



Randolph Town Council

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Monday, May 8, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

This is a hybrid meeting. The Public is invited to attend this meeting in person or remotely, by telephone or computer access.

Call to Order: Council President Alexopoulos called the meeting to order.

Roll Call – Council Members Present: William Alexopoulos (In-Person), Richard Brewer (By Zoom), James Burgess (In-Person) Natacha Clerger (In-Person), Jesse Gordon (In-Person), Katrina Huff-Larmond (In-Person), Kevin O'Connell (In-Person).

Pledge of Allegiance: Pledge of Allegiance led by Councillor Burgess.

Moment of Silent Prayer: Moment of Silent Prayer held.

Approval of Minutes:

1. Meeting Minutes of Town Council Meeting March 27, 2023

Motion to approve the Minutes of Town Council Meeting on March 27, 2023, made by Councillor O'Connell, seconded by Councillor Burgess.

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0 (Absent: Egan and C. Alexopoulos; Inaudible during vote: Brewer)

Motion passes.

2. Meeting Minutes of Town Council Meeting April 3, 2023

Motion to approve the Minutes of Town Council Meeting on April 3, 2023, made by Councillor Gordon, seconded by Councillor O'Connell.

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0 (Absent: Egan and C. Alexopoulos; Inaudible during vote: Brewer)

Motion passes.

Announcements from the Council President:

1. At the last meeting we had I received a letter from the Town Attorney wishing to open contract negotiations. I've appointed two members of the Council for the Town Attorney's Contract Negotiation Subcommittee: Councillor O'Connell and Councillor C. Alexopoulos.
2. If everything goes as planned, we are looking to have a meeting scheduled on Tuesday, May 30, 2023, at 6:00 PM for a budget meeting. The FinCom Subcommittee will be there as well which is the entire Town Council. We are just waiting for the Town Manager to submit the proposed budget and will look forward to having this meeting on May 30th, 2023 at 6:00 PM.

Presentations:

1. Presentation of Gift by Mary Fernandes

Mary A. Fernandes from Wareham, MA, on behalf of the Paul K. Fernandes Foundation and Board of Directors, presented a donation of \$4,700.00 as the result of the fundraiser for the fifth anniversary of the Intergenerational Community Center. The funds are to be used for the Randolph Intergenerational Community Center for adults and for youth. To Town Council President and Town Council members: it is a pleasure to present this check. Council President Alexopoulos: I applaud you and your family for hosting the fundraisers for the past five years and for collecting the funds to donate back to the community.

Ms. Fernandes: I want to take an opportunity to thank those who continue to support the Foundation and the Community Center. It was an honor to present an award to Mr. Ron Barber who was a student here at the high school and didn't receive his recognition for the Hall of Fame for sports.

Motion was made by Council President Alexopoulos to accept the gift as presented, in the amount of \$4,700 for the purposes of funding the Randolph Intergenerational Community Center for adults and for youth.

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0 (Absent: Councillor Egan, Councillor C. Alexopoulos; Inaudible during roll call: Councillor Brewer)

Motion Passes.

Public Comments:

1. Craig McDonald, 71 Emily Jeffers Road: I've lived here for over 21 years. The reason for coming before the Council today is to represent the 30-plus basketball players that were going to the Randolph Intergeneration Community Center in Randolph (RICC). We had a strong following that allowed us to engage in fellowship by playing basketball for the past four years. I have been informed that this program would not be able to continue because the RICC center would be used solely for Randolph residents, to give them a chance to utilize its facilities and programs. I have spoken with the Town Manager and Programs Director Liz Larossee about ways to get the program back in motion. Council President Alexopoulos: Thank you for your comments. You may also want to attend the Board of Recreation meeting scheduled for this upcoming Wednesday, by Zoom. They handle issues as they relate to recreation throughout the Town. Councillor Huff-Larmond: I think the larger issue is how we intend to utilize the facility and whether or not we want residents outside of Randolph to also utilize the facility. I know that is a conversation currently being held with the Board of Recreation. I think it would be an excellent opportunity for you to speak to the individuals on the Board of Recreation.
2. Joe Burke, Hills Street: Is there any way we can change how other boards and authorities conduct their meetings so they are in person and not online? Who sets that policy? Council President Alexopoulos: I can find out.
3. Dave Mulligan, 3 Pond Lane: The new estimate of the water treatment plant, is there any estimate regarding what the homeowners can expect on their water bills? Councillor Burgess: We haven't borrowed any money so we don't have a debt service plan on this. Council President Alexopoulos: That's correct. We don't know what such costs would be yet. All that won't be factored in until we know what the final cost is.

