

Town Council Meeting
May 12, 2022

The May 12, 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:

Kelli Russ, Finance Director
Julia Chretien, Solicitor
Mike Antonellis, Town Planner

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**II. ANNOUNCEMENTS /
PUBLIC COMMENT**

Denise L. DiFranco asked for a moment of silence for Mary Joseph, she was a long-time Foster resident and very active on the radio.

Ms. DiFranco noted that a new traffic light was installed on Route 6 and Cucumber Hill Road.

Ron Cervasio discussed the Town Financial Meeting, noting that the ambulance corps was not sharing their books with the town. Mr. Walden said they were. Mr. Cervasio asked for clarification of which is true. He also suggested recruiting businesses to increase revenue.

Pam Fontaine, 8 Danielson Pike, said she was very distressed with the council because of them not funding the ambulance corps.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

Warrants

Approval of General Warrant #18 \$77,915.27

Monthly Reports (March)

*Building & Zoning *DPW *Police *Social Services

*Planning *RIRCC

*Finance *Tax Assessor

Quarterly Reports (Jan, Feb & March)

*Libraries *Planning *Civil Preparedness

*Conservation Commission

*Foster Center Fire *Foster School Department

Chris Stone moved, David Paolino seconded, to accept the consent agenda as presented.

Motion passed 5 - 0.

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

IV. PUBLIC HEARING

Consideration of a Mobile Food Truck Establishment License application (Type B) for Joshua Gorton of Gorton's Refreshments LLC, D/B/A Del's Lemonade of Johnston, 1501 Hartford Ave. Unit C, Johnston, RI

Denise L. DiFranco opened the public hearing.

Joshua Gorton explained the permit was for the food truck event and also for other locations if it was okay with the businesses.

Heidi Rogers added and also for games. She asked that when it comes to the food truck event, won't he have to coordinate with Eric Weiner? Mr. Gorton said, yes, and he has emailed him.

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02919, for the year ending
December 31, 2022.

Denise L. DiFranco asked if he was driving around like an ice cream truck. He said, no. Julia Chretien said if he is going to be selling at games, he needs written permission from Recreation to do so.

Anna Rao, Central Pike, asked about where he is going and would he have a lot of trucks riding around.

Mr. Gorton said it would be one truck in a single location from 12 to 6 p.m.

Denise L. DiFranco asked for people in favor or against. There were no more comments.

David Paolino moved, Cheryl Hawes seconded, to grant the permit.

Motion passed 5 - 0.

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

V. OLD BUSINESS
Grant Writers

Denise L. DiFranco requested an update on the work of Matt Haynes and JoAnn Johnson with Mike Antonellis. Mr. Antonellis said they had met and discussed the scope of work and sent out an email. Ms. DiFranco asked if Mrs. Dillon was cc'd on that. Mike said she was and Ms. DiFranco asked Mrs. Dillon to forward the email to the other council members. Mrs. Dillon said she would. Mr. Antonellis said they agreed it would be to provide technical grant writing support to the Town of Foster under the supervision of the planning department and work collaboratively with the planning department and town council to identify funding opportunities and obtain all relevant information and data for grant application requirements. All final submissions must be approved by the planning department. They will provide grant administration support as needed and as directed. They will only seek reimbursement for grant applications submitted and completed under the direction of the planning department or the town. The town may discontinue the grant writing services as detailed and as presented at any time. Mr. Antonellis said he would work with Kelli to identify our own funding sources internally to provide for this, and to go out for the RFP for the economic development consultant, and see what he can save through that.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Woody Lowden Center-Wireless Communication Tower

Joe Woodside of RIEMA said there was a request to put a radio communications tower on the property at the Woody Lowden field. The State runs and maintains a State communications system for public safety, and that particular location is severely lacking in radio coverage. Not only for the State responders but the local responders, Coventry, Scituate PD, and Foster Police sometimes. They saw there was a need, and it would assist Foster Police and Fire who have equipment in

Coventry on the Waterman Hill tower. That site has all the equipment in a building the size of a porta-john with no climate control which is bad for the equipment. As part of our request for this site, we would be putting a climate-controlled secure building, generator, perimeter fencing and monitoring equipment. All town equipment would be placed on the tower.

Heidi Rogers asked if this would all be at RIEMA's expense. Mr. Woodside said yes. She asked where on the property they wanted to place it. Mr. Woodside said they were looking at that with their site vendor, and officials from the town: Mike and the DPW director. They had been out there to look at some sites, way up on the left past the building, so it would be up in the wooded area. Ms. Rogers said she wondered if they ever went to sell it, would they have to have an easement? Atty. Chretien said they could write that out. Ms. Rogers asked if they could subdivide that piece of land. Mr. Antonellis said the easement would be easier. They need a buy-in from the town council because they will require a special use permit to go before the Zoning Board of Review for the approval of the use since it is a town owned property, the town would have to sign off as the landowner. Ms. Rogers said we really need it.

