

At a meeting of the Town Council holden in and for the Town of Gloucester on October 6, 2022

I. Call to Order

The meeting was Called to Order at 7:30 P.M.

II. Roll Call

Members present: William E. Reichert , President; Walter M. O. Steere, III, Vice President; William A. Worthy, Jr.; Stephen W. Arnold ; David Laplante

Also Present: Jean Fecteau, Town Clerk; David Igliazzi, Town Solicitor; Christine Mathieu, Deputy Town Clerk; Adam Muccino, Finance Director; K. Johnson, Building/Zoning Official; K. Scott, Town Planner ; M. Bouvier, Senior Center Director; G. Treml, Director Public Works; G. Mosca, EMA Director; and Chief Delprete

III. Pledge of Allegiance

Councilor Reichert asked Boy Scout Troop 44 to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance

IV. Open Forum - For Agenda Items

Councilor Reichert asked if anyone wished to speak on an agenda item to please step to the podium and state your name for the record.

None

V. Consent Items - Discussion and/or Action

A. Approval of Town Council Minutes: Regular Meeting of September 15, 2022; Special Meeting of September 21 , 2022; Special Meeting of October 4, 2022: Discussion and/or Action

B. Pole Grant- Putnam Pike - Install new pole 131-84 to support pole line from P131- Discussion and/or Action

MOTION was made by Councilor Worthy to APPROVE the Town Council minutes of September 15th and September 21st; and to TABLE the minutes of October 4th, 2022; and to APPROVE a Pole Grant for Putnam Pike, new pole 131-84 to support pole line from P131; seconded by Councilor Steere

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Laplante, Arnold, Worthy, Steere and Reichert
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

VI. Unfinished Business

A. Boards and Commissions

1. Appointments- Discussion and/or Action

a. Economic Development Commission

1. Position #4 - Two year term to expire 12/31/2022

Councilor Reichert stated that the Chair has recommended Elyza Bertuzzi and that a talent Bank application is on file.

MOTION was made by Councilor Worthy to APPOINT Elyza Bertuzzi to the Economic Development Commission, Position #4, for a term to expire 12/31/2022; seconded by Councilor Arnold.

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Laplante, Arnold, Worthy, Steere and Reichert

NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

b. Board of Canvassers - Position #3, One unexpired 6 year term to expire 3/1/26

Councilor Reichert stated that there is no recommendation at this time. Councilor Reichert stated that the Chair is asking Council to Table this item until after the election cycle.

MOTION was made by Councilor Steere to TABLE the appointment to the Board of Canvassers until the first meeting of January 2023; seconded by Councilor Laplante

Discussion: Councilor Arnold stated that there is a recommendation he would like to make.

Councilor Steere WITHDREW his MOTION

MOTION was made by Councilor Arnold to appoint Stephanie Kain to the Board of Canvassers immediately for a term to expire 3/01/2026; seconded by Councilor Worthy

Discussion: J. Fecteau, Town Clerk and Clerk for the Board of Canvassers, stated she spoke with Ms. Kain's husband and Councilor Laplante earlier this evening about the candidate. J. Fecteau stated that the Chair has not met with the candidate yet and

that the normal practice is for the Chair to make a recommendation to the Council. J. Fecteau also stated that the candidate is an employee of the Town and state law does not allow for employees to be members of the Board of Canvassers. J. Fecteau stated that the item was requested to be tabled until January 2023 to allow the time to get a determination and she really needs the proposed candidate to work the election.

Councilor Arnold WITHDREW his MOTION

MOTION was made by Councilor Steere to TABLE the appointment to the Board of Canvassers until the first meeting of January 2023; seconded by Councilor Laplante

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Laplante, Arnold, Worthy, Steere and Reichert
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

- c. Tax Assessor Board of Review - Position #1, One unexpired 6 year term to expire 12/31/26

Councilor Reichert stated that we are reaching out to the Chair of this Board. Councilor Reichert stated that the Clerk's office has also reached out to the Tax Assessor and the Finance Director. Councilor Reichert stated that there is no recommendation at this time.

