

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING- WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2024

The council met on Wednesday, February 28, 2024, and called to order at 6:39 p.m. in the Town Hall, Council Chambers, Council Chairman Calouro presiding:

PRESENT: Council Chairman, Nathan Calouro
Vice-Chairwoman, Mary Parella
Councilman, Antonio "Tony" Teixeira
Councilman, Timothy Sweeney
Councilman, Aaron Ley

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator, Steven Contente
Assistant Town Solicitor, Andy Tietz, Esq
Town Sergeant, Archie Martins

February 29, 2024 - Joint Finance Committee Meeting
March 6, 2024-Special Meeting - Capital Projects
March 18, 19, 20 and 25, 2024 - Budget Workshops
March 21, 2024- Joint Finance Committee Meeting
March 27, 2024 - Town Council Meeting & Vote on Provisional Budget

6:30 pm - Public Service Interviews and Appointments

Newport and Bristol County Convention & Visitors Bureau - One member to fill an unexpired term ending September 2026

a. Stephan H. Brigidi, 30 Bradford Street - Interest/Appointment

The Council heard from Mr. Brigidi who expressed his interest in becoming a member of the Newport and Bristol County Convention & Visitors Bureau. Discussions ensued between members of the Council and Mr. Brigidi pertaining to Mr. Brigidi's qualifications and experiences. Mr. Brigidi also stated why he would consider himself to be a good fit for the position.

b. Brian J. Travers, 474 Hope Street - Interest/Appointment

The Council heard from Mr. Travers who expressed his interest in becoming a member of the Newport and Bristol County Convention & Visitors Bureau. Discussions ensued between members of the

Council and Mr. Travers pertaining to Mr. Travers's qualifications and experiences. Mr. Travers also stated why he would consider himself to be a good fit for the position.

Parella/Teixeira- Voted unanimously to appoint Stephan H. Brigidi to the Newport and Bristol County Convention & Visitors Bureau with a term set to expire in September 2026.

Motion RE: Consent Agenda - To Approve the Consent Agenda

Sweeney/Teixeira- Voted unanimously to approve the Consent Agenda as prepared and presented.

A. Submission of Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)

- A1.** Town Council Special Workshop Meeting Minutes - January 10, 2024
- A2.** Town Council Meeting Minutes - February 7, 2024
- A3.** Town Council Executive Session Minutes - February 7, 2024 (sealed council only)

Sweeney/Teixeira- Voted unanimously to approve the Council minutes of January 10, 2024, February 7, 2024, and Executive session minutes of February 27, 2024, as prepared and presented.

B. Public Hearings

- B1.** Charles Eli Dunn, Folklore, LLC, d/b/a Folklore Provisions, 301 Hope Street - request for Class B Limited Liquor License (see also agenda items C1, D1, and D2)

Sweeney/Teixeira-Voted unanimously to close the public hearing

Prior to the vote being taken, Applicant Charles Eli Dunn addressed the council. Mr. Dunn spoke in favor of the petition and highlighted the overall concept of the establishment.

Alayne White residing at 11 Constitution Street addressed the council and spoke in favor of the petition.

Laurie Muhlbach, residing at 275 Hope Street, spoke before the council, expressing her views on the advantages and disadvantages of the establishment, highlighting a net positive perspective as a direct neighbor.

It is hereby recorded that no further testimony was provided by members of the public either in favor or opposition to the matter

C. Ordinances

- C1.** Ordinance #2024-02 Chapter 15 Junk, Secondhand and Antique Dealer Sec. 15-36 Required conditions; Sec. 15-38 Hearing on application by town council and Sec. 15-39 Prerequisites to issuance (to comply with legislative changes exempting licensing requirements for businesses dealing with secondhand consignment goods, resale good, thrift goods and antiques) **(2nd Reading)**

Teixeira/Sweeney- Voted unanimously to consider this action to constitute the Second Reading for the adoption of Ordinance #2024-02. Advertise in the local newspaper

- C2.** Ordinance #2024-03 Chapter 16, Article V Stopping, Standing and Parking, Section 16-146 Parking time Limited in designated area (to add a 30 min parking restriction on High Street M-F 10 am - 4pm) **(2nd Reading)**

Teixeira/Sweeney - Voted unanimously to consider this action to constitute the Second Reading for the adoption of Ordinance #2024-03 Advertise in the local newspaper

- C3.** Ordinance #2024-4 Chapter 17, Article II Alcoholic Beverages Establishments, Section 17-82 Number of Licenses (to increase the number of Class BV Limited Licenses from 7-8) **(2nd Reading)**

Sweeney/Teixeira - Voted unanimously to consider this action to constitute the Second Reading for the adoption of Ordinance #2024-04. Advertise in the local newspaper

- C4.** Ordinance #2024-5 Chapter 16 Motor Vehicles and Traffic, Article V. Stopping, Standing and Parking, Sec. 16-143 Parking prohibited at all times (one space adjacent to the driveway at 45 Congregational Street) **(1st reading)**

Teixeira/Sweeney - Voted unanimously to consider this action to constitute the first reading of Ordinance #2024-05. Advertise in the local newspaper.

