

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES-WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2024

The council met on Wednesday, October 9, 2024, and called to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall, Council Chambers, Council Chairman Calouro presiding:

PRESENT: Council Chairman, Nathan Calouro
Vice-Chairwoman, Mary Parella
Councilman, Antonio "Tony" Teixeira
Councilman, Timothy Sweeney
Councilman, Aaron Ley

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator, Steven Contente
Town Solicitor, Michael Ursillo, Esq
Town Sergeant, Archie Martins

Motion RE: Consent Agenda - To Approve the Consent Agenda

Sweeney/Teixeira- Voted unanimously to approve the Consent Agenda withholding Item GG1 for further consideration.

A. Submission of Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)

A1. Town Council Meeting - September 18, 2024

Sweeney/Teixeira - Voted unanimously to approve these minutes as prepared and presented.

B. Public Hearings

C. Ordinances

C1. Ordinance No. 2024-16 Chapter 27 Taxation, Section 27-15- Tax Classification System (to adopt a system of classifications for taxable property in town) (2nd Reading)

Teixeira, Sweeney- Voted unanimously to consider this action to constitute the

Second Reading for the adoption of Ordinance #2024-16 with the amendment to include the following language in section (A) (1) (c)1

" ;or if not a registered voter, present at least two forms of identification acceptable to the tax assessor/collector, including but not limited to a driver's license, passport or car registration."

. Advertise in the local newspaper

Prior to the vote being taken, Town Solicitor Ursillo explained that to qualify a property as an owner-occupied structure under the ordinance, proof of residency is required. Initially, voter registration was proposed as a way to verify residency. However, it was noted that not all property owners are registered voters. After consulting with Tax Assessor DeMeo and reviewing practices from other municipalities, it was suggested to include an option for individuals to provide at least two other forms of identification, such as a driver's license, passport, or car registration, as proof of residency. The proposed amendment would be added to Section A, 1(c) (1) to accommodate this and would read as follows:

" ;or if not a registered voter, present at least two forms of identification acceptable to the tax assessor/collector, including but not limited to a driver's license, passport or car registration."

Vice Councilwoman Parella noted that while the proposed process may still be somewhat complicated for some individuals, there is potential for it to be simplified in the future through coordination with the Tax Assessor's Office.

Tax Assessor DeMeo noted that they are still working on finalizing the process and determining the exact details. She explained that it is proposed to have an application in place where applicants would specify how they qualify and provide the necessary proof of residency. The goal is to make the process straightforward and easy to understand. Under the current proposal, applicants would apply and complete the application in the first year, with reapplication required every three years. However, the method for notifying residents about the reapplication process has yet to be determined

It was questioned whether applicants could apply online. It was noted that while there is currently no option to file for any

exemptions through the Tax Department, forms are available for download. Members of the council agreed that it would be valuable to have the application available for online submission in the future.

Chairman Calouro provided an overview of the proposed 3-tiered tax classification system, explaining that this is the final step in a process that began some time ago in collaboration with the Administrator. The current system applies a single tax rate for all property types—commercial, residential, and non-owner-occupied residential. The new 3-tiered system would establish separate and distinct rates for each category, though the rates may not necessarily differ, with the goal being to create more appropriate tax distinctions.

The intention behind this proposal is to offset costs for full-time residents by shifting some of the tax burden to short-term rentals, such as Airbnbs. While the specifics of how non-owner-occupied properties, like short-term rentals, will be defined and taxed are still to be determined, the tax rates will be discussed and finalized during the upcoming budget period. The overall objective is to make living in Bristol more affordable for residents without negatively impacting business, especially short-term rental businesses

It was clarified that applications for the new tax classification will be accepted from January 1 through March 15, 2025. For this initial year, an extended application period will be allowed until May 2025. There was a question raised about whether reapplication notifications could be included when tax bills are sent out, which will be further considered as part of the process

Town Solicitor Ursillo clarified the proposed ordinance, states that it requires an annual reapplication for good reason. In the first year, applicants will need to complete the full, detailed application. However, in subsequent years, they will only need to sign a certification indicating that no changes have occurred, with a requirement to fully reapply every three years. This simplifies the process as it avoids repeating the full application unless there are changes. The rationale behind this is that property ownership could change at any time, and it's important to ensure that only eligible residents continue to benefit from the system. The annual certification process ensures fairness while keeping the process simple.