MOTION was made by Councilor Worthy to TABLE the appointment to the Tax Assessor Board of Review, Position #1; seconded by Councilor Steere

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Laplante, Arnold, Worthy, Steere and Reichert
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

B. Authorization of signature

1. RI Infrastructure Bank Municipal Infrastructure Program for \$85,000- Discussion and/or Action

Councilor Reichert stated that Council received a request from the Town Planner last meeting for approval of three documents. Councilor Reichert stated that this document, a program agreement between the Town and the RI Infrastructure Bank Municipal Infrastructure Program, was not ready for signing. Councilor Reichert stated that the Council has received the request from K. Scott, Town Planner, which

he read as follows:

To: Town Council Members
From: Karen Scott, Town Planner
Date: September 9, 2022
Re: Rhode Island Commerce – Site Readiness Program
Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank – Municipal Infrastructure Program
Rhode Island Commerce – Placemaking Grant Award

I am requesting authorization for the Town Council President to sign the following grant agreements:

1. RI Commerce Site Readiness Grant for \$40,000 to partially fund a Public Water Feasibility Study for Chepachet Village.
2. RI Infrastructure Bank Municipal Infrastructure Program for \$85,000 to fund the balance of the Public Water Feasibility Study for Chepachet Village.
3. RI Commerce Placemaking Grant Award for \$150,000 to construct a large covered pavilion and parking area at Gloucester Memorial Park.

Thank you for your consideration.
(End of memo)

MOTION was made by Councilor Worthy to AUTHORIZE the Town Council President to sign the RI Infrastructure Bank Municipal Program Contract in the amount of \$85,000 to fund the remainder of the Public Water Feasibility Study for Chepachet Village; seconded by Councilor Arnold

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Laplante, Arnold, Worthy, Steere and Reichert
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

VII. New Business

A. Adoption of 2022/2023 Budget - Discussion and/or Action

1. Final amendments to proposed budget prior to adoption, if needed

Councilor Reichert stated that Council has received a memo from the Finance Director which he read as follows:

To: Honorable Gloucester Town Council, William Reichert, President
From: Adam Muccino, Finance Director

Re: Final Amendments to the proposed budget

Date: 10/06/2022

Given the discussion and comments at the Public Hearing on the budget this past Tuesday, 10/04/2022, I have made the following revisions to the proposed fiscal 2023 budget.

- **Pay increases for Staff not covered by a collective bargaining agreement** – Confirmed that these increases are at 3%, not the originally proposed 4%.

- **No use of the unrestricted fund balance to fund operational expenses in FY2023**
- **Adjustments** – Page 4 – added \$181,108 for the transfer from the Gloucester public Schools “set-aside” account (page 124 of the FY21 audit). This amount directly reduces the amount to be raised by taxes.

- **Treasurer’s Office** – Page 13 - increased the Payroll Services and Audit line items. These lines were previously reduced to the fiscal 2022 adopted amounts in light of the failed referendum. The FY22 amounts were not sufficient to fund the expense for these line items in FY23.

- **Personnel Office** – Page 13 – reallocated the \$30k expense in wages to the Consultant Service line.
- **Public Safety** - Page 16 – (confirmed by Chief DelPrete)
 - Restored the funding for the additional police officer in fiscal 2023 for 6 months of the fiscal year, \$52k.
 - Increased the special patrol back to the FY23 requested amount, \$3.5k.
 - Increased the amount for Vacation / Illness coverage, \$9.3k.
 - Adjusted the Administrative Investigator / Staff & Dispatchers lines given current staffing levels / pay rates and plans for the rest of the fiscal year, \$7.4k & \$15k respectively.
 - Restored the funding to the Training line to the FY23 originally requested amount, \$5k.

- **Animal Control** – Page 19 – Adjusted the wages for the Animal Control Officer and the Assistant Animal Control Officer based upon changes approved by Council in Spring 2022.
 - The new ACO came in at a salary less than what the previous ACO was earning, the \$49,440 in the FY23 column in the revised budget represents that lower amount plus a 3% increase in pay.

○ The Assistant ACO received a 19% increase in pay in May 2022. The amount indicated in the fiscal 2023 budget considers that increase but does not factor in an additional 3% increase in pay (given the 19% increase less than a year ago)

• **Department of Public Works – Highway Division** – Page 21 – Increased the Wages line by \$58k honoring the request for another Driver / Laborer in fiscal 2023. This incremental amount accounts for 8 months in fiscal year 2023.

• **Recreation** – Page 27 – Increased the wages for Swim/Tennis/Arts & Crafts by \$10k over FY22. The original request was for \$13k over FY22, however, I reviewed the FY22 and FY23 expenses and compared that to the scheduled minimum wage increases and was only able to come up with a \$9,200 difference from what was budgeted and what was need in FY23; I rounded that figure up to \$10k to ensure there was some latitude in the budget.

