



Randolph Town Council

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Monday, May 22, 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 Vice-President Brewer called the meeting to order.

Roll Call – Council Members Present: Christos Alexopoulos (In-Person), Richard Brewer (By Zoom), Natacha Clerger (In-Person), Ryan Egan (By Zoom), Jesse Gordon (In-Person), Katrina Huff-Larmond (In-Person).

Pledge of Allegiance: Pledge of Allegiance led by Councillor C. Alexopoulos.

Moment of Silent Prayer: Moment of Silent Prayer held in remembrance of the late John Kespert. John Kespert passed away peacefully on May 5, 2023, and was active in Randolph and served on the Disability Commission for years. Councillor O'Connell's mother-in-law also recently passed away. Our deepest condolences also go to him and his family.

Approval of Minutes:

1. Meeting Minutes of Town Council Meeting May 8, 2023

Motion to approve the Minutes of Town Council Meeting on May 8, 2023, made by Councillor C. Alexopoulos, seconded by Councillor Clerger.

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0 (Absent: W. Alexopoulos, Burgess, O'Connell)

Motion passes.

Councillor O'Connell entered the meeting, via Zoom, at 6:08 PM.

Public Comments:

Council Vice President Brewer stated public comments will be limited to 45 minutes this afternoon, with three minutes allotted for each person to speak.

1. Alden Dearborn, West Roxbury, MA - Ms. Dearborn is a teacher at Randolph Public Schools. Concerns were raised regarding Randolph's public school building conditions. Requests were made for the Town to invest more in the school department so that Randolph's children can worry about their education instead of their health and safety when attending school.
2. Karen Cartwright - Ms. Cartwright has been a science teacher at Randolph Public Schools for over fifteen years. Concerns were raised regarding employee turnover which contributes to teacher burnout, and school building conditions including building temperatures, and building ventilation.
3. Jeffrey Fox, Providence RI - Mr. Fox has been a physics teacher at Randolph High School since 2014. Concerns were raised regarding salaries not keeping up with inflation, and having to develop unit plans

for a prefabricated curriculum that doesn't address the individual needs of the classroom. Requests were made for additional funding towards the Randolph Public School system.

4. Heather Hoi-Yi Ho - Ms. Ho commented on the Home Rule Petition regarding bilingual ballots in Haitian-Creole and English. Ms. Ho implores the Town Council to vote on this Council Order favorably. There is a need to ensure the protection of all individuals' right to vote.
5. Sarah Joncas, Randolph, MA - Concerns were raised regarding there not being enough money in the school department's budget. Requests were made for the Town of Randolph to designate Chapter 70 funding for the schools.
6. Keri Windsor, Randolph, MA - Ms. Windsor is the parent of a child who goes to the John F. Kennedy Elementary School in Randolph. Concerns were raised regarding class sizes and Randolph's ability to retain its educators. Ms. Windsor is also an educator and explained how the teaching profession has changed significantly over the years. Requests were made for the Town to offer competitive salaries to educators to help with employee retention.
7. Jennifer Walsh, Stoughton, MA - Ms. Walsh is an educator in Randolph Public Schools. Requests were made for additional funds to be allocated to the school department to help provide a safe learning environment for schools. Concerns were made regarding extensive injuries sustained by numerous teachers requiring worker's compensation due to the individual needs of children and there not being enough staff to provide the necessary support.
8. Kathleen Crogan-Camera, 52 West Street, Randolph, MA - Randolph's first-ever Progress Pride Flag Raising Ceremony will be held on June 2, 2023, at 7:00 PM at Randolph Town Hall. This is a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Coalition-sponsored event that Town Manager Howard is officiating, Pastor Timith from the First Congressional Church will be saying the invocation, and there will be additional speakers.
9. Jill Shapole, 7 West Englewood Ave, Randolph, MA - Ms. Shapole is a lifelong resident of Randolph, Randolph Education Association President, and a teacher at the Lyons Elementary School. Requests were made for the Town to allocate funds from the Stabilization Fund to the school department for staffing and student resources.
10. Lina Nguyen, 10th grade Student at Randolph High School - Nguyen speaks today on behalf of her history class who has been diligently working on a civic action project regarding the building conditions of Randolph High School.
11. Will Molina, 10th Grade Student at Randolph High School - Concerns were raised regarding the limited bathroom availability due to maintenance issues.
12. Linda, 10th grade student at Randolph High School - Concerns were raised regarding the condition of High School bathrooms, mold in the building. A survey was distributed to students and results indicated that many also found this to be an issue.
13. Ava, 11th Grade Student at Randolph High School - Concerned were raised regarding how a reduced budget affects staffing needs within the high school, therefore offering less classes.
14. Argenis Mendez, 53 Country Club Drive - I am here with several neighbors regarding our request for road repavement of this road.
15. Dawn Martins, Norwood - Ms. Martin is a school counselor in Randolph Public Schools. Concerns were expressed regarding the capacity of classrooms.
16. Hope Rigo, Easton, MA, Ms. Rigo is an educator within Randolph Public Schools for over seventeen years. Concerns were expressed regarding class sizes, staffing needs, and required resources to help all students.
17. Shawna, Middleborough, MA - Shawna is the Vice President of the Randolph Education Association and a Randolph Educator - Concerns were expressed regarding the importance of smaller class sizes.
18. Joe Burke, 54 Hills Street - The Board of Health and Police Department should be notified of these issues when it concerns the health and safety of students and conditions of the buildings.
19. Carma Okemore, Stoughton, MA - Ms. Okemore teaches science at the Randolph Community Middle School - Concerns were raised regarding the shortage of staff, and students not having the needed support.

