

State of Rhode Island

County of Washington

In Hopkinton on the nineteenth day of December 2022 A.D. the said meeting was called to order by Town Council President Michael Geary at 7:00 P.M. in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 1 Town House Road, Hopkinton, RI 02833.

PRESENT: Michael Geary, Scott Bill Hirst, Stephen Moffitt, Jr., Sharon Davis, Robert Burns; Town Solicitor Stephen Sypole; Town Manager Brian Rosso; Town Clerk Marita Murray.

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order with a moment of silent meditation and a salute to the Flag.

**ROLL CALL**

Councilors Davis, Burns, Hirst, Moffitt and Geary announced they were present.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Joseph Moreau of Old Depot Road noted that approximately four years ago he was put on an email list for the Beaver River Valley Community Association in Richmond which was started because of the solar issues. He recently received an email concerning a lawsuit filed last December against the Town of Richmond for \$100,000,000 in damages by the Preserve. Three attorneys from the law firm of JSM represented the town and were hired by the town's insurance carrier because Richmond's solicitor declined to represent the town due to the likelihood that she would be called as a witness. She stated that three attorneys from the law firm of JSM represented the town: Marusak, Vaage and Sypole, who did an exceptional job representing the town and the Decision by the Superior Court is an outstanding achievement. Mr. Moreau wished to compliment and thank Solicitor Sypole for his contribution to this case and for helping Hopkinton's neighbor. Mr. Moreau also noted that he had seen the two new DPW trucks and was very happy about this purchase. Lastly, he noted that there were four large projects before the Planning Board and at the last Planning Board meeting the Planner noted that Solicitor Hogan has done a great job. Mr. Moreau did not feel that this

was the time to be seeking alternate solicitors. He wished the town to move forward and not start all over again with new attorneys during such a critical time. Alfred DiOrio of Woodville Road also wished to speak about the possible advertising for positions of solicitors. He was disappointed to hear that the Council felt that the Planning Board Solicitor's position should be advertised for he was not aware that the current Solicitor's performance has been anything but exceptional. He requested the Council reappoint Attorney Hogan, for in his fifty years of working as a surveyor he has worked very closely with the legal profession and Ms. Hogan stood out as one of the best attorneys that he has ever worked with. Her experience and commitment are well respected by her peers and she has served both the Planning Board and community in an exemplary fashion. She is well acquainted with the various applications and projects that the Planning Board is currently reviewing, some of which are very complicated and have significant histories. Bringing someone else on board at this late stage for any of those projects is something that the Planning Board does not need. Ms. Hogan continues to provide the Planning Board with current case law critical to maintaining the Board's knowledge of the land use landscape and in his experience, no Planning Board solicitor has ever done that in the past; this has proven very important to the Planning Board members. He urged the Council to reappoint Attorney Hogan as the Planning Board solicitor without delay.

Carolyn Light of 43 Forest Glen Drive also spoke on Attorney Hogan's behalf. She was disappointed that the Council had not polled the Town Planner's office or the volunteer members of the Planning Board concerning Attorney Hogan's performance. As a resident, she noted that she would be disappointed if they felt obligated to advertise for this position. Attorney Hogan has presented to the Board a fashion of work that they were not aware could be provided. She hoped that if the Council proceeded with advertising, they would choose somebody with the skill set, the experience and the knowledge that Attorney Hogan has to offer; Attorney Hogan is a wonderful asset to their community and letting her go would be a big mistake.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**ESTATE OF VELMA CLINTON**

This matter was scheduled for Attorney Daniel Baruti to read the Will of Velma Clinton.