- C2.** Ordinance 2024-17 Chapter 21 Police, Article II Probationary Patrol Officers, Sec. 21-41 Appointment-Qualifications of applicants (to change age qualification from 21 to 18) **(2nd reading)**

Teixeira/Sweeney- Voted unanimously to consider this action to constitute the Second Reading for the adoption of Ordinance #2024-17. Advertise in the local newspaper

D. Licensing Board - New Petitions

E. Licensing Board - Renewals

- E1.** Six-month review Dog Kennel License, Matthew Dame, A Dog's Life, 36 Spring Street

a. recommendation - Town Administrator and Chief of Police

b. recommendation- Town Administrator and Animal Control Officer

Sweeney/Parella-voted unanimously to receive and file the recommendations and allow the establishment to continue with the licenses, based on the positive feedback received after the six-month review.

Prior to the vote being taken, Matthew Dame addressed the council, expressing his gratitude for their consideration of renewing his license. He also apologized for wasting the council's time by not being in full compliance.

F. Petitions - Other

G. Appointments

- G1.** Board of Tenants' Affairs (one two-year unexpired term set to expire January 2025)

a. Donald Luminello, 1014 Hope Street, Apt G4 - Letter of resignation

b. Donna M. Falcoa, 1014 Hope Street, Apt S5 - interest/appointment

Teixeira/Sweeney- Voted unanimously to accept this resignation and to instruct the Clerk to send a letter of thanks for service; to advertise in the local paper and to continue the matter to the October 30, 2024 council meeting.

Prior to the vote Council Clerk Cordeiro noted for the record that a "received at meeting" item was provided to the council. The item was an application from Mr. Arthur Medeiros, who expressed interest in serving on the Board of Tenant Affairs. She explained that Mr. Medeiros initially applied for the Bristol Housing Authority, as referenced in the next agenda item, but his intention was to apply for the Board of Tenant Affairs.

Chairman Calouro recommended continuing agenda items G1 and G2 to the next council meeting in order to clearly advertise and note the parties' interest in the appropriate board updates. He also inquired whether more than one tenant can serve on the Bristol Housing Authority and stated that further clarification on this matter is pending.

G2. Bristol Housing Authority - (one 5-year unexpired term set to expire January 2027)

a. Arthur Medeiros, 1014 Hope Street, H1 - interest/appointment

b. Donna Falcoa, 1014 Hope Street, Apt. S5 - interest/appointment

Parella/Teixeira- Voted unanimously to continue the matter to the next council meeting on October 30, 2024.

H. Old Business

H1. James Paul, 28 First School Street re an Ordinance Amendment to designate First School Street as residential - No Overnight Parking **(Continued from August 21, 2024)**

- a. Director Williamson, Community Development re proposed revisions to Residential Parking Zone Ordinance - Section 16-345 (c)

Teixeira/Parella - Voted unanimously to refer this matter to the Town Solicitor so that he may draft ordinance language for Council consideration on October 30, 2024. The ordinance shall include, in addition to the streets proposed by Community Development, the addition of Third School Street, Shaws Lane, Rock Street, Ryan Avenue, and Easterbrooks Avenue to the "No Overnight Parking" street list.

Prior to the vote, Community Development Director Williamson provided an overview of a previous petition brought to the council regarding the increase in overnight parking due to the Prudence Ferry, which included a request to designate Third School Street as a no-overnight parking area. She noted that residents on adjacent streets were also experiencing parking issues. A more comprehensive review was conducted, involving the Administrator, Police Chief Lynch, Captain Wozney, and Town Clerk Cordeiro.

Director Williamson explained the illustration presented, differentiating no overnight parking from residential parking limits, and stated that a reasonable walking radius for affected residents was considered to be a half mile. This ensured no streets were overlooked and that could be impacted by the parking changes. She further clarified that a list of streets included in the plan was provided in the council packets for review.

