

**TOWN COUNCIL MEETING- WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1, 2023**

The council met on Wednesday, March 1, 2023, 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  
Assistant Town Solicitor, Amy Goins, Esq  
Town Sergeant, Archie Martins

**(ADDED ITEM)**

*At this point in the meeting, Council Chairman Calouro requested that the Council might add an agenda item to send condolences to the late David Sylvaria, former Bristol Fire Chief.*

Parella/Sweeney- Voted unanimously to add an agenda item to send condolences to the late David Sylvaria.

Members of the council expressed their condolences, reflected on Mr. Sylvaria's accomplishments, and thanked him for his service and dedication to the town.

**Motion RE: Consent Agenda - To Approve the Consent Agenda**

Sweeney/Teixeira -Voted unanimously to approve the Consent Agenda as prepared and presented.

**A. Submission of Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)**

- A1.** Town Council Meeting February 8, 2023
- A2.** Executive Session Meeting - January 18, 2023 (sealed council only)
- A3.** Executive Session Meeting - February 8, 2023 (sealed council only)

Sweeney/Teixeira- Voted unanimously to accept and approve the council meeting

minutes of February 8, 2023, and executive session of January 18, 2023, and February 8, 2023, as presented.

**B. Public Hearings**

- B1.** Elser Ramirez for State Street Tavern LLC, d/b/a Bar 31, 29 State Street, request for Transfer of Class BV Liquor License to Andrew Breslin for Pearl Holdings, LLC d/b/a Tinkers (new ownership) (see agenda items D1, D2, and D3)

Sweeney/Parella-Voted unanimously to close the public hearing.

Prior to the vote taken, Council Chairman Calouro opened the Public Hearing.

Attorney Al Rego addressed the council and spoke in favor of the transfer of the liquor license. Attorney Rego noted that the previous owner was granted and grandfathered a 1:00 am closing and the new owner would be requesting the same consideration.

Clerk Cordeiro noted that when Bar 31 was issued their license, they were issued a license with a 1:00 am closing time, which according to the town ordinance would allow the transfer to be subject to the previous conditions.

It is hereby noted for the record no other testimony was presented by members of the public in favor nor in opposition thereto.

- B2.** Louis E Frattarelli Jr, 2 Hilltop Street - Request for License to Maintain Town Property

a. recommendation - Town Administrator and Fire Chief

b. recommendation - Town Administrator and Chief of Police

c. recommendation - Town Administrator and Department of Community Development

d. recommendation - Town Administrator and Department of Public Works

Sweeney/Parella-Voted unanimously to close the public hearing, and to approve a license to maintain the property described on the drawing as a strip of land approximately 40 feet wide by 200 feet in length, an undeveloped portion of land on the southern end of the Vernon Avenue right of way (paper street) abutting Spring Street and subject to public use and access.

Prior to the vote taken, Council Chairman Calouro opened the Public Hearing.

Mr. Louis Frattarelli, Jr., 2 Hilltop Road, addressed the council and asked for consideration to clear and maintain a portion of the paper road found on Vernon Ave., to provide access to his property and allow neighbors access to the paper road.

It is hereby noted for the record no other testimony was presented by members of the public in favor nor in opposition thereto

**C. Ordinances**

- C1.** Ordinance #2023-04 Chapter 17, Article II Alcoholic Beverages Establishments, Section 17-82 - Number of Licenses (to decrease the number of Class B Limited licenses from 6-5) **(1st reading)**

Teixeira/Ley- Voted unanimously to consider this action to constitute the First Reading of Ordinance #2023-4. And to advertise in the local newspaper.

**D. Licensing Board - New Petitions**

**D1.** Andrew Breslin, Pearl Holdings, LLC d/b/a Tinkers, 29 State Street - Request for Transfer of a Class BV Liquor License (**see agenda item B1**)

a. recommendation - Town Administrator and Fire Chief

b. recommendation - Town Administrator and Chief of Police

c. recommendation - Town Administrator and Department of Community Development

Sweeney/Teixeira- Voted unanimously to grant the transfer of the license per the recommendations received and subject to conformance and conditions, as delineated, to all laws and ordinances and payment of all fees, taxes, and levies; **subject to a six-month review.**

Prior to the vote being taken, Chairman Calouro asked the solicitor for clarification if the previous conditions of a 1:00 am closing "must" be granted or would the council have the ability to modify the closing time.

Solicitor Goins noted that if the 1:00 am closing time was grandfathered, the answer would be yes. However, she stated she would have to review the ordinance for further clarification.

Councilman Ley noted that the same consideration for a grandfathered 1:00 am closing was recently granted for the transfer of Aidan's and Harbor House.

