

Town Council Meeting
February 10, 2022

The February 10, 2022, Town Council Meeting was called to order by Denise L. DiFranco, President, in Foster, RI at 7:00 p.m.

The following members were present:

Denise L. DiFranco, President
Heidi Rogers, Vice President
Chris Stone
David Paolino
Cheryl Hawes

Also present:

Mark Tourgee Esq. , Solicitor
Kelli Russ, Finance Director

- I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** The Pledge of Allegiance recited.
- II. PUBLIC COMMENT** None.
- III. CONSENT AGENDA** Approval of Minutes for January 27, 2022
Approval of General Warrant
General Warrant #12 \$38,209.95
Tax Assessor's Additions and Abatement
- Heidi Rogers moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. David Paolino seconded.
Motion Passed 5-0.
Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; Cheryl Hawes, aye;
Denise L. DiFranco, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye.
- IV. OLD BUSINESS**
1. ARPA Funds
- ARPA Funds discussion planned for 2/24.
Denise L. DiFranco asked if there was anything that anyone wanted further information on. Ms. DiFranco said she would meet with Matt Haynes next Friday 2/18 regarding the libraries' previous request on 1/27.
Cheryl Hawes said she met with Matt Haynes yesterday.
Ms. DiFranco said she spoke with Cindy Mellor-Neale regarding Borders Farm and confirmed that they have not received any other ARPA funds. No one had questions.
2. Update on Kearsarge Solar at the Nike Site
- Kearsarge Solar at the Nike Site update.
Kearsarge Solar was informed by National Grid that having a solar site would be put on hold until National Grid updates the infrastructure to accept the solar installation. David Paolino added that National Grid was bought out by another company so they may not want to accept new contracts at this time.
- Lynne Rider said that when the Theodore Foster site first went online, her husband was working for National Grid and that it cost National Grid a lot of money to update their infrastructure in order to handle that new source of energy.
- Amita Rodman said that we know these things take time and wondered if we could look to National Grid in

Connecticut. David Paolino said “no” because it is not in their legal jurisdiction. Ms. Rodman asked what else we could do to move forward. David Paolino said that he is guessing from a utility standpoint that it could be up to a million dollars a mile to upgrade the grid to that location to be able to accept the project, and short of town funding, it’s not going to happen.

Denise DiFranco clarified Ms. Rodman’s question regarding what we can do now to have the project ready when the time comes. Mr. Paolino said that any investment is probably not advisable because we don’t know what the actual wattage will be. He suggested speaking with Mike Antonellis the Town Planning Coordinator.

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. Conservation Committee request for Earth Day Activities on April 30th.

Denise F. DiFranco referred to an email from Tony McClellan. Tony stated that the Earth Day tire and electronics collection at the DPW site has been very successful for the last few years and that they would like to host a Conservation Fair. The Earth Day collections would be scheduled from 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. and the fair would be scheduled from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. with organizations and vendors that have a conservation/sustainability/local aspect.

Mr. McClellan asked what permits would be needed for prepackaged food to be opened on site and for one or two food vendors to sell food on site. Town Clerk Susan Dillon said that food trucks would need to be registered with the town and for prepackaged food from Borders Farm they would need a statement from the Department of Health, but there are no regulations on local honey.

Amita Rodman asked if it would be possible to reach out to additional farms in Foster. Tony said yes, with a winery being another possible vendor.

Lynne Rider asked if hazardous chemicals would be collected. Tony said that is done through RIRRC but they would provide information for hazardous chemical collections at the event.

Cheryl Hawes made a motion to approve April 30th for the Conservation Commission to host their Earth Day Event and Fair with approved vendors. David Paolino seconded.

Motion Passed 5-0.

Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; Cheryl Hawes, aye; Denise L. DiFranco, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye.

2. Budget workshop dates

Kelli Russ suggested Thursday March 3rd at 5:30 p.m. which worked for all the council members. Kelli will verify with everyone else for March 3rd.

The Financial Town meeting will be May 3rd.

The final date to adopt the budget is April 14th, at the earliest April 7th.

The public hearing will need to be March 24th or 31st. Two or three workshops should be scheduled in that timeframe.

Denise L. DiFranco suggested March 10th at 5:30 p.m. since it is a regular Town Council meeting.

March 15th is the Regional Financial Town Meeting.

March 16th at 5:30 p.m. at the Town House was agreed upon as the 3rd meeting.

The public hearing will be March 31st at 7:00 p.m.

March 24th at 5:30 p.m. was agreed to be the 4th meeting at the Benjamin Eddy immediately followed by the regular Town Council meeting.

3. viram Foundation Grant

Denise L. DiFranco stated that Amita Rodman and her husband have a foundation that has generously donated a grant to the Town of Foster. Ms. DiFranco thanked Ms. Rodman and asked how she would like to see the money spent. Ms. Rodman said things that would be of long term benefit to Foster such as cohesive signage, beautification, and uniformity as well as enhanced communication and community engagement to create a sense of presence. For example, Ms. Rodman has been working with Susan Dillon on the monthly *Foster Home Journal* updates but she would like to see weekly updates. The grant money could be used to hire someone a few hours a week to apply for grants to get funding for initiatives such as recording and posting town council meetings.

4. Appointment of Planning Board Member

Heidi Rogers moved to appoint Susan Joyce to serve out the term of Helen Hardy which expires 12/2023. Chris Stone seconded.