Councilwoman Parella asked why Third School Street, Shaws Lane, Rock Street, and Ryan Street were not included in the diagram and the no-overnight-parking amendments. She noted that these areas might also be affected by the parking issues and recommended that these streets be included in the proposed parking changes. It was also recommended that Easterbrook Road be included in the proposed no overnight parking ordinance amendment.

Discussions followed regarding the potential expansion of no-overnight-parking areas and when it should end. The Town Administrator noted that he had reached out to the Chair of the Prudence Island Planning Committee. They were able to secure a limited number of long-term parking spaces from the VFW, which

would be leased. Additionally, they are in discussions with Gooding Realty at Gooding Plaza, which is conveniently located on the 60 bus route, running every half hour.

The Administrator also mentioned that the Harbor Master is working with the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) on a request to permit winter parking at the Marina once the regular Marina parking season ends in mid-November. This would allow Prudence Island residents to park at the Marina by permit during the winter months, though a response from CRMC is still pending.

It was noted that the first priority was taking care of the residence.

Chris Sousa of 18 First School Street addressed the Council, expressing his gratitude for their consideration of the request. He noted that surrounding neighbors had attended the August meeting in support of the parking restrictions. He also mentioned that this could benefit some residents by allowing them to rent out available space in their driveways, adding that he had space in his own driveway.

It was clarified that residents in the area will be required to obtain a parking sticker from the Clerk's Office.

Councilman Ley inquired whether there was a process for temporary guest passes for visitors. Clerk Cordeiro noted that the ordinance includes a provision allowing residents to obtain a temporary pass on behalf of their guests, which is valid for up to one week.

Councilman Ley mentioned that one consideration should be how to handle situations where a resident has a guest from out of town, particularly if the guest has a rental car and arrives on a Friday when the Clerk's Office is closed. This could lead to an issue with obtaining a guest pass. Ley suggested it may be important to think about how to address this potential problem, especially in cases where the necessary registration information cannot be provided to the Clerk's Office in time.

Chairman Calouro emphasized that the process is more about responding to concerns raised by residents rather than strict, immediate enforcement. It is typically a resident calling about a vehicle for a couple of days.

James Paul asked if Portsmouth would suggest that for long-term parking, perhaps it could be pushed more toward the Portsmouth side of town. Since Bristol is more condensed compared to

Portsmouth, this could help alleviate the parking issue. They emphasized that the intent isn't to discourage visitors, as they contribute to local businesses, but that long-term parking on the Portsmouth side might provide a better balance for both residents and visitors.

Chairman Calouro added that the town has been working on this issue, noting that discussions have taken place. He mentioned that while he didn't want to go into too much detail, as the relevant parties aren't present to respond, there have been recommendations. For example, when the lease on the parking lot came up, the Administrator reached out to Portsmouth, asking whether they would be interested in taking over the lease on Thames Street. This demonstrates that there has always been dialogue between the towns. However, the ultimate decision rests with the Portsmouth Town Council regarding what they want to do. Chairman Calouro emphasized that Bristol's goal is to ensure residents' concerns are addressed.

I. Other New Business Requiring Town Council Action

- I1.** Paula Carroll, 103 Constitution Street on behalf of the Bristol Prevention Coalition re Proclamation for Red Ribbon Week October 23-31, 2024.

Teixeira/Parella-Voted unanimously to support the Proclamation Declaring the First Friday in June to be National Gun Violence Awareness Day, and send it to the 38 other Rhode Island municipalities

Barbara Palumbo, coordinator of the Bristol Prevention Coalition, of 63 Narrows Road addressed the Council, requesting consideration for the adoption of the Red Ribbon Week Proclamation. She explained the significance of the proclamation, highlighting efforts focused on prevention and community engagement. Barbara also provided the Council with a schedule of events planned for the week. In attendance with Mrs. Palumbo were Paula Carroll and Kerri Sousa.