Councillor C. Alexopoulos entered the meeting, in person, at 6:27 PM.

New Business:

1. Council Order 2023-023: Confirmation for a Date Modification for the Town Manager to Submit the Proposed Operating Budget for FY2024 to the Town Council

Council President Alexopoulos read Council Order 2023-023. Town Manager Howard provided additional information about the Council Order.

Motion to approve the Council Order 2023-023 as presented made by Councillor Burgess, seconded by C. Alexopoulos.

Roll Call Vote: 8-0-0 (Absent: Egan)

Motion Passes.

2. Council Order 2023-024: Authorization By The Randolph Town Council To Petition The General Court To Enact Special Legislation Regarding The Status of The City Known As The Town Of Randolph As A Gateway Municipality

Council Clerk read Council Order 2023-024.

Councillor Gordon introduced Council Order 2023-024 and provided a brief explanation of the purpose of this Council Order. The census bureau undercounted the number of people in Randolph and it does that for a lot of communities like ours. It matters in our case because we had an official census count of 34,984, and to qualify as a gateway city we needed sixteen more people, which is not a lot of people. We asked the state agencies what we could do to demonstrate that we in fact do have those sixteen people. We came up with a plan to appeal the count for group homes in town that are traditionally undercounted. We prepared that report and were well over the sixteen needed people. The real issue is that the census, both at the state and federal levels, has no way to correct an error. We would like to ask the legislature to bypass the federal and state rules and say “We declare it to be so” by way of a Home Rule Petition. It would go to the legislature to hopefully declare us eligible for the gateway city status.

In summary, some of the benefits include the Town of Randolph being eligible for \$500,000 to \$1,000,000 in grants every year.

Councillor Huff-Larmond: It would be a huge benefit for us to be a gateway city so I support this. I just want to make sure that what we’re doing doesn’t have too much pushback. Representative Driscoll’s suggestion was for us to find the sixteen people, not to do a Home Rule Petition. Councillor Gordon: He suggested both because of the inability to correct the error at the state or federal level. Councillor Huff-Larmond: I do agree that the census is extremely undercounted because of the lack of trust in giving personal information to the government. I’m concerned about the piece describing “bachelor degrees or above,” how do we measure that? Councillor Gordon: That is also vague in the state rules. The Donahue Institute prepared a packet that essentially says “We are below average educational attainment” which is a bachelor's degree or higher, and also says “We are below average in state income per household.” I asked all the state representative agencies which statistic we use for this and their answer was “It’s automatic from the census.”

Councillor Clerger: Not only can I prove that the Haitian Community is undercounted before the census, but with the Biden Program, every day we have hundreds of Haitians coming to Randolph through churches, different organizations, and families. We need to take that into consideration because they live right here with us and are utilizing the town’s resources like everyone else. Councillor Gordon: I think the right approach for that would be to write a supplemental letter stating what you believe to be true. Residents of Randolph may also do this.

Councillor Gordon: Can we make public the Massachusetts Donahue Institute report coming up in two weeks? Town Attorney Griffin: We've been working with the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute since last fall. We did file an appeal of the census data. Because the paths you can choose to appeal your census count are very specific and statistically based, the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute has been developing statistics about all the cities and towns in Massachusetts and the voting districts in Massachusetts so that they have the data available that you need to file the very technical appeal. The recommendation from them, that we have followed, is that we appeal under the category of undercounting of the group homes in Randolph, because that is a category where we can get the institutions to substantiate how many residents they had as of that specific census date and then compare those with the count the census got, whereas other categories would be more difficult to match. Based on the data we've collected, we are hopeful we have more than the sixteen needed but that is up to the Census Bureau. The appeal got filed about a week and a half ago so we don't know exactly when we'll hear.

