



## **Town Council**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**Monday, February 28, 2022 6:00 p.m. via Zoom**

*The public is invited to attend this meeting remotely only, via phone or computer. In order to maintain safe social distancing guidelines, no physical presence will be allowed at this time. The Town website will be updated on the day of the meeting with the phone and computer access instructions.*

**Call to Order – Roll Call – Pledge of Allegiance:** Council President W. Alexopoulos called the meeting to order.

**Roll Call – Council Members Present:** William Alexopoulos, Richard Brewer, Natacha Clerger, Kenrick Clifton, Jesse Gordon and Katrina Huff-Larmond.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Pledge of Allegiance led by Councillor Clifton.

**Moments of Silent Prayer:** A moment of silent prayer held in remembrance of former Councilor Jason Adams' mother, Pamela Adams who passed away on Friday, February 25, 2022, as well as the mother of former Town Council Clerk- Deb Ward, Amagry Cedahome Cadomy passed away. Our condolences go out to their families.

#### **Presentations:**

1. State Senator Walter Timilty, together with Major Joseph Blume, Executive Officer of Cyber Security Defense Battalion with the Massachusetts National Guard.

Senator Walter Timilty: Thank you to the people of Randolph for allowing me the privilege and honor to serve you on the Massachusetts State Senate. One of my roles in the Massachusetts State Senate is to serve as the Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security. I'd like to formally invite the Town of Randolph to a Forum on Cyber Security on March 30, 2022 at no cost. The location of the forum is the Braintree National Guard Armory. The National Guard will engage in assessments in terms of Randolph's abilities and potential vulnerabilities, as well as educate and train whoever the Town designates to participate in this forum.

Major Blume: Cyber attacks are exponentially increasing. One in six communities in Massachusetts have been hit by a cyber attack which is very costly. The attack of choice is usually ransomware. We've worked with various cities and towns to conduct network discovery and run vulnerability sweeps of their network and find out everything about their network.

After the presentation, Council President Alexopoulos invited questions from the Town Council.

Councillor Gordan: Is it possible to speak with other cities and towns who have used their services, specifically, with their Information Technology (IT) directors, to obtain information from them? Major Blume stated that he can reach out to neighboring towns' IT directors, and have them reach out to Randolph's IT director to provide the after-action review we did of said town.

## Public Hearings

### 1. 6:15 PM: Council Order: 2022-10 Authorizing Additional Borrowing for Water Treatment Plant Project

Council President Alexopoulos opened the public hearing. Attorney Griffin read the legal notice that was published in the Patriot Ledger on February 18, 2022. Counsel President W. Alexopoulos opened the hearing for public comments.

Sandra Cohen, of Bittersweet Lane: Concrete costs have increased extraordinarily. Does the contract contain a final cost overrun, and if there is a total cap on the contract? President Alexopoulos: The cost of the physical structure of the plant is in the \$78M range. The two sub-aqueous transmission lines, of which the costs are being shared between Hohlbrook and Randolph, are another \$2.8M. The total project is \$81,604,000.00. Based upon information we have from our engineers and architects, they feel confident that the project should not exceed that amount. Town Manager Howard: The Council took a vote back in 2018, which at the time was just a conceptual opinion of probable cost without an actual design of the plant at that point. We are now at 100% design and have a new opinion of probable cost except in this case, we're dealing with the actual design documents which will be put out to bid. This is not necessarily what we will have to spend, but is required by the State funding mechanism (SRF funds) and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MASSDEP), to get an approval certificate to have the funding in place. Braintree took their vote a few weeks ago to make sure they have their funds set aside, Hohlbrook is having their vote tomorrow night and now this is us making sure we have the SRF funding, and MASSDEP approval certificate in place.

Joe Burke, of Hills Street: If we borrow this money, will our water and sewer rates go up. Town Manager Brian Howard: No because this is an authorization to borrow. The Harper funds, principal reduction, and the funds we already set aside, will eliminate any water increases as much as possible. Mr. Burke: Twenty years ago Hohlbrook didn't pay their fair share for a project which consisted of a pipe connecting from Hohlbrook to Randolph and we had to eat up the costs. How do we know they're going to pay their share now? Town Manager Howard: Recent legislation that was passed would not allow any opportunity for Hohlbrook not to pay their portion. Mr. Burke: When will this go into effect? President Alexopoulos: We have a contract with an engineering company to design the plant, and a contract with the environmental company who are the consultants. Those are the only contracts we have and then this will go out to bid within the next month or two. We are looking at Summer 2022, to put the shovel in the ground. Mr. Burke: Would be cheaper to go through the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA), and then sell the water to Hohlbrook if they wanted to buy it. President Alexopoulos: That was discussed 10-12 years ago, and we are way beyond that scope now.