Gordon Brayton said it would be a giant boost to the town. If we could get fire and police on the 800, it would save the town a major expense. David Paolino asked how much the equipment would be to use it. Mr. Brayton said they already had quite a bit; in the long run it will be cheaper.

JoAnn Johnson, 17 Howard Hill Road, said it was ironic because her husband always wanted to put a tower in their back yard. Her request was to be cognizant of the neighbors. Mr. Woodside said they would make sure they had the proper setbacks. The trees are tall and will shield it from view. The frequencies are safer than cell so it's not a health hazard. Mr. Antonellis said he wanted to preserve the opportunity for so we can have cell service on it if it's something the town wants to provide. Mr. Woodside said that would be a decision further down the line if it is feasible. Mr. Antonellis said he wanted to mention it because the Zoning Board may make that as a possible opportunity.

Lynne Rider asked how big the footprint was. Mr. Woodside said roughly 35 x 65 feet for the fenced in perimeter. Ms. Rider asked if the building was inside that area. Mr. Woodside said it was within the perimeter. Ms. Rider said that there are the remnants of a chimney back there, and if they happen to see it, it's all that's left of the CCC [Civilian Conservation Core] Camp so it would be

nice not to knock it down. Mr. Woodside said he was good with holding on to that, it's a piece of history.

2. Opioid Funds: Counselor
Presentation

Denise L. DiFranco said she had talked to Chief Breit about using the opioid funds for getting some counseling in town. Chief Breit introduced Steve Ricco, Chris Dorval. Mr. Ricco is a retired Pawtucket officer and Mr. Dorval is a Providence Police therapist.

Mr. Dorval stated that he is a licensed drug and alcohol counselor and clinical social worker. He owns Ocean State Recovery Center in Johnston, RI. It is an outpatient health care facility that provides services to the State of RI, but also offers peer support to police, fire, and other departments. He offered any resources the town could benefit from with substance abuse disorders.

Ms. Rogers asked if that would include education in the high school. Mr. Dorval said absolutely; he has been doing that. Cheryl Hawes asked about the grammar school. Mr. Dorval said yes, and that age eight is a good time to start educating. He noted there was a lot of misinformation about substance abuse. He distributed brochures, noting family support and contact information.

David Paolino asked about how they handle the situation when they get a call from someone in crisis or if there is a home situation. Mr. Dorval said they do not work in that way; but they do work collaboratively with a group called parents' support network that provides mobile outreach. They cover all of northern Rhode Island.

Heidi Rogers asked how this would work with their funding—would we just pay for the program at the schools? Mr. Dorval said there would be contracts for high school, middle school, and potentially elementary school, but also a public forum for families including marketing for that. It would be an hour-long presentation for people. Denise L. DiFranco suggested getting Allison [Bouchard] involved. David Paolino asked if it would be an appropriate use of the funds to train officers in how to spot a potential issue. Chief Breit said they already do that, that's part of an officer's job.

Anna Rao asked if the ambulance people were trained. David Paolino said that was part of the state requirements.

Lynne Rider asked how sustainable would this be with the amount of funds that we have? Mr. Dorval suggested to use a "train the trainer" type model. They would train someone in the community who wants to champion this. Ms. Rider asked if this would be open to the ministers and priests in town? Mr. Dorval said it would be a great opportunity to include them.

Cheryl Hawes said she thought this was a good plan and use of the money and that it is needed in our schools. Denise L. DiFranco said they need to develop a contract. She suggested the Chief, Julia, and Alli be involved. David Paolino moved, Chris Stone seconded, that Heidi Rogers and Denise L. DiFranco work in conjunction with the opioid team to enter into a contract. The team would consist of Julia Chretien, Chief Breit, Allison Bouchard, Steve Ricco, and Chris Dorval. Motion passed 5 - 0. Heidi Rogers, aye; Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; Cheryl Hawes, aye; Denise L. DiFranco, aye.

3. Discussion with
Glocester regarding
Animal Control

Denise L. DiFranco said Will Worthy suggested that they have a meeting with members of the Glocester council next Thursday at their meeting to discuss how to move forward. Ms. DiFranco invited the Chief, noting that their Chief would be there at the council meeting. Chris Stone moved, Heidi Rogers seconded, that David Paolino and Denise L. DiFranco go to their council meeting to discuss the dog officer. Lynne Rider said that sometimes groups need to hear the whole thing. David Paolino said they could get meeting minutes. JoAnn Johnson asked if they could be more specific about the purpose of the meeting. Denise L. DiFranco said they had a contract with Scituate; they increased their fee substantially. The council felt that they could not continue with that contract and they got the impression that it was not negotiable, so they started looking elsewhere. Julia Chretien explained that the kenneling fee and the animal control officer fee were two different things; the officer fee went up. Motion passed 5 - 0. Heidi Rogers, aye; Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; Cheryl Hawes, aye; Denise L. DiFranco, aye.