Attorney Baruti explained that he had known Velma Clinton personally for the better part of fourteen years and was now representing her estate. Mrs. Clinton was a long time resident of the Town who valued animals, books, friends, neighbors and the Town of Hopkinton. Mrs. Clinton provided for the Town of Hopkinton a very substantial gift, including a late model Subaru, the contents of her home, and a check in the amount of \$1,250,871.83 with specific instructions that the town, acting through the Town Council, do with whatever they feel appropriate. Lois Beauchain noted that she had been a very close friend of Mrs. Clinton. She wished the Council to know that Velma loved animals and she hoped they could use some of the money for the Animal Control Department. Denise Kugler advised that she had known Velma for over fifty years and she had a kindness in her that you do not see anymore and is greatly missed. Velma walked miles every day and always carried treats for all of the animals she encountered. Attorney Baruti wished to thank Attorney Sypole for his help throughout the probate process; noting that Captain Carrier and Mr. Rosso were also instrumental.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Councilor Hirst asked that the Minutes of the December 5, 2022 Town Council meeting be pulled and Councilor Burns noted that at the bottom of page 13 it read Council President Moffitt, but should correctly state Council President Geary.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR DAVIS TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 5, 2022 TOWN COUNCIL MEETING WITH CORRECTION; APPROVE TWO (2) SETS OF EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES OF DECEMBER 5, 2022; ACCEPT THE FOLLOWING MONTHLY FINANCIAL/ACTIVITY REPORT: TOWN CLERK; APPROVE REFUND AS A RESULT OF DUPLICATE PAYMENT ON REAL PROPERTY TAX SUBMITTED BY THE TAX COLLECTOR; APPROVE REFUND AS A RESULT OF OVERPAYMENT ON

REAL PROPERTY TAX SUBMITTED BY TAX COLLECTOR. SET FEBRUARY 21, 2023 AS THE SECOND TOWN COUNCIL MEETING IN FEBRUARY DUE TO PRESIDENT’S DAY HOLIDAY.

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

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA ORDER**

It was requested that No. 2 under Unfinished Business be heard before the Town Manager’s Report.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR DAVIS AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR MOFFITT TO MOVE NO. 2 UNDER UNFINISHED BUSINESS UP BEFORE THE TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT.

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

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**RHODE ISLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

This matter was scheduled to discuss, consider and possibly vote on suggestions for the Rhode Island General Assembly. Present were Representative Elect Megan Cotter and Representative Brian Patrick Kennedy.

Councilor Davis noted that Solicitor Sypole had provided the Council with information concerning a new Land Use Commission Housing Working Group and Zoning Working Group and what they wanted to work on, which she found appalling.

Representative Kennedy noted that the information received was only recommendations brought forth in November so as of today there is nothing in the form of a piece of legislation. Speaker Shekarchi had an interview with the Providence Journal and noted that affordable housing is going to be one of the main issues of this legislative session. He noted that there is a requirement that each community must reach 10% affordable housing; it was believed that

Hopkinton was at approximately 8% to 8.5%. Representative Kennedy felt that once Hopkinton obtained 10% affordable housing, things would be much better because they would then have a much better ability to control what happens in the community. He felt there was no question that this was going to continue to be a major focus of the next legislative session due to the fact that they are trying to get the housing crisis under control. He believed over \$50,000,000 has been set aside for affordable housing this year and this money would be available to communities to address some of these issues. There is a problem with people building housing with one or two affordable units, which when the deed restriction ends, are no longer affordable. He hoped that the Town could discuss extending the time for these units to remain affordable with the developers.

Councilor Davis wished to speak about the preliminary draft memo that they received which was prepared by the Exeter Planning Board and she read a portion of that memo into the record:

“The purpose of this memo is to make you aware of proposed changes to the RI Zoning Enabling Act that would restrict existing municipal land use authority and could lead to a one size fits all Statewide zoning. These changes are being recommended by the RI House of Representatives Land Use Commission. These are expected to be incorporated into legislation in 2023 that is a top priority for the House Speaker Shekarchi. The Exeter Planning Board believes these proposed changes would negate policies in our State approved comprehensive plan that strive to accommodate growth that avoids negative impacts to the quantity and quality of our sole course of drinking water as well as development density that can be reasonably supported by a rural community. Moreover, these changes will encourage greater development pressure on our farms, forests and have negative impact to Exeter’s rural character and quality of life. We urge the Exeter Town Council to strongly oppose these changes and to encourage other Town Council’s to do the same. The most egregious recommendations include but are not limited to:

- Eliminate public hearings for developments that conform to zoning
- Establish a growth rate quota for residential development in all cities and towns
- State mandated lot sizes for municipalities
- Create Statewide land development regulations
- Allow developers to over-ride municipal zoning to build housing.

