foundation for a Community Grant seeking funds for the repair of “Betty the Elephant Potato Head” seconded by Councilor Reichert

Discussion: none

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

MOTION PASSED

- J. Boards & Commissions
 - 1. Resignation - Discussion and/or Action
 - a. Economic Development Commission
One two year term to expire 12/31/2020

Councilor G. Steere stated the Clerk has received a letter of resignation from Joshua Hoffman from the Economic Development Commission.

MOTION was made by Councilor Forgue to ACCEPT the resignation of Joshua Hoffman from the Economic Development Commission; seconded by Councilor Henry

Discussion: none

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

MOTION PASSED

- 2. Appointment - Discussion and/or Action
 - a. Economic Development Commission
One two year term to expire 12/31/2020

Councilor G. Steere stated the Chair has recommended the appointment of Lauren Niedel to the Economic Development Commission.

MOTION was made by Councilor Forgue to APPOINT Lauren Niedel to the Economic Development Commission for a two year term to expire 12/31/2020; seconded by Councilor Reichert

Discussion: none

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

MOTION PASSED

K. Gloucester Land Trust - Funding of Hawkins Dam project - Discussion and/or Action
Councilor G. Steere stated that at the Budget Board/Town Council workshop Council decided that the funding of this project should be discussed. Councilor G. Steere stated the Land Trust has some funds set aside.

R. Najecki, representing the Land Trust, stated the bid received by Pare Corp. for the construction work, did not include any of the oversight expenses needed for the project and that additional cost is unknown at this time.

R. Najecki also stated the Land Trust met and decided to seek a grant writer to go forward with obtaining grants for dam repair. R. Najecki stated the Chair has been authorized to talk with a person who has experience with successful dam repair projects

R. Najecki stated there will be a meeting of D.E.M., Dam Safety Dept., coming up and it is thought they will discuss the possible revision of standards regarding the 500 year flood damage. R. Najecki further stated also on their agenda is the discussion of possibly obtaining federal funding sources to do dam repair.

Councilor W. Steere thanked R. Najecki

B. Payton spoke regarding Land Trust expenditures. B. Payton expressed concerns for the budgeting and spending practices of the Land Trust. B. Payton stated the autonomy the Land Trust wanted, when he was chair, was to prevent interference with deciding which properties to purchase. Councilor Forgue questioned the spending items Mr. Payton referenced. Discussion followed regarding the necessity of legal council present at every meeting.

Discussion followed with R. Najecki about the Land Trust's Hawkins Dam Project. Council explained to Mr. Najecki that it was their expectation that the Land Trust will find the funding for this project.

No Action.

- L. Hunting - Gloucester Veterans Memorial Recreation Area - (Stone Dam Rd.)
Discussion and/or Action

Completed earlier in meeting.

X. Town Council Correspondence/ Discussion

1. Correspondence received from the ACLU regarding the repeal of Gloucester Code of Ordinance, 157-2.E regarding public intoxication. T. Kane explained and it was agreed this item will be addressed through the process for amendments.
2. Correspondence received from Blackstone Valley Tourism requesting \$2,000 for their efforts promoting communities.
3. Correspondence received inviting Town Council to the St. Patrick's Day Parade.
4. Correspondence from School 1 congratulating Erin Helly, a student at Ponaganset High School, on receiving an Notable Mention for her story, *Folds and Creases*. Erin is among the twenty winners of the Write Rhode Island Short Story Competition. Also noted was teacher, Lisa LaFerriere at Ponaganset High School who was mentioned as being instrumental connecting students with local writers and opportunities. Councilor Henry noted that the School Committee has recognized these accomplishments.
5. Correspondence from Secretary of State following up on cyber security issues.

XI. Department Head Reports/Discussion

Councilor Henry stated she is still working with Judy Colalucci on the Earth Day celebration and will update Council if any changes occur relative to the Corona Virus outbreak.

XII. Bds. and Commissions Reports/ Discussion

1. R. Shields, Recreation Director, updated the Council on revitalization being done at Winsor Park by himself, Gloucester Little League, Recreation Commission, DPW, and possibly Ponaganset. R. Shields stated fields are needed and everyone has committed to helping out. Councilor W. Steere stated the Little League has never gotten back to him regarding Gloucester Memorial Park. R. Shields will discuss the use of Leja Field with the Little League

President

2. K. Scott, Town Planner, stated we have closed out the National Grid Community Initiative program and through hers and town departments efforts assisting with “getting out” the marketing netted the Town \$14,175. K. Scott these funds can be recycled back into the town for our own projects.
3. D. Brennan, Finance Director, stated Power Options, the Town’s energy provider, contract runs until December 2020. D. Brennan stated with dropping prices they have offered to come before the Council to explain available offers, such as locking in, if Council is interested in a presentation. Council expressed, after discussion, this may be a good time to consider this option, possibly at next meeting if they are available. D. Brennan stated she will have the rep. come to the next meeting.
D. Brennan also stated she will have the fireworks contract (to be extended), the Senior Center parking lot contract, and the extension of the GASB contract for next meeting.
4. T. Kane, Solicitor, updated the Council on current litigation and stated that two tax appeals have been successfully dismissed.

XIII. Open Forum
none

XIV. MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to Seek to Convene to Executive Session Pursuant to: RIGL 42-46-5 (a)(4) Investigative proceedings regarding allegations of civil misconduct - Discussion and/or Action; seconded by

Discussion: none

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

MOTION PASSED

After Executive Session

XV. Reconvene Open Session
For the record: No votes were taken in Executive Session

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to SEAL the minutes of Closed Executive Session pursuant to R.I.G.L. 42-46-7.c; seconded by Councilor Forgue

Discussion: None

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

MOTION PASSED

XVI. MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to Adjourn at 11:35 p.m.; seconded by Councilor Reichert

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