

At a meeting of the Town Council holden in and for the Town of Gloucester on August 17, 2017:

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; Edward C. Burlingame, Vice-President; Walter M. O. Steere, III and Patricia Henry.

Member Absent: William E. Reichert

Also present: Jean M. Fecteau, Town Clerk; Tim Kane, Town Solicitor; Susan Harris, Deputy Town Clerk; Diane Brennan, Finance Director; Gary Treml, Director of Public Works; Ken Johnson, Building/Zoning Official; Karen Scott, Town Planner; Jane Steere, Tax Collector; Lori DeSantis, Tax Assessor; Robert Shields, Recreation Director and Judy Branch, Director of Human Services.

III. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

IV. Open Forum - For Agenda Items

A. Stacey Swift stated that he wished to speak regarding the Elderly Tax Exemption but will wait to speak until the Public Hearing.

B. Robert Kelman, of 19 St. James Lane, spoke regarding the Town against Robert and Shana Grena litigation. R. Kelman stated that he understands that a settlement has been reached, but expressed concern with regard to the heavy truck traffic on the roads. R. Kelman recommended that the Town require a bond. R. Kelman stated that why no bonds have been required to now is a mystery to him. R. Kelman commented that the (D.E.M.) Planning Commission has stated that no work shall take place until certain issues are resolved, however, the issues are not resolved and there has been activity since August 4th. R. Kelman asked the Town Council to consider the Town and the taxpayers when making this settlement. R. Kelman stated, again, that if truck traffic is allowed to continue bonding should be considered.

Councilor G. Steere thanked R. Kelman for his comments and stated that this matter is on tonight's agenda.

V. Public Hearing

A. Gloucester Code of Ordinance

1. Proposed Amendment to Chapter 247 Taxation, Article III: Exemption for Elderly and Disabled Persons - Discussion and/or action

Councilor G. Steere stated that this Public Hearing was advertised in the Valley Breeze/Observer on August 3, 2017.

Councilor G. Steere DECLARED the Public Hearing Open and stated that a first reading was held on July 20, 2017.

Discussion: Councilor Burlingame explained that Gloucester's elderly and disabled tax program is the most generous in the State, noting that over \$2050.00 is taken "off the top" of the tax bills. Councilor Burlingame stated that our current senior exemptions wipe out the revenue from motor vehicle tax, which is well over 2 million dollars per year. Councilor Burlingame stated that when home values dropped as a result of the recession, the values of exemptions should have dropped proportionately, but it didn't happen, causing the elderly exemption to take a higher percentage of tax revenue than before and this number will continue to increase if it is not addressed. Councilor Burlingame stated that the Council looked at other communities and made some adjustments to the requirements, such as increasing the number of years of ownership from 5 years to 10 years. Councilor Burlingame further stated that due to the salary exemptions which entitle some taxpayers another \$1,500.00 credit, some are paying nothing for municipal services such as Police and Town Hall.

Councilor Burlingame summarized the proposed ordinance amendment as follows:

1. Everybody that owns property as of the date that this Ordinance is passed will be "grandfathered" and nothing will change. (If you own the property now when you reach 65 and you have owned it for five years you will be eligible for the exemption).
2. The waiting time will be increased from 5 years to 10 years for anyone who buys property after the date that this Ordinance is enacted.
3. For new residents only: people who own property after this amendment is passed, there will be a minimum tax of \$600.00 per year. Councilor Burlingame reiterated that this would not affect those currently owning property.

Councilor Burlingame commented that this is not going to solve the problem immediately but will ease the situation somewhat. Councilor Burlingame further stated that if nothing is done the problem will continue to grow.

Councilor Burlingame stated that for those currently receiving an exemption of \$2070, they will keep it and it will be frozen where it is.

Councilor Burlingame reiterated that for those who currently receive the salary exemption, it will be frozen where it is now.

Councilor Burlingame stated that the practices in the Assessor's Office will be tightened up to ensure we get our tax dollars and problems, such as, people owning property in two (2) states "double-dipping" will be addressed.

Councilor Burlingame again reiterated that for all property owners that have the exemption, nothing changes.

Councilor G. Steere asked for clarification regarding the following:

“Owners who are 80 years of age and older, and have owned and occupied property for 20 years prior shall receive an additional \$1,000.00 exemption.”

