



## Randolph Town Council

### Meeting Minutes

**Meeting Date: Monday, March 10, 2025, 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:** Christos Alexopoulos (In-Person), Richard Brewer (In-Person), James Burgess (In-Person), Natacha Clerger (In-Person), Ryan Egan (Via Zoom), Jesse Gordon (Via Zoom), Kevin O’Connell (Via Zoom), Katrina Huff-Larmond (In-Person), Brandon Thompson (In-Person).

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

**Moment of Silent Prayer:** Moment of Silent Prayer was held in remembrance of Randolph Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Coalition member Astrid Johnson.

#### Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Motion to approve the minutes of the Town Council meeting on February 24, 2025 made by Councillor Burgess, seconded by Councillor O’Connell.

Roll Call Vote: 9-0-0

Motion passes.

#### Public Comments

1. Joe Burke, 54 Hill Street: For the past months, it’s been a nightmare up here. I’ve been here for 53 years and we always have welcomed everybody in Randolph. Take a vote and just do the resolution. It doesn’t mean anything.
2. Sandy Cohen, 63 Bittersweet Lane: The idea that ICE is coming here is nonsense. We are not a sanctuary city. We’ve made changes to the Resolution with the help of Councillors Burgess, Clerger, and Brewer, and I think we have a good resolution. I have been a resident of this Town for nearly as long as Joe. I have seen many changes, and I think that it proves us to implement a welcome to our diverse Town. Putting this out is not going to make ICE come to this Town. If they’re going to find us, they’re going to find us no matter what we say.
3. Sandy Slavitt, 42 Grove Street: I attended the recent Public Safety Subcommittee meeting of the Town Council. Councillor Burgess raised concerns because the resolution to declare Randolph a welcoming Town did not have teeth and you are right because we are not asking for a constitutional amendment. Our goal is far more modest. We are simply asking the Town Council to officially declare what most of us already know, that Randolph is welcoming.

4. Tracey Griffith, Racial Justice Director of the American Civil Liberties of Massachusetts. The ACLU of MA strongly believes in the democratic process and specifically in the ability of the people to participate in their government, learn about and weigh in on proposed government actions, and thereby ensure that their representatives accurately reflect their will. As far as the appropriate subcommittee meeting to advance the resolution concerning a commitment to all residents of the Town of Randolph remains unscheduled. We strongly urge the Council to put it on the agenda and vote in favor of a public hearing.
5. George Magazine, 17 Hillsdale Road: I think I debated this issue with the Council back in 2016. Randolph is a beautiful place, and we have beautiful people here. We need this passed and to be heard and to be put on the agenda so we can do this together.
6. Kevin Coleman Joyce: My wife, my son, and I moved here 35 years ago. We are very fond of this Town and its people, and it is a welcoming and very diverse community. I applaud Mayor Wu and her performance before the Committee last week. I hope you will allow this resolution to be debated and passed at your next meeting.
7. Yolete Ibokette, 28 Restarick Ave: I am here on behalf of the DEI Coalition to provide an update on our ongoing efforts to advance equity in the Town's hiring and retention practices and to urge the Town to invest in supporting this important initiative. Our vision is to ensure that Town staff, including leadership, reflect Randolph's racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity. hiring and retention practices and urge the town to invest in this initiative. racial h- changes to HR website to reflect
8. David Norris, 4 Dennis Avenue: I have lived in Randolph for just two years and have come here in part because it is a diverse community. Words do matter, and what we say about ourselves, how we define who we are, and how we present ourselves to the world and to attract other people to this community is important.
9. Brian White: I am here on behalf of the Randolph DEI Coalition. We appreciate the February 27th Public Safety Subcommittee hearing on the resolution concerning commitment to all residents of the Town of Randolph. We now urge the full Council to promptly schedule a hearing and vote on the resolution. Things have only gotten worse for our immigrant neighbors, friends, and family. They're living in fear, and it's rippling through our diverse and thriving community. Attendance is down by more than half at the DEI Coalition ESOL classes.
10. Heather Ho: I'm here to complete what my colleague Yolet started to say about hiring and retention practices in our Town. Equitable hiring goes beyond recruitment. Retention is just as critical. Employees must feel supported, valued, and genuinely included. This requires culturally sensitive supervision, inclusive meetings, and an intentional workplace culture. We appreciate the Town Manager's presence at the Martin Luther King Day celebration and his proclamation affirming equity and inclusion as a priority for Randolph. We are hopeful we can schedule a conversation soon to continue building on the progress that we've made together.
11. Guerlince Semezler, 60 Mill Street: Randolph is 41% black African American, 12.9% Asian, 1-% Latino. This is just a sample of what some of the previous speakers talked about. Randolph is already a welcoming Town for a lot of individuals all over the world. I urge the Council to do the right thing and bring this resolution forward for a vote.