- C5.** Ordinance #2024-06 Chapter 27, Article I Taxation, Sec. 27-7 Exemptions of persons over the age of 65 years and Sec. 27-9 Entitlements and amounts **(1st Reading)**

Teixeira/Sweeney - Voted unanimously to consider this action to constitute the first reading of Ordinance #2024-06. Advertise in the local newspaper.

Prior to the vote being taken, it was emphasized that there had been extensive discussion in previous meetings regarding senior exemptions for assistance. It was highlighted that the tax rate would be calculated by assessing each exemption granted on property under the provisions of this section at the current tax rate, or at a rate equivalent to \$20 per \$1,000 evaluation, whichever is greater. Even if the tax rate exceeded \$20, it would still be capped at \$20 for the exemption. This explains how the figure of \$20 was determined, translating to a tax exemption ranging from \$250 to \$300.

- C6.** Ordinance #2024-07 Chapter 27 Taxation, Sec. 27-9 Entitlements and amounts (amendments to the hardship exemption) **(1st Reading)**

Teixeira/Sweeney - Voted unanimously to consider this action to constitute the first reading of Ordinance #2024-07. Advertise in the local newspaper.

Discussions ensued regarding the method employed by the US Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, in determining the property threshold.

D. Licensing Board - New Petitions

- D1.** Charles Eli Dunn, Folklore, LLC, d/b/a Folklore Provisions, 301 Hope Street - request for a Victualling License

- a. recommendation - Town Administrator and Fire Chief
- b. recommendation - Town Administrator and Chief of Police
- c. recommendation - Town Administrator and Water Pollution Control

Teixeira/Parella- Voted unanimously to grant this license per the recommendations received and conditions, if any, as delineated, and also subject to conformance to all laws and ordinances and payment of all fees, taxes, and levies.

- D2.** Charles Eli Dunn, Folklore, LLC, d/b/a Folklore Provisions, 301 Hope Street - request for Class B Limited Liquor License

- a. recommendation - Town Administrator and Fire Chief
- b. recommendation - Town Administrator and Chief of Police

c. recommendation - Town Administrator and Department of Community Development

Sweeney/Teixeira-Voted unanimously to grant this license per the recommendations received and conditions, if any, as delineated, and also subject to conformance to all laws and ordinances and payment of all fees, taxes, and levies; subject to a six-month review.

D3. Philip Fitting, British Motorcars in Bristol, in support of Explore Bristol - request for One-Day Dancing & Entertainment License at Independence Park on June 7, 2024, 5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

a. recommendation - Town Administrator and Fire Chief

b. recommendation - Town Administrator and Chief of Police

c. recommendation - Town Administrator and Director of Recreation

Teixeira/Sweeney- Voted unanimously to grant this license per the recommendations received and conditions, if any, as delineated, and also subject to conformance to all laws and ordinances and payment of all fees, taxes, and levies.

D4. Philip Fitting, British Motorcars in Bristol, request for food truck event permit in support of Explore Bristol at the lower field of the town beach, south side of Asylum Road on June 8, 2024, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

a. recommendation - Town Administrator and Fire Chief

b. recommendation - Town Administrator and Chief of Police

c. recommendation - Town Administrator and Director of Recreation

Teixeira/Sweeney- Voted unanimously to grant this license per the recommendations received and conditions, if any, as delineated, and also subject to conformance to all laws and ordinances and payment of all fees, taxes, and levies.

D5. Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School, 127 State Street - request for One-Day Dancing & Entertainment License for a fundraising event on May 18, 2024, from 6 p.m. - 11 p.m.

a. recommendation - Town Administrator and Fire Chief

b. recommendation - Town Administrator and Chief of Police

Teixeira/Parella- Voted unanimously to grant this license per the recommendations received and conditions, if any, as delineated, and also subject to conformance to all laws and ordinances and payment of all fees, taxes, and levies.

D6. Bristol Police Department request for One-Day Dancing & Entertainment License for the 3rd Annual Community Night Out Event at the Town Common on August 14, 2024, from 5:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m.

a. recommendation from Town Administrator and Fire Chief

b. recommendation from Town Administrator and Chief of Police

c. recommendation from Town Administrator and Director of Parks and Recreation

Parella/Ley- Voted unanimously to suspend the regular order of business to consider agenda items D6, D7, and F3 at this time.

**It is hereby noted for the record that discussion and action concerning agenda items D6, D7, and F3 appear, in place, as found within.*

Teixeira/Sweeney- Voted unanimously to grant this license per the recommendations received and conditions, if any, as delineated, and also subject to conformance to all laws and ordinances and payment of all fees, taxes, and levies.

Prior to the vote being taken, Sergeant Mourato addressed the council, offering insights into the event and its objectives. He emphasized the communal spirit and elucidated on how the community night event aimed to enhance the well-being of the community. He conveyed gratitude and appreciation towards the department, town council, and the community as a whole.

- D7.** Bristol Police Department request for One Food Truck at the 3rd Annual Community Night Out Event at the Twn Common on August 14, 2024, from 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
- a. recommendation from Town Administrator and Fire Chief
 - b. recommendation from Town Administrator and Chief of Police
 - c. recommendation from Town Administrator and Director of Parks and Recreation

Teixeira/Sweeney- Voted unanimously to grant this license per the recommendations received and conditions, if any, as delineated, and also subject to conformance to all laws and ordinances and payment of all fees, taxes, and levies.