Councilor Burlingame stated the main statements are:

- (1) Qualified owners who are 65 years of age or older, or qualified owners that are permanently disabled: an exemption in the amount of \$2,070;
- (2) Owners who are 80 years of age or older, and have owner/occupied property for twenty years prior, shall receive an additional exemption, of \$1,000.
- (3) Qualified owner/occupants after (Approval Date), regardless of exemptions allowed on real estate, shall pay a minimum tax of \$600 annually.

After discussion, it was agreed that the additional \$1,000 over the basic exemption, when residents turn 80, would be for all qualified property owners and not just new owners. Lori DeSantis replied in the affirmative that statement was correct. Councilor G. Steere stated that it is not strictly for the new people. Councilor Burlingame agreed.

Councilor W. Steere asked about current residents who change residency within the Town, do they continue as they were at the new property. Councilor Burlingame replied in the affirmative.

Hank Reagan, of 56 Lake View Drive, stated that when people reach that age bracket there is a strong possibility that someone will pass which would drive the household income down. H. Reagan asked if they still qualify for the low income level because when you lose one person you lose one pension. Councilor Burlingame replied in the negative.

John Salisbury stated that he has owned property for over 20 years and is 86 years old. Mr. Salisbury asked how that will affect him. Councilor Burlingame stated that the exemption will be frozen where it is.

Russell Gross, Putnam Pike, stated that he will be turning 80 before January and asked if he will be receiving the additional \$1,000 credit on next year's taxes. Mr. Gross asked if the \$2,070 exemption will become a \$3,070 exemption. Lori DeSantis and Council members replied in the affirmative. Mr. Gross expressed he wanted that stated on the record.

Viviane Valentine, of Saw Mill Road, asked if the minimum tax has any conflict with State Law. Tim Kane, Town Solicitor, replied that the proposed ordinance amendment is consistent with the state enabling legislation. V. Valentine asked, if it is in conflict would state law take precedence. T. Kane replied that state law usually controls in matters of taxation.

Joe Huguenin, of 348 Lake Drive, asked if when this goes into effect will the low income residents

have a minimum tax of \$600.00. Councilor Burlingame replied that this minimum applies to new property owners only.

Councilor G. Steere DECLARED the Public Hearing Closed.

Discussion: There was Council discussion regarding the effective date of the amendment. Councilor Burlingame stated that it will be effective upon passage. Jean Fecteau, Town Clerk, questioned that if it passes tonight, would we be filling in tomorrow's date in most cases. Councilor Burlingame answered in the affirmative. Councilor Henry asked if we would rather it be the first of the month. Councilor Burlingame replied that we don't want people to "jump in".

MOTION was made by Councilor Burlingame to ADOPT the amendment to the Gloucester Code of Ordinance, Chapter 247 Taxation, Article III, Exemption for Elderly & Disabled Persons, effective upon passage; seconded by Councilor Henry.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES - G. Steere, Burlingame, W. Steere & Henry
NAYS - 0

MOTION PASSED

VI. Consent Items - Discussion and/or action

- A. Approval of Town Council meeting minutes of July 20, 2017
- B. Tax Assessor's Additions & Abatements - July 2017
- C. Motor Vehicle Abatements (Resulting from Rhode Island Legislation/Budget)
- D. Finance Director's Report - July 2017
- E. Pole Grant- Lake Drive

MOTION was made by Councilor Henry to **APPROVE** the Town Council meeting minutes of July 20, 2017; to **APPROVE** the Tax Assessor's ADDITIONS to the 2017 Tax Roll in the amount of \$6,719.55 and the ABATEMENTS to the 2016 Tax Roll in the amount of \$1,911.97; to **AUTHORIZE** the Finance Director to process Motor Vehicle Abatements in an amount not to exceed \$295,000.00; to **ACCEPT** the Finance Director's Report for July 2017; and to **APPROVE** the Pole Grant: T.36/E.36 for new service on the easterly side of Lake Drive; seconded by Councilor Burlingame.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES - G. Steere, Burlingame, W. Steere & Henry
NAYS - 0

MOTION PASSED

VII. Unfinished Business

- A. Boards & Commissions
 - 1. Appointment - Discussion and/or action

a. Local Board of Appeals for Building Code - 5 year term

Councilor G. Steere stated that the Town Clerk has had an Engineer position vacant for some time, on this board, a no answer on calls out to a member whose term expired, and a vacancy due to the passing of a member. Councilor G. Steere stated that due to these vacancies and there being no current talent bank applications on file for this board the Clerk will be advertising for people that might be interested.