**D2.** Andrew Breslin, Pearl Holdings, LLC d/b/a Tinkers, 29 State Street - Request for a Victualling License

a. recommendation - Town Administrator and Fire Chief

b. recommendation - Town Administrator and Chief of Police

c. recommendation - Town Administrator and Department of Community Development

d. recommendation - Town Administrator and Water Pollution Control

Sweeney/Teixeira - Voted unanimously to grant this license per the recommendations received and subject to conformance to all laws and ordinances and payment of all fees, taxes, and levies.

**D3.** Andrew Breslin, Pearl Holdings, LLC d/b/a Tinkers, 29 State Street - Request for a Dancing & Entertainment License

a. recommendation - Town Administrator and Fire Chief

b. recommendation - Town Administrator and Chief of Police

Sweeney/Teixeira - Voted unanimously to grant this license per the recommendations received and subject to conformance to all laws and ordinances and payment of all fees, taxes, and levies.

**D4.** Isabel Onterry for Banda Filarmonica de Sta. Isabel, 577 Wood Street - Request for a One-Day Dancing & Entertainment License, March 18, 2023, from 7PM - 12AM

a. recommendation - Town Administrator and Fire Chief

b. recommendation - Town Administrator and Chief of Police

Teixeira/Sweney- Voted unanimously to grant this license per the recommendations received and subject to conformance to all laws and ordinances and payment of all fees, taxes, and levies.

**D5.** Chuck MacDonough for Bristol Fourth of July Committee re Request for Bingo License for March 1, 2023, and September 13, 2023.

a. recommendation - Town Administrator and Fire Chief

b. recommendation - Town Administrator and Chief of Police

Sweeney/Teixeira - Voted unanimously to grant this license per the recommendations received and conditions, if any, as delineated, and also subject to conformance to all laws and ordinances and payment of all fees, taxes, and levies.

Prior to the vote being taken, Vice Chairwoman Parella noted that the petition for the bingo license was scheduled for the same date of the council meeting. She stated that the nature of the request to operate on the same day did not set a good precedent and asked that all further petitions be submitted in a more timely fashion; and not after the fact.

Chairman Calouro asked Clerk Cordeiro to reach out to this applicant and further applicants notifying them of the bingo license requirements.

**E. Licensing Board - Renewals**

**F. Petitions - Other**

**F1.** Leta A. Cain, 109 Constitution Street, request for an accessible parking space **(1st reading)**

a. recommendation - Town Administrator and Chief of Police

b. recommendation - Town Administrator and Department of Public Works

Sweeney/Teixeira- Voted unanimously to consider this action to constitute the first reading of a request for an accessible parking space and to continue the said matter until March 29, 2023, for the second reading.

**F2.** Robert Botelho, 5 Paull Street, requesting to amend legal definition for "Adult Entertainment" in town ordinance

a. Town Ordinance Article I Sec. 28-1 definition for Adult Entertainment

Sweeney/ Teixeira- Voted to refer the matter to the solicitor's office for a written opinion. Voting in favor were Calouro, Parella, Sweeney, Teixeira. Voting against Ley.

Prior to the vote being taken, Clerk Cordeiro noted that a letter was received from Steven Brown, Executive director of the ACLU and a copy was distributed to the council at the meeting.

Mr. Robert Botelho, 5 Paull Street, addressed the council for consideration to update the definition of adult entertainment to align with neighboring municipalities that have more stringent regulator definitions. He stated that the current definition is focused on nudity and is not comprehensive. He claimed that the lack of updated regulations could attract adult-only businesses to Bristol, which could negatively impact taxpayers, property values, and safety. He explained that the catalyst for the petition was the growth of adult entertainment businesses in suburban communities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Botelho suggested that adult entertainment encompasses the following "adult entertainment is the act of entertaining, nude or clothed with or without music, by dancing, moving, or behaving in a consistent manner, mimicking sexual action with or without physical contact of others, with the intended purpose to please, sexually stimulate or provide sexual gratification for viewing pleasures of legal consenting adults within or outside of the establishment to include both live exposure and film video or any type of reproduction of such sexual activity."

Councilman Ley asked if the proposed definition would include drag shows. Mr. Botelho responded that it would be up to the municipality.

Councilman Sweeney stated there was no just cause to make such changes that seemed to be very strict and stringent and asked if the language would strict any type of shows or dancing.

Assistant Solicitor Goins noted that the town can and currently regulates adult entertainment through zoning. However, due to first amendment concerns the town would have to be very specific about what is and is not prohibited. She further explained that the council, if so chooses, could refer the matter to the solicitor's office for a written opinion. In the meantime, her verbal opinion on the matter was that the current definition does not need to be amended and that the proposed definition would be unconstitutionally vague.

