

SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES-WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 2026

The council met on Wednesday, April 29, 2026, and called to order at 7:02 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
Town Solicitor, Andy Teitz, Esq

The Pledge of Allegiance

Council Chair Calouro led the Council and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

A. Public Hearings

A1. Show Cause Hearing- consideration of the revocation or suspension of the Dancing and Entertainment License and the Class B Victualer Intoxicating Beverage license issued to AZJ - John St. LLC-Jeffrey Quinlan, Zach King, Andrew Tuchler, d/b/a Aidan's Pub, 5 John Street

Teixeira/Sweeney - Voted unanimously to approve and adopt the amended consent order, as presented by the solicitor, including the revised language set forth in Condition D-4.

Parella/Ley - Voted unanimously to schedule a three-month review of the consent order at the regular Town Council meeting on August 19, 2026.

At a duly called special meeting of the Bristol Town Council held on April 29, 2026, Chairman Calouro convened the session and led the Pledge of Allegiance. The Chairman noted that the purpose of the meeting was a show cause hearing regarding John Street, LLC (d/b/a Aidan's Pub), with respect to its entertainment and alcoholic beverage licenses. Solicitor Teitz provided an extensive overview of the background leading to the hearing, explaining that Aidan's Pub had generated a significant number of calls for service since the prior fall, including repeat noise violations and multiple incidents of underage drinking. He reminded the Council that, following an October 19 review of the entertainment license, the Council had directed

the Police Chief to meet with the owner to develop a noise remediation plan. Although the owner had produced a six-point list of corrective measures, only one item—cessation of late-night disposal