Councillor Gordon entered the meeting, in-person, at 6:25 PM.

## **Presentations**

### **1. Birthday Proclamation**

Councillor Clerger presented Randolph resident Beatrice Desin with a proclamation to celebrate her birthday.

### **Motions, Orders, Resolutions**

Councillor Burgess made a motion to direct the Town Accountant/Finance Director Janine Smith to restrict the School's Finance Director from all financial software effective immediately.

Councillor Huff-Larmond: What does that mean? That is a huge ask to restrict the school Financial Director from her duties.

Councillor Burgess: she opened a bank account in her name with Town funds with no authorization to do so.

Councillor Clerger: I think it's fair if it's under investigation.

Councillor Gordon: I certainly cannot support this motion with so many things hidden from the public.

Kevin O'Connell: The School Committee held an executive session on this topic. Town Attorney Christine Griffin: Anything discussed in Executive Session cannot be discussed. Councillor O'Connell: What Burgess is trying to do has already been done by the School Committee.

Councillor Egan: I'm not clear on the issue currently and I don't have enough information. Im sure this individual reports to the superintendent. I urge for an executive session before anything is voted on.

The Town Attorney read the following: The Town Council may vote to go into executive session pursuant to M.G.L. ch. 30A, section 21(a)(3) relative to potential litigation strategy concerning anticipated litigation. 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.

The Chair so declared

Motion to go into executive session for purposes of anticipated litigation.

Roll Call Vote: 9-0-0

Motion passes.

The public portion of the Town Council meeting will reconvene after the executive session has concluded.

The Town Council reconvened.

Motion to direct the Town Accountant/Finance Director to restrict the School Finance Director's access to all financial software effective immediately and to reevaluate access at the end of the investigation, upon consideration of the recommendation of the Town finance director made by Councillor Burgess, seconded by Councillor Clerger.

Discussion of the Council:

Councillor Huff-Larmond: I will not be voting on this motion because I believe this matter is being taken care of by the School and we should allow them to do their work.

Councillor Gordon: I agree with the caveat that we should allow the school committee and I appreciate the amendment that was made on the motion but I will still be voting no.

Councillor Clerger: I will be voting yes because when it comes to money, we are the ones voting on the budget for the schools and we have to be held accountable for that. The Town Council makes the ultimate decision on their money.

Councillor Burgess: People pay \$6,000 in property taxes but can't send a kid to school. It is my duty that if something is inappropriate then I'm going side with the resident every day. I won't side with the school committee just because they say they're doing something.

Councillor O'Connell: I think we need the safety net in place and we are protecting the town.

Councillor Egan: I will vote no on this motion because it still includes a directive that I don't agree with and a directive that was already taken by the employee.

Roll call vote on the motion to direct the Town Accountant/Finance Director to restrict the School Finance Director's access to all financial software effective immediately and to reevaluate access at the end of the investigation, upon consideration of the recommendation of the Town finance director.

Roll Call Vote: 6-3-0 (Nays: Gordon, Egan, Huff-Larmond)

Motion passes.

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

1. If you have an uncashed check from the Town of Randolph, go to our website and click on the link for a list of names and the form to return to the Treasurer/Collector's Office. Eventually, those funds will go to the State.
2. Excise tax bills for 2025 have been issued and are due by April 2, 2025.
3. There is an event being planned by the Veterans Department for Saint Patrick's Day, and it has been expanded to include the Seniors in the Community. Please register by contacting the Randolph Intergenerational Community Center.
4. The animal Control Officer is doing workshops with a topic of the month. The next meeting will be about cats. The dates for the workshops are posted on the Town's website.