President Alexopoulos closed the public comment portion of the hearing and asked if any councilors wished to speak.

Councilor Gorden: There are two possibilities for future cost increases. The first one being that PFAS is not included in the current cost but will be added. President Alexopoulos: There are no additional costs which have not been added in this document. There is also a PFAS filter built into this cost breakdown. Town Manager Howard: We do have an MWRA permit in place in the chance that we will have to build and maintain something internally to deal with the PFAS issue. Town Manager Howard: PFAS removal is not an issue, it's a question of the discharge and what will happen after that which does not affect the water quality.

Councilor Gordan: Will the new water treatment plant have public access? It would be a real educational experience for the students and residents of Randolph. President Alexopoulos: The current design

includes several glass panels which allow people to see what is going on in the water treatment plant, and a conference room that is shared for educational purposes.

Councilor Clifton: Is this project going to be a federal procurement, a state procurement, or is it not clear whether or not we will be receiving federal funds to facilitate the funding of this project? Attorney Giffin: It will depend on which funds we use. If we use ARPA funds, then we have to comply with all the federal procurement requirements because those are federal monies. If we use the portion of the ARPA funds that came directly from the state, or if we just use state funding mechanisms then we would have to comply with all the state procurement requirements. Council President and Town Manager have been involved in the day-to-day management of this project so they would know much more regarding the particulars of this funding. If standards are different, then we would have to comply with the most rigorous standards.

Councilor Huff-Larmond: Are we voting on this tonight? Whether there are guidelines in place or not, the hope is that we continue to go above and beyond the expectations of Minority or Women-Owned Businesses (MWBE).

President Alexopoulos: We are required to vote so that the project is fully funded to proceed with the process.

Motion to approve Council Order 2022-010 made by Councillor Brewer, seconded by Councillor Clifton.

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0 (Absent: C. Alexopoulos, Burgess; Absent During Vote: Clerger)  
Motion Passes.

#### **Public Comments:**

Sandy Cohen, of Bittersweet Lane: Does the town have cyber liability coverage under an insurance policy? Council President Alexopoulos: We will find out and get back to you with this information.

#### **Resolutions:**

##### **1. Resolution Calling on the Biden Administration to Cease Deportation of Haitian Migrants Under Title 41**

This Resolution will be continued to a future Town Council Meeting. Councillor Clerger is feeling under the weather.

#### **Town Manager's Report:**

Town Manager Howard gave the following updates:

1. Since the last meeting, we have seen another significant decrease in Covid-19 numbers. Our testing positivity rate is 2.44, last week we were at 4.6. We are currently ranked 307 in the State which is amazing. Covid-19 rapid tests kits are available during regular office hours in the health department office at Town Hall. State funding for the Covid-10 PCR testing ends on April 1, 2022 and the state has not indicated whether or not they will renew the contracts for Stop The Spread Sites. We will continue to follow-up with the State and see what our plans as a community are going forward.

Councilor Huff-Larmond: The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee used a company called G-Transit to allow the website to be changed into different languages. Is this something we could look into for the Town Website? Town Manager Howard: We are currently in the process of renovating the

website. Google Translate is used to translate the website currently. We are looking into various options used by other cities in the coalition to determine what we will use for language translation going forward.

Councilor Huff-Larmond: There is a lot of discussion regarding mental health services, with the recent suicide of one of our students in Randolph. How do we do better to provide mental health services to students, whether it's through school or the town such as Town social workers. Town Manager Howard: I met with Liz LaRosee and Police Chief Marag to discuss a series of topics and this was one of them. Chief Marag highlighted what is being done within the police station, which includes a number of employees within the union and third-party services that they subcontract. Chief Marag also received a grant for social work services through Harper funds and we can see if we can do anything to enhance work in that area. In addition to that, I recently spoke to the School Superintendent and communicated that if there is anything the school department or School Committee would like to bring forward then there is certainly community support for that.

Councilor Brewer: Isn't there going to be a health clinic going into the highschool- can something be incorporated into that plan? Town Manager Howard: Yes, that will definitely be included.

Councilor Brewer: The guys working on the ground level at 19 Highland Ave are running small generators for small power tools which means we won't light up the building. I know Deputy Castro and Building Commissioner Ron Lum have been involved.