- D8.** Victor Gomes, Vic's Corner Seafood & Catering, 465 Wood Street- request for Victualling license
- a. recommendation - Town Administrator and Fire Chief
 - b. recommendation - Town Administrator and Chief of Police
 - c. recommendation - Town Administrator and Director of Community Development
 - d. recommendation - Town Administrator and Water Pollution Control Chemist/Pretreatment Coordinator

Sweeney/Teixeira- Voted unanimously to grant this license per the recommendations received and conditions, if any, as delineated, and also subject to conformance to all laws and ordinances and payment of all fees, taxes, and levies.

Prior to the vote being taken, applicant Victor Gomes spoke to the council, offering an overview of his proposed establishment. He mentioned that it would operate as a grab-and-go food venue with no indoor seating.

- D9.** Camille Teixeira, Chairwoman, Bristol Fourth of July Committee, request for Bingo License at the VFW Post on March 26, 2024, and September 18, 2024, both events from 6 p.m.- 8:30 p.m.
- a. recommendation - Town Administrator and Fire Chief
 - b. recommendation - Town Administrator and Chief of Police

Sweeney/Teixeira- Voted unanimously to grant this license per the recommendations received and conditions, if any, as delineated, and also subject to conformance to all laws and ordinances and payment of all fees, taxes, and levies.

D10. Charles MacDonough, Bristol Fourth of July Summer Concert Series, request for Food Truck, June 19 - July 2, 2024, at Independence Park from 4:30 p.m. - 9:45 p.m. daily

- a. recommendation - Town Administrator and Fire Chief
- b. recommendation - Town Administrator and Director of Parks and Recreation
- c. recommendation - Town Administrator and Director of Public Works
- d. recommendation - Town Administrator and Chief of Police

Teixeira/Parella- Voted unanimously to grant this license per the recommendations received and conditions, if any, as delineated, and also subject to conformance to all laws and ordinances and payment of all fees, taxes, and levies.

D11. Maria J. Cesario, Treasurer, Bristol Rotary Club, request for One-Day Bingo License for a fundraiser on March 21, 2024, at St. Elizabeth's Church from 5:30 p.m. - 9 p.m.

- a. recommendation - Town Administrator and Fire Chief
- b. recommendation - Town Administrator and Chief of Police

Sweeney/Teixeira- Voted unanimously to grant this license per the recommendations received and conditions, if any, as delineated, and also subject to conformance to all laws and ordinances and payment of all fees, taxes, and levies.

E. Licensing Board - Renewals

- E1.** Fabio Lopes, Bristol Sunset Cafe, 499 Hope Street - Six-Month Review and Request for Consideration of One Additional Class BV Liquor License (**continued from 7-12-2023- Licensed issued August 2023**)

Sweeney/Teixeira- - Voted unanimously to refer the matter to the Town Solicitor to draft an ordinance for one additional Class BV Liquor License for council consideration on March 27, 2024; and schedule the public hearing for the April 17, 2024, council meeting.

Prior to the vote being taken, Clerk Cordeiro acknowledged the recommendation labeled as "received at meeting." She explained that, due to an oversight in the clerk's office, the request for recommendation was sent out late to the BPD. Despite the short notice, the police were able to provide their recommendation, and she expressed gratitude for their assistance and diligence in having it available for the council's consideration.

F. Petitions - Other

- F1.** Philip Fitting, British Motorcars in Bristol, request to sell/serve alcohol in support of Explore Bristol at Independence Park on June 7, 2024, 5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- a. recommendation -Town Administrator and Fire Chief
 - b. recommendation - Town Administrator and Chief of Police
 - c. recommendation - Town Administrator and Director of Public Works
 - d. recommendation - Town Administrator and Director of Community Development
 - e. recommendation - Town Administrator and Director of Parks and Recreation

Teixeira/Sweeney- Voted unanimously to approve the petition per the recommendations received and subject to conformance to all laws and ordinances

and payment of all fees, taxes, and levies

F2. Joao D. Medeiros, Facility Manager, St. Elizabeth's Auditorium, request to relocate two accessible parking spaces in the vicinity of 577 Wood Street

a. recommendation from Town Administrator and Chief of Police

b. recommendation from Town Administrator and Director of Public Works

Teixeira/Parella- Voted unanimously to consider this action to constitute the first reading of a request for relocation of accessible parking space and to continue the said matter until March 27, 2024, for the second reading.

F3. Bristol Police Department request for Use of Town Common and Support of Town Council for the 3rd Annual Community Night Out Event on August 14, 2024 (event hours from 5:30-8:30 PM - set up hours begin at 11 AM)

a. recommendation from Town Administrator and Fire Chief

b. recommendation from Town Administrator and Chief of Police

c. recommendation from Town Administrator and Director of Parks and Recreation

Teixeira/Sweeney- Voted unanimously to approve the petition per the recommendations received and subject to conformance to all laws and ordinances and payment of all fees, taxes, and levies; and to appropriate \$1200 from the Town Council Contingency account in support of the community night out event.

