

Town Council Meeting
December 8, 2022

The December 8, 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
Steve Bellucci

Also present:

Kelli Russ, Finance Director
Julia Chretien, Solicitor
Gordon Rogers, DPW Director

- A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
- B. ANNOUNCEMENTS/
PUBLIC COMMENT** Matt Haynes, 41 Johnson Road, who is on the Board of Trustees for the Library spoke about the number of cards issued by the Human Services Dept. not picked up for kids needing Christmas presents, and asked that if there are people who have any extra money, please help out. Cheryl Hawes thanked the Recreation Committee and DPW Dept. for Friday's event (Bright Night); it was beautiful.
Ms. Hawes also asked why the light at the end of Round Hill Road was not yet on. DPW Director Gordon Rogers said it that RI Energy had not yet responded.
- C. MINUTES** Approval of Minutes – November 17, 2022
Cheryl Hawes moved, David Paolino seconded to approve the minutes of November 17 as presented.
Discussion: None.
Motion passed 5 - 0.
Heidi Rogers, aye; Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; Cheryl Hawes, aye; Denise L. DiFranco, aye.
- D. SEATING OF NEW
COUNCIL** Cheryl Hawes vacated her seat and said thank you to the people of Foster for their vote of confidence for the last six years.
Steven Bellucci took the seat as a newly elected council member.
- E. SWEARING IN
CEREMONY** Representative Michael Chippendale administered the Oath of Office to the Town Council, the Town Clerk, and the Tax Board of Review member, Patricia Moreau.
- F. NOMINATION OF
TOWN COUNCIL
PRESIDENT** Heidi Rogers moved, Chris Stone seconded, to nominate Denise L. DiFranco to serve as Town Council president.
Motion passed 4 – 0 – 1, with one abstention.

Heidi Rogers, aye; David Paolino, aye; Chris Stone, aye;
Steve Bellucci, aye; Denise R. DiFranco, abstained.

**G. NOMINATION OF
TOWN COUNCIL VICE
PRESIDENT**

Heidi Rogers moved, David Paolino seconded, to
nominate Steve Bellucci to serve as Town Council Vice
President.

Discussion: Mr. Bellucci said he was willing.

Motion passed 5 - 0.

Heidi Rogers, aye; David Paolino, aye; Chris Stone, aye;
Steve Bellucci, aye; Denise R. DiFranco, aye.

H. CONSENT AGENDA

Warrants - Approval of General Warrant FY 2023 #8
\$139,766.58

License Renewals:

Secondhand Licenses:

Debra A. Parente, d/b/a Aunt B's Eclectic Finds, 114
Danielson Pike

Russell Smith, d/b/a Chelsea's Trading Post, 151
Danielson Pike

CBI LLC, d/b/a Cooke Brother's Imports, 184A
Danielson Pike

MCC Inc., d/b/a Mike's Auto Repair, 45 Anthony Rd.

Paul Hayhurst, d/b/a GCC Auto Sales, 175 Danielson Pike

Keith LaFazia, d/b/a Rhody Outdoors, 2 Goldmine Rd.

Adam David Dacko, d/b/a Route 6 Outpost, 52 Danielson
Pike

David Mihailides, Danny's Auction Barn LLC d/b/a
Partners Auto Auction RI, 150 Danielson Pike

Wendy O'Shea, d/b/a Old Man Mercantile & Antiques, 52
Danielson Pike

William Wilbur, Coastal Atlantic, d/b/a Foster Auto, 40
Mill Road

Thomas Neves, d/b/a Diablo Custom Workz LLC, 52
Danielson Pike

Victualing License Renewals:

Drake Petroleum, d/b/a Foster Xtra Mart, 188 Danielson
Pike

Paul Oueidat, d/b/a JP's General Store LLC, 189A
Hartford Pike

Gun Shop License Renewals:

Laurence Costa Mello, d/b/a Alarry Farm, 7 Rickard Road

Keith LaFazia, d/b/a Rhody Outdoors, 2 Goldmine Road

Adam David Dacko, d/b/a Route 6 Outpost, 52 Danielson
Pike

Thomas Neves, d/b/a Diablo Custom Workz LLC, 52
Danielson Pike

Holiday Sales Renewals:

Adam David Dacko, d/b/a Route 6 Outpost, 52 Danielson Pike

Drake Petroleum, d/b/a Foster Xtra Mart, 186 Danielson Pike

Russell Smith, d/b/a Chelsea's Trading Post, 151 Danielson Pike

Wendy O'Shea, d/b/a Old Man Mercantile & Antiques, 52 Danielson Pike

Paul Oueidat, d/b/a JP's General Store LLC, 189A Hartford Pike

Thomas Neves, d/b/a Diablo Custom Workz LLC, 52 Danielson Pike

Debra A. Parente, d/b/a Aunt B's Eclectic Finds, 114 Danielson Pike

Private Investigator's License Renewal:

Alan Pittman, d/b/a Alan Pittman Investigations, 117 Central Pike

Camp Ground License Renewals:

Virginia Bassett, d/b/a Ginny B Campground, 7 Harrington Road

Legacy Land Preservation LLC, d/b/a Dyer Woods Campground, 114 Johnson Rd.

Chris Stone moved, Heidi Rogers seconded to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Discussion: None.

Motion passed 5 - 0.

Heidi Rogers, aye; David Paolino, aye; Chris Stone, aye; Steve Bellucci, aye; Denise R. DiFranco, aye.

**I. APPOINTMENT OF
TOWN OFFICIALS**

Appointment of Town Officials

Chris Stone moved, Heidi Rogers seconded, to reappoint Inman & Tourgee as Town Solicitor.

Discussion: None.

Motion passed 5 - 0.

Heidi Rogers, aye; David Paolino, aye; Chris Stone, aye; Steve Bellucci, aye; Denise R. DiFranco, aye.

Heidi Rogers moved, Chris Stone seconded, to reappoint Nicole Carroll-Barnes as Probate Court Judge.

Discussion: None

Motion passed 5 - 0.

Heidi Rogers, aye; David Paolino, aye; Chris Stone, aye; Steve Bellucci, aye; Denise R. DiFranco, aye.

Heidi Rogers moved, Steve Bellucci seconded, to reappoint Kaitlin Boyer as Tax Collector/Tax Assessor

Discussion: None

Motion passed 5 - 0.

Steve Bellucci, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye; Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; and Denise L. DiFranco, aye.

Heidi Rogers moved, Steve Bellucci seconded, to reappoint Allison Bouchard as Director of Human Services.

Discussion: None

Motion passed 5 - 0.

Steve Bellucci, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye; Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; and Denise L. DiFranco, aye.

David Paolino moved, Heidi Rogers seconded to appoint George Dumont as the Building & Zoning Official.

Discussion: None.

Motion passed 5 - 0.

Steve Bellucci, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye; Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; and Denise L. DiFranco, aye.

David Paolino moved, Heidi Rogers seconded, to reappoint Tammy Steinkamp as Recreation Director.

Discussion: Heidi Rogers commended Tammy Steinkamp for the phenomenal job with the food trucks, Trunk or Treat, and Bright Night—she does a great job.

Motion passed 5 - 0.

Steve Bellucci, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye; Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; and Denise L. DiFranco, aye.

J. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTIES

Heidi Rogers moved, Steve Bellucci seconded to approve the Town Clerk's recommendation to appoint Michaela Johnson as Deputy Town Clerk.

Discussion: None.

Motion passed 5 - 0.

Steve Bellucci, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye; Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; and Denise L. DiFranco, aye.

Heidi Rogers moved, Steve Bellucci seconded, to approve the Finance Director's recommendation to appoint Karen Williams as Deputy Treasurer.

Discussion: None.

Motion passed 5 - 0.

Steve Bellucci, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye; Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; and Denise L. DiFranco, aye.

**K. APPOINTMENT OF
NON-STANDARD
EMPLOYEES**

Appointment of Non-Standard Employees

Heidi Rogers moved, David Paolino seconded, to reappointed Robert Thurber to the two positions of Corder of Wood and Tree Warden.