Councilman Sweeney motioned that the matter is tabled indefinitely due to the "chilling effect" it would have on the first amendment.

Chairman Calouro asked that the motion include a written opinion from the solicitor's office. The motion was amended by Councilman Sweeney to refer to the solicitor's office for a written opinion.

Councilman Ley addressed the audience and the petitioner. He argued that the petition was about a ban on drag shows and that it was unfortunate that some members of the audience or people watching TV have had to repeatedly defend themselves against similar proposals. He expressed concern that proposals like this are being brought forward in the wake of violence against drag performers and the recent mass shootings in Colorado. He asserted that everyone should feel free to express themselves in our town and walk into any kind of nightclub without fear. Councilman Ley stated that he did not support the proposal and would like to reject the petition all together and could not agree to a motion outside of anything other. He explained that the solicitor's feedback was not necessary.

Councilman Teixeira agreed with Councilman Ley's views however he felt it would be in the best interest of the town to pursue the solicitor's opinion.

Vice Chairwoman Parella expressed that she was not aware the proposed amendment to the adult entertainment definition was geared around drag shows. Nor did she consider a drag show as adult entertainment. She explained that she was approached by conservative individuals that raised concerns. She referred to the ACLU letter that suggested that such moves are common in dance clubs and should not be considered inappropriate; and questioned if the proposed language would even touch upon cheerleaders. She stated that she would be in favor of rejecting



the petition and feels that the solicitor's written opinion would have the council's actions taken based on legal standing.

Mr. Botelho addresses several rebuttals, including one from the solicitor, regarding the definition of adult entertainment in Bristol. He then responds to comments from Vice Chairwoman Parella and Councilman Ley denying that the proposal was meant to restrict Roger William Students on the dance floor or to control trans drag shows in Bristol. The proposal was specifically for the viewing pleasure of patrons and grouping these together was not an accurate reflection of what was being proposed. Mr. Botelho asked why Councilman Ley assumed the definition was geared toward drag shows.

Councilman Ley responded that due to the presence of the audience, many others thought the same; and the change in the definition would affect any sort of drag show entertainment. Also, that it was not lost on him the petition comes to the council after a recent drag show event.

**F3.** Jason Paganelli - True North Running Company re Colt State Park Half Marathon on November 5, 2023 - portion of race is on public roadway

a. recommendation - Town Administrator and Fire Chief

b. recommendation - Town Administrator and Chief of Police

c. recommendation - Town Administrator and Department of Public Works

Sweeney/Parella- Voted unanimously to approve this petition based upon the recommendations received and subject to conformance to all laws and ordinances.

**F4.** Edward J. Correia, Carnival Chairman for the Fourth of July Committee re - Request Use of Town Common for Carnival, June 21 - July 5, 2023

a. recommendation - Town Administrator and Fire Chief

b. recommendation - Town Administrator and Chief of Police

c. recommendation - Town Administrator and Director of Parks and Recreation

d. recommendation - Town Administrator and Department of Public Works

Teixeira/Sweeney- Voted unanimously to grant this license subject to the recommendations received and subject to conformance to all laws and ordinances and payment of all fees, taxes, and levies.

Councilman Teixeira asked that the committee review all recommendations and ensure they are followed.

Vice Chairwoman Parella asked for clarification of the carnival dates that would include set-up and breakdown dates. It was noted that the information would be distributed to the council at its next meeting on March 29, 2023.

- F5.** Charlene Ferreira, President East Bay Softball, re consideration for Council Support for the East Bay Spring Softball Recreational League

Sweeney/Teixeira- Voted unanimously to receive and file.

Prior to the vote taken, Clerk Cordeiro noted that a letter to withdraw was received by her office, noting that Mrs. Ferreira would be submitting a grant application during the budget workshops instead.

- F6.** Barbara Palumbo, Bristol Prevention Coalition re consideration for Council Support for the pre-prom attendee ticket reduction awards

Sweeney/Ley- Voted unanimously to appropriate up to \$1500 from the Town Council Contingency account in support of this program

Prior to the vote taken, Barbara Palumbo of 5 Narrows Road, addressed the council. Ms. Palumbo discussed the pre-prom plan for Mt. Hope High School, which is scheduled to take place on March 7<sup>th</sup> this year. The attendees of the pre-prom would be offered a \$10 discount on their prom ticket. It was clarified that the \$10 discount would be offered per student, and up to a maximum of 150 students would be allowed to attend the pre-prom. However, it was noted that the actual number of attendees would generally range between 50 and 75 students.

