

State of Rhode Island

County of Washington

In Hopkinton on the seventh day of February 2022 A.D. said meeting was called to order by Town Council President Stephen Moffitt, Jr. at 6:00 P.M. in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 1 Town House Road, Hopkinton, RI 02833.

PRESENT: Stephen Moffitt, Jr., Sharon Davis, Scott Bill Hirst, Michael Geary; Deputy Town Clerk Marita Murray attended remotely. Robert Marvel, Town Solicitor Stephen Sypole, Town Manager Brian Rosso arrived during the workshop.

EXECUTIVE SESSION UNDER RIGL SEC. 42-46-5(A)(1) INTERVIEWS: BOARDS & COMMISSIONS: COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR DAVIS AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR GEARY TO RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Geary

OPPOSED: Hirst

SO VOTED

Council President Moffitt reported that no votes were taken in Executive Session.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR DAVIS AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR GEARY TO SEAL THE MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE SESSION.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Geary

OPPOSED: Hirst

ABSTAIN: Marvel

SO VOTED

WORKSHOP

The Town Council conducted a workshop to review and discuss draft Town Council Bylaws which began at 6:15 PM. Councilor Marvel, Town Solicitor Stephen Sypole and Town Manager Brian Rosso were in attendance and participated remotely.

Solicitor Sypole indicated that pursuant to the request of the Council, he had reviewed Section 114(C) on page 8, entitled, *Other Administrative Issues*, and his

suggestion was that they should rename this section to *Requests for Agenda Items* and delete the last sentence of that paragraph which was on page 9. This was agreed to by all Councilors. Councilor Hirst noted on page 10 that public forum was to be allowed at the beginning of the meeting; he wished to assure that they would have a public forum at the beginning and end of the meeting for agenda and non-agenda items. It was agreed that this sentence would read: *Public Comment shall be placed at the beginning and end of the Town Council Meeting with the following stipulations:*” Solicitor Sypole noted that public comment is not required and the Council can determine what they would like to have. On Page 11, Councilor Davis wished to have clarification from Solicitor Sypole regarding section (E) Motions to Reconsider, and section (F) Renewal of Motions at Subsequent Meeting. Councilor Hirst did not like the word “indecorous” in Section (B) and it was agreed that this would be changed to “disrespectful.” On page 12, Section 117(A), *three minutes* should be changed to *five minutes, unless extended by Town Council*. Page 13, Section 120(A), Sergeant-at-Arms was discussed. Councilor Davis asked if this meant that a police officer should attend every meeting. Solicitor Sypole explained that the draft Bylaws were originally prepared for a town that had no police department. Councilor Geary noted that there was an elected Town Sergeant, Larry Phelps. Councilor Davis asked if he would be expected to come to every meeting, and if not, how would they decide when he needed to attend. Solicitor Sypole felt that if the Council felt there should be police presence, they could request it as needed. Town Manager Rosso noted that in the past Chief Palmer has offered to attend Council meetings as requested; however, comp time became an issue. Therefore, Mr. Rosso explained that he selects what meetings Chief Palmer or another officer should attend. If they are anticipating a large attendance at a meeting or if there is a controversial matter on the agenda, he will request police presence. Councilor Hirst asked that the Solicitor define what legal power the Town Sergeant has under Rhode Island law. Mr. Rosso indicated that he would rather have a police officer present if there may be an issue at a meeting. Councilor Geary felt that it would be appropriate for all elected officials to be sworn in along with the new Town Council so everyone will know who their elected officials are. Councilor Davis

wondered what duties the Town Sergeant had and Mr. Rosso noted that the Town Sergeant received a stipend. Councilor Marvel believed they should specify that the police department should provide enforcement of decorum at meetings. Councilor Davis indicated that she had no problem with that but wished to know what they are paying the Town Sergeant to do. Regarding Section 121(A), Councilor Davis wondered what the definition of *capacity* was. Solicitor Sypole believed this would be for someone acting as a power-of-attorney or an attorney on behalf of someone. It was decided that the word *capacity* would be removed. On page 14, Order of Agenda, Councilor Hirst wished to switch numbers 7 and 8, which was agreed to by all. Councilor Davis asked for #13 to read: *Make a motion to schedule a vote at the next Council meeting.* It was noted that they would start the next workshop on Section 123.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR DAVIS TO CONTINUE THE WORKSHOP TO FEBRUARY 22, 2022 AT 6:00 P.M.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Hirst, Marvel, Geary

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

The meeting was called to order with a moment of silent meditation and a salute to the Flag at 7:05 PM.