F4. Clara Read, 11 Noyes Avenue, request for no parking in front of 8 - 10 Noyes Avenue

a. recommendation - Town Administrator and Chief of Police

b. recommendation - Town Administrator and Director of Public Works

Teixeira/Ley- Voted unanimously to deny the no parking request.

Prior to the vote being taken, Police Chief Lynch provided the council with an overview of the no-parking request procedures. He mentioned that while it might be challenging to navigate out of the petitioner's driveway, it was still feasible. He emphasized the nature of the narrow roads in the area and surrounding streets, pointing out that many of them are tight and narrow.

Petitioner Clara Reed, residing at 11 Noyes Ave, addressed the council, she expressed her safety concerns, particularly regarding the presence of four intersecting driveways, and requested the council's consideration to reinstate the no parking requirement. Mrs. Reed highlighted that the no parking box had been present before the street underwent repaving. It was clarified that some no-parking boxes were installed before they were required by town ordinance and are therefore not considered enforceable. With the recent street paving, this matter has arisen a few times, providing an opportunity for the town to address the issue.

Council members emphasized the significance of maintaining a balance to prevent the complete elimination of parking spaces. They noted that the policy established by the police department has been fair in handling requests and has demonstrated its effectiveness

5. Jason Paganelli, True North Running Company re Colt State Park Half Marathon on November 3, 2024 (portion of race on public roadway)

a. recommendation - Town Administrator and Fire Chief

b. recommendation - Town Administrator and Chief of Police

c. recommendation - Town Administrator and Department of Public Works

Sweeney/Teixeira- - Voted unanimously to approve the petition per the recommendations received and subject to conformance to all laws and ordinances and payment of all fees, taxes, and levies

G. Appointments

G1. Waypoiset Trust (1 term set to expire February 2026)

a. Bryan Leffingwell, 12 Fried Avenue, Interest/Reappointment

Teixeira/Sweeney- Voted unanimously to reappoint Brian Leffingwell to the Waypoiset Trust with a term set to expire in February 2026

G2. North & East Burial Grounds Commission (one unexpired term set to expire January 2025)

a. Charles C. Cavalconte, 88 Church Street re letter of resignation

Teixeira/Parella- - Voted unanimously to accept this resignation and to instruct the Clerk to send a letter of thanks for service; and advertise in the local paper.

G3. Bristol 250th Commission (total of nine (9) terms set to expire December 2027- members consisting of - (3) council appointments - (1) Town Administrator Appointment- (1) rep. Explore Bristol- (1) rep. Fourth of July- (1)rep. BHPS (1)-rep. BWRSD (1)-rep. RWU)

a. Carol Gafford, 700 Metacom Avenue, Apt. 133, recommendation Fourth of July Committee

b. Amanda Marsili, 9 Etelvina Court, recommendation Roger Williams University

Teixeira/Parella- Voted unanimously to appoint Carol Gafford and Amanda Marsili to the Bristol 250th Commission with a term set to expire in December 2027.

G4. Recreation Board (3 terms set to expire February 2027 - 1 full member; 1 alternate member and 1 alternate vacancy)

a. Michael S. Cabral, 10 Alves Street - Interest/Reappointment

b. Kevin Manuel, 282 Chestnut Street, 1st Alternate Member Interest/Reappointment

Sweeney/ Teixeira- Voted unanimously to reappoint Michael Cabral and Kevin Manuel to the Recreation Board with a term set to expire in February 2027

G5. Harbor Commission (One term set to expire March 2024)

a. Dominic S. Franco, 26 Tower Street - Interest/Reappointment

b. Vasco Castro, III, 101 Woodlawn Avenue - Interest/Appointment

Teixeira/Parella- Voted unanimously to reappoint Dominic S. Franco to the Harbor Commission with a term set to expire in March 2024

Prior to the vote being taken, Clerk Cordeiro noted that an additional application was received from Bruce Palumbo of 6 Mallory Court with interest in appointment.

G6. Zoning Board of Review (two terms set to expire March 2029)

a. Joseph P. Asciola, 1220 Hope Street - Interest/Reappointment

b. Donald S. Kern, 32 Defiance Avenue -
Interest/Reappointment

Teixeira/Sweeney- Voted unanimously to reappoint Joseph Asciola and Donald Kern to the Zoning Board of Review with a term set to expire in March 2029

G7. Bristol County Water Authority (total of two terms- 1 term set to expire February 2027 and one vacant unexpired term set to expire February 2025)

a. Robert J. Martin, 10 St. Anna Avenue -
Interest/Reappointment

Teixeira/Sweeney - Voted unanimously to reappoint Rober Martin to the Bristol County Water Authority with a term set to expire in February 2025

G8. Christmas Festival Committee (David Scarpino, Chair)
re Proposed Membership 2024-2025

Teixeira/Sweeney - voted unanimously in favor of the slate of candidates for the ensuing term based on the recommendation of the Chair.