- I2.** Clerk Cordeiro re upcoming election details

Teixeira/Sweeney-Voted unanimously to receive and file.

Prior to the vote being taken, Clerk Cordeiro provided the Council and the public with detailed information regarding the upcoming elections. She noted that Election Day will be on November 5th, with polls open from 7:00 AM to 8:00 PM. Polling locations can be found on the town's website, the Secretary of State's website, or by calling Town Hall. Early voting will begin on October 16th and will continue through November 4th, Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, at the Reynolds School Building, located at 235 High Street. The mail-in ballot application deadline is October 15, 2024, and she provided information on how to obtain an application. Clerk Cordeiro encouraged anyone with questions or in need of further information to contact Town Hall or use the available online resources

- 13.** * Chairman Calouro re Mt Hope High School Robotics Team financial support from Town Council Contingency Fund

Parella/Teixeira - Voted
unanimously to appropriate \$1000
from the Town Council Contingency
account in support of this program

Vice Chairwoman Parella addressed the Council, sharing her concern after learning from social media that the Mount Hope High School robotics team might not be able to compete this year due to a lack of funding. She expressed surprise that a town like Bristol would not have at least one robotics team, considering its strong history in the program. Vice Chairwoman Parella highlighted the importance of the program, emphasizing how it teaches students critical 21st-century skills such as teamwork, coding, public speaking, and problem-solving. She was encouraged by the community response, including contributions from local businesses, alumni, and citizens, to support the program.

Vice Chairwoman Parella moved to donate \$1,000 from the Council's contingency fund to help the team compete this year, which was seconded by Councilman Tony. The Council opened the floor for discussion.

Ryan Garrity, a teacher at Mount Hope High School and leader of the robotics program for 19 years, provided further insight into the program's financial struggles. He mentioned that the program, once a class, has been reduced to an after-school activity with limited funding. He also introduced two students from the team, Kylie Durett and Tyler Scarborough, who shared their experiences with the program. Ryan explained that while

they are working to bring back fundraising activities, such as the Pasta Dinner, the program lacks essential parts and funds for registration fees.

Council members expressed strong support for the program, emphasizing its educational value and the importance of advocating for additional funding through the school committee. They encouraged continued efforts to secure resources and praised the impact of the program on students, including scholarship opportunities

CF. Citizens Public Forum

*PERSONS WISHING TO SPEAK DURING THE CITIZENS PUBLIC FORUM
MUST NOTIFY THE COUNCIL CLERK PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF
THE MEETING*

It was noted for the record that Bob Chew had signed-in to speak during the Citizens Public Forum. However, when the Chairman called his name multiple times, he was not present in the audience. This was duly recorded.

J. Bills & Expenditures

J1. Bid #1052 Catering Services for Bristol Fourth of July Ball 2025

Texeira/Sweeney- Voted unanimously to refer this matter to the Town Administrator and the Fourth of July Committee to act in the best interest of the Town.

Prior to the vote taken, the Clerk read the following bids:

- Emery's Catering in the amounts of
 - Option A (sit down) \$ 34,342.81 / \$137.37 per person
 - Option B (light fare) \$41,066.89 / \$164.27 per person
- CP'S Catering & Sandwich Shop in the amounts of
 - Option A (sit down) \$ 28,750 / \$115.00 per person
 - Option B (light fare) \$ 35,000 / \$140.00 per person
- Pranzi Catering and Events in the amounts of
 - Option A (sit down) \$ 46,119.92 / \$184.48 per person
 - Option B (light fare) \$ 38,201.10 / \$152.81 per person

- Legacy Hospitality & Entertainment Group in the amounts of
 - Option A (sit down) \$ 42,500 / \$170 per person
 - Option B (light fare) \$ 24,500/ \$98 per person

J2. Bid #1053 Fall 2024 Tree Servicing and Delivery

Teixeira/Sweeney- - Voted unanimously to refer this matter to the Town Administrator to act in the best interest of the Town.