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to TABLE the appointments to the Local Board of Appeals for Building Code to the September 21, 2017 Council meeting; seconded by Councilor Henry.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES - G. Steere, Burlingame, W. Steere & Henry
NAYS - 0

MOTION PASSED

b. Budget Board

One 3 year term to expire 1/2018

Councilor Henry stated that she should have a name for appointment next month.

MOTION was made by Councilor Henry to TABLE the appointment to the Budget Board for one 3 year term to expire 1/2018; seconded by W. Steere.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES - G. Steere, Burlingame, W. Steere & Henry
NAYS - 0

MOTION PASSED

B. Department Head (non-union) salary adjustments - Discussion and/or action

Councilor Burlingame stated that he is not comfortable that we have a process yet and would like to remove this item from the agenda for further investigation.

Councilor Henry noted that if there is any public perception that the Council has not been analyzing and working on this issue, she would like everyone to know that the Council has been working on this diligently and feels that they must continue to do so.

MOTION was made by Councilor Burlingame to remove from the agenda Department Head (non-union) Salary Adjustments - Discussion and/or action; seconded by Councilor W. Steere.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES - G. Steere, Burlingame, W. Steere & Henry

NAYS - 0

MOTION PASSED

C. Town Employee, Department Head Hiring Processes - Discussion and/or action
Councilor W. Steere stated that discussion took place at the last meeting and he is looking for feedback from the Council members regarding his recommendations. Councilor Burlingame stated that he agrees that the Council liaison should be added to the list in most cases, however, he would not want to put another Councilor on. Councilor Burlingame noted that in a recent case he took himself out of the hiring process and he feels that the liaison should have the right to opt out if they feel uncomfortable with one of the possible positions.

Councilor G. Steere asked if the Council liaison would be that of the HR Department or the department of the position being filled. Councilor W. Steere replied that he meant the liaison to HR, but it would come down to the Council's decision. Councilor W. Steere expressed his opinion that there should be one (1) Council person.

Councilor Henry suggested that the liaison to whatever department is being hired should be included in the process as well as the HR liaison. Councilor Burlingame expressed concern that this would be too many Council members.

There was Council consensus to take a couple of weeks to get some notes together for discussion at the next Town Council meeting.

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to TABLE Town Employee, Department Head Hiring Processes - Discussion and/or action until the Town Council meeting of 9/7/17; seconded by Councilor Burlingame.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES - G. Steere, Burlingame, W. Steere & Henry
NAYS - 0

MOTION PASSED

VIII. New Business

A. Ratification: Letter of Support to League of Cities & Towns re: changes proposed for CDBG funding - Discussion and/or action

Councilor G. Steere stated that the state proposed changes to the CDBG award criteria for the 33 non-entitlement communities in Rhode Island. Councilor G. Steere stated the League of Cities & Towns forwarded correspondence expressing concern for these proposed changes to Michael Tondra, of the Office of Housing and Community Development, entitled State CDBG Program Changes to Adversely Impact Municipalities.

Councilor G. Steere stated that the deadline to submit was last Wednesday but the Clerk was able to get a consensus of a majority of the Council, in time, to have Gloucester added to that letter.

Council now must ratify that action.

Discussion: None.

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to RATIFY Gloucester's inclusion on correspondence (dated August 9, 2017) forwarded by the R.I. League of Cities & Towns to the Office of Housing & Community Development regarding proposed changes to the CDBG award criteria; seconded by Councilor Henry.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES - G. Steere, Burlingame, W. Steere & Henry
NAYS - 0

MOTION PASSED

B. Boards & Commissions

1. Appointments - Discussion and/or action
 - a. Land Trust appointment
One five year term to expire 02/2022

Councilor G. Steere stated that the Chairman of the Land Trust requested that appointment be held until the September 7th meeting.