• **IT Office**–Page 30 –

○ Increased the Computer Systems Support / Repairs to the FY23 requested amount, \$5.2k.

○ Increased the Computer System Licenses by \$3k to the FY23 requested amount.

○ Confirmed with Director Floor that the \$192,610 amount shown under Technology in the FY21 audit, page 124, has been earmarked for a transition to a hosted server in the coming fiscal year.

• **Capital**–Final Page –reduced the paving line item by \$10k in order to balance the Total Department Requests with the proposed capital funding in FY2023. Given that the 2% capital set aside has decreased on account of the Total expenses decreasing from the failed referendum and that we do not want to tinker with the previously voter approved amount of \$807,276, in order to balance the Capital plan in fiscal 2023, 10k was removed from the paving line item. This change was confirmed by Director Treml.

Respectfully

Adam R. Muccino

Discussion:

Councilor Reichert stated that this would be the time for any Council members to request changes or ask questions. Councilor Laplante asked the effect these changes have on the proposed tax rate. A. Muccino, Finance Director, stated that the proposed tax rate would stay the same. A. Muccino stated the reason being that \$181,000 was

shown as an expense but not as a reduction for adjustments when calculating the amount to be raised by taxes as it should have been in the budget presented for public hearing on October 4, 2022. A. Muccino stated that this correction offset the additions so that the tax rate stayed the same. A. Muccino stated the changes were based on comments from the public hearing. Councilor Arnold was concerned about the cut in services so he is glad that some minimum services were restored. A. Muccino stated his thanks to the resident who pointed out the error. Councilor Reichert asked what the amount the budget would go up. A. Muccino stated that the tax rate would increase by 1.4% over FY 2022 or \$0.26 per 1000.

MOTION was made by Councilor Worthy to ADOPT the amendments to the proposed FY 2022/23 budget as stated in the Finance Director's recommendation of October 6th, 2022; seconded by Councilor Arnold

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Laplante, Arnold, Worthy, Steere and Reichert
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

2. Adoption of Budget to present to voters

MOTION was made by Councilor Worthy to ADOPT the 2022/2023 budget, as amended by Town Council as of October 6, 2022, for presentation to the Financial Town Referendum to be held on October 25, 2022; seconded by Councilor Steere

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Laplante, Arnold, Worthy, Steere and Reichert
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

3. Adoption of 2022 Financial Town Referendum Ballot Questions

Councilor Reichert stated that the Council needs to adopt the final language for the ballot.

Discussion: Councilor Steere asked if the entire question should be read into the record. D. Igliazzi, Town Solicitor, stated the entire question does need to be read into the record and asked the Finance Director to confirm the numbers. A. Muccino confirmed.

MOTION was made by Councilor Worthy to ADOPT the language for Question #1 which he read as follows:

Shall the Town Budget for fiscal year 2022/23 appropriate a sum of \$ 32,307,684 which includes Municipal Services & Capital Expenses; Gloucester School Dept. Operating & Capital Expenses; Gloucester' s share of the Foster/Glocester Regional Operating & Capital Expenses; and includes a Levy of Property Tax (not including Motor Vehicle taxes) of not less than \$ 24,102,377 or more than \$ 24,695,177 ?

; seconded by Councilor Arnold

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Laplante, Arnold, Worthy, Steere and Reichert
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

4. Approval of Budget narrative for advertisement, if needed
Councilor Reichert stated that Council needs to decide if they want the Finance Director to do public outreach to explain the proposed budget prior to the referendum on October 25th.

Discussion: Councilor Laplante stated he would like to have the Town Clerk and the Finance Director work on an ad with an explanation and publicize the ad on the website, in a CodeRed and as many ways as they can to get the message out especially as to the proposed tax rate increase of 1.4%. Councilor Steere stated he trusts their judgment as to the message. Councilor Arnold suggests a simple explanation with an example as to the dollar amount of increase. Councilor Laplante agreed that examples should be included in the ad. Attorney Igliazzi recommended that a motion be made by the Council authorizing the Finance Director and the Town Clerk to develop language for the ad.