There are other recommendations pending from zoning, comprehensive plan and subdivision plan and subdivision work groups of the Land Use Commission that are not available to the public at this time. The primary stimulus for these recommendations is the need to address Rhode Island’s housing crisis. The Exeter Planning Board recognizes the urgent need for more balanced housing Statewide and in Exeter. Upon completion of a low and moderate income housing development that is near completion, Exeter will have approximately 7% of our housing in compliance with the Low and Moderate Income (LMI) Housing Act that requires 10% of our housing be LMI. In addition, Exeter adopted a Village Ordinance, over 10 years ago, that would allow multifamily housing in a mixed use compact development pattern in areas where appropriate water and wastewater could support the added density. It should be noted that not one developer has proposed to use this Village Ordinance despite the availability of a

public drinking supply to encourage development at the intersection of Route 2 and Exeter Road. RI's housing crisis is a serious problem that needs to be resolved. We believe it can best be addressed by the following:

1. Compact growth to support more density should be encouraged, **not mandated**, in appropriate areas that can be adequately served by supporting infrastructure, at a minimum drinking water and wastewater treatment.
2. The need for more housing cannot be implemented without considering all the other issues municipalities are required to assess in accordance with the RI Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act. Exeter, like all municipalities, has been making our land use decisions consistent with our State approved Comprehensive Plan. The need for housing should not supersede all the other issues municipalities are currently required to address.
3. To be successful in producing more housing, RI must have strong partnerships between State, Municipal, Private Sector and Non-Profits. Establishing inflexible State mandates does not foster good partnerships.
4. Municipalities need financial and technical assistance to establish creative approaches to housing that must be customized to meet unique municipal needs. This approach helped Exeter develop our current Village Ordinance.
5. The housing crisis was caused by multiple factors over many years. It's not reasonable and it's inaccurate to single out land use statutes and municipalities as the sole source of this problem.
6. Changes to the existing land use statutes will not be effective without comprehensively addressing all the issues that have caused the housing crisis.”

Councilor Davis suggested that she would be in favor of the Town Council sending a similar memo to the Representatives on Hopkinton's behalf. Representative Cotter acknowledged that she had spoken with the author of Exeter's memo and agreed that affordable housing was a problem but what might work in a city might not work in a rural community. She noted that one of her goals was to hold coffee hours or informational sessions so the community could take part in legislation. She believed that ADU's were incredibly beneficial for our rural communities. Representative Kennedy advised that the land use proposal could not be introduced until January and then after it has been introduced it has to go through a whole hearing process both in the House and in the Senate. At that time members of the Town Council, Planning Board, Town Manager, Solicitor and town residents can come and testify before the committees. Councilor Davis acknowledged that, but indicated that what they were reeling from was what happened in May concerning the solar tax legislation. She noted that they did not have a chance to discuss that before it was voted on. Representative Kennedy indicated that what was key was that in Hopkinton there was a lot of ledge, granite and places that are not suitable for developing