At the conclusion of the board appointments, Chairman Calouro took a moment to express his deep gratitude and appreciation for all members of the community who volunteer their time to serve on one of the town's many boards and commissions. He acknowledged the invaluable contributions of these individuals, recognizing their commitment to the betterment of the community. Chairman Calouro emphasized the importance of their selfless efforts in helping to shape and enhance the town's governance. On behalf of himself and the members of the council, he extended a heartfelt thank you to all those who dedicated their time and expertise to the collective well-being of the community.

H. Old Business

H1. Harbor Master Marsili re - Consideration of Proposed Ordinance to include Insurance Requirements for Town Marina (continued from December 6, 2023)

a. Harbor Commission recommendation

Sweeney/Ley- motioned to refer this matter to the Town Solicitor so that he may draft changes to the draft ordinance to include language that Recreation classifications would require liability insurance within 30 days of passage of this ordinance and commercial classifications would require liability insurance within 180 days of passage of this ordinance for consideration on March 27, 2024. Voting in favor was Calouro, Teixeira, Sweeney, Ley. Voting opposed Parella. Motion passed.

Prior to the vote being taken, Harbor Master Marsili addressed the council, presenting his recommendation. He proposed that the council should consider implementing insurance requirements for boaters utilizing the town's marina. He elaborated that incidents such as boat fires, sinkings, and damages to other boats or town marinas and docks should not be financially shouldered by taxpayers. Based on his research, he indicated that liability insurance for recreational boaters could cost approximately \$750. While he acknowledged that fees would likely be significantly higher for commercial vessels, he stressed the necessity of this measure to alleviate the burden on the town. Harbor Master Marsili also highlighted that most private marinas typically require either \$500k in commercial liability insurance or \$250k in recreational coverage.

Councilman Sweeney expressed his agreement that there should be some form of limited liability to ensure the town has a means of recourse. Chairman Calouro emphasized that claims or damages caused by boaters should be the responsibility of the town, rather than burdening the taxpayers.

The Chair of the Harbor Commission, Jim Dollins, addressed the council, expressing his views on the matter. Mr. Dollins stated that while he does not disagree with the necessity of insurance, his primary concern lies with the timing of the requirement. He mentioned that there has been limited time to gather comparisons

for insurance, indicating that insurance companies are facing challenges in understanding the requirement due to the lack of comparisons specifically tailored to local marinas. He requested the council to consider postponing the requirement for commercial fishermen, until next year to ensure a fair and reasonable fee and cost is applied at an appropriate time. Mr. Dollins emphasized that there is currently insufficient information available to make an informed decision and proposed exploring cooperative pooled efforts to assist with a plan for commercial fishermen.

Council Chairman Calouro acknowledged the concerns raised by the Harbor Commission, but he emphasized his concerns regarding accidents. He emphasized that accidents are unforeseen events, which is why they are termed as such. He stressed that it is the council's responsibility to ensure that taxpayers are not burdened with the costs of these accidents.

John McDonald, a commercial fisherman and member of the Harbor Commission, addressed the council, expressing the challenges faced by commercial fishermen with wooden boats in obtaining insurance. He described how some have been quoted as much as \$3200 for insurance, a significant financial burden that could potentially hinder their ability to continue operating as commercial fishermen or dissuade new entrants into the industry. Mr. McDonald expressed concern about the difficulty in obtaining liability insurance and feared that this requirement might contribute to the loss of the local culture of commercial fishermen in the community.

Councilman Sweeney highlighted that it would be good practice for commercial fishermen to have their own commercial fishing insurance, regardless if it was mandated by the town. To ensure that they are adequately covered in the event of an accident.

Vice Chairwoman Parella proposed that it would be beneficial to gather information on the number of boats already insured. She emphasized the importance of retaining local commercial fishermen, a matter that has been prioritized in harbor plans. Vice Chairwoman Parella expressed deep concern about inadvertently driving commercial fishermen out of the town, despite not intending to do so. She stressed the need to proceed cautiously to avoid forcing out commercial fishermen and expressed worry about the potential impact on them. Vice Chairwoman Parella suggested a phased implementation of the requirement and advocated for obtaining more information before proceeding. She also inquired about the possibility of involving fisherman associations to assist in finding reasonable coverage.

Vice Chairwoman Parella motioned to phase in the insurance requirement, initially focusing solely on recreational boaters. She proposed delaying the inclusion of commercial boats until further research could be conducted. Seconded by Ley for discussion

Councilman Ley inquired about the scenario where a boat could not obtain insurance. Assistant Solicitor Tietz suggested that exceptions to the requirement may not be feasible. Councilman Ley pointed out that by the time the ordinance passed, it would be close to May, allowing boaters time to conduct research. The solicitor noted that the council could also establish an effective date for implementation.

Assistant Solicitor Teitz pointed out that there is currently no legal mandate for these boaters to have insurance. However, he highlighted that the majority of recreational and commercial boats already carry comprehensive insurance, although it can be costly and may necessitate surveys for older boats. In this instance, the town is solely seeking liability insurance.

Councilman Sweeney recommended imposing two different effective dates one for recreational boats and one for commercial boats. Solicitor Teitz noted that recreational and commercial vessels would need to be defined.

Discussions ensued regarding comprehensive insurance.