20. Christine Sherman, Randolph, MA - Ms. Sherman is the parent of a child at Lyons Elementary School and an educator within Randolph Public School. Concerns were raised regarding the potential reduction in staff which would mean less support for students.

Public Hearings:

1. 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 Vice President Brewer opened the public hearing. This council order was introduced at the May 8, 2023 Council meeting. The Town Clerk read the legal advertisement which was published in the Patriot Ledger on May 12, 2023.

Councillor Gordon displayed a presentation regarding Randolph's eligibility to qualify for gateway city status and provided additional information on this Council Order. The Census Bureau undercounted the number of people in Randolph and this happens a lot in communities like ours. In our case, we were counted to have 34,984 people living in the Town of Randolph and we need sixteen more people to be able to reach gateway city status. We asked state agencies what we could do to rectify this and one of the ideas was for us to report on disability group homes which are traditionally undercounted. The real challenge is that there is no way, on the State and Federal level, that would correct this error so we're asking the legislature to bypass State and Federal laws so that they can declare it so we have the correct, updated census numbers. This is a Home Rule Petition which would go to the State Legislature after the vote tonight.

Council Vice President Brewer opened the meeting for public comments.

1. Joe Burke, 54 Hills Street: I believe apartment buildings are supposed to provide the Town with certain data about who resides in the building and if they're not doing that we should look into that. I think fine's can be issued for people who refuse to fill out the census. The Town should look into that.
2. Jennifer Bartecchi, Randolph Educator - I have visited many families who trusted me to visit them.
3. Kathleen Crogan-Camara, 52 West Street - I wish to speak in favor of this! Let's get it done.

Council Vice President Brewer opened the floor for Councillor Comments.

Councillor Huff-Larmond: I would love to be a gateway city as long as it is not under any false statements that we meet certain criteria. You are saying we meet them but I need to see the data. I have done extensive research regarding the Town's median income and it has not been below average. The Randolph Health and Wellness Committee, and many other Randolph Boards and Organizations have also been doing alot of research regarding this topic. We should connect with them to see how we can work together to best achieve this. I'm not willing to say Randolph is an underachieving Town to reach gateway status.

Councillor C. Alexopoulos: I want to echo Councillor Huff-Larmond's sentiments. You don't want something if it's attached to labels and stigma, you want it because it is fair.

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. I thought that Representative Driscoll's suggestion was for us to find the sixteen people, and not to do a Home Rule Petition.

Councillor Gordon: He suggested for us to do 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 requirement regarding "bachelor degrees or above," and want to know how 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."

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, and different organizations. 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.