affordable housing. There also may be issues with putting a well and septic on other parcels of land because of State requirements. In order to meet those requirements, unless there is a plan brought forth, such as a packaged septic system or well to serve several properties, there will be a question of whether the proposal of the Land Use Commission can be achieved in some of the more rural communities. There are a lot of properties in Hopkinton designated as open space and a lot of property along the river and he did not believe those places could change. Going forward, until any legislation has been introduced, it is difficult for them to do anything. He suggested that the Council could adopt a Resolution of support and indicate some of the things that they feel should be addressed in the legislation, noting their concern if something oversteps what they currently have in place for zoning. Representative Cotter noted that Hopkinton shares an aquifer with Richmond and that should be taken into consideration when talking about building more housing. Councilor Moffitt advised that Hopkinton is in a regional school district and if enrollment increases the school budget increases as well as our town taxes. He asked the Representatives to notify the Council of any legislation came before them that may be a concern to the town; if they know of anything of interest ahead of time and can notify the Council, the Council could place it on an agenda so it could be discussed. Councilor Davis asked the Representatives how they would like to spend the \$610,000,000 surplus, noting that Speaker Shekarchi did not want to revisit and reform the state's school aid formula. Representative Kennedy suggested that this was actually a proposal that was being put forth by the new Senate Majority Leader and reopening discussions on that would potentially have a negative affect for the bottom line of the Chariho district. He stated that they had lost their regionalization bonus a number of years ago and one of the few things that they have gotten back from the State has been the categorical regional transportation money. All of the regional schools received exactly what they were supposed to for the very first time since they adopted categorical regionalization money for transportation aid. His fear is if they change the formula again, more of that money will go to the urban communities and the suburban communities will be left on their own. We had a negative impact on the last formula change; he did not want to see another

formula change. Representative Kennedy hoped with the \$610,000,000 they could reduce taxes for state taxpayers. Councilor Davis also noted in the Providence Journal article, Speaker Shekarchi was asked about convening a constitutional convention which is supposed to be done every decade but has not been done since 1986. She noted that Speaker Shekarchi did not want to do this because he was afraid that there was going to be dark money which would have excessive influence on the constitution in a negative way. She asked the Representatives who they would pick and how would they pick the voters to be representatives on this convention meeting. Representative Kennedy acknowledged that when reading this article this was the first time that he had become aware of this and usually it was the Governor who calls for something like this. Councilor Davis asked their opinion on the expanded privacy right in the state constitution to protect abortion rights, gay marriage and interracial marriage. Representative Kennedy advised that these matters were already codified in state law. Councilor Davis asked about their ideas for expanded access to shorelines and Representative Kennedy indicated that he was 100% for this; the more access for people to get to the beach the better. Lastly, Councilor Davis asked the Representatives their thoughts on have free RIPTA services, noting that Ashaway residents had asked her about having a RIPTA stop at the Main Street Plaza. Representative Cotter suggested that when they spoke about affordable housing they should also be speaking about transportation for they go hand-in-hand. Representative Kennedy noted that one of the State's ultimate goals was to get the MBTA train service expanded down to Westerly at some point in time so that people can get on at the Westerly station and travel to Wickford Junction, Warwick, Providence or Boston. This will be a negotiation that has to take place between the Department of Transportation and the MBTA. As of now, the bus only provides service at the Exit 1 commuter lot and the Hope Valley commuter lot. Representative Cotter indicated that Massachusetts recently decided to tax residents earning over \$550,000 a year generating \$140,000,000 which they earmarked for education; she felt this was something that could potentially happen in Rhode Island. She also believed they should incentivize other districts to become regionalized and if they did this, they could eliminate