CONSENT AGENDA

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR GEARY TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS FOLLOWS: Approve Town Council Meeting and Workshop Minutes of January 18, 2022; Approve abatement due to software double billing effort on real property 2021 tax roll submitted by the Tax Assessor.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Hirst, Marvel, Geary

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

Town Manager Brian Rosso reported that it had been brought to his attention that there were several street lights out in town, noting that the town currently has a contract with Prism to maintain their LED street lights. He advised that Chief Palmer assisted him with obtaining a list of all streetlights that were out in town which was submitted to Prism for correction. In the process of listing those lights that were not working, Chief Palmer found one light on Edgewood Avenue and one on Oak Street that were old candescent lights that had not been converted when the town bought the streetlights from National Grid in 2017. There were five other locations around bridges that Chief Palmer felt should have streetlights for the safety of residents and he was working with Prism in that regard as well. Currently there is a restricted streetlight account with \$4,175 which he plans to use to pay for the five new streetlights and the conversion of the two candescent lights, which will cost approximately \$3,900. The next step will be to follow-up on approximately seventeen streetlights that were never transferred over to the town and converted to LEDs and they are working with National Grid and Prism in that regard.

Regarding employee updates, Mr. Rosso indicated that Elizabeth Monty, the previous Tax Assessor, has been hired as the new Finance Director and will commence work on February 14, 2022 and Debra Lewis of Westerly, RI has been hired for the Deputy Finance position. He explained that Ms. Lewis is a Chariho graduate and the sister of Detective Glen Ahern; has a Bachelor degree from URI; and currently works at Dime Bank as a manager, so she has a lot of experience in finance and accounting. Mr. Rosso indicated that Ms. Lewis has a great personality and believes that she will be a good fit for the town. Regarding the Tax Assessor, Tiana Zartman was awarded that position and Alisha Wilbur has been hired as the Senior Clerk. Mr. Rosso also believed they had a candidate to fill the Town Manager's assistant position.

Mr. Rosso next spoke about the two COVID test kit distribution events that the town held and wished to thank the Councilors who assisted in those events, along with Joe Moreau and Ron MacDonald. He noted that they gave out 215 kits on Thursday to seniors age 70 and above, and another 585 kits on Saturday to Hopkinton residents. Some of the remaining 450 kits will be kept for the Council

and staff and the remainder will go to first responders and schools. They may also set up a time for pick-up of kits for residents who may have missed the events. He planned to coordinate with Mary Sawyer and Alisha Wilbur to set up a time for distribution at the Crandall House. The details of when residents can pick up kits will be posted on the website.

Lastly, he wished to make residents aware of the RI Rebounds Small Business Grant Program. The town has nothing to do with this program; it is done through the Rhode Island Commerce Corp; however, he just wished to raise awareness that this was a grant opportunity for small businesses who have lost revenue due to COVID.

Councilor Geary wish to thank everyone who assisted with the COVID distribution events and especially wished to thank Dave Caswell, DPW Director. Mr. Rosso agreed that DPW was of great assistance as well as the police department.

OLD BUSINESS

REVISION TO COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE CHARGE

Councilor Marvel noted that the communication committee charge originally had an end date for the committee to make their recommendations of February 7, 2022. Since no one has yet been appointed to this committee, he felt that the final recommendation date should be revised to the first Town Council date in June of 2022.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR MARVEL AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR GEARY TO EXTEND THE RECOMMENDATION DATE OF THE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE TO JUNE 6, 2022. Discussion on the motion:

Councilor Hirst felt there should not be an actual date in the motion in case it needed to be continued again; he felt it should be until the committee is discharged by the Council. Council President Moffitt felt they should put in a date so they have something to look at. Discussion ended.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Hirst, Marvel, Geary

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

NEW BUSINESS

AWARD 2022 FULL REAPPRAISAL AND REVALUATION BID

This matter had been scheduled to discuss, consider and possibly award a bid regarding the 2022 Full Reappraisal and Revaluation to Vision.

Mr. Rosso noted that the town had put out a bid on Sunday, November 14, 2021 to advertise in the Westerly Sun and solicit bids for the reappraisal and revaluation of the town's real property, personal property and tangible property. They received one bid from Vision who they currently work with and have always been happy with their work. He questioned whether this bid was competitive and reasonable and checked with other municipalities and found it to be comparable. Tiana Zartman, Tax Assessor, noted that in the past they have had two bidders, Vision and Northeast Revaluation. They are currently using Vision software and the RFP had noted that they were not looking to change software so they believe that is why Northeast did not bid on this project. They were also able to cut down costs on this project because usually with a full valuation, the appraisers attempt to go into every house for inspection, but due to COVID they are only going to send out mailers asking people to verify the information on the field card. Statistical revals are performed every three years and the town is reimbursed their cost by the state. Full revals are performed every nine years and the town is required to pay for those. Ms. Zartman explained that with a statistical reval they only look at houses that were sold or where building permits have been pulled. Mr. Rosso noted that the funding will be appropriated in the 2022/2023 fiscal year so this will be in the upcoming budget as a CIP project with the cost being \$156,000.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR DAVIS AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR MARVEL TO AWARD VISION THE FULL REAPPRAISAL AND REVALUATION BID.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Hirst, Marvel, Geary

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

TRI-TOWN RESOLUTIONS WITH RICHMOND, CHARLESTOWN AND WESTERLY

This matter had been scheduled to discuss, consider and possibly vote to adopt three Resolutions and authorize the Hopkinton Police Chief to enter into three reciprocal, non-emergency aid Agreements between the Towns of Hopkinton/Richmond, Hopkinton/Charlestown and Hopkinton/Westerly.