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to TABLE the appointment to the Land Trust for one five year term to expire 2/2022 to the Town Council meeting of September 7, 2017; seconded by Councilor Burlingame.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES - G. Steere, Burlingame, W. Steere & Henry
NAYS - 0

MOTION PASSED

- b. Parade Committee
One Alternate position (#2)

Councilor G. Steere stated that the Chairman has requested that Melissa Trunzo be appointed to fill the Alternate position on the parade committee. Councilor G. Steere stated a talent bank app has been filed in the Clerk's Office.

MOTION was made by Councilor Burlingame to APPOINT Melissa Trunzo to the Alternate #2 position on the Parade Committee; seconded by Councilor W. Steere.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES - G. Steere, Burlingame, W. Steere & Henry

NAYS - 0

MOTION PASSED

C. Use of Pavilion, Scarecrow Festival: Discussion and/or action

Councilor G. Steere stated that the Council has a request from Mark Rechter on behalf of the Chepachet Grange.

Discussion: Mark Rechter began by thanking Councilor Henry for meeting with him to discuss the event planned for October 14th by the Grange.

Councilor Henry explained that this would be the first event held at the pavilion and stated that the GBA has requested to hold their second annual Halloween event a couple of weeks later. Councilor Henry stated that the Chepachet Grange has come up with a very creative craft idea to make scarecrows for display at the pavilion. Councilor Henry stated that the Council had several concerns, such as affixing anything in any way to the new pavilion. Councilor Henry further stated that the event has grown since it was first proposed. M. Rechter agreed, stating that the hope is to make this "festival" an annual event for the Town and he and other people seem to think it's a good idea. M. Rechter explained that he has reached out to local farmers who may have produce to sell, and would also like to have music as the Library did earlier this summer. M. Rechter noted that there would also be children's games, adding that this event would be geared towards children and families. M. Rechter stated that the Canterling Colts 4-H Club and the Library are sponsors of this event. M. Rechter stated his opinion that a Scarecrow Festival would be a fitting event for the pavilion. M. Rechter stated they would like to line the streets with scarecrows, maybe as many as one hundred.

Mark Rechter expressed one of his concerns is regarding access to the parking lot and feels that the driveway, in and out, should be closed due to children being in the area. M. Rechter stated that there seems to be enough parking on the street and at the Town Hall.

Councilor Henry stated that the Council has approved regulations for the pavilion and M. Rechter is asking for several of them to be waived for this event. Councilor Henry stated that they are looking for a 2-hour extension after sunset on the Friday evening to allow them to set up for the event, and in case of rain, access to the pavilion on Sunday the 15th. Councilor Henry pointed out that any materials left overnight will not be protected from vandalism.

Councilor Henry stated that they are seeking a permit to set up a grill or cooking devices no closer than 50 feet from the pavilion. Councilor Henry also stated that there would be no cooking devices inside the pavilion. M. Rechter stated that this would allow them to sell hot dogs and hamburgers. M. Rechter stated that he has spoken with the Department of Health and will be applying for a license as a non-profit organization. M. Rechter stated that food trucks were considered, but the profits would not go to any organization. M. Rechter stated that they already have two (2) people with food safety certificates to do the cooking.

Councilor G. Steere asked Mr. Rechter if he is saying that any organization would have to get that state license. Mr. Rechter stated it thought so but, in fact, it may be appropriate protocol to require this license from any organization.

Councilor Henry stated that the Grange is also looking for permission to put up two (2) signs advertising the Festival. M. Rechter explained that there will be signs around Town promoting the event, but he would also like to put up a sign that day at location of the event.

Councilor Henry stated that it is a good idea to block off the parking lot, but suggested that a temporary sign be posted directing people where additional parking is located.

Councilor Henry stated that permission is also requested to sell grilled and baked foods. M. Rechter noted that he has spoken to several people and it has been determined that baked goods may not be possible.

Councilor Henry stated that there was a question regarding the use of electricity and bathroom facilities at the festival. Councilor Henry stated that this would fall under the purview of the Recreation Department and the Public Works Director and that Mr. Rechter would have to work with those individuals.

Councilor Henry commented that there are many things planned, such as a petting zoo and face painting, and cautioned M. Rechter that it is best to “walk before you run”. M. Rechter responded that they are not looking to be a Heritage Day and only wish to supplement what the GBA has already done.