Chairman Calouro addressed several key points. Firstly, he emphasized the importance of recognizing the value of commercial fishermen and ensuring alignment on this matter. Secondly, he highlighted that historically, rates have been more favorable for commercial fishermen compared to pleasure boats, underscoring the continued focus on this aspect. He disagreed with the notion that the insurance requirement was intended to push out commercial fishermen, stating that it was aimed at safeguarding town docks and users from financial burdens associated with accidents. Regarding Councilman Sweeney's suggestion to postpone the requirement for commercial fishermen for six months, Chairman Calouro supported the idea, believing it would allow sufficient time for thorough research.

Chairman Calouro considered the harbor master's request for low-liability insurance to be reasonable. Despite the associated costs, he believed it was a necessary step forward, indicating that it should have been implemented earlier for the benefit of all waterfront users. He stressed that requiring insurance for commercial fishermen was not about trying to eliminate them but rather to ensure the preservation of the waterfront's beauty and

prevent potential disruptions due to accidents. However, he acknowledged that there were still unanswered questions that needed addressing, as highlighted by his colleagues.

Discussions ensued regarding encouraging more commercial fishermen.

Vice Chairwoman Parella expressed her inability to support the ordinance in its entirety due to the concerns she previously raised. Specifically, she could not endorse it at the moment as it encompassed regulations pertaining to commercial fishermen.

I. Other New Business Requiring Town Council Action

- I1.** Library Director Dyer re Council consideration to support resolution for FY 2025 State Budget Allocation for Funding Rogers Free Library

Teixeira/Sweeney -Voted unanimously to support the Resolution for FY 2025 State Budget Allocation for Funding Rogers Free Library and direct the Clerk to transmit a copy of this resolution to the Governor and members of the Town of Bristol State Legislative Delegation

- I2.** Bristol Bookfest Committee re council consideration to support Proclamation recognizing April 5-6, 2024, as Bristol Bookfest Weekend

Teixeira/Parella -Voted unanimously to support the Proclamation recognizing April 5-6, 2024, as Bristol Bookfest Weekend

- I3.** Town Clerk Cordeiro Re (Draft) Budget Workshop Schedule for Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Sweeney/Teixeira- Voted unanimously to approve the FY 2024-2025 budget workshop schedule as presented.

- I4.** Council Consideration re 2024 Town Council Meeting Schedule Changes

Teixeira/Sweeney- Voted unanimously to cancel June 19, 2024, and July 10, 2024, council meetings and schedule a meeting for June 26, 2024.

Prior to the vote being taken, council members discussed a scheduling conflict related to the recognition of Juneteenth. Originally, June 19th was not acknowledged as a holiday when the council schedule was drafted. However, now that it is recognized as a holiday and the council does not convene on holidays, it was deemed necessary to reschedule the meeting. Additionally, it was noted that the scheduled meeting on July 10th was constrained for time to receive recommendations promptly. Considering the holiday celebrations on July 4th the week prior, it was recommended to address both scheduling conflicts by canceling the June 19th and July 10th meetings and scheduling a meeting on June 26th in their place.

15. Director Williamson, DCD, Subdivision and Development Review Regulations Update per State Law

a. Subdivision and Development Review Regulations

Sweeney/Teixeira- Voted unanimously to receive and file

Director Williamson provided the council with an overview of the updates required for the subdivision and development review regulations in accordance with state law. She explained that the updates mainly pertained to the process and also allowed for the opportunity to revise other sections.

Director Williamson explained that when the state law changed in 1995, it granted the Planning Board the authority to adopt their own regulations, which had previously been the responsibility of the Council. This transition led to some expectations from the Council about the process. As a result, a paragraph was added requiring the Planning Board to send the regulations to the Council for advice and comments before adoption. However, it has been recommended to revise this process so that the regulations are sent to the Council after adoption, simply for informational purposes. This revision would ensure that the Council is aware of the changes made without delaying the adoption process. This proposed change is included in the draft provided to the council.

It was emphasized that it is extremely important to provide the council with the regulations to ensure that the town is fully aware of any changes being made.

Discussions followed concerning unified development and adjustments to hearing notices. Subsequently, deliberations focused on recent zone modifications and potential alterations to legislation.

I6. Draft Resolution in Support of Legislation Amending the Town of Bristol's Real Estate Tax Exemption for Persons Over the Age of Sixty-five (65) Years to Require that Eligible Properties be Owned and Occupied by Said Persons for a Period of twenty (20) Years

Sweeney/Parella-Voted unanimously to continue the matter to the March 27, 2024, council meeting.

Chairman Calouro remarked that the current discussion had been previously addressed earlier in the meeting. He provided a brief summary of the topic at hand and highlighted the next steps. One aspect of the dialogue involved considering a residency requirement, which is not currently in place. He clarified that the resolution under consideration aimed to amend the town's regulations to facilitate the real estate exemption, particularly for seniors. The proposal suggests a 20-year residency requirement, although this number had not been previously specified by the council.

Chairman Calouro emphasized that individuals currently benefiting from the senior exemption would be grandfathered in and unaffected by the proposed change. This means that if someone already has the senior exemption, they will maintain it regardless of the proposed change.