Council President Moffitt read one of the Resolutions.

**Town of Hopkinton
State of Rhode Island**

**RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
RELATIVE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT MUTUAL AID AGREEMENTS**

Resolved, that

WHEREAS, the Rhode Island General Assembly has enacted R.I.G.L. 45-42-2, which allows the chiefs of local police departments to enter into reciprocal non-emergency aid agreements with other local police departments which share jurisdictional lines; and

WHEREAS, any such agreement entered into by a local police department must be approved by the town council by resolution in order to be effective; and

WHEREAS, the borders of the Town of Hopkinton with neighboring towns and cities are irregular and disjointed, and in some criminal and traffic cases, charges have been dismissed due to jurisdictional issues; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of mutual aid agreements with neighboring police departments will result in improved services to the community, clear guidelines of jurisdictional authority and a better relationship with our neighboring police departments; and

WHEREAS, mutual aid agreements have been developed for the Towns of **Hopkinton and Richmond/Charlestown/Westerly** and are ready for review by the Town Council; and

WHEREAS, this is a matter of importance to the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of Hopkinton.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Town Council hereby approves the mutual aid agreement between the **Hopkinton Police Department** and the **Richmond/Charlestown/Westerly Police Department**, in the form attached hereto.

The Town Clerk of the Town of Hopkinton is directed to forward a copy of this Resolution to the Chief of the Hopkinton Police Department and the members of the Town Council of the Town of Hopkinton, to the Chief of the Richmond/Charlestown/Westerly Police Department and to the Town Council of the Town of Richmond/Charlestown/Westerly and to the Superintendent of the Rhode Island State Police.

The Resolution shall take effect upon passage.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY

COUNCILOR MARVEL TO ADOPT THREE RESOLUTIONS AND

AUTHORIZE THE HOPKINTON POLICE CHIEF TO ENTER INTO THREE

RECIPROCAL, NON-EMERGENCY AID AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE TOWNS OF HOPKINTON/RICHMOND, HOPKINTON/CHARLESTOWN AND HOPKINTON/WESTERLY.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Hirst, Marvel, Geary

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

BOARDS & COMMISSIONS

CHARTER COMMISSION

This matter had been scheduled to discuss, consider and possibly vote to appoint Polly Hopkins, Thomas Buck, Eric Bibler and Patricia Fontes to the Charter Commission.

Council President Moffitt noted that Mr. Bibler had removed his application for the Charter Commission. He also noted that Councilor Hirst had requested a roll call vote.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCIOR GEARY TO APPOINT POLLY HOPKINS TO THE CHARTER COMMISSION. Discussion on the motion:

Council President Moffitt noted that he would not support Ms. Hopkins due to a Twitter profile she has where she is known as Polly Purebred, Domestic Terrorist, a snapshot of which he displayed. He noted that he had concerns about voting for someone who had this type of profile and he would not be supporting her.

Councilor Hirst indicated that he would support her but believed a lot of people did not support her because she has been a critic of Chariho. Councilor Davis indicated that she could not vote for someone who is a domestic terrorist.

Councilor Marvel also noted that in light of that he could not support her.

Discussion ended.

IN FAVOR: Hirst, Geary

OPPOSED: Moffitt, Davis, Marvel

MOTION FAILED

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR DAVIS AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR GEARY TO APPOINT THOMAS BUCK TO THE CHARTER COMMISSION.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Hirst, Marvel, Geary

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR DAVIS AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR GEARY TO APPOINT PATRICIA FONTES TO THE CHARTER COMMISSION.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Hirst, Marvel, Geary

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

PUBLIC FORUM

Joseph Moreau of Old Depot Road wished to congratulate the promotions and rehiring of Liz Monty. He thanked Mr. Rosso for his work in hiring these employees. He recently met Alisha Wilbur and felt that she was an excellent promotion as well. He wished to thank everyone who assisted in the COVID test distributions and especially wished to thank Mr. Caswell and his staff saying that they did an excellent job on the snow removal and the ice treatment and the residents really appreciate everything that they have done.

ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR GEARY TO ADJOURN.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Marvel, Geary

OPPOSED: Hirst

SO VOTED

Marita D. Murray

Deputy Town Clerk