Councilor Henry noted that the Grange has their own liability insurance in place for this event.

Councilor W. Steere asked the Solicitor what the Town must look out for. Atty. Kane stated the appropriate insurance in place as well as Dept. Of Health approval would protect the town.

Councilor G. Steere stated that the organization will have a permit from the Department of Health, therefore any liability would be on their back, not the Town’s. Councilor W. Steere stated that he would ask that the organization be required to clean up the premises after the event and be responsible for any damage to the property. M. Rechter acknowledged that requirement and stated that it is a beautiful facility and they will protect it.

Councilor Henry asked if there will be a fire extinguisher near the grill. M. Rechter replied in the affirmative. Councilor W. Steere asked M. Rechter if he has checked with the Fire Department regarding the grills. M. Rechter stated that he plans to contact the Fire Department. Councilor W. Steere asked if there will be any tents on the premises. M. Rechter replied in the negative.

Regarding the placement of the grills 50 feet away from the pavilion, Councilor G. Steere noted that we do not own the field all the way to Dorr Drive. Councilor G. Steere commented that we cannot sanction an event on somebody else’s property.

M. Rechter stated that he would like to meet with Gary Trembl, Director of Public Works, to get his input.

Councilor G. Steere asked the Council for their thoughts.

Councilor Henry commended the Grange and Mark Rechter for attempting to have something wonderful happen in our community. Councilor Henry commented that the Town would benefit from something exciting like this festival. Councilor Henry applauded their efforts and would like to try to make this work for them.

John Salisbury, resident, cautioned that adequate restroom facilities must be considered.

There was discussion regarding having additional facilities for the event. M. Rechter stated that additional port-a-johns may be necessary but he will know better what their needs will be when he begins getting applications.

Councilor W. Steere asked how we would handle the trash that will be generated. M. Rechter replied that this would be their responsibility, however, he did ask if the Town could provide a few extra barrels.

Councilor Burlingame stated that the regulations specifically say no grills and expressed concern that if the Council allows this, they will never be able to refuse another request. Councilor W. Steere agreed and stated that he had the same concern, but noted that the Parade Committee had grills at Gloucester Memorial Park. Councilor Burlingame stated that we specifically said no in the Rules and Regulations for the pavilion and it had nothing to do with GMP. Councilor Burlingame stated that the Council may want to rethink that provision in the guidelines because we will not be able to say no to anyone who wants to use a grill.

Councilor G. Steere stated that if this works out, it will be a great thing and the first of many.

Councilor W. Steere stated that the other point is that this event will probably need a Police detail. M. Rechter stated that he has spoken to the Chief and has asked for a Police presence during the festival. Joseph DelPrete, Chief of Police, spoke but was inaudible on the recording. Councilor Henry asked if there is a need for a Police detail that day, and referred to the Halloween event last year where there was a Police Officer there for crossing the street. M. Rechter stated that he will talk to the Chief regarding having someone there for that purpose.

MOTION was made by Councilor Henry to grant the use of the pavilion to the Chepachet Grange #38 for their Gloucester Scarecrow Festival to be held on Saturday, October 14, 2017, or in case of rain, Sunday, October 15, 2017, and to grant relief from the following regulations in Article 3-221-18:

1. Relief from Subsection A: granting a two-hour extension for setup on Friday night, October 13th, and the same relief if it has to take place on Sunday, October 15th.

2. Relief from Subsection E: granting permission to set up a grill, a minimum of 50 feet from the Pavilion, subject to applicant receiving a Department of Health permit.
3. Relief from Subsection I: granting permission to set up signage outside of the wall.
4. Relief from Subsection K: granting permission to close the parking area to traffic the day of the event.
5. Relief from Subsection O: granting permission to sell grilled food, under the stipulation a Department of Health permit shall be received by applicant, and there shall be a fire extinguisher on premise.
6. The need for portable toilets, to be used as additional facilities, will be considered by Applicant, Chepachet Grange.
7. Cleanup and trash removal will be the responsibility of the Applicant, Chepachet Grange.
8. The applicant, Chepachet Grange, will work with the Chief of Police regarding a Police presence for safety.
9. Subject to Fire Department requirements, to include a hose on site.