Councilman Ley expressed reservations about the proposal, indicating a preference for implementing a means test for eligibility. He suggested that seniors currently benefiting from the tax exemption should continue to do so, while newly eligible individuals might undergo means testing. He questioned the age requirement and the potential tax implications for newcomers, highlighting the need for further consideration before lending his support to the proposal.

Vice Chairwoman Parella questioned the 20-year residency stipulation in the draft resolution. Assistant Solicitor Teitz responded that the original language of the proposal stipulates

a 20-year exemption from taxation for properties owned and occupied continuously for that period. However, this requirement posed limitations, as it only applied to individuals who had resided in the same house for the entire duration. To address potential scenarios where individuals may have moved or downsized, the language was revised (received at meeting document) to accommodate those who have owned residential properties in Bristol for 20 years, regardless of the number of moves made within that timeframe. The intention is to ensure eligibility for individuals who have maintained Bristol as their primary residence over the years, while also closing potential loopholes concerning commercial property owners or temporary residents.

Vice Chairwoman Parella expressed concern about individuals who may have resided in Bristol for many years but did not own a home, as they would now be ineligible for the exemption. She suggested using the term "resident" instead of "owner and resided." She also referred to her previous proposal for a more substantial deduction in the elderly exemption. While acknowledging the town's progress, she emphasized the need for further thought and consideration on this matter. She raised a question regarding the age requirement, suggesting the possibility of extending it from 65 to 67 years of age. Additionally, she referenced previous discussions and a memo addressed to the council approximately a year ago, wherein she proposed consideration of using the proposed adjustments to the tax system to redistribute the tax burden onto commercial properties or short- and long-term rentals as a potential means to offset the impact of the exemption.

Council Clerk Cordeiro noted for the record that a revised resolution was provided at the start of the meeting and is noted as "received at meeting".

Chairman Calouro clarified that the proposal was brought before the council because the council itself requested it. It wasn't initiated by any individual but emerged from discussions within the council. He emphasized that the proposed 20-year requirement was not set in stone and could be adjusted as per the council's decision. Furthermore, he noted that legislative approval would be necessary for any changes to be implemented, necessitating engagement with legislators on the matter. Also noting that the majority of the communities within the state do not impose residency period requirements for senior real estate tax exemptions.

Councilman Teixeira noted his support of the resolution.

Treasurer Hassell mentioned that she reviewed the tax assessor's report from the last council workshop. According to her findings, implementing a \$50 increase to the tax exemption alone would result in a tax increase of \$94,000 annually. However, if this \$50 tax exemption increase was combined with the proposed 20-year residency requirement, the annual tax increase would be reduced to \$65,800.

Council members questioned what the yearly tax implication would be if there were no residency requirements in place.

Councilman Ley explained his initial understanding of the residency requirement for the senior tax exemption. He indicated that he thought the requirement pertains to having Bristol as one's primary residence to qualify for the exemption, suggesting that individuals with primary residences in other locations might not be eligible.

Councilman Ley also highlighted the potential savings of \$30,000 associated with a 20-year residency requirement. He proposed exploring shorter residency requirements, such as 2 or 3 years, to evaluate their impact on savings, anticipating minimal savings with shorter durations.

Chairman Calouro emphasized the recurring theme within the council's discussions, which revolves around supporting long-term residents to remain in Bristol. Additionally, he highlighted the significance of property ownership in the context of decreasing property taxes for elderly Bristol residents. Reiterating that while the proposal is not a complete solution, it is a step towards addressing the issue of residents being forced to leave the community.

The council agreed by consensus to continue the matter to the next council meeting, during which the Tax Assessor would be present to offer additional clarification.

CF. Citizens Public Forum

*PERSONS WISHING TO SPEAK DURING THE CITIZENS PUBLIC FORUM
MUST NOTIFY THE COUNCIL CLERK PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF
THE MEETING*

J. Bills & Expenditures

J1. Bid #1035 Asbestos Abatement, Demolition and Site Restoration at 216 Bayview Avenue

Teixeira/Sweeney - Voted unanimously to refer this matter to the Town Administrator and to act in the best interest of the Town.

Prior to the vote taken, the Clerk read the following bids:

- Costello Dismantling Company, Inc., in the amount of \$174,750.00
- AA. Asbestos Abatement Co., Inc., in the amount of \$144,720.00

J2. Bid #1036 Walley School Roof Replacement

Sweeney/Teixeira- Voted unanimously to refer this matter to the Town Administrator and to act in the best interest of the Town.

Prior to the vote taken, the Clerk read the following bids:

- A & M Sheet Metal & Roofing Inc., in the amount of \$239,900.00
- Westway Construction in the amount of \$235,000.00

J3. Bid #1037 Fourth of July Celebration Fireworks Display for 2024 and 2025

Teixeira/Sweeney - Voted unanimously to refer this matter to the Town Administrator and the Fourth of July Committee to act in the best interest of the Town.