MOTION was made by Councilor Laplante to have the Finance Director, Adam Muccino, and the Town Clerk , Jean Fecteau, develop the wording and delivery for the CodeRed and advertisement for the upcoming Financial Town Referendum; seconded by Councilor Worthy

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Laplante, Arnold, Worthy, Steere and Reichert
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

B. American Rescue Plan Act Funds - Authorization

1. INTERNAL PROGRAMS

a. Town Building Security Devices- Discussion and/or Action

Councilor Reichert stated that the IT Director reached out to Council regarding a new system for town building security. Councilor Reichert stated that Council has agreed to the need and the application. Councilor Reichert stated that a motion is needed to reserve ARPA Funds to purchase the equipment needed. Councilor Reichert stated that the equipment is being purchased through a State Master Price Agreement contract. The cost is approx. \$55,623.37.

MOTION was made by Councilor Arnold to RESERVE \$55,700 from ARPA Funds for INTERNAL PROJECT - Town Building Security; seconded by Councilor Worthy

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Laplante, Arnold, Worthy, Steere and Reichert
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

C. Authorization for Signature

1. Reimbursement request for funds expended from the RIDEM Recreation Development Grant - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor Reichert stated that Council has received a request from the Town Planner which he read as follows:

To: Town Council Members
From: Karen Scott, Town Planner
Date: October 3, 2022
Re: RIDEM Recreation Development Grant, Reimbursement Request #2

I have completed the necessary paperwork to request Reimbursement #2 in the amount of \$194,979.79 for the Town of Gloucester's Recreation Development Grant. To date the Town has constructed the majority of the playground, the basketball court and the walkway to the Village. I anticipate one additional reimbursement request for the balance of funds equal to the full \$400,0000 grant.

Signature from the Town Council President is required on this request.

(End of memo)

Discussion: None

MOTION was made by Councilor Worthy to AUTHORIZE the Town Council President to sign the RIDEM Recreation Development Grant, Reimbursement Request #2 in the amount of \$194,979.79; said grant is for improvements to Gloucester Memorial Park; seconded by Councilor Steere

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Laplante, Arnold, Worthy, Steere and Reichert
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

Discussion: Councilor Worthy thanked K. Scott, Town Planner, for her efforts and stated it looks great. Councilor Steere asked when the park would be open. K. Scott stated that the park passed inspection today and the playground would be open on this coming Saturday. K. Scott offered thanks to G. Treml, Director of Public Works and the entire department for their efforts and stated how fantastic they have been throughout the process. K. Scott stated that the sign should be in about October 17, 2022.

2. Grant Agreement - Between RIDEM and the Town of Gloucester FHWA, Recreational Trails Grant Program Funds
For: Hawkins Pond & Steere Hill Farm Pavilions - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor Reichert stated that Council has received a request from the Land Trust which he read as follows:

To: Town Council President & Town Council members
Date: October 5, 2022
Re: Signature for RI DEM Recreational Trails Grant Contract
From: Gloucester Land Trust

Request for Motion: The Gloucester Land Trust requests that this Council move to allow and grant the President of the Council the authority to sign the Recreation Trail Grant Contract by and between the Town of Gloucester and RI DEM for the benefit of the Gloucester Land Trust and requests the authority for the President to sign any update or amendment to this contract.

Background: For close to two years, the Gloucester Land Trust (GLT) has worked with the RI DEM seeking approval of a grant related to the Federal Highway

Recreational Trail Grants Program. The funding is given to RI DEM who approves the grants.

In or around July 2021, the GLT was approved for a grant up to \$57,000.00 with a 20% matching funds from the GLT. Although the grant was approved in July 2021, staffing shortages at RI DEM caused a delay into August 2022. This delay has also caused increased costs in the quotes the GLT obtained for the specific items covered by the grant. The grant will allow the GLT to purchase two pavilions, a picnic table and a bench.

Town's Involvement: RI DEM requires the Town to sign the contract unless the GLT is registered as a separate vendor under the RI Dpt. of Administration. The GLT is not presently registered as such. Therefore, the Council President's signature is required for the contract as the GLT is not able to sign on behalf of the Town.

The Town's role with respect to this contract is to receive the funds and act as the conduit to the GLT obtaining the funds. The GLT plans to separately account for these funds for purposes of the contract, invoicing and matching purposes.

(End of memo)

Discussion: Attorney Igliazzi explained that he worked with the Town Clerk and the attorney for the Land Trust as to the President signing additional documents. Attorney Igliazzi stated that the Land Trust attorney originally wanted the President be authorized to sign any kind of amendment which he did not recommend. Attorney Igliazzi stated that there may be a discrepancy as to the start date so after a conversation with the Land Trust attorney, Attorney Igliazzi is agreeable for the Council President to sign any additional documents that are specific to only the start date.