Councilor Clifton: How was the last storm handled? Town Manager Howard: All was taken care of smoothly. The timing of the storm was helpful since it took place during the work day so many vehicles were out of the way.

Councilor Clifton asked: What is the status of the mask mandate in schools? I am hopeful that we will follow science and data in order to make decisions. Council President Alexopoulos: This was a topic up for discussion and vote during the last School Committee meeting and they voted not to remove the mask mandate: five in the affirmative, and two in the negative.

Councilor Clifton: A number of residents have raised concerns regarding the 19 Highland Ave. It has been reported that the place is unkept, there is debris flying everywhere and fences are on the ground. This is unacceptable. Additionally, Green Booster's Organization has been involved in the training of dozens of our residents who have become certified in mental health services. I wonder if our schools, our town and local organizations are using those services to the fullest extent to make sure everyone is operating to the best of their ability as it relates to mental health. Town Manager Howard: Town employees have participated in training which took place over one-two days, however it is base level training of a combination of different health services.

Councilor Gordan: Census figures indicate we are sixteen people shy of 35,000 to get our gateway city status. What is the process of the Town reporting and the relevant stats such as the average education stats and average income of the town versus the state? How do we know when that information comes in and when can we expect them to come in? Town Manager Howard: The federal census and the town census do not ask the financial questions you are asking about. The federal government lowered the number of questions on the census and sent out a community survey which releases data yearly. It's called the American Community Survey and it goes to communities based on size, so the bigger cities first then communities based on population. The reason they started doing this is because they want more people to fill out the census and secondly, they are sending it to a certain percentage of residents in each community each year so at least there is more fluid data and information versus collecting data every 10 years.

2. I would like to recommend Naraida M. Santos Pena for the Planning Board. She has a Masters Degree in architecture and Bachelors of Science in architecture. She currently works as an assistant project manager for Danvers Contracting. I think she would be an excellent member of the Planning Board.

Motion to ratify the appointment of Naraida M. Santos Pena for the Planning Board made by Council President Alexopoulos, seconded by Councillor Brewer.

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0 (Absent: C. Alexopoulos, Burgess; Absent During Vote: Clerger)

Motion Passes.

Councilor Egan: There was a letter sent out by ABCC regarding the 2020 Census quotas for retail licenses which provides the new numbers but could not find the old numbers. Did we gain any new licenses in any category? Town Manager Howard and Town Attorney Griffin have not seen the document and will get back with comments after they review.

### **New Business:**

#### **Counsel Order 2022-11: Authorizing Town to Enter Governance Agreement - Intermunicipal Agreement for Emergency Communications and Dispatch Services Between Randolph and Braintree**

Council President Alexopoulos read Council Order 2023-011.

Town Manager Howard provided an explanation regarding the purpose of this Council Order. The reason it is needed is to apply for a \$7.1M grant with the Town of Braintree for the State E911 system. The application for the grant is due Thursday so certainly would like to try and take part in this year's funding. In particular, it will save us over \$1M in capital costs, it will have an annual savings of over \$60K plus in operating costs, and we know based on the change over and equipment that it will have significant improvement on communication.

Police Chief Anthony Morag: I want to thank the Council members for the conversations regarding mental health. We know we are moving in the right direction and the support is appreciated and bringing it to light. When becoming Police Chief, I knew that part of strategic planning was looking at regionalization of resources. In today's time with constraints in the budget, we have to look at combining resources with communities to help lighten the load but also provide quality services at a higher level. We entered into a feasibility study with the Town of Braintree through the Edward Collins Center of UMass Boston. Interviews were done at both stations, our equipment was looked at, there was an analysis of our budgets, and the data showed that it is feasible. The State's 911 department wants to condense and get everyone on the same page to enhance service. There are currently 351 different communities in the Commonwealth who each operate differently when it comes to their 911 system. There are currently over 100 communities participating in this process. This grant will pay for upgrades on the computer systems, professional training, and new in-house radio systems which would help rectify the dead zones that exist in Randolph. This grant would save costs, we would have an annual savings of \$60k+ on operating, we would see significant improvements on communications, and create better services for residents and businesses in Randolph.

Council President Alexopoulos opens the floor to comments from the Council.

Councilor Clifton: Thank you for your very persuasive presentation. It makes sense that wherever there is an opportunity to consolidate services, the communities would be better served. The more we can work together, share services, reduce costs while at the same time be more effective in providing that particular service to our residents. Are we comfortable enough that Braintree serves a similar demographic profile so we can ensure a smooth transition to that service?