some administrative costs. She noted there were currently 35 school districts in Rhode Island; however, in Texas, one of their school districts is the size of Rhode Island. Councilor Moffitt thanked Representative Kennedy for his assistance with the paving of the High Street bridge and for keeping them informed in that regard. It was also noted that 2025 was earmarked for improving Laurel Street and the High Street bridge and that the section of Route 3 that was missed will be completed next year. Councilor Hirst stated that the number one problem is transportation; however, the real issue is that the State of Rhode Island under Article XII, Section 1 of the Rhode Island State Constitution specifically directs the General Assembly to promote education. He discussed property taxes and the imbalance with Charlestown and the other two towns. Representative Kennedy indicated that he had sat on a number of regionalization committees over the years for Charliho and this fact was always brought up. The problem is that when the district was created the three communities recognized that they wanted to have a regionalized school district; however, Charlestown was asked that they put all of the tax base together and come up with a tax rate and Charlestown said no. Councilor Hirst believed that this was a civil rights issue and if it was taken to federal court it could be changed; the General Assembly has the power to take away the town's power to run the schools. Councilor Hirst asked Representative Kennedy to explain why he voted for the legislation to take away the solar tax benefits that the town was promised by the solar developers, noting that Speaker Shekarchi was the attorney for the Brushy Brook proposal which was denied. Representative Kennedy indicated that the town had contacted him about a piece of legislation that was being sponsored by Representative Carlos Tobon. Carlos Tobon ran into ethical issues and they did not see him again. The ultimate piece of legislation that passed was not proposed by Carlos Tobon and he did not get a follow-up email from the town telling him about the new proposal. At the end of the session there are hundreds of pieces of legislation that reach their desk on a daily basis and they are expected to vote on a substantial number of those. He noted that the League of Cities and Towns was working on a study committee on this matter and if they came up with a piece of legislation that was agreeable to all parties, he would introduce it. Representative Cotter noted that to make changes

to Chariho, the Charter would need to be changed. Recently in the Exeter/West Greenwich School District there was a dip in enrollment so they decided to do a five-year average so that at no point would there be a huge increase in their bill. She also noted that she has had meetings with people who were very excited about introducing bills concerning smart solar siting and reducing clear cutting. Councilor Hirst asked when the deadline was for introducing legislation and it was noted February 15, 2023, except for municipal legislation which was not bound by that deadline. Councilor Hirst asked what the Representatives were going to do to protect taxpayers' property rates, when there were Boards and Commissions in the town that could be circumvented by the General Assembly by passing laws regarding land use and things of that nature. Representative Cotter indicated that they would keep communications open. If there was something that did not look like it was in the best interest of the town then they can address the General Assembly; they cannot promise that they can fix it, but they can use their voices to advocate for the community. Councilor Moffitt reminded them that Hopkinton was different from Cranston and his concern was that in Rhode Island things were painted with a broad brush.

Carolyn Light of Forest Glen Drive suggested that there are communities very close to complying with the low to moderate income housing requirements and the Hopkinton Planning Board strives, with every project that comes before them, to make it work if at all possible. She asked what happened to the communities that did not make any effort to comply. She wished the State take a look at those communities and penalize them; if there is no penalty there should be some type of measure designed to offset that because it is not fair to our community and our infrastructure. Representative Cotter indicated that she had spoken with RI Housing Works concerning her district for Hopkinton and Exeter have made wonderful strides; however, Richmond has not and is only at 3.71% affordable housing. She believed the State was looking at the communities who are not complying first. What affordable housing looks like in Hopkinton will not be the same as what it looks like in Cranston and they will advocate for that. Councilor Moffitt also noted that more housing with children meant higher taxes. He also noted that Hopkinton and Richmond share the aquifer and this was a concern as

well. Ms. Light indicated that the Planning Board does adhere to planned growth and asked how were they going to assure that Richmond complied. She hoped that at the State level they could put more emphasis on the communities that were not complying; they should look at those communities that were under 5% and when they were reshaping the requirements for low income moderate housing that they find a way to implement a way to penalize those towns.

Solicitor Sypole suggested that as more information comes forth and as legislation is introduced, they can put this matter back on the agenda.

### **TOWN MANAGER REPORT**

This matter was scheduled by the Town Manager to discuss the proposed Animal Control Ordinance.