Prior to the vote taken, the Clerk read the following bids:

- Pyrotecnico Fireworks, Inc. with the total bid amount of \$44,500.00 broken down as follows:
 - o Year #1 2024 \$22,000.00
 - o Year #2 2025 \$22,500.00

K. Special Reports

L. Town Solicitor

M. Executive Sessions

Consent Agenda Items:

(CA) AA. Submission of Minutes - Boards and Commissions

Approval of consent agenda = "motion to receive and place these items on file"

(CA) AA1. Harbor Commission Meeting Minutes, January 8, 2024

(CA) AA2. Board of Fire Engineers Meeting Minutes, February 5, 2024

(CA) AA3. Zoning Board of Review Minutes, January 2, 2024

(CA) AA4. Harbor Commission Meeting Minutes, February 5, 2024

(CA) AA5. Historic District Commission Meeting Minutes, January 4, 2024

(CA) AA6. Planning Board Meeting Minutes, January 11, 2024

(CA) AA7. North and East Burial Grounds Commission Meeting Minutes September 13, 2023

(CA) AA8. North and East Burial Grounds Commission Meeting Minutes, November 15, 2023

(CA) AA9. Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes, January 9, 2024

(CA) AA10. Bristol Housing Authority Meeting Minutes, January 11, 2024

(CA) BB. Budget Adjustments

Approval of consent agenda = "motion to approve these adjustments"

(CA) CC. Financial Reports

Approval of consent agenda = "motion to receive and place these items on file"

(CA) DD. Proclamations, Resolutions & Citations

Approval of consent agenda = "motion to adopt these Proclamations, Resolutions and Citations as prepared and presented"

(CA) EE. Utility Petitions

Approval of consent agenda = "motion to approve these petitions"

(CA) FF. City & Town Resolutions Not Previously Considered

Approval of consent agenda = "motion to receive and place these items on file"

- (CA) FF1. Town of Richmond Opposing Option A Chariho Regional School District New School Initiative & Stage II Application
- (CA) FF2. Burrillville Town Council Resolution Supporting House Bill 2024-H7462 Relating to Amendments to the Energy Facility Siting Act
- (CA) FF3. Middletown Town Council Resolution Increasing the Allowance for Reimbursement for New Library Construction
- (CA) FF4. Middletown Town Council Resolution in Support of Fully Funding State Aid to Libraries to the Full Twenty-Five Percent

(CA) GG. Distributions/Communications

Approval of consent agenda = "motion to receive and place these items on file"

- (CA) GG1. Town Administrator Contente to Graphic Ink re Award Bid #1027 Souvenir Merchandise for the 239th and 240th Fourth of July Celebrations
- (CA) GG2. Town Administrator Contente to Constructive Disruption, LLC re Award Bid #1026 Library Strategic Planning Services
- (CA) GG3. Town Administrator Contente to Hart Engineering Corporation re Award Bid #1028 Screw Pump Repair-Main Lift Pumping Station
- (CA) GG4. Town Administrator Contente re Rejection of Bid #1033 Town Beach Stage Project
- (CA) GG5. Town Administrator Contente to Westway Construction Inc. re Award Bid #1034 Elevator and Installation Package for Town-Owned Building

(CA) GG6. Annual Review of Mobile Food Establishments

(CA) HH. Distributions/Notice of Meetings

(Office copy only)

Approval of consent agenda = "motion to receive and place these items on file"

(CA) HH1. Historic District Commission Meeting, February 9, 2024

(CA) HH2. Bristol Fourth of July Committee, Special General Committee Meeting, February 20, 2024

(CA) HH3. Bristol Fourth of July Committee, Reception for Military and Town Officials, February 21, 2024

(CA) HH4. Conservation Commission Meeting, February 12, 2024

(CA) HH5. North and East Burial Grounds Commission Meeting, February 14, 2024

(CA) HH6. Bristol Fourth of July Committee, Souvenir Sub-Committee Meeting, February 15, 2024

(CA) HH7. Bristol Fourth of July Committee Meeting, February 20, 2024

(CA) HH8. Bristol Fourth of July Committee, Freedom Raffle Sub-Committee Meeting, February 21, 2024

(CA) HH9. Bristol Fourth of July Committee, Block Dance Sub-Committee Meeting, February 22, 2024

(CA) HH10. Bristol Fourth of July Committee, Interfaith Sub-Committee Meeting, February 28, 2024

(CA) HH11. Zoning Board of Review Meeting, March 4, 2024

(CA) HH12. Capital Projects Commission Meeting, February 27, 2024

(CA) HH13. Historic District Commission Meeting, March 7, 2024

(CA) HH14. Technical Review Committee Meeting, February 26, 2024

(CA) II. Claims (Referrals)

Approval of consent agenda = "motion to refer these items to the Insurance Committee and at its discretion to the Interlocal Trust"

(CA) III1. Matt Clarizio, 9 Deer Run Road, Claim for Damage to Property

(CA) II2. Cheryl Zamil, 685 Hope Street, Claim for Personal Injury

(CA) JJ. Miscellaneous Items Requiring Council Approval

Approval of consent agenda = "motion to approve these items"

(CA) KK. Curb cut petitions as approved by the director of public works

Approval of consent agenda = "motion to grant these curb cuts per the recommendation of, and conditions specified by, the Director of Public Works"

There being no further business, upon a motion by Councilman Ley, seconded by Councilman Sweeney and voted unanimously, the Chairman declared this meeting to be adjourned at 9:34pm.

Melissa Cordeiro, Town Clerk
Council Clerk