Seconded by Councilor Burlingame.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES - G. Steere, Burlingame, W. Steere & Henry

NAYS - 0

MOTION PASSED

D. Sign Ordinance- Historic District, Update - Discussion and/or action

Councilor Henry stated that she has asked Ken Johnson, Building/Zoning Official, to provide the Council with an update regarding compliance with the Sign Ordinance in the Historic District.

Discussion: Ken Johnson reported that the mandate given by the Council has gone ignored even though he has sent letters and has visited the businesses personally. K. Johnson stated that Kevin Kitson has assured him that the signs at his former location will be coming down next week, but no action has been taken by most of these businesses. K. Johnson stated that his only other alternative is to get the Legal Department involved. Councilor Burlingame asked K. Johnson if he needs the Council to tell him to do that. Councilor Burlingame stated that at a Department Head meeting three (3) months ago K. Johnson reported that there were still several people who were not in compliance.

Councilor Burlingame asked if this is still the case. K. Johnson replied in the affirmative.

Councilor Burlingame gave his personal opinion that this should not be aired at this level and that the Building Official has the authority and responsibility to see that it gets done. K. Johnson agreed and stated that he has felt that way for the last couple of months.

Councilor G. Steere asked Tim Kane, Town Solicitor, what is the next step in getting people to comply. T. Kane replied that a legal letter could be sent, followed by Court action.

Councilor Burlingame asked if these businesses are all current with their operating permits. K. Johnson replied that they are current, but those permits come from the Clerk's office. K. Johnson commented that he doesn't want to be here discussing this any more than anyone else. Councilor Burlingame indicated he does not want to have this discussion at the next Council meeting. Councilor W. Steere stated that we have processes in place and directed K. Johnson to go ahead with them. K. Johnson stated that he did not want to get into the "strong arm" business and asked where the GBA on this issue. Councilor Burlingame stated that we must follow through with the processes that the Council has put in place and write a letter stating that if they do not comply, they will get a letter from a lawyer and the other things will kick in. Councilor G. Steere stated that the Council knows that K. Johnson has tried.

- E. Disclosure of Executive Session, August 3, 2017 - Discussion and/or action
R.I.G.L. 42-46-5 (a)(2) Litigation: Town of Gloucester vs. Robert & Shana Grenga,
Superior Court Civil Action # PC -2017-0693.

Councilor G. Steere stated that at the Executive Session of August 3rd, 2017 Council, after review, a motion was made and voted to settle litigation and a settlement agreement is on file.

Tim Kane, Town Solicitor, stated for the record that the agreement will be a public document in the morning. T. Kane stated that per the Open Meetings Act, the Council must disclose such a settlement once it becomes final. T. Kane noted that the agreement is dated August 4th and the Court papers have been finalized, therefore tomorrow morning it will become a public document available at Town Hall.

- F. Farmer's Market update - Discussion and/or action
Discussion: Councilor Henry stated that she received a phone call from the manager of the Burrillville Harrisville Farmer's Market, asking if we are having a Farmer's Market at the new Pavilion. Councilor Henry replied that she has met with several farmers to discuss the possibility, but they have not organized anything for this year. Councilor Henry stated the manager spoke to one of the farmers, Katie Steere, to discuss if we would be interested in having a shared Farmer's Market at our Pavilion on Thursday nights next year and, in turn, Harrisville would open up their market to Gloucester farmers.

Councilor G. Steere asked if they would arrange themselves, stating that the Town does not want to get involved in that. Councilor Henry replied in the affirmative and stated that it just involves use of the Pavilion.

Al Bettencourt, president of the Burrillville Farmer's Market, stated that they would like to participate with Gloucester to form an organization rather than compete with each other. Councilor Henry reiterated that the Farmer's Market would not be Town sponsored, and stated that a proposal will be brought to the Council for permission to have this happen.

G. Personnel: Adoption of Model Policy for Controlled Substance and Alcohol Testing
- Discussion and/or action

Councilor G. Steere stated that the Personnel Director has forwarded to Council an updated policy for adoption. Councilor G. Steere stated the original "Controlled Substance and Alcohol Testing Policy" was adopted in September 2011 and this updated version is a model policy prepared by the Trust and customized to Gloucester.