Police Chief Morag: There is a governance agreement which includes a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion provision to help with the hiring process. I will be on the Operations Committee and will have a say on the hiring process and I know we need to represent the demographic, it's a priority that we represent the demographic and provide the best service our community deserves. Braintree is top notch and they have the same sentiments.

Councilor Clifton: I saw that the Town of Randolph will be paying Braintree a certain allocation.

Town Manager Howard: Braintree is the lead community so Braintree employees will receive their health insurance from the Town of Braintree. Anything below 2.5% does not require pre approval, anything over that requires approval from the community so there are safeguards in place but the employees themselves would be employees from the town of Randolph.

Police Chief Morag: We could be assured that the values we hold here in Randolph will be upheld in Braintree in terms of hiring, but also treating all residents with all due respect. The day to day operations are run by the director of emergency communications, however the Operations Committee which consists of both Randolph and Braintree employees. They will be doing the annual budget and recommendation of employees but will be doing the operating policies and procedures that govern them. I am confident in the fact that Randolph will have a 50% stake and seat at the table based on conversations held throughout the process.

Councilor Brewer: We are in need of equipment in a huge way, I like the idea of labor savings. I also have scanners so I hear the frustration of officers when they can't get reception in different areas. This is a great opportunity to enhance the radio system and provide additional protection to our officers.

Councilor Huff-Larmond: Is there anything that we will be doing to assess this process, to make sure it is being successful and to ensure that when there are interactions with our community that it is being effective?

Police Chief Morag: Assessments have to be a part of any process, so yes the director, assistant director and supervisor will assist in assessments but I will also be spending time to evaluate by listening to 911 calls, listen to calls coming in on a day-to-day basis to ensure that the right people are in place and that it's actually working. Dispatch will also have better and more focused training.

Motion for the approval of Council Order 2022-11 made by Councillor Clifton, seconded by Councillor Brewer.

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0 (Absent: C. Alexopoulos, Burgess; Absent During Vote: Clerger)

Motion Passes.

### **Committee Reports:**

Councillor Clifton: Can we get an update on hiring a clerk for the Town Counsel. Town Manager Howard: Interviews are being held and there was another applicant who expressed interest recently so we'll be interviewing them.

**Human Services/Seniors/Recreation Subcommittee:** Councillor Gordon provided an update. We would like to rename the Recreation Board to emphasize the senior service for intergenerational aspects and other services as well.

Councilor Huff-Larmond: It seems like there is confusion about what the Boards that currently exist. There are three committees: The Town Council Recreation Subcommittee, the Recreation Board, and

the Randolph Intergenerational Community Center (RICC) Board. How can we bring these Boards together to see what can be done to go forward. Is there also a way to advertise which Boards have vacancies so that people can express interest? I know people have been reaching out who like to serve on a Board. Town Manager Howard: Yes, we can backtrack names of individuals who have reached out and look at how to move forward.

**Master Plan Implementation Committee:** Councillor Gordon provided an update. There will be a meeting tomorrow at 5:00 PM. It is not on the website yet but should be posted so people can attend. Town Attorney Griffin: I will review the determination of that particular Board to see whether posting the meeting is subject to Open Meeting Law.

### **Council Comments:**

Councilor Huff-Larmond: I am excited that we had our first Diversity Equity and Inclusion Coalition Meeting last week. We got to know each other and learn more about why this coalition exists and what we plan on doing going forward. The next meeting is March 17, 2022 at 7:00 PM and the zoom information will be posted on Facebook. Secondly, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated will have a virtual mental and physical health conference with Randolph Intergenerational Community Center from 12-2 PM. There will be discussion about mental health and how to take care of yourself.

Councilor Gordan: There will be a few Resolutions I plan to introduce regarding PFAS testing.

### **Executive Session:**

Executive Session Meeting Minutes pursuant to M.G.L. ch. 30A, section 21(a)(3) relative potential litigation strategy. M.G.L. ch. 30A, section 21(a)(3) permits a public body to go into executive session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares.

Motion made by President Alexopoulos to discuss opioid litigation and strategy in the towns' opioid litigation, seconded by Councillor Egan.

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0 (Absent: Christos Alexopoulos, James Burgess, Natacha Clerger)

### **Adjournment:**

The Council President announced that the Council would enter Executive Session and would not be returning to public session after the Executive Session.

The public portion of the Town Council meeting concluded, and the Council entered an executive session at 8:07 PM.