The council members discussed the budget and resources required to support the pre-prom ticket discount. After deliberation of source founding the initiative from the opioid funds, the council members expressed their support for the pre-prom attendee ticket reduction of \$10 per ticket with the amount not to exceed \$1500. It was recommended the funds be sourced from the council contingency fund until such funding parameters were set for the use of opioid funds.

Chairman Calouro strongly supported the educational program aimed at preventing drug use among students, particularly in light of the current prevalence of drugs. He emphasized the personal significance of the program, as his own children are in the school system. He agreed that such programs are important and mentioned a post-prom event as an example. He stressed the importance of education to keep students from going down the wrong path and emphasizes the need to prevent even a single loss of life. Members of the council encourage the program's organizers to keep up the good work.

#### **G. Appointments**

**G1.** Bristol County Water Authority (1 term to expire March 2026)

a. Juan Mariscal, 1303 Hope Street,  
interest/reappointment

Teixeira/Parella - Voted  
unanimously to reappoint Juan  
Mariscal with a term to expire  
March 2026

**G2.** Harbor Commission (1 full-term member and 2 alternate members term(s) to expire March 2026)

a. James C. Dollins, 37 Clifton Road,  
interest/reappointment (full member)

b. Robert S. Hamel, 859 Hope Street,  
interest/reappointment (alternate member)

c. Toore Peterson, 6 Avenir Court, not seeking  
reappointment

Teixeira/ Sweeney - Voted  
unanimously to reappoint James  
Dollins a full member and Robert  
Hamel as alternate member with  
term(s) to expire March 2026. To  
advertise in the local paper and  
to instruct the Clerk to send a  
letter of thanks for service.

**G3.** Waypoyset Trust (1 term to expire March 2025)

a. Steven E. Johnson, 345 Channel View Unit 101,  
interest/reappointment

Sweeney/Teixeira - Voted unanimously to  
reappoint Steven Johnson with a term to  
expire March 2025

**G4.** Zoning Board of Review (2 alternate members term(s) to  
expire March 2028)

a. Derek N. Tipton, 10 Dixon Avenue,  
interest/reappointment

b. Alayne White, 11 Constitution Street,  
interest/reappointment

c. Paul Blasbalg, 60 Dewolf Avenue,  
interest/appointment

Teixeira/Parella - Voted  
unanimously to reappoint Derek  
Tipton and Alayne White as  
alternate members with terms to  
expire March 2028.

**G5.** Assistant Harbormaster (terms set to expire January  
2024) **(interviews rescheduled for 3/29/2023 6:30PM)**

a. Donald A Fitting Jr., 10 Woburn Street,  
interest/appointment

b. Samuel A. Turner, 50 Belvedere Drive,  
interest/appointment

Teixeira/Sweeney - Voted  
unanimously to continue the  
interviews to March 29, 2023

Prior to the vote taken, Clerk Cordeiro noted that the  
interviews were rescheduled to March 29<sup>th</sup> due to interview  
scheduling conflicts.

The Clerk was instructed to add any additional application to  
the March 29, 2023 interviews.

**G6.** Rogers Free Library Board of Trustees - Revisions to  
correct Library Terms

- a. Beverly Larson, term to expire January 2024
- b. Al Wroblewski, term to expire January 2024
- c. Laura Cabral, term to expire January 2024
- d. Samantha Faria, term to expire January 2025
- e. vacant, term to expire January 2025
- f. Marie Knapman, term set to expire January 2026
- g. vacant, term set to expire January 2026

Ley/Parella - Voted unanimously to  
revise the terms of the Rogers Free  
Library Board of Trustees as presented.

Prior to the vote taken, Clerk Cordeiro noted that the revisions  
to the board terms were to address term changes as found in the  
2017 Rogers Free library board of Trustee Bylaws that were never  
reflected in the council records.

**H. Old Business**

**H1.** Vice Chairwoman Parella re update on Rogers Free  
Library Board of Trustees appointment process  
**(continued from 2/8/2023)**

Parella/Teixeira- Voted unanimously  
to instruct the Library Board to work

with the solicitor's office to draft a resolution to adopt revisions to the bylaws consistent with the discussion.

Prior to the vote taken, Vice Chairwoman Parella stated that as the library liaison, she was asked to make changes to the appointment process for new board members. The council requested that the library board provide at least three names for consideration. She explained that she had been in discussions with the new library board chairman who is open to these changes and is working with a subcommittee to draw up support and recruit new members. She explained that One of the board members and the previous chairperson has resigned, and two new appointments will be made in the next few months.