MOTION was made by Councilor Burlingame to ADOPT the Policy for Town of Gloucester, Controlled Substance and Alcohol Testing for Employee- CMV Drivers, to be dated August 17, 2017; seconded by Councilor Henry.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES - G. Steere, Burlingame, W. Steere & Henry
NAYS - 0

MOTION PASSED

IX. Town Council Correspondence /Discussion

- A. Councilor G. Steere stated that correspondence was received from the Town Clerk regarding three (3) boards that are sitting dormant; the Personnel Board, Affordable Housing Advisory Board and the Community Resource Committee.
- B. Councilor G. Steere stated that correspondence was received from the Federal Railroad Administration regarding improvements to the Northeast Corridor rail line.
- C. Councilor G. Steere stated that correspondence was received from the League of Cities and Towns regarding a list of new proposed legislation.
- D. Councilor G. Steere stated that correspondence from the GBA indicating that they wish to pay the bid amount of \$1,750.00 for the large sign for the Pavilion at Kent Field. Councilor G. Steere stated the GBA requests that a small plaque be placed nearby stating that they paid for the sign.
- E. Councilor G. Steere stated that correspondence was received from the Department of Transportation regarding their request to keep tractor trailer trucks off many of the State roads. Councilor G. Steere stated that he personally opposes this and that he had called Rep. Mike Chippendale about it. Councilor Burlingame stated that Rep. Chippendale went to the hearing and the State Traffic Commission voted 3 to 2

against the proposal. Councilor G. Steere stated that there will be a public hearing and all the municipalities and the public will be notified 30 days in advance.

- F. Councilor G. Steere stated that a notice was received from the attorney for the affordable housing project that a site visit will be conducted by the Planning Board on Saturday, August 19th at 2:00 p.m.

X. Department Head Reports/Discussion

- A. Diane Brennan, Finance Director, stated that the Planning Board has directed Karen Scott, Town Planner, to pursue the cost of an independent traffic study pertaining to the proposed affordable housing project. K. Scott solicited prices from the State MPA and the cost was quoted at \$2,300. D. Brennan stated that these funds are not provided for in the Planning Department or Planning Board budgets, and the only funding source for this unbudgeted expense would be the Council Contingency Account. D. Brennan asked the Council for direction in this matter. - No action.
- B. Jane Steere, Tax Collector, stated that she has begun processing the revised motor vehicle statements and is giving taxpayers until October 31st to pay without interest. J. Steere stated interest will start to accrue on November 1st and that is explained on the tax bill. J. Steere stated that the new bills have four (4) stubs to be used instead of the ones that originally went out.
- C. Councilor W. Steere addressed Gary Treml, Public Works Director, stating that he noticed that the water is on at the Pavilion. Councilor G. Steere asked if this is prudent and noted that there has already been vandalism there. G. Treml stated there hasn't been any problem with the water at this point. Councilor G. Steere asked if the vandalism was caught on tape. G. Treml replied in the affirmative and stated that the vandals will be going before the Juvenile Hearing Board. More discussion, not at microphone.
- D. Joseph DelPrete, Chief of Police, stated an arrest was made on the vandalism at the pavilion. The Chief also stated that as of August 2nd there has been a new traffic pattern at the site of the roundabout. Chief DelPrete stated that it is working well, there have been only two (2) minor accidents and the Friday night traffic has been better.

XI. Bds. and Commissions Reports/ Discussion

None.

XII. Open Forum

- A. Stacey Swift, of Hartford Pike, spoke regarding a problem he and his neighbors are having with getting their mail through North Scituate or Foster. S. Swift asked if their addresses could include the actual town of residence as well as the zip code of the delivering Post Office. Councilor G. Steere asked S. Swift if he has approached the

Post Office. S. Swift stated that he has been on Hartford Pike for over 40 years and has tried to get his mail through Chepachet. S. Swift stated he was told he could install a mailbox on Pray Hill Road and walk to get his mail, but he feel that this is unsafe. S. Swift stated that there is further confusion when people say that Ponaganset High School is in North Scituate because it is actually located in Glocester. Councilor G. Steere stated that this would have to be done through the Post Office because they are the ones who handle it.