Prior to the vote taken, the Clerk read the following bids:

- Schichtel's Nursery, Inc. with a total bid price of \$13,803.00
- Central Nurseries, Inc. with a total bid price of \$21,590.00
- M-O-N Landscaping, Inc. with a total bid price of \$39,738.00
- SiteOne Landscape Supply with a total bid price of \$18,740.00

J3. Bid # 1054 2024-2025 Tree Planting Landscape Services

Teixeira/Sweeney- Voted unanimously to refer this matter to the Town Administrator to act in the best interest of the Town.

Prior to the vote taken, the Clerk read the following bids:

- Central Nurseries, Inc., with a bid price of \$555.00 per tree and a total bid price of \$138,750.00
- M-O-N Landscaping, Inc., with a bid price of \$650.00 per tree and a total bid price of \$162,500
- Regal Tree and Shrub Experts, LLC with a bid price of \$645.00per tree and a total bid price of \$161,250
- North-Eastern Tree Service, Inc., with a bid price of \$690.00 per tree and a total bid price of \$172,800
- HG Landscaping Services, LLC., with a bid price of @280.00 per tree and a total bid price of \$70,000

Prior to the vote being taken Community Development Coordinator Williamson provided an update on the grant the town received

from the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank. The grant, one of the community resilience grants, is designated for tree planting in three problem watersheds: Silver Creek watershed, Tanya Brook watershed, and a watershed in the Anawamscutt neighborhood that drains to Mount Hope Bay.

Director Williamson explained that this bid will cover the first phase of the project, with tree planting beginning in the fall of this year and continuing into the spring of next year. Meetings have been held with residents, and plans are in place to stake the planting locations. The project aims to plant 250 trees to support climate resilience in these areas.

When asked about the types of trees to be planted, Director Williamson emphasized the "right tree, right place" approach, meaning that trees will be selected based on their suitability to the area. The Tree Warden and Town Planner Tanner have been surveying the neighborhoods to determine the best fit for each location, and a tree list is being finalized.

K. Special Reports

K1. Stephan Brigidi, Discover Newport re State of Rhode Island Monthly Reports
FY 2024 Local 1% Collections June 2024

a. Meal and Beverage Report

b. Local Hotel Tax Report

Teixeira/Sweeney- Voted unanimously to receive and place this matter on file.

Prior to the vote being taken Chairman Calouro noted that some communities have seen significant decreases, while Bristol experienced a small decrease in certain areas and an increase in others. Overall, the year-over-year changes were described as stable. Chairman Calouro speculated that the town may have seen fewer weddings this year, based on anecdotal observations of fewer bridal events at local venues like Herreshoff and Blithewold.

Vice Chairwoman Parella noted that the meal and beverage tax brought in \$673,007.52 over the past year, approaching the \$700,000 mark. She recalled that not many years ago, the amount was around \$400,000, highlighting the steady increase. Parella expressed her satisfaction with this growth, acknowledging that

it has become a great source of revenue for the town. She also mentioned discussions about the state potentially retaining this revenue but was pleased that the funds continue to be allocated back to the communities.

K2. Bristol County Water Authority, Board of Directors,
Tri-Town Monthly Report September 2024

Sweeney/Teixeira- Voted unanimously to
receive and place this matter on file.

L. Town Solicitor

M. Executive Sessions

Consent Agenda Items:

(CA) AA. Submission of Minutes - Boards and Commissions

**Approval of consent agenda = "motion to receive and
place these items on file"**

- (CA) AA1. Historic District Commission Meeting Minutes - July 11, 2024
- (CA) AA2. Historic District Commission Meeting Minutes - August 1, 2024
- (CA) AA3. Historic District Commission Meeting Minutes - July 10, 2024
- (CA) AA4. Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes - May 7, 2024
- (CA) AA5. Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes - June 6, 2024
- (CA) AA6. Housing Authority Meeting Minutes August 29, 2024
- (CA) AA7. Planning Board Meeting Minutes - July 18, 2024
- (CA) AA8. Rogers Free Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - June 20, 2024
- (CA) AA9. Capital Project Commission Meeting Minutes - August 27, 2024