Vice Chairwoman Parrella explained that a draft of the appointment process was distributed to herself and the clerk. ( a copy of the draft was distributed to members of the council at this time) She explained that some revisions were made to include applications being submitted through the Clerk's office and forwarded to the Rogers Free Library Chairman. A subcommittee would review the applications and make a selection for at least three candidate recommendations to the town council. The council would also interview the final candidates prior to selection as consistent with the appointment process for other Town Boards and Commissions.

Chairman Calouro suggested a minor adjustment to the appointment process to ensure all applicants are listed, not just the top three. He emphasized the importance of transparency and public knowledge. Overall found the format reasonable and easy to work with.

## **I. Other New Business Requiring Town Council Action**

### **I1. Resolution (#2023-04) - Bristol Fourth of July Celebration - 2023**

Sweeney/Teixeira - Voted  
unanimously to adopt this  
resolution as proposed.

### **I2. Director Parks and Recreation Rensehausen re Camp Fee Increase Proposal**

Teixeira/Sweeney- unanimously  
adopt the resolution to approve  
the camp fee increase to \$300.

Prior to the vote taken, Director Resenhausen explained the proposed changes to the program's cost, increasing it to \$300 for the first child and keeping subsequent children at the current rate of \$250. He believed it is a reasonable increase given the program's value and the fact that it will only impact the first child in a family. The cost is considered low compared to other camps, and the program has resources available to assist families with financial hardships. Anyone unable to afford the cost can reach out to the office for assistance.

**I3.** Director Parks and Recreation Resenhausen re Beach Fee Increase Request

Sweeney/ Teixeira - Voted  
unanimously to refer to the  
solicitor to draft an ordinance  
for council consideration of beach  
fees as proposed.

Prior to the vote taken, Director Resenhausen explained the proposed increases in beach fees for non-residents, with the hope that it will reduce overcrowding and generate more revenue for the town from non-residents. The proposal includes:

- a \$10 fee for weekday residents,
- a \$20 fee for weekday non-residents, and
- a \$30 fee for weekday resident bus
- a \$60 fee for weekday non-resident bus
- a \$15 fee for weekends/holidays residents, and
- a \$30 fee for weekends/holidays non-resident, and
- a \$30 fee for weekend/holiday resident bus
- a \$30 fee for weekday/holiday non-resident bus
- to add active military to the veteran category, still at no charge.

He explained Season passes for regular citizens cost \$25, while seniors and veterans can get them for free. The proposed changes do not affect student discounts, and only apply to vehicles, not per person. He

**I4.** (Councilman Sweeney) re parameters for the Use of Opioid Funds

Sweeney/Teixeira - Voted  
unanimously to receive and file.

Prior to the vote being taken, Councilman Sweeney noted there was a public health alert issued by the RI Department of Health and the Department of Behavioral Health Care Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals due to the increase in non-fatal opioid overdose activity in the East Bay. It was discussed where these funds should be spent, and what the oversight process should be for these allocated funds. Noting that the goal is to use the funds to make the biggest impact on the community affected by the opioid crisis.

It was noted that there was an estimate of \$42,000 in opioid funds received this fiscal year and approximately \$70,000 last fiscal year.

Town Administrator Contente noted that the opioid litigation was still ongoing and that the Town is working with the school district and the Bristol Prevention Coalition to establish a prevention education curriculum.

Substance Abuse Coordinator, Barbara Plumbo discusses how the settlement funds are currently being used for incidental expenses and how they will be utilized for various programs in the future, such as Ripple Up and Project Alert. She also mentions the need for training costs for prevention specialists and supporting the police department, particularly in the tips 411 line and needle disposal efforts. Plumbo notes that the budget proposal will itemize the funds being requested and how they will be distributed among the school, police, and community. She emphasizes that the settlement money has clear guidelines for use and that Bristol is fortunate to have resources such as East Bay Recovery Services and the Safe Station.

Lisa Peterson, of 9 Jennifer Drive and COO at Victor, a mental health and medical services provider, spoke at a Council meeting about the importance of being mindful and thoughtful about the once-in-a-generation investment they have for substance use treatment. She shared her experience and recommended the council be transparent and evidence-based in their interventions. Peterson urged the council to evaluate how they can make the funds last and address the real gaps in addiction treatment beyond prevention. She also suggested the council should follow the state's model of requesting proposals for specific projects under different umbrellas of prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery services.



It was agreed that there needs to be an overall strategy for the use of the funds and that an oversight process should be put in place to ensure that the funds are being used effectively. Discusses ensued regarding various options for how the funds could be allocated, and what types of programs or services could be supported.

