

Town Council Meeting
March 9, 2023

The March 9, 2023, Town Council Meeting was called to order by Denise L. DiFranco, President, in Foster, RI at 5:30 p.m. at the Benjamin Eddy Building.

The following members were present:
Denise L. DiFranco, President, excused
Steve Bellucci, Vice President
Chris Stone
David Paolino
Heidi Rogers

Also present:
Kelli Russ, Finance Director
Julia Chretien, Assistant Solicitor

- I. EXECUTIVE SESSION**
PURSUANT TO RIGL 42-46-5, (A), (1) Personnel
1. Police Chief Position
 2. Finance Department Temporary Help

Heidi Rogers moved, Chris Stone seconded, to go into Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 for a work session regarding Personnel and Job Performance 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.

The meeting was reconvened at 6:00 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

III. ANNOUNCEMENTS / PUBLIC COMMENT

Lynne Rider spoke on behalf of Preservation. They know they will soon be putting in the gas tanks that will heat the Town House and will be digging a trench. Preservation asked that the granite posts not be damaged. Ms. DiFranco said that Mr. Rogers said there was enough space.

Ron Cervasio said that Denise L. DiFranco has been on the council twelve years. Each year the financial stability of the town has become worse. It's apparent that you [Ms. DiFranco] have worked every way she can to not do the one thing that she should, and that is to bring new business in. Mr. Cervasio mentioned the police department, the ambulance corps and the Covid money. After the police station is done with your name on the plaque, the Aylsworth House will need \$500,000 worth of work and the old Town House will need someplace between \$5 to 8 hundred thousand dollars with no funds available to take care of them. We'll have two derelict buildings. He gives credit for buying the land across from this, but we could have bought the Zimmerman and Printer houses and we would have had the most fabulous center of town ever. Your 10 years have been a disaster.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

Warrants - Approval of General Warrant
FY2023 # 14 \$129,293.20
Chris Stone moved, Steve Bellucci seconded.
Discussion: None.

Motion passed 5 - 0.

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

V. OLD BUSINESS

**1. Police Station Building
Update**

Denise L. DiFranco said they council has a copy of a survey where the land is going to be. Mr. Renzi and the planner will meet on the 22nd at 6:30 regarding the administrative subdivision. They decided to have it just prior to the Economic Development meeting at 7. They reviewed the survey. Mr. Bellucci asked if they had figured out the parking. Ms. DiFranco said yes, in the back would be the impound and what police cars they have already. In the front will be twelve spots. The road will be on South Foster's property and there will be gravel so there can be parking there. Steve Bellucci asked how many people the community room would hold. Ms. DiFranco said she did not know. Julia Chretien said that the Fire Marshall would determine that.

Kelli Russ said she thought it would be a hundred. Mr. Bellucci said they would need at least 50 or 60 parking spots.

Ms. DiFranco said they decided to go with a full basement. Some of the positives is [an additional] man lock near dispatch. The other plus is that in 2018 the state said there would need to be sprinklers in all the municipal buildings. If we had started earlier, we would not have had them and we would have had to retrofit them which would cost more money.

Steve Bellucci asked how much would it cost for a full basement. Denise L. DiFranco said it would not cost that much more. Mr. Bellucci asked if it was going to be useable. Ms. DiFranco said yes; and it would give space for expansion in the future.

The council reviewed other details, such as setbacks, cell tower options, the community room, and charging conduits for electric cars. Ms. DiFranco said South Foster is having a meeting to do the paperwork for the planner for an Administrative Subdivision, a checklist and application.

Ms. DiFranco said there's a need for ballistic sheathing which has a rating of 1 to 10; ten is an army / military grade. Most departments are using 3. The ballistic sheathing comes in 4 x 8 sheets and they have to be put around the building. It's recommended we do a level 5 because the requirements may be raised in the future. They are looking for grants from homeland security to see if that's a possibility. Mr. Bellucci wanted to know if that had been included in the original estimates. Ms. DiFranco said no because it's something new that's come out. Mr. Bellucci asked if anyone knew what the projected cost of the building would be. Chris Stone said he thought 5

million dollars. Mr. Bellucci said more like 6 or 7 million dollars.

Ms. DiFranco repeated that the Administrative Subdivision is scheduled for March 22 at 6:30; Anthony [Renzi] suggested it and she spoke to Grant. Ms. DiFranco said she had concerns about the fact that a neighbor of hers became upset because of police building rumors, so Ms. Joyce has done some PR things in the past and she would like to write some articles explaining what is happening in the *Foster Home Journal*, the Facebook page, sending out email blasts, with the facts.

Lynne Rider said that if concerned people would attend the police building committee meetings, all of these questions could have been answered by people who were much more in the know. You are saying 5 million but you have Gordy Brayton there who has his finger on the pulse of building, you've got Joe Walsh who is an electrical guru, you've got Brendan Mara, engineer, they have a pretty good handle on what things cost. Mr. Bellucci says that he had and every couple months he sees new things being added and that is why he was wondering if it was figured in. Ms. Rider said that if you attended their meeting last Monday, it all could have been asked and answered. Mr. Bellucci said he asked now. It's fine if we need it, but he wants to know how much more it's going to cost. Ms. Rider said, ask them. Mr. Bellucci said he just did, he asked this one right here.

Guenter Bay said there might be a problem because there is only one egress. Ms. DiFranco said no, there are two doors. Mr. Bay said the other thing is that from the traffic light at Rt. 6, it slows down. He sees a big problem with cars coming flying down the road. He also asked about sheathing.

Ron Cervasio spoke on Ponaganset high school, Paine School, and the Town Hall where cost-savings hurt us. He would like to see it done right.

2. Open Meetings
Procedures: Public
Participation

Denise L. DiFranco said that she and Mr. Bellucci have discussed this in the past. Mr. Bellucci said we have to have it; it has to be done and he thinks it should at the beginning of the meeting, and then the meeting should be run in an orderly fashion so we can get through this stuff, and not allow cross-talking and people going off in different directions.

Ms. DiFranco said it sounds good, and so we're good with keeping it the way it is now. She asked if there were any other comments.

Heidi Rogers said she would never get rid of public comment.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Roberts Rules of Order
v. Democratic Rules of
Order

Denise L. DiFranco said that when they start a new term they discuss whether they are going to use Robert's Rules of Order or Democratic Rules of Order.

Mr. Bellucci moved to put the Democratic Rules of Order in place for this term. Heidi Rogers seconded.

Discussion: None.

Motion passed 5 - 0.

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

Mr. Bellucci said that under the Democratic Rules of Order, the facilitator of the meeting does not speak and doesn't vote. Ms. DiFranco said unless she removes and makes arrangements for him [Mr. Bellucci] to run the meeting. Mr. Bellucci said you don't get to vote unless there's a tie.

Lynne Rider said that is Robert's.

Julia Chretien said she will put together summaries in writing for March 30.

2. Appointment to Zoning
Board (Alternate
Position)

Denise L. DiFranco said that next is an appointment to the Zoning Board.

Steve Bellucci moved to put Jason Simmons in as second alternate on the Zoning Board.

Heidi Rogers seconded.

Motion passed 5 - 0.

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

**VII. FUTURE AGENDA
ITEMS**

Public Hearing on the 30th

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Steve Bellucci moved to adjourn. Heidi Rogers seconded.
Meeting ended at 6 p.m.

Submitted by,

Susan M. Dillon, Town Clerk