MOTION was made by Councilor Worthy to AUTHORIZE the Town Council President to sign the Recreation Trail Grant Contract by and between the Town of Gloucester and RI DEM titled "FHWA, Recreational Trails Grant Program Funds For the Period of: August 1, 2022 to August 1, 2024 for the Purpose of Hawkins Pond & Steere Hill Farm Pavilions for the benefit of the Gloucester Land Trust" and this will also include any amendments of a formal start date for the Town Council president to sign if necessary; seconded by Councilor Steere

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Laplante, Arnold, Worthy, Steere and Reichert
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

D. Personnel

1. Public Safety - Police Department

a. Transfer - Sergeant to Senior Patrol Officer - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor Reichert stated that Council has received a memo from the Chief requesting the transfer of Sergeant Donald J. Sousa to Senior Patrol Officer effective September 30, 2022.

Discussion: None

MOTION was made by Councilor Worthy to Transfer Sergeant Donald J. Sousa from the position of Sergeant to the position of Senior Patrol Officer, effective September 30, 2022; seconded by Councilor Laplante

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Laplante, Arnold, Worthy, Steere and Reichert
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

Councilor Reichert stated that the revisions to the hiring handbook, adopted last month, outlines the process to be followed when the Chief wants to start the process of searching for a replacement employee for the Sergeant position. Councilor Reichert stated that when that is complete, Council can appoint with the Chief and HR Director's recommendation.

Jean Fecteau explained that she added this statement because before the revisions adopted by Council last month, the Council would need to authorize the department head to begin the search process. J. Fecteau stated that due to the revisions this authorization is not necessary.

No action needed at this time.

E. Authorization to Seek Bids - #2 Heating/Fuel Oil - Discussion and/or Action

Discussion: A. Muccino explained why there is a need to seek bids due to the ending of the prior contract. A. Muccino hopes to post the request for bids by Monday.

MOTION was made by Councilor Arnold to AUTHORIZE the Finance Director to begin the process to seek bids for #2 Heating/Fuel Oil; seconded by Councilor Worthy

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Laplante, Arnold, Worthy, Steere and Reichert
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

VIII. Town Council Correspondence/ Discussion

Councilor Reichert stated that Council has the following correspondence:

1. Letter from resident praising actions taken by ACO Jennifer Grundy
2. Correspondence from DEM regarding an amendment to Public Law Chapters 360 and 361 titled *An Act Relating to Waters and Navigation -Inspection of Dams and Reservoirs*

Rhode Island General Laws Section 46-19-9 required every city and town to have an emergency action plan ("EAP") submitted to the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency ("EMA") by July 1, 2008 and approved by EMA for each high hazard dam and significant hazard dam that lies within the city or town. The law also requires the submission of annual updates to the EAPs to EMA.

On June 29, 2022, the Governor signed an amendment to the law. The amendment authorizes the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management ("DEM") to assess an administrative penalty up to \$1,000 per day for each day of noncompliance with the law. The correspondence includes a list of high hazard and significant hazard dams in town that may not have a plan.

3. Correspondence from Ryan Mulcahey, Director of Legislative Affairs from Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management regarding additional work to be done to remove 44 docks along the waterline of the Echo Lake/Pascoag Reservoir.

IX. Department Head Reports/Discussion

J. Fecteau offered congratulations to C. Mathieu, Deputy Town Clerk, for earning her certification as a Certified Municipal Clerk status .

Councilor Laplante asked if any letters had been received from the mobile home park. J. Fecteau stated that a letter had been received the prior month and placed in Council's packet. J. Fecteau stated that Council did not take any action at that time. Councilor Laplante requested this matter be placed on the next agenda.

X. Bds. and Commissions Reports/ Discussion

None

Councilor Reichert asked if Troop 44 had any questions which they did not.

XI. Open Forum

Councilor Reichert asked if anyone wishing to speak, would step to the microphone when called and state your name for the record.

K. Lamontagne , Parade Chair, made a suggestion for Troop 44 to volunteer at the parade if they so wished.

XII. Adjourn

MOTION was made by Councilor Reichert to ADJOURN at 8:10 p.m.; seconded by Councilor Worthy

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Laplante, Arnold, Worthy, Steere and Reichert
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED