

At a meeting of the Town Council holden in and for the Town of Gloucester on January 4, 2024

I. Call to Order

The meeting was Called to Order at 7:30 P.M. by Councilor W. Worthy , Town Council President.

II. Roll Call

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

Also Present: Jean Fecteau, Town Clerk; David Iglizzi, Town Solicitor; Christine Mathieu, Deputy Town Clerk; Mark Capuano, Finance Director; G. Mosca, EMA Director

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

IV. Open Forum - For Agenda Items

Councilor W. Worthy stated that anyone wishing to speak on an agenda item, is welcome to speak now. Councilor W. Worthy stated those wishing to speak should step to the microphone and state their name for the record.

None

V. Consent Items - Discussion and/or Action

A. Approval of Town Council Minutes: Regular meeting of December 7th & December 21st , 2023

MOTION was made by Councilor C. Greathouse to APPROVE the Town Council Minutes of December 7th and December 21st, 2023; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame

Discussion: None

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

MOTION PASSED

VI. New Business

A. Future Town-wide EMS - Discussion and/or Action

Discussion: Councilor W. Steere requested this item in order to initiate a discussion as to the future of EMS. Councilor W. Steere stated that he recognizes it is tough to get volunteers and the need to make sure the town is covered. Councilor W. Steere stated that he knows the fire departments are also trying to get more volunteers . Councilor W. Steere stated this conversation applies to primarily rescue and making sure that when someone needs help they get it in a timely fashion. Councilor W. Steere stated he would like to suggest that the Council send a letter to the three boards of directors at each fire station to open up a discussion on the future of EMS.

Councilor S. Arnold stated his agreement with Councilor W. Steere.

Chief Waterman, Harmony Fire Department, stated that they get about 80% of calls for emergencies and the other 20% is for fire. Chief Waterman stated that many calls are not actually true emergencies but rather what people think is an emergency.

Chief Waterman stated that the EMS people are paid by the day and that the average per diem person stays about a year. Chief Waterman stated that the per diem people leave for better paying jobs that are not per diem. Chief Waterman stated that the three fire districts have been meeting over the past few months to try and solve this problem.

Councilor W. Worthy asked the cost for training a person for EMS. Chief Waterman stated that it depends on what the person is training for. Chief Huestis, Chepachet Fire Department, stated that an EMT needs 150 hours of classroom and that the cost is paid by the district. Chief Huestis stated the cost depends upon the class and time.

Chief Waterman stated that a paramedic receives training for two years at a cost of \$10,000 to \$15,000. Chief Waterman also stated that insurance limits the number of hours a per diem person may work and that the fire department does not pay overtime.

Chief Huestis stated that the number of calls are increasing and that Chepachet Fire Department responded to 1003 calls this past year.

Chief Waterman stated that he is all for the Town Council trying to help and is open to a discussion. Chief Waterman stated that it is all about making sure citizens have the protection they need.

Councilor W. Steere stated that there are a lot of new people in town who might not know that the three fire departments are all volunteers. Councilor W. Steere stated his opinion that a discussion is needed to figure out the future.

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to send a letter to each fire department board of directors to engage in a conversation about EMS services in town; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame

Discussion: None

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

MOTION PASSED

B. Reimbursement - Previous School Capital Funding - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Worthy stated that at the last Council meeting a resident asked where the reimbursement for elementary school capital repairs was applied in budget when received from RIDE.

Councilor W. Worthy stated that there was a motion in 2016 which he read as follows :

MOTION was made by Councilor Sette that the Gloucester Town Council support the application to the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) for Stage II school renovation projects. The renovation projects are part of a five year plan submitted to RIDE for the eligibility for housing aid reimbursements. In addition, the Town agrees to fund \$300,000 annually to the capital fund toward these school renovation projects for each of the five years as a match to the School Department's funding of \$300,000/year covering the same five year period. The Town also agrees to encumber \$975,000 from current surplus towards the cost of the projects. Terms of this motion are contingent upon RIDE approval of application;
Seconded by Councilor Burlingame.
(End of motion)

Discussion: Councilor S. Arnold stated that this was a way to maximize the town's return and appreciated the town clerk's work on this research. Councilor S. Arnold stated his opinion that answers would be coming from the School Department and the Finance Department.

Councilor J. Burlingame stated his opinion that he thought the money went back to the school and was reinvested. Councilor J. Burlingame stated that the amount of reimbursement depends on the project.

M. Capuano, Finance Director, stated that the reimbursement money goes into the town's general fund and then it is set aside into a special fund for the school's use. M. Capuano stated that he believes the money has to be used for the school as it is Title 16 money .

Councilor S. Arnold stated that the question was where did the money go when it came back, to the town or to the school. Councilor S. Arnold stated that it seems clear it went into a town fund and then was set aside and restricted for the school.

Councilor W. Steere stated that it is important to note that the money is for the Gloucester elementary schools and not for the Regional school.

Councilor J. Burlingame stated that the schools do not have as big a surplus as it has been being used. M. Capuano stated there is about \$600,000 but it is earmarked for projects and emergencies. Councilor J. Burlingame stated that the money set aside was already set for projects.