**15.** (Councilman Sweeney) re update on the Outside Dining Status

- a. memo from Department of Community Development
- b. (Draft) Application Form for Outdoor Dining Permit
- c. (Draft) for Outdoor Dining Design Guidelines and Manual
- d. (Draft) Ordinance

Sweeney/Teixeira - Voted unanimously to refer to the solicitor to draft an ordinance for council consideration at the March 20<sup>th</sup> council budget meeting for first reading.

Prior to the vote taken, John Shevlin from pare corporation addressed the council. Mr. Shevlin discusses his team's work on developing seasonal outdoor dining guidelines for the town of Bristol. They are also creating a checklist for the application form, and they aim to make the guidelines town-wide and aesthetically pleasing while keeping costs low for business owners. The guidelines cover topics such as safety, parking, storm preparedness, and aesthetics. They have developed a manual outlining the approval process, operational requirements, and construction requirements, as well as design material requirements for furniture, shade structures, and barriers. They have also drafted an ordinance for outdoor dining within parking areas. The team worked with business owners and incorporated their feedback into the final package. Mr. Shevlin summarized that the guidelines aim to be a positive image for Bristol while keeping it simple.

Vice Chairwoman Parella discusses a meeting she attended with the business owners and notes that the sidewalk dining ordinance should be kept separate from the current discussion of the outdoor dining guidelines. She states that there should be a reference to automobile speed when it comes to barriers. Mr.

Shevlin relies upon that he could make such references and recommendations to be included in the guidelines.

Councilman Sweeney asks about ADA compliance measures taken into consideration. Mr. Shevlin noted that additional consideration will be taken in the ADA parking requirements and provide further recommendations for council consideration.

It was mentioned that the guidelines are flexible and can be adjusted to fit specific situations, just like requesting a waiver for setback regulations when applying for the planning board. They also discuss reducing the recommended sidewalk space from 5 feet to 4 feet, while still ensuring safety, accessibility, and minimum ADA requirements.

Council Chairman Calouro noted that the first reading of the ordinance will be given special consideration and be heard during the March 20<sup>th</sup> budget session with the second reading at the council's next regular meeting on March 29<sup>th</sup>.

**I6.** Principal Planner Tanner re Downtown Bicycle Network - demonstration project - status update

Sweeney/Ley - Voted unanimously to receive and file.

Prior to the vote taken, Town Planner Tanner informed the Council about the Bike Path Extension Project and the progress made in creating a bicycle network to extend into the downtown area. He explained that on-street markings and signage will be added to help cyclists navigate through the town, and an index plan and construction detail plans have been provided. He notes that the markings will be visible in a few months.

A discussion ensued regarding connecting the Eastside of town to the West through a bike path connector or pavement markings in Bristol, as well as creating a connection from the end of the bike path to downtown. Noting that goal was to encourage people to explore more of Bristol. The possibility of a QR code and public bike repair stations was discussed.

**I7.** (Town Administrator Content/ Tax Assessor DiMeo) re tax rate changes

- a. (Draft) Resolution
- b. (Draft) Legislation

c. copy of Ordinance Town of Middletown

d. copy of Ordinance Town of Newport

Parella/Ley - Voted unanimously to adopt the resolution as presented and authorize the Clerk to send the same to the members of the General Assembly; and to continue the matter to a special workshop to be held in the spring after the council budget workshops.

Prior to the vote taken, Town Administrator Contente introduced a proposal for tax relief for residents, citing the growing problem of partially occupied homes in Bristol that puts a strain on the town's housing stock. He stated that tax assessor has been working diligently to implement the tax groups, and the proposed tax rate would provide relief to residents while being fair to commercial businesses and investment properties. Investment properties in Bristol, owned by nonresidents, could seek this benefit if the tenants are year-long residents.

A presentation of the proposed tax structure for Bristol was presented by Tax Assessor DiMeo which included:

- Current conditions that have increased housing shortages
- The proposed tax structure that creates town(2) tax rate categories for residential owner-occupied and residential non-owner-occupied.
- Neighboring community models for Middletown and Newport
- Proposed property tax structure for Bristol. (based on tax levies of 2022)
- Comparative tax rate summary- of neighboring towns
- Bristol owner-occupied description
- Sample example worksheets of property tax categories (example of an average assessment of \$443,000 for residential owner-occupied showed a savings of \$306 a year)

Tax Assessor Dimeo noted that she determined the rates and averages using the 2022 tax roll and divided the properties into categories. She noted that there was room for error as its owner-occupied home may not have accurately been determined as there is no current existing database to gather the information. However, a generalized average was based on a property mailing lists.