4. Selection of two Council
Members to attend
Engineering Board in
May

David Paolino moved, Heidi Rogers seconded, to send Denise L. DiFranco and Cheryl Hawes to the Engineering Board meeting on May 31 at Station One. Motion passed 5 - 0. Heidi Rogers, aye; Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; Cheryl Hawes, aye; Denise L. DiFranco, aye.

5. Special Meeting
regarding the Foster
Ambulance Corps

Denise L. DiFranco said they needed to have a special meeting regarding the Ambulance Corps funding and have that be the only item on the agenda. Denise L. DiFranco set it for Tuesday, the 17th at 6 o'clock.

6. Summer Town Council
Meeting Dates

Denise L. DiFranco said she was looking at June and July. Heidi Rogers said that they usually don't have one in July

because of Foster Old Home Days setting up. Denise L. DiFranco said in June, it would be the 9th and the 23rd—did everyone want to do the 9th and not the 23rd? Kelli Russ said that was the end of year and they may need it. Denise L. DiFranco said in July it would be the 14th and the 28th and she could not make the 14th. Cheryl Hawes could not make the 14th. Would moving it to the 23rd be a problem? In August it would be the 11th and 25th.

Chris Stone moved, Heidi Rogers seconded, to have the meetings on June 9th, July 21st and August 11th.

Motion passed 5 - 0.

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

7. Resolution 2022-05
opposing H-7060 & S-
2139 (the reinstatement
of “Happy Hour”)

Denise L. DiFranco said that Representative Chippendale sent in an email in regard to the restoration to Happy Hour. Denise L. DiFranco said he was reaching out to the clerks and councils he represents to ask them to consider taking a position via Resolution against a bill currently in the RI legislature to legalize “Happy Hour” again in Rhode Island. There are strong feelings on both sides where some folks see it as economic development and others see it as re-embracing a failed policy of the past that led to the increase of DUIs and deaths from DUIs. Mr. Chippendale holds the latter opinion, and when it was passed by the House two days ago, he argued very strongly against it and voted against it. He requested the communities to call for the outright rejection of this bill or the veto of it by the governor. He would feel better if they made the bill enabling instead of mandatory, in other words, towns like ours where there are no buses, taxis, and Ubers means anyone drinking at Happy Hour is getting there and back by motor vehicles on public roadways. Providence has a robust and safe public transit system, and this may work in their city, but he feels towns should have the say as to whether or not such policies should be adopted in each specific town.

The bill has already passed the House and has received much push back from family members of recent children killed by drunk drivers. He said he thinks this has caused the Senate to pause on the issue and in the event that they do take it up, he would hope that they would amend it to be enabling only.

Heidi Rogers read the Resolution (see Exhibit A).

David Paolino moved, Chris Stone seconded, to adopt the Resolution and send Representative Chippendale back to the State House with the Resolution.

Cheryl Hawes asked if there was any establishment in the town that does a Happy Hour? Chris Stone said Lucky's.

David Paolino said they could if we passed it. Cheryl

Hawes asked if they had in the past? Heidi Rogers said

she thought they did drink specials and when they do drink specials they don't call it Happy Hour. Cheryl Hawes said she thought Happy Hour was illegal everywhere. David Paolino said it was, they want to bring it back.

Lynne Rider said she never knew it was regulated by State Law and was actually a thing. She is guessing it is where establishments are allowed to serve drinks cheaply—and an establishment doesn't ordinarily regulate what they charge for a drink?

Chief Breit explained that the State made a law abolishing Happy Hour so an individual made a motion to bring it back but there was a lot of push back on it. Ms. Rider asked if the State was able to say you can no longer reduce the prices? Chief Breit said that was correct.

Heidi Rogers said they have drink specials at Helen's where they need to empty a keg so they can put new summer stock in, but it's not just during a specific time. Cheryl Hawes said restaurants have other ways of doing it. Matthew Haynes asked if there was any information from Mr. Chippendale on what the chances of amending the bill might be? Denise L. DiFranco said she did not know, only that they are holding off.

Motion passed 5 - 0.

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

8. Reappointment of Board
of Canvassers Alternate -
Lisa Costa

Denise L. DiFranco said that last on the agenda was the re-appointment of Board of Canvasser alternate Lisa Costa.

Heidi Rogers moved, Cheryl Hawes seconded, to reappoint Lisa Costa as an alternate to the Board of Canvassers for a six-year term ending in March of 2028. Motion passed 5 - 0.

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

VII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Municipal Court
- New Police Station
- Wright's Auto

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Chris Stone moved, David Paolino seconded, to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Submitted by,

Susan M. Dillon, Town Clerk