- B. Hank Reagan spoke regarding a target tax for certain people. Mr. Reagan stated he received a tax bill for dock rights. H. Reagan stated that he is being charged \$4,000 for a dock that he inherited, which was formerly assessed at \$300.00. H. Reagan noted that some people who have docks are not being charged, and he knows of one person who does not have a dock but is being charged for dock rights. H. Reagan stated his opinion that his dock is a \$300.00 tangible piece of real estate. H. Reagan noted that he and other residents of Keach Pond own the pond and dam lock, stock and barrel and they pay the Association a fee for taxes & insurance. Mr. Reagan stated this is a tax on a fee. H. Reagan stated that he has gone to several Town departments and nobody has been able to answer his questions regarding this tax. Mr. Reagan stated he has asked everyone, including the revaluation company and they stated that they did not know where it came from.

Mr. Reagan would like answers to the following questions for himself and his neighbors:

Where does the fee come from and who approved?

How is fee value determined and applied? (inconsistent as noted)

How can you raise a line item 1300%?

How can you charge for a right on private property which the town or the state has no responsibility to maintain?

Why would a \$4000 dock fee be applied every year?

What law or tax code is this based on and who instigated this new version of a tax code where intangible items, such as license or rights, fall under real estate tax?

H. Reagan spoke regarding the installation of lights at the athletic fields and objected to the cost to the taxpayers. Councilor G. Steere pointed out that the School Committee put the lights in, not the Town. H. Reagan stated his opinion that the Athletic Department is running this Town. Mr. Reagan discussed how much his taxes have gone up.

Councilor Burlingame asked H. Reagan how this charge showed up on his tax bill. H. Reagan replied that it used to be a dock line item for \$300 and now it is a line item for \$4,000 for the right to own a dock. Councilor Burlingame stated that he owns a piece of waterfront property on Keach Pond and he did not get that. Lori

DeSantis, Tax Assessor, stated that Mr. Reagan has filed an appeal and she has contacted the revaluation company. The Tax Assessor stated the reval company will forward correspondence to her to explain the fee. Councilor Burlingame expressed concern for the taxpayers who have received this charge and will pay it without questioning it. Councilor W. Steere suggested having a discussion with the revaluation company. Councilor G. Steere thanked H. Reagan for bringing this matter forward.

- C. David LaPlante, of Absalona Hill Road, spoke regarding the affordable housing project and stated that although everyone is worrying about the traffic, the bigger problem will be the composting toilets. D. LaPlante further stated that he heard that more land will be sold and more housing units will be built.

D. LaPlante stated that he just found out that there is a proposal for a propane depot to go in at the old Kitchen 44. D. LaPlante stated that it will be before the Planning Board on Monday and people were just notified about it yesterday. D. LaPlante stated the proposal is for two (2) 30,000 gallon tanks to be used for truck refills. D. LaPlante stated that the Planning Board will hear the proposal on Monday and the Zoning Board will hear it on Thursday. D. LaPlante commented that it is on a road that is heavily traveled and has a curve and a down hill, which will be of concern in icy conditions. D. LaPlante expressed his opinion that there is no need for this amount of propane in Gloucester and feels that this is has to do with the proposed power plant.

D. LaPlante stated that people knew about the affordable housing project because it was discussed openly, but nobody was aware about the propane proposal. D. LaPlante commented that the when people don't know about something, there is an appearance of deception and lack of transparency. D. LaPlante noted that the Harmony Fire Department is against the proposal. D. LaPlante stated his opinion that this should go before the Safety Commission even if the proposal meets Zoning requirements.

Councilor G. Steere stated that these concerns cannot be addressed because this is Open Forum, but urged D. LaPlante to attend the Planning Board and Zoning Board hearings.

- D. George Charette spoke regarding revaluation, stating that his property went up \$60,000 in 2013 and another \$88,000 three (3) years later, both times with a "drive-by". G. Charette stated that the reval company stated that they use comparable sales to determine assessments. G. Charette expressed his opinion that our future in Gloucester is being jeopardized by the people on Smith Hill, whether by taxation or regulation.

XIII. Adjourn

MOTION was made by Councilor Burlingame to ADJOURN at 9:35 p.m.; seconded by Councilor Henry.

VOTE: AYES - G. Steere, Burlingame, W. Steere & Henry

 NAYS - 0

MOTION PASSED