Tax Assessor DiMeo explained the need to change the tax rate and the proposal's aim to give residents a little break to keep them in town. The proposed tax structure would have two tax rate categories: residential owner-occupied and residential non-owner occupied, as well as commercial, industrial, and any apartment buildings with six or more residential units. Noting that similar models have been implemented successfully in neighboring towns, Middletown and Newport, for the 2022 tax year.

Tax Assessor DiMeo provided a breakdown of the tax rates for Middletown and Newport and proposed the same for Bristol. The proposed tax rate would be based on what was levied for taxes in 2022, with the tangible tax rate frozen at \$13. DiMeo explained that the tangible tax rate was frozen was due to the Governor's budget last year, which approved legislation that capped the tax rate for towns providing tangible tax exemption. DiMeo clarified that only towns offering a tangible tax exemption and not already having their tax rate split out are affected. Michelle added that Bristol is one of the few communities that this affected. She also provided a comparison of tax rates of all municipalities in the packets provided.

Discussions ensued regarding how to define an owner-occupied property, which included providing a valid driver's license or State ID with the Bristol address, voter registration card, or vehicle registration with the personal address. Residents who have another address need to provide proof that they are not receiving this exemption in another jurisdiction.

Discussions ensue regarding property assessments for non-residential commercial properties and affordable housing units.

It was noted that apartments were not broken down per unit and only condos were valued individually. For mixed-use buildings, the assessment is a holistic approach and not separated by units.

Councilman Ley asks about a hypothetical large apartment complex and how it falls under the non-resident commercial category. He wonders if a 20-unit building with 10 affordable units and 10 market-rate units would have different property tax rates. Tax Assessor DiMeo clarifies that the 20 units are assessed at their full market value, but adjustments are made for affordable housing on the assessment side. This adjustment is not reflected on the tax bill, as the overall assessment already includes the percentage for affordable housing.

Vice Chairwoman Parella raises concerns about property investors making significant profits from short-term and commercial rental

investments. She suggests that exemptions to help seniors maintain their homes can be offset by different tax rate structures for these investment rental properties. She notes that finding solutions may take time and should be addressed one step at a time.

Chairman Calouro noted that the focus of the conversations was to discuss proposed tax rates and steps toward implementing them. The Chairman emphasized that the proposed tax rates were not set in stone and there were many factors that needed to be addressed before any next steps could be taken. The first steps would be to adopt the resolution for the new tax classification plan, allow the opportunity for discussion, and gather information. He explained that there are many factors that need to be addressed, including compliance with the tangible tax and addressing issues such as short-term rentals. The goal is to make it more affordable for older residents on fixed incomes whose taxes go up but whose income doesn't. There may be potential for three tax rates, but this may depend on the results of a workshop and other factors.

**18.** Director of Public Works Parella re request granting Notice to Proceed with the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Road Resurfacing Project

Teixeira/Parella - Voted unanimously to approve the request granting authorization to proceed with the road resurfacing project scheduled for the fiscal year 2023-2024.

Prior to the vote taken, it noted that if any invoices were received prior to the 2024 fiscal year the funds would be borrowed from the town and then later reimbursed.

Councilman Teixeira asks that a list of the road resurfacing projects be later distributed to the council. Town Administrator Contente noted the list would be posted on the Town's website

## **J. Bills & Expenditures**

**J1.** RFP# 1001 - Fourth of July Celebration Fireworks Display

Sweeney/Teixeira -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, Clerk Cordeiro noted the following bid(s) received:

- Pyrotecnico Fireworks, Inc., in the amount of \$21,000

**J2.** RFP# 1003 - Souvenir Merchandise for the 238th Fourth of July Celebration

Teixeira/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, Clerk Cordeiro noted the following bid(s) received:

- Graphic Ink, Inc., in the amount of \$49,158.50

**K. Special Reports**

**K1.** 2024 Consolidated Assessment and Listing Methodology (CALM) for Section 305(B) and 303(D) Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Reporting

- a. Solicitation of Water Quality Data and Information for 2024 Integrated Report (consideration for water quality assessments submission deadline April 1, 2023)

Sweeeeey/Teixeira -Voted unanimously to receive and file.

**(ADD ITEM)**

*At this point in the meeting, Council Chairman Calouro requested that the Council might add an agenda item to send condolences to the late Rick Roderick, who was active in the high school bands a local school bus driver and a member of the Fourth of July Committee.*

Sweeney/Ley- Voted unanimously to add an agenda item to send condolences and acknowledge the late *Rick Roderick*.

Members of the council expressed their condolences, reflected on Mr. Roderick's accomplishments, and thanked him for his service and dedication to the town.