Motion passed 5 - 0.

Steve Bellucci, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye; Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; and Denise L. DiFranco, aye.

Denise L. DiFranco said there was a letter from Mr. D'Agostino requesting to be reappointed. Heidi Rogers moved, David Paolino seconded, to reappoint Thomas D'Agostino as Fence Viewer.

Motion passed 5 - 0.

Steve Bellucci, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye; Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; and Denise L. DiFranco, aye.

Denise L. DiFranco said there were two letters of application for the Keeper of the Keys position; we did not have a Keeper of the Keys in the past.

Heidi Rogers moved, David Paolino seconded, to appoint Kevin Donovan as Keeper of the Keys.

Discussion: Lynne Rider asked who the other applicant was. Denise L. DiFranco asked the attorney if that was appropriate to say. Atty. Tourgee said it was. Denise L. DiFranco said one was Ms. Hawes and the other was Mr. Donovan.

Motion passed 5 - 0.

Steve Bellucci, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye; Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; and Denise L. DiFranco, aye.

Denise L. DiFranco said she spoke to Mr. Hopkins and that he was still interested. Chris Stone moved, Heidi Rogers seconded, to reappoint Stanley Hopkins as Town Historian.

Motion passed 5 - 0.

Steve Bellucci, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye; Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; and Denise L. DiFranco, aye.

Heidi Rogers moved, Chris Stone seconded, to reappoint Jayme Pirzynski as EMA Director.

Discussion: Heidi Rogers said that Ms. Pirzynski has also been assuming the role of the Assistant EMA Director; we don't have one of those.

Motion passed 5 - 0.

Steve Bellucci, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye; Chris Stone, aye;
David Paolino, aye; and Denise L. DiFranco, aye.

Denise L. DiFranco said that last was the constables and those are usually the three fire chiefs and the Town Council and anyone else who wanted to do public service.

Heidi Rogers moved, Steve Bellucci seconded, to appoint the three fire chiefs and the town council members as constables.

Motion passed 5 - 0.

Steve Bellucci, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye; Chris Stone, aye;
David Paolino, aye; and Denise L. DiFranco, aye.

**L. SWEARING IN OF
NEWLY-APPOINTED
NON-STANDARD
EMPLOYEES**

Swearing-In of Newly-Appointed Non-Standard Employees: Kaitlin Boyer, Kevin Donovan, Chief Brayton were sworn in by Representative Mike Chippendale.

M. NEW BUSINESS
a. Town Council Meeting
Dates - December 15,
2022

Denise L. DiFranco said that setting the meeting dates are one of the things that has to be done; traditionally it has been the second and fourth Thursday.

Heidi Rogers suggested disposing of the December 15th meeting. Heidi Rogers moved, Chris Stone seconded, to dispose of the December 15, 2022, meeting.

Discussion: None.

Motion passed 5 - 0.

Steve Bellucci, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye; Chris Stone, aye;
David Paolino, aye; and Denise L. DiFranco, aye.

Denise L. DiFranco asked if they wanted to continue with the second and fourth Thursdays of the month starting in January.

David Paolino moved, Heidi Rogers seconded, to continue with the second and fourth Thursdays of the month starting January 2023.

Discussion: Heidi Rogers asked, still at 7? Ms. Rogers said to consider 6 because department heads have to stay. Steve Bellucci moved, Heidi Rogers seconded, to change the meeting time to 6 o'clock.

Further discussion: Gordon Rogers said on the agenda it says "dates" not times. Denise L. DiFranco asked the attorney and it is acceptable.

Motion passed 5 - 0.

Steve Bellucci, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye; Chris Stone, aye;
David Paolino, aye; and Denise L. DiFranco, aye.

b. Resignation of Town
Planner

Denise L. DiFranco said that next is a sad agenda item. Heidi Rogers read a resignation letter from Michael Antonellis, Town Planner (see Exhibit A). David Paolino moved, Chris Stone seconded, to accept the resignation letter of Michael Antonellis with regrets. Discussion: David Paolino said that Michael has been awesome to work with and felt that we have accomplished a lot. Heidi Rogers said she feels he has been the best they have had; he will be sorely missed. Lynne Rider said she wanted to clap for his accomplishments; everyone joined in applause. Denise L. DiFranco made it clear that he did not go looking; they went to him. Motion passed 5 - 0. Steve Bellucci, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye; Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; and Denise L. DiFranco, aye.

c. Advertisement of Town
Planner Position

Denise L. DiFranco asked Mr. Antonellis to look at the job description so that it would be up to date and concise. He said he would post on the national site. Denise L. DiFranco said she would ask that we ask for the resumes be emailed to herself. Heidi Rogers moved, David Paolino seconded, that the resumes be emailed to Denise L. DiFranco and that the council would review them as a whole in Executive Session. Discussion: Lynne Rider suggested that he be part of that meeting. Motion passed 5 - 0. Steve Bellucci, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye; Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; and Denise L. DiFranco, aye.

d. Approval of Police
Building Schematic
Design

Denise L. DiFranco said that next is to approve the schematic so that they can get in touch with the architect and it can be finalized. Steve Bellucci moved, David Paolino seconded, to approve the schematic. Discussion: Lynne Rider asked how many square feet it turned out to be. Chris Stone said 9,180 sq. ft. Heidi Rogers said the top level is 6,143, the lower 2,287. Steve Bellucci said 750 in the attic. 6,143 is the footprint, including the sally port. Motion passed 5 - 0. Steve Bellucci, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye; Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; and Denise L. DiFranco, aye.

e. EMS Updates – Funding

Denise L. DiFranco said it's been going well, better than expected, but we need to have funds moved over.

Kelli Russ said that from a cash flow standpoint, they are in the negative to cover payroll, \$100,000 over. She reviewed the process; there is no funds from third party billing.

David Paolino moved, Chris Stone seconded, that we fund EMS the \$100,000 requested, and if we get the third party billing monies received and if they have a surplus at the end of the year, that any money up to the \$100,000 be returned to the town.

Discussion: Heidi Rogers asked how long we would be funding this and paying for that building. Steve Bellucci said they are in the process of turning the building and rescues over to South Foster.

Motion passed 5 - 0.

Steve Bellucci, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye; Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; and Denise L. DiFranco, aye.

Move item i. up to now

i. RFP Survey of land on the corner of Rt.6 and Rt.94

Heidi Rogers moved, Steve Bellucci seconded, to move item i. to this point in the agenda.

Motion passed 5 - 0.

Steve Bellucci, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye; Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; and Denise L. DiFranco, aye.

Michael Antonellis said that Foster Survey bid was the best by far.

Heidi Rogers moved, Steve Bellucci seconded, to award the surveying of Rt. 6 and 94 for the police station site to Foster Survey Company in the amount of \$4,850.00 to begin within 30 days to be paid from the contingency fund.

Discussion: Lynne Rider suggested putting a definite end date on this because Hemlock Village took so long. Mr. Rogers said they were hired to do the surveying for the Swamp Meadow Bridge and the reason why that didn't move quickly is because it wasn't done fast enough. Mr. Bellucci suggested 30 days. Patty Moreau suggested they ask the surveyor how far behind he is. Mr. Rogers said he would go along with 30 days. David Paolino asked if they feel like the grant for the police station is any closer for funding. Mr. Chippendale said no. He said we could ask again because there are still funds. Denise L. DiFranco asked if we had heard any more about the community room Mr. Antonellis said they had not, last he heard it was

still hung up in the Treasury Department and the State has had no guidance on how to proceed. Denise L. DiFranco said that Senator Reed's office said she would hear by the end of the year to help with the communication portion.

Motion passed 5 - 0.

Steve Bellucci, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye; Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; and Denise L. DiFranco, aye.

f. January 18th: Joint Meeting
with Planning Board
(Economic Development
Consultant Preliminary
Findings)

Denise L. DiFranco said the Mr. Antonellis has asked if we could meet with the Economic Development consultant who is ready to present a draft.

Steve Bellucci moved, David Paolino seconded, to have the meeting at the Ben Eddy building with the planning board. Denise L. DiFranco said it is a Wednesday night. Atty. Tourgee explained how to invite the planning board to a town council meeting, how to run a joint meeting, and where they would sit.

Motion passed 5 - 0.

Steve Bellucci, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye; Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; and Denise L. DiFranco, aye.

g.DEM Ballfield Grant
Extension

Denise L. DiFranco noted that it is not an opportune time to be planting grass so Mr. Antonellis reached out to DEM to get an extension in which we have to complete it by March 31, 2024. Kelli Russ said she would ask for funding before then.

Steve Bellucci moved, David Paolino seconded, to approve Denise L. DiFranco's signature on the DEM ballfield extension.

Motion passed 5 - 0.

Steve Bellucci, aye; Heidi Rogers, aye; Chris Stone, aye; David Paolino, aye; and Denise L. DiFranco, aye.

h.Potential Purchase of St
Paul's Church Land

Denise L. DiFranco said that next there is the potential purchase of a portion of St. Paul's church property, facing the church on the left on Rt. 6 amounting to 25 acres.

They are looking to divide it into 2 portions; the library is looking at one. Mr. Antonellis said it is no secret that they are going to sell, and he wanted to bring it to the council for them to start thinking about. There is no history of use on the lot. There was a consideration of selling them off as house lots which he did not feel was economically wise as it is potential commercial property, and would amount to \$16,000 worth of taxes. It is potentially the best commercial property on Rt. 6. He explained the procurement procedure. A suggested price was \$200,000

per lot so both would be \$400,000; there is over 600 feet of frontage on Route 6. Both lots are high and dry. Steve Bellucci asked for a plat map. Mr. Antonellis said he would send him the plans. Matthew Haynes said he had spoken with St. Paul's and they are very motivated to choose the right buyers.

j. Health Care Mandates and
Options

Denise L. DiFranco said that Kelli Russ and Jackie had attended a meeting regarding the health care and the new mandates that are coming in to play effective January 1. Kelli Russ said that we have to make selections of options such as transgender coverage, and then there are other definite mandates. Heidi Rogers said that this is what we will cover, how do we vote on that? David Paolino asked if they would be subject to a lawsuit if they didn't cover it. Atty. Tourgee said no. You have a right to do it, but we don't have to cover it for any child requesting it. Ms. Russ said the mandates are in January, if you are an employee and you are newly pregnant, you can elect to change your plan rather than waiting for the enrollment time. Another is pediatric and autoimmune illnesses are being added, hysterectomy and labroscopic removal of fibroids.

Denise L. DiFranco so that is not what we are voting on, what are the optional ones? Kelli Russ said the optionals are transgender and transitioning.

Heidi Rogers moved, Steve Bellucci seconded, to approve gender-affirming care in 2023 where self-funded clients will be able to choose an enhanced benefit bundle to expand upon existing coverage.

Discussion: Kelli Russ clarified that gender affirming is transgender transitioning.

Motion failed 0 - 5.

The council was polled:

Heidi Rogers, no;

Chris Stone, no;

Steve Bellucci, no;

Denise L. DiFranco, no;

David Paolino, no;

Kelli Russ said there is a second travel option, so you can open for abortion rights because you can now pay for the abortion and you can cover the travel. It doesn't pertain to us.

Heidi Rogers moved, Steve Bellucci seconded, that we approve self-funded clients be able to elect travel benefits related to accessing abortion, gender-affirming care and

Town Council Meeting
December 8, 2022

transplant services under the travel benefit, key benefits to include an annual benefit maximum for each service the ability to choose a combined maximum for these services.

Discussion: None.

Motion failed 0 - 5.

Steve Bellucci, no; Heidi Rogers, no; Chris Stone, no; David Paolino, no; and Denise L. DiFranco, no.

N. ADJOURNMENT

Heidi Rogers moved to adjourn. Steve Bellucci seconded.

Motion passed 5 - 0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Submitted by,

Susan M. Dillon, Town Clerk