Motion Passed 5-0.

Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; Cheryl Hawes, aye; Denise L. DiFranco, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye.

Denise L. DiFranco stated that they had a lot of good applicants. David Paolino said the number of applicants was encouraging. Cheryl Hawes would like to recognize Lynne Rider and would have liked to appoint her. David Paolino agreed. Lynne Rider said she had spoken with Ms. DiFranco and agreed with her desire to get new people involved.

5. Appointment of Zoning Board Member

Heidi Rogers moved to appoint Barbara Fell to complete the term of Joe Carey which expires 12/2022. David Paolino seconded.

Motion Passed 5-0.

Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; Cheryl Hawes, aye; Denise L. DiFranco, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye.

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6. Appointment of Recreation Committee Member
Heidi Rogers moved to postpone the recreation appointment of Elaine Gugliotti to the March 10th Town Council Meeting because they were unable to open the file of the application letter. Cheryl Hawes seconded.
Motion Passed 5-0.
Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; Cheryl Hawes, aye; Denise L. DiFranco, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye.
7. Reappointments to Planning Board
Heidi Rogers moved to reappoint Hillary Downes-Fortune and David Paolissi to the Planning Board with terms ending December 2026. Cheryl Hawes seconded.
Motion Passed 5-0.
Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; Cheryl Hawes, aye; Denise L. DiFranco, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye.
8. Reappointment to Zoning Board
Cheryl Hawes moved to reappoint James Finnegan to the Zoning Board for a 3 year term ending 12/2024. Heidi Rogers seconded.
Motion Passed 5-0.
Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; Cheryl Hawes, aye; Denise L. DiFranco, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye.
9. Reappointment to Zoning Board (Alternate)
Heidi Rogers moved to reappoint Michelle Ziemba as an alternate Zoning Board member for the term ending in 12/2022. Cheryl Hawes seconded.
Motion Passed 5-0.
Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; Cheryl Hawes, aye; Denise L. DiFranco, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye.
10. Reappointments to Recreation Committee.
Heidi Rogers moved to reappoint David Tirrell, Whitney Colwell Desrosiers, Jayne Stoo,s and Joe Stoo,s for the terms ending in 12/2026. Cheryl Hawes seconded.
Motion Passed 5-0.
Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; Cheryl Hawes, aye; Denise L. DiFranco, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye.
11. Reappointments to Land Trust.
Heidi Rogers moved to reappoint Myra Mercier, Thomas Boyden, and Lawrence Chapman to the Land Trust with terms expiring 12/2024. Cheryl Hawes seconded.
Motion Passed 5-0.
Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; Cheryl Hawes, aye; Denise L. DiFranco, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye.
12. Reappointments to Conservation Committee.
Heidi Rogers moved to reappoint Page Wooller, Tony McClellen, Michael Galligan, and Kathy Zahansky to the Conservation Committee with terms ending 12/2024. Cheryl Hawes seconded.
Motion Passed 5-0.
Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; Cheryl Hawes, aye; Denise L. DiFranco, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye.

**FUTURE AGENDA
ITEMS**

Denise L. DiFranco announced that next Thursday, 2/17, at the Benjamin Eddy Building there will be a combined meeting with the Planning Board and the following week is the public hearing and workshop for ARPA. On March 10th the Town Council will vote on where the ARPA money will be spent, appoint the new Recreation Committee member and swear in new police officers.

Amita Rodman asked about the group Denise had mentioned putting together at the Public Hearing on 1/27 regarding the reduced ARPA funds for small towns because of not having water and sewer infrastructure. Denise said that so far she has not received a positive response from other small towns but that she is still going to pursue it.

Cheryl Hawes said that she spoke with Matt Haynes regarding his interest in becoming a grant writer and would like to add that to the next agenda.

VI.

EXECUTIVE SESSION
PURSUANT TO RIGL 42-46-5, (A), (1) Personnel
1. Tax Assessor Position

**RETURN TO OPEN
SESSION**

8:04 p.m. Heidi Rogers moved, Chris Stone seconded, to go into Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 for a work session regarding Personal according to RIGL 42-46-5-A (1) and to reconvene into open session and to further keep the minutes of said meeting closed and the minutes of all executive sessions held previous to this meeting remain closed in accordance with provisions in RIGL 42-46-4 & 5. No discussion.

Motion passed 5-0.

Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; Cheryl Hawes, aye; Denise L. DiFranco, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye.

8:34 p.m. Heidi Rogers moved to reconvene into public open session. Chris Stone seconded.

Motion Passed 5-0.

Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; Cheryl Hawes, aye; Denise L. DiFranco, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye.

Denise L. DiFranco announced that three votes were taken in executive session. The first was to appoint Kaitlin Boyer as Tax Assessor contingent upon her completion of the certification within the year.

Vote was 5-0.

The second was to utilize Patti Moreau as a consultant as needed for up to 75 days per year.

Vote was 5-0.

The third was to keep the pay rate for those positions being filled consistent with the current budget.

Vote was 5-0.

VII.

ADJOURNMENT

Heidi Rodgers moved to adjourn. Chris Stone seconded.
Motion Passed 5-0.
Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; Cheryl Hawes, aye;
Denise L. DiFranco, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye.

Submitted by,

Susan M. Dillon, Town Clerk