(CA) AA10. Harbor Commission Meeting Minutes - September 9, 2024

(CA) AA11. Bristol Fire Department Board of Engineers Meeting Minutes - September 30, 2024

(CA) BB. Budget Adjustments

Approval of consent agenda = "motion to approve these adjustments"

(CA) BB1. Tax Assessor DiMeo re- Recommended Abatements & Additions - October 2024

(CA) CC. Financial Reports

Approval of consent agenda = "motion to receive and place these items on file"

(CA) CC1. Treasurer Carulli Year to Date Budget Report - October 2024

(CA) DD. Proclamations, Resolutions & Citations

Approval of consent agenda = "motion to adopt these Proclamations, Resolutions and Citations as prepared and presented"

(CA) DD1. Resolution - 2024-9-18-H1 Adoption of Sowams Land Acknowledgement (signed)

(CA) DD2. Resolution - No. 2024-9-18- H2 Rhode Island Department of Transportation Relative to Maintenance of the Middle Passage Port Marker (signed)

(CA) EE. Utility Petitions

Approval of consent agenda = "motion to approve these petitions"

(CA) FF. City & Town Resolutions Not Previously Considered

Approval of consent agenda = "motion to receive and place these items on file"

(CA) GG. Distributions/Communications

Approval of consent agenda = "motion to receive and place these items on file"

(CA) GG1. Bristol Fourth of July Committee re Macaroni Supper, October 23, 2024, 5 pm-8 pm, St. Elizabeth's Auditorium

Ley/Sweeney- Voted unanimously to receive and place this matter on file.

Prior to the vote being taken, Deputy Clerk DaCosta provided a brief announcement on behalf of the Bristol 4th of July Committee regarding their annual macaroni supper. The event will take place on Wednesday, October 23rd, at Saint Elizabeth's auditorium, with both sit-down and take-out options available. Tickets are \$15. For those who may not want pasta, there is an option to donate a meal to a person in need. Meals will also be delivered to Benjamin Church, and Deputy Clerk DaCosta thanked Councilman Texeira for generously donating 20 meals to Benjamin Church.

(CA) HH. Distributions/Notice of Meetings
(Office copy only)

Approval of consent agenda = "motion to receive and place these items on file"

(CA) HH1. Housing Authority Meeting - September 12, 2024

(CA) HH2. Bristol Fourth of July General Committee Meeting - September 17, 2024

(CA) HH3. Rogers Free Library Board of Trustees Meeting - September 19, 2024

(CA) HH4. Capital Projects Commission Meeting - September 24, 2024

(CA) HH5. Zoning Board of Review Meeting - October 7, 2024

(CA) HH6. Recreation Board Meeting - September 25, 2024

(CA) HH7. Bristol County Water Authority Board of Directors Meeting - September 26, 2024

- (CA) HH8. Bristol County Water Authority Finance and Claims Committee Meeting - September 25, 2024
- (CA) HH9. Planning Board Technical Review Committee Meeting - October 2, 2024
- (CA) HH10. Capital Project Commission Meeting - October 2, 2024
- (CA) HH11. Bristol County Water Authority Properties Committee Meeting - October 2, 2024
- (CA) HH12. Board of Canvassers Meeting - October 7, 2024
- (CA) HH13. Board of Canvassers Meeting - October 15, 2024

(CA) II. Claims (Referrals)

Approval of consent agenda = "motion to refer these items to the Insurance Committee and at its discretion to the Interlocal Trust"

(CA) JJ. Miscellaneous Items Requiring Council Approval

Approval of consent agenda = "motion to approve these items"

(CA) KK. Curb cut petitions as approved by the director of public works

Approval of consent agenda = "motion to grant these curb cuts per the recommendation of, and conditions specified by, the Director of Public Works"

(CA) KK1. John Marks, 201 High Street re curb cut

a. recommendation- Town Administrator and Director of Public Works

There being no further business, upon a motion by Councilman Sweeney, seconded by Councilman Teixeira and voted unanimously, the Chairman declared this meeting to be adjourned at 8:09

Melissa Cordeiro, Town Clerk
Council Clerk