Mr. Rosso stated that the animal control ordinance is out of date. The Animal Control Officer, Samantha Bowen, has been working on revising this ordinance with Chief Palmer; and, Attorney Sypole has provided insight. Mr. Rosso felt the biggest issue was the fees and fines being assessed which were written in the RI General Law; they would need to have this ordinance sponsored by a Representative in order to make some changes. There are other municipalities in the state that have added provisions to the RI General Laws which allow them to apply different fees. Mr. Rosso indicated that this amendment required a Councilor to sponsor it and he had a red-lined copy of the ordinance available so they could easily see the proposed changes. Councilor Hirst indicated that he would sponsor this.

### **COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS**

This matter was scheduled to discuss, consider and possibly vote to advertise the positions of Town Solicitor, Zoning Solicitor, Planning Solicitor, Prosecutions Lawyer and Probate Judge.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST THAT THE POSITIONS OF TOWN SOLICITOR, ZONING SOLICITOR, PLANNING SOLICITOR, PROSECUTIONS LAWYER AND PROBATE JUDGE BE ADVERTISED IN THE WESTERLY SUN AND ON THE TOWN'S WEBSITE.

There was no second to this Motion. Motion failed.

Councilor Burns advised that after more review and after hearing public comment, he felt there should be more discussion in this regard. Councilor Moffitt suggested that he was going to make a motion not to advertise these positions.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR MOFFITT AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR DAVIS NOT TO ADVERTISE THE POSITIONS OF TOWN SOLICITOR, ZONING SOLICITOR, PLANNING SOLICITOR, PROSECUTIONS LAWYER AND PROBATE JUDGE. Council discussion: Councilor Hirst indicated that he would vote against this motion, noting that a number of attorneys wished to apply for these positions. He felt that if the Council did not wish to advertise in the newspaper, they should at least put this on the town's website to see who applied. They did not have hire anyone new but they should give people a chance to apply. Councilor Burns indicated that he previously wanted to advertise these position; however, after speaking with Board members and hearing from the public he has come to realize that there is a lot going on in the town and this may throw a wrench into some of these projects. Councilor Davis also noted that she loves going out to bid to see what is out there; however, she agreed that there would be a lot lost if they were to obtain new solicitors. Discussion ended.

IN FAVOR: Geary, Moffitt, Davis, Burns

OPPOSED: Hirst

SO VOTED

**VACANIES AND APPOINTMENTS:**

**Historical District Commission**

This matter was scheduled to discuss, consider and possibly vote to accept the resignation of Polly Hopkins from the Historical District Commission.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR MOFFITT AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR DAVIS TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF POLLY HOPKINS FROM THE HISTORICAL DISTRICT COMMISSION.

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

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

**Charter Commission**

This matter was scheduled to discuss, consider and possibly vote to appoint Joseph Moreau to the Charter Commission.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR DAVIS TO APPOINT JOSEPH MOREAU TO THE CHARTER COMMISSION.

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

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

**NEW BUSINESS**

**COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

This matter was scheduled to discuss, consider and possibly vote to continue the term of the Commissions Committee until the new website is in place.

Councilor Davis advised that she had spoken with Etta Zasloff who indicated that they wished to continue this committee until the new website is functioning well. They wish to be able to provide advice and be the testers of the new website from the residents' viewpoint and to work with Jeff in that regard. Mr. Rosso stated that this was never the intent of that Committee. Councilor Davis noted that what they concluded with all of their research was that the website would be the best way to communicate with the residents and they wished that to be user friendly. Councilor Moffitt reiterated that they just wished to beta test the site, which Councilor Davis agreed with, noting that she was very excited to be a part of that. Mr. Frenette suggested that the website should be up and running by the end of

April. He noted that he believed content was the most important thing – what do people want and need to see; not how it works or where things are, noting that they are working from a template.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR DAVIS AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR MOFFITT TO CONTINUE THE TERM OF THE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE UNTIL APRIL 30, 2023.

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

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

### **ETHICS TRAINING**

This matter was scheduled to discuss, consider and possibly vote to hold an ethics training session via Zoom meeting given by the RI Ethics Commission.