### **New Business**

#### **1. Council Order 2025-010 Prior Fiscal Years Unpaid Bills**

Town Manager Howard introduced Council Order 2025-010 and provided additional information regarding the purpose of this Council Order.

Motion to approve Council Order 2025-010 as presented made by Councillor Burgess, seconded by Councillor Clerger.

Roll Call Vote: 8-0-0

Motion passes.

Motions, Orders, and Resolutions:

1. Councillor Gordon: I'd like to make a motion to place on the agenda of the March 24, 2025 Town Council meeting the resolution known as the Welcoming Town Resolution which has been introduced and discussed in Subcommittee, seconded by Councillor Clerger.

Town Attorney Griffin: You cannot debate on the resolution itself but you can debate about whether or not to add it to the next agenda.

Roll call vote: 4-5-0 (Nays: C. Alexopoulos, Brewer, Burgess, Egan, O'Connell)  
Motion fails.

### **Correspondence:**

1. County Commissioner Richard Staiti provided an update regarding the application for the CDBG Fiscal Year 2025 application and stated their motion to approve the funding was voted 2-0, with the motion passing unanimously.
2. Randolph's State Delegation submitted a letter in support of the Pappas Rehabilitation Facility.

### **Subcommittee Reports:**

1. Public Safety: Councillor Burgess reported on this subcommittee. There will be a meeting this Thursday at 5:00 PM to discuss the resolution.
2. Councillor Gordon asked Councillor Thompson about scheduling an Environment subcommittee meeting. Councillor Thompson: We can set one up after this meeting.

### **Council Comments:**

1. Councillor O'Connell: Next Monday is the St. Patrick's Day Celebration. Come check it out.
2. Councillor Clerger: Haitian Flag Day will be a prayer breakfast on Friday, May 16. More information to come. I still have the free fresh food and produce distribution program going on. The food bank is in shortage.
3. Councillor Gordon: To clarify there will be a Public Safety subcommittee meeting this Thursday at 5:00 PM. 2. The Holbrook Planning Board is meeting on the TLA Trash Transfer Station. They've voted no on allowing an overnight permit. The permit for overnight does not affect the permit during day but without it, it makes it very difficult for day operations to function. This was important because it was voted 3 to support and 3 to deny.. Attorney Griffin: I appreciate your enthusiasm and we have all been working on this for a very long time but I would not go as far to say that we killed it. The Holbrook Planning Board has changed somewhat since the permits were granted and the Board has been less hospitable. Their Conservation Commission has refused to extend the order of conditions and TLA has appealed that to the Department of Environmental Protection. These are all positive developments from the Randolph perspective but there is still a lot to go.
4. Councillor Brewer: 1. I am disappointed with another Councillor for putting it on Facebook that the council is blocking a resolution. That really bothered me. 2. Great police work the other day. A suspect was caught within 45 min.
5. Councillor Huff-Larmond: 1. I didn't take that as an insult if someone's opinion of knowing what this town has been going through in terms of this resolution and social media is the thing these days and so i don't think it was an inappropriate platform. It was said earlier shame on councillors who put their head

- in the sand and not vote for a situation that in my opinion involves us. As for the School Finance Director: I voted no because I believe it is not our business, and as for voting our residents, I have an awesome record so that was a false statement in my opinion. I appreciate you will have this meeting with Public Safety on Thursday and hope we vote for the people. That's what this resolution is about. 3. Happy International Women's month. Thank you to the Randolph Woman's Club for a fabulous discussion and had the honor of facilitating the panel. 4. I have RSVP'd for St. Patrick's day event.
6. Thompson: I got to see golden gloves finals and Massachusetts had a huge showing for that. 3. The topic of immigration has been brought up a lot. They've taken steps to detain permanent legal residents. A student from Columbia University is being detained and his lawyer has not been able to get in contact with him. Things are getting more aggressive.

**Adjournment:**

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

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.