Motion to send Council Order 2023-024 to the Economic Development Subcommittee made by Councillor O'Connell, seconded by Councillor Egan.
Roll Call Vote: 7-0-0 (Absent: W. Alexopoulos, Burgess)
Motion Passes.

Town Managers Report:

1. Wear Orange Weekend is taking place June 2nd through June 4th to demonstrate gun violence awareness.
2. We are approaching the second week of the Spring Hydrant Flushing Program. Keep an eye out for the listed streets names and hours that will be affected and wait until after the flushing to turn the water back on. If you have any questions, please call Town Hall.
3. The Annual Senior Olympics was great. Thank you to Director of Elder Affairs, Keri Sullivan for all the work she does for Randolph's seniors. We appreciate the invitation to attend this wonderful event.
4. Haitian Flag Day celebrations went great! Thank you Councillor Clerger for putting it all together. It's always nice to see our community coming together and celebrating the diversity of our Town.
5. Thank you to the Gardening Club for their recent flower display here at Town Hall. They do a fantastic job every year, and do a lot to keep Randolph looking beautiful with DPW.
6. Please stop by Powers Farm on Sunday's for the Main Street and Artisan Market. I believe they are there once a month, so you can check out the Randolph Intergenerational Website to find out more.

New Business:

1. **Council Order 2023-025: Authorization By The Randolph Town Council To Petition The General Court To Enact Special Legislation Regarding The Preparation of Certain Bilingual Ballots In The City Known As The Town Of Randolph**

This Council Order was introduced on May 8, 2023. The legal notice was published on May 12, 2023 in the Patriot Ledger. The Town Council Clerk read Council Order 2023-025.

Councillor Huff-Larmond: We have one of the largest populations of individuals speaking haitian creole and it is only right we have ballots made in haitian creole. If the council votes in the affirmative for this, it will go to the State House as a Home Rule Petition. It's a long process and it will not happen this year but it is important we put this out there now. We need to give our people the resources they need to be able to vote.

Councillor Gordon: We've been contacting other Towns to do the same process we are doing especially if they have a large population speaking Hatian-Creole. There are federal laws in place that protect

certain languages. We are not trying to change federal law, but trying to petition the state to allow us to make this change so that it benefits the residents of Randolph.

Councillor C. Alexopoulos: Would this make it a trilingual ballot or would there be three separate ballots? Councillor Huff-Larmond: It could go either way. I think that is something the Town Clerk and ourselves can decide on.

Council Vice President Brewer: The public hearing for Council Order 2023-025 will be continued to June 5, 2023 for a vote of the Town Council.

2. Council Order 2023-026: Authorization and Approval for Memorandum of Agreement (“MOA”) For New Successor Collective Bargaining Agreement By and Between The Town of Randolph, Massachusetts and New England Police Benevolent Association, Inc., Local 34 (“Superior Officers’ Union”)

Council Vice President Brewer introduced Council Order 2023-026 to the Council.

Town Manager Howard provided an explanation regarding the purpose of this Council Order: 1. This contract allows this union to remove themselves from civil service. With Civil Service, it can sometimes take years for us to get a new employee. 2. It also gives flexibility to the Police Chief to organize staff as needed and operate minimum manning, and manage his budget. 3. There is also the ability to work paid details at Gillette Stadium with the Chief’s approval. 4. The clothing allowance goes up \$100 each year. 5. This contract also addresses the leave policy for the death of a mother in-law and father in-law issue. 6. The hazardous duty bonus is similar to what’s in patrol. It also includes a 2.5% cost of living adjustment each year. 7. The contract also needed to be updated as it pertains to FMLA leave, maternity leave, and more so that was taken care of in this contract. 8, As you exit civil service, you have to have language in place that deals with circumstances regarding seniority, promotions, and layoffs so that is included in this contract. I recommend the approval of this agreement strongly to the Town Council.

Councillor Huff-Larmond: I am thrilled and happy we are going in this direction. I am hoping we can achieve this in leadership roles as well so all individuals have an equal opportunity to be successful. We hope that at some point we can expand the opportunities for all to be taken in the system. Thank you for the work.