#### **L. Town Solicitor**

Citizens Public Forum

**Persons wishing to speak during the citizens public forum must notify the Council Clerk and sign in prior to the commencement of the meeting.**

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. Commissioners of the Cemeteries the North and East Burial Grounds Commission Meeting, Minutes, November 9, 2022

(CA) AA2. Commissioners of the Cemeteries the North and East Burial Grounds Commission Meeting, Minutes, December 14, 2022

(CA) AA3. Bristol Housing Authority Meeting Minutes, January 12, 2023

(CA) AA4. Board of Tax Assessment Review Meeting Minutes, January 9, 2023

(CA) AA5. Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes, January 17, 2023

(CA) AA6. Harbor Commission Meeting Minutes, February 6, 2023

##### **(CA) BB. Budget Adjustments**

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

(CA) BB1. Tax Assessor DiMeo re Recommended Abatements & Additions - February 17, 2023

**(CA) CC. Financial Reports**

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

(CA) CC1. Town Treasurer Hassell- re Revenue and Expenditure Statement - February 22, 2023

**(CA) DD. Proclamations, Resolutions & Citations**

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

(CA) DD1. Citation - Brigadier General Michael T. Brynes U.S. Army ret. - in memory of (signed)

(CA) DD2. Citation - Ann C. Kellerman - in memory of (signed)

(CA) DD3. Resolution # 2023-02 - Resolution in Support of Housing Development & Land Use (signed)

(CA) DD4. Resolution # 2023-03 - Town of Bristol Petitioning the Honorable General Assembly to Enact Legislation Providing Municipalities with Relief from Excessive State Building Permit Fees (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) FF1. Town of Warren Resolution - Resolution to the Honorable RI General Assembly in Support of 2023 H 5309

(CA) FF2. Bristol Warren Regional School Committee - Resolution Requesting Change to Transportation Region - House Bill No. 5252



(CA) FF3. Bristol Warren Regional School Committee - Resolution in Support of Full Funding of Categorical Transportation Aid as Outlined in RIGL § 16-7.2-6

(CA) FF4. Town of Charleston Resolution - Resolution in Support of Full Funding of Categorical Transportation Aid as Outlined in RIGL 16-7.2-6

(CA) FF5. Town of Hopkinton Resolution - Resolution of the Hopkinton Council in Support of Housing Development & Land Use

**(CA) GG. Distributions/Communications**

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

(CA) GG1. State Traffic Commission - approved the installation of a crosswalk across from Route 114 in the vicinity of the Bristol Center of the Rhode Island Audubon Society located at 1401 Hope Street

(CA) GG2. Bid Tabulation - Bid# 999 - Operation of the Bristol Golf Course

(CA) GG3. Bid Tabulation - Bid# 1000 - Town Wide Landscaping

(CA) GG4. Town Administrator Contente to Info Quick Solutions, Inc. re award of Bid#996 - Land Evidence Recording Management System

(CA) GG5. Bristol Police Department Annual 2022 Report

(CA) GG6. Town Clerk Cordeiro - re Thank you letter to Ruth Souto for serving on the Rogers Free Library Board of Trustees

(CA) GG7. Town Clerk Cordeiro - re Thank you letter to Jacqueline Katz for serving on the Rogers Free Library Board of Trustees

(CA) GG8. Town Administrator Contente re First Amendment to PCS Lease Renewal (signed)

(CA) GG9. Town Administrator Contente re Police Contract Extension - Memorandum of Agreement

(CA) GG10. Revised policy as amended - Town of Bristol Public Request Flag Policy

**(CA) HH. Distributions/Notice of Meetings**

(Office copy only)

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

- (CA) HH1. Bristol Housing Authority Meeting, February 9, 2023
- (CA) HH2. Board of Tax Assessment Review Meeting, February 13, 2023
- (CA) HH3. Bristol Planning Board Technical Review Committee Meeting, February 14, 2023
- (CA) HH4. Bristol Historic District Commission Meeting, February 15, 2023
- (CA) HH5. Rogers Free library Board of Trustees Meeting, February 16, 2023
- (CA) HH6. Zoning Board of Review Meeting, March 6, 2023
- (CA) HH7. Bristol County Water Authority Board of Director Meeting, February 23, 2023
- (CA) HH8. Bristol County Water Authority Personnel/Compensation Committee Meeting, February 23, 2023
- (CA) HH9. Historic District Commission Meeting, March 2, 2023

**(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"**

There being no further business, upon a motion by Councilman Ley, seconded by Councilman Sweeney and voted unanimously, the Chairman declared this meeting to be adjourned at 9:12 pm.

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Melissa Cordeiro, Town Clerk

DRAFT