Councilor Hirst advised that they did not need to schedule ethics training if the Councilors wished to attend the Newly Elected Officials Orientation being put on by The Trust and RI League of Cities and Towns on Friday, January 6, 2023 at Crowne Plaza in Warwick.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### **Chariho Omnibus Meeting**

This matter was scheduled to discuss, consider and vote on ideas to suggest be included in the Chariho Omnibus Meeting in January.

Councilor Hirst noted that he had three items that he would like included in the Omnibus Meeting. As background, he indicated that for many years the member towns were asked to put forth suggestions of what they wished to discuss at the Omnibus Meeting for they cannot discuss business unless it is duly advertised and posted.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR DAVIS TO INCLUDE A REQUEST FOR AN OUTSIDE

MANAGEMENT STUDY ON THE AGENDA FOR THE OMNIBUS  
CALENDAR MEETING.

IN FAVOR: Geary, Hirst, Davis, Burns

OPPOSED: None

ABSTAIN: Moffitt

SO VOTED

Councilor Hirst wished to address ways to have the General Assembly address the funding and promoting of education. He noted that the constitutional mandate under Article XII, Section 1 states that the General Assembly shall promote education.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR MOFFITT TO DISCUSS AT THE OMNIBUS MEETING AN ATTEMPT TO GET THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES TO PROMOTE BETTER FUNDING OF PUBLIC EDUCATION.

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

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

Councilor Hirst advised that the Chariho Act requires the Chariho School District to maintain all school buildings. He would like to have a discussion on what condition all of the schools are in and how those buildings are being maintained.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR MOFFITT TO HAVE A DISCUSSION ON THE CURRENT STATE OF MAINTENANCE OF ALL SCHOOL BUILDINGS IN THE DISTRICT AND HOW THEY ARE BEING MAINTAINED.

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

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Joseph Moreau of Old Depot Road wished to thank the members of the Council for appointing him to the Charter Commission and for voting not to advertise for the position of solicitors. He believed that the members of the Communication Commission were not trying to overstep any bounds or change anything, they were just trying to improve the town. Mr. Moreau complained about the current website and its inconsistencies. Lastly, he indicated that he has read the Town Charter twice and something that he found out and spoke with Al DiOrio about was that before the fiscal year ends, the Planning Board is supposed to report to the Town Council on what they have accomplished for that year. Mr. DiOrio cannot remember the last time that this happened. The Town Charter also states that every two years the Planning Board is supposed to review those ordinances and report to the Town Council.

Carolyn Light of Forest Glen Drive stated that the beta testing of the website that the Communications Committee wished to do is for functionality only and not content. She also advised that she was disappointed that the Town had hired a photographer to take pictures for the website. She felt there were better ways to spend that money; a lot of long term residents participate in a website called Hope Valley Past and Present and they could have provided pictures for free. She felt the Council should have reached out to the community rather than hiring somebody. Councilor Moffitt believed that the Council had made the right decision in that regard. Ms. Light felt that one of the hardest jobs of the Council was to engage the community. Little things like that meant a lot to people who could not contribute in other ways.

Ron Prellwitz of Main Street advised the Council that in Rhode Island, if both a husband and wife are on Social Security, they make too much money to qualify for the senior exemption. He felt that this should be addressed at some point. Also, he is the Chairman of the 1904 School Committee. The School Committee sent a representative to their first two meetings and he advised that representative that when Chariho took over the 1904 building as a functioning school, it was full of teachers, students, all resources and materials; however, when they left that building, the only thing left was one damaged teacher's desk. He asked where

everything went. Thereafter, there was an uproar and they stated to him that he could not accuse them of stealing and that could be a suit for libel.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR DAVIS TO ADJOURN IN HONOR OF MARITA MURRAY, OUR NEW TOWN CLERK.

SO VOTED

Marita D. Murray

Town Clerk