Councillor Gordon: I speak in support of the process and the result. I congratulate the Police Chief Marag and the Town Manager in achieving this. Let’s do it for the fire department as well.

Councillor O’Connell: This is coming full circle- lets get it done.

Councillor Egan: Great job with negotiations. This is great.

Motion to approve Council Order 2023-026 as presented, made by Councillor C. Alexopoulos , seconded by Councillor Egan.

Roll Call Vote: 7-0-0 (Absent: W. Alexopoulos & Burgess)

Motion passes.

3. Council Order 2023-027: Transfer from Reserve Fund

Town Manager Howard introduced this Council Order and provided an additional explanation on the purpose of the Transfer from the Reserve Fund.

Motion to approve Council Order 2023-027 as presented, made by Councillor C. Alexopoulos, seconded by Councillor Egan.

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0 (Absent: W. Alexopoulos & Burgess, Absent During Vote: C. Alexopoulos)
Motion passes.

Correspondence:

1. Randolph Elder Services is hosting a Blood Drive on Thursday, May 25, 2023 from 9:00 am to 2:00 PM at the Randolph Intergenerational Community Center. Please schedule online at redcrossblood.org or call 1-800-733-2767. Registration is required.
2. The Town of Randolph is preparing a Digital Equity Plan and is hosting a public meeting to present an overview of the Digital Equity planning process and the public is invited to provide feedback. The public meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 25, 2023 from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM at the Turner Free Library.
3. The Town of Randolph is hosting its annual Randolph Day celebration on Saturday, June 10, 2023 from 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM at the Randolph High School parking lot. It is a free event, and no registration is required. There is going to be a foam party from 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM, and face painting from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM.

Open Council Comments:

1. Councillor Clerger: 1. The recent Police and Fire Department versus the Haitian Community was wonderful. Thank you to everyone who came out for the Haitian Flag Raising: the Town Manager, Councillors Gordon and Huff-Larmond, Town Hall staff. 2. We hear the needs of the school department and it is very upsetting. We need to address their concerns. 3. Those responsible for maintaining the soccer field at Belcher park have reached out to advise they are struggling financially to keep up with the maintenance of the field. I let him know the Town will do what they can to help.
2. Councillor Huff-Larmond: 1. I attended the Gardening Club Flower show and it was great with lovely selections. 2. Thank you to Councillor Clerger for putting together a great Haitian Flag Day 3. Juneteenth, Pride Month, and Caribbean Heritage Month are all coming up in June so please keep an out for additional details for the various events in place to celebrate. 4. I was able to connect with the first class of Randolph Youth Council members who have now graduated from college and we have been able to celebrate their great accomplishments. One of the reasons why the Randolph Youth Council was started was in hopes that we are able to connect with the Youth and they will give back to the community in their adulthood.
3. Councillor C. Alexopoulos: Randolph is also celebrating Memorial Day this upcoming Monday morning. There will be an event starting at the Elk's and then at the Turner Free Library.
4. Councillor Gordon: 1. Randolph Community Partnership Gala is occurring on June 1, 2023. Contact the members of that organization to purchase your tickets 2. The Pride Flag Raising is coming up! Details will follow. 3. The Randolph High School will be coming up on June 3, 2023. 4. The State's Department of Conservation is having a third hearing regarding changes at Ponkapoag Pond. It is a virtual hearing at 6:00 PM, Thursday, June 8, 2023. 5. June 10th is Randolph Day also Boston's Pride Parade Day in Boston which I look forward to attending.
5. Councillor O'Connell: 1. I'm looking forward to attending the Randolph High School Graduation in June 2. Residents made comments through See, Click, Fix regarding the intersection at Cole Terrace and Highland Avenue. This has been on my radar for a long time and it is on Randolph list of streets to fix through the Complete Streets Program. Please be patient with us. 3. I had an awesome time at the Senior Olympics. I had the pleasure of presenting to Medals, along with many of our State Representatives. I appreciate everything our community center does for our seniors. Thank you Keri Sullivan and Liz LaRossee.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn made by Councillor Clerger, seconded by Councillor C. Alexopoulos.
Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0 (Absent: W. Alexopoulos and Burgess; Absent during vote: Egan)
Meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.