No Action Taken By Council

- C. Boards & Commissions
 - 1. Resignation - Discussion and/or Action
 - a. Economic Development Commission -
Position #7, Term to expire 12/31/2024

Councilor W. Worthy stated that the Clerk's Office has received the resignation of Ashley Sarji, on 12/20/2023, from the Economic Development Commission, effective immediately.

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Arnold to ACCEPT, with thanks, the resignation of Ashley Sarji from the Economic Development Commission, Position #7, effective 12/20/2023; seconded by Councilor W. Steere

Discussion: Councilor W. Worthy stated his thanks to A. Sarji and stated that she is a doer. Councilor S. Arnold wished A. Sarji the best of luck.

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

MOTION PASSED

2. Appointments - Discussion and/or Action
 - a. Economic Development Commission -
Position #7, Unexpired term to expire 12/31/2024

Councilor W. Worthy stated that the Chair does not have a recommendation at this time and she has requested that the Council table.

MOTION was made by Councilor C. Greathouse to TABLE the appointment to Position #7, Economic Development to the Town Council meeting of January 18, 2024; seconded by Councilor W. Steere

Discussion: None

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

MOTION PASSED

- b. Conservation Commission
Position #3, #4, & #5 Three year terms to expire 12/31/2026

Councilor W. Worthy stated that the Chair has recommended the reappointment of all three expired positions: Albert Aubin, Roy Najecki, and Thomas Yanni.

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to REAPPOINT Albert Aubin to Position #3; Roy Najecki to Position #4; and Thomas Yanni to Position #5, Conservation Commission, for three year terms to expire 12/31/2026; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame

Discussion: None

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

MOTION PASSED

- c. Zoning Board of Review
Alternate #1 One year term to expire 12/31/2024
Alternate #2 One year term to expire 12/31/2024

Councilor W. Worthy stated that Council has received a recommendation from the Chair of the Zoning Board of Review: Frank Anderson as Alternate #1 and Donna DiGiulio as Alternate #2 (the previous Alternate #2 member does not wish to be reappointed and has forwarded an email to that effect to the Clerk)

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Arnold to REAPPOINT Frank Anderson as Alternate #1, and to APPOINT Donna DiGiulio as Alternate #2, Zoning Board of Review for one year terms to expire 12/31/2024; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame

Discussion: None

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

MOTION PASSED

D. Appointments

1. Personnel

- a. Tax Assessor Appointment-Discussion and/or Action
2- year Term to expire 12/31/2025

Councilor W. Worthy stated that this is an off year appointment per Rhode Island Public Law.

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Arnold to TABLE the appointment of Jessica Parker to the position of Tax Assessor for a 2-year term to expire 12/31/2025 ; seconded by Councilor W. Steere

Discussion: None

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

MOTION PASSED

2. Tree Warden - Annual Appointment for 2024 - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Worthy stated that this is an annual appointment. Councilor W. Worthy stated that the current Tree Warden has requested being reappointed. Councilor W. Worthy stated that Sandra Shepard has been the Tree Warden for the last ten years.

MOTION was made by Councilor C. Greathouse to APPOINT Sandra Shepard to the position of Tree Warden for 2024, contingent upon maintenance of a current Arborist License; seconded by Councilor S. Arnold

Discussion: None

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

MOTION PASSED

VII. Town Council Correspondence/ Discussion

1. Councilor W. Worthy stated that Council has received correspondence from NAGE (DPW Union) notifying the Council of their intent to begin successor negotiations. Councilor W. Worthy stated that their current contract will expire on June 30, 2024. Councilor W. Worthy stated that typically, the Council will add to the agenda for a future meeting to vote on a

negotiating team when this notice is received.

2. Councilor W. Worthy stated he received correspondence from A. Constantino requesting an agenda item regarding dry hydrants in town. Councilor W. Steere stated A. Constantino can come to any meeting and speak but feels the issue is a fire department one and not a town one. Councilor J. Burlingame asked what action is needed. Councilor S. Arnold stated there could be a discussion regarding the pros, cons but also feels it is a fire department issue. Councilor Worthy stated that he would have A. Constantino reach out to J. Fecteau, Town Clerk.
3. Councilor S. Arnold stated he had correspondence from A. Constantino regarding the trolley car which A. Constantino originally thought he would use and now has decided he can't use in his development. Councilor S. Arnold stated that A. Constantino asked the town if they would like the trolley car. Councilor S. Arnold stated his opinion that it is a piece of the town's history but it needs a lot of restoration work. Councilor S. Arnold asked for suggestions. Councilor W. Steere stated that maybe the Gloucester Historical Society would be interested in the trolley.
4. Councilor W. Steere stated he would like to thank all employees and all members of the town's boards and commissions for their work during 2023 and he looks forward to a good 2024.

VIII. Department Head Reports/Discussion

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

- 1, M. Capuano, Finance Director, stated that the Budget Board is scheduled to have their first meeting on January 10, 2024. M. Capuano thanked all department heads for their work in preparing their budgets. M. Capuano stated he is looking forward to the process.

IX. Bds. and Commissions Reports/ Discussion

Councilor W. Worthy asked if any Boards or Commissions have anything to report or if Council had any questions for any boards and commissions.

None

X. Open Forum

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

None

XI. Adjourn

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to ADJOURN at 8:10 p.m.; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame

Discussion: None

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