Councillor Huff-Larmond: I'm all for making sure Randolph is considered a gateway city and I know we have the sixteen. I am not comfortable saying that the majority of folks of color fall under the median income if we are not, and I am not comfortable saying that folks of color fall under a certain educational level.

Council President Alexopoulos: We'll put this on the next agenda for the next Council Meeting of May 22, 2023, for a presentation and a vote.

Correspondence:

1. FEMA: Preliminary copies of Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM)
2. Comcast: Changes to Xfinity Lineup
 - a. Effective May 12, 2023, ShopHQ will no longer be available with Xfinity.
 - b. Effective May 9, 2023, the programmer on Access channel 1098 has terminated their agreement and will no longer be available on channel 1098.
 - c. Effective May 12, 2023, the programmer on Access channel 1094 has terminated their agreement and will no longer be available on channel 1094.
 - d. Effective May 13, 2023, HBO Max will be renamed Max.
3. Main Street Farmers Market will be at Powers Farm on the following dates: May 21, June 18, July 16, August 13, and September, 17 from 12 PM to 4 PM.
4. Randolph Community Partnership, Inc. is hosting its 2023 Red Carpet Gala on Thursday, June 1, 2023, from 6 PM to 10 PM. Tickets can be purchased online.
5. Haitian Flag Day Celebrations
 - a. Soccer Games between the Haitian Community and Randolph Police and Fire Department so Saturday, May 13, 2023, at 1:00 PM.
 - b. Haitian Flag Day Celebrations will continue on Thursday, May 18, 2023, beginning with a breakfast and Haitian flag raising at Town Hall at 10:00 AM. At 5 PM, there will be a celebration with food, music, and performances at the Randolph Intergenerational Community Center.

Subcommittee Reports:

Small Business Subcommittee: Councillor Huff-Larmond advised there will be a date for this subcommittee to meet soon.

Human Services/Seniors/Recreation Subcommittee: Councillor Gordon advised there will be a date for this subcommittee to meet soon.

Open Council Comments:

1. Councillor Brewer: On April 27, 2023, I went to the Police Academy. We got to see what all the different units do and learned about the information technology and investigational portions of the department.
2. Councillor Clerger: Haitian Flag Day is coming. We are very excited about the soccer game between the Haitian Community and Randolph Police and Fire Community Departments. I want to remind people about Haitian Flag Day Celebrations on May 18, 2023. Soley Levey will be coming to raise the Haitian flag with us at Town Hall at 10 AM. We thank the State Auditor for being one of our speakers for that day.
3. Councillor O'Connell: This Saturday, March of Dimes is having its annual walk at the Boston Hatch Shell so if you are in that area, please come join us from 9 AM to 11 AM. I will be dj'ing for the crowd so come show your support!
4. Councillor C. Alexopoulos: I echo Council Vice President Brewer's sentiments about the police academy. I learned a lot about how things are done, the training they go through, and the programs they have. If you have a chance to go when the police department rolls out the program, you will learn a lot.
5. Councillor Huff-Larmond: The Randolph Town Clean-Up a few weeks ago was great. It's nice to see members of the community outside making our town beautiful. Town Manager Howard and I are working on bringing back jobs for youth at the Town Hall. You should be hearing more about that soon.
6. Councillor Gordon: I'd like to comment on the passing of Mel King. He was a big mayoral candidate in Boston. He founded what's called the "Rainbow Coalition" and I've applied his advice in everything I do in Randolph to make it so that every person can work together. 2. I entered the Randolph's Annual Spelling Bee at the Randolph Intergenerational Community Center funded by the Paul K. Fernandes Foundation and I won the adult section bringing home the trophy!
7. Council President Alexopoulos: The Greek Food Festival in Brockton will take place from May 19 through May 21.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn made by Councillor Clerger, seconded by Councillor Burgess.

Roll Call Vote: 8-0-0 (Absent: Egan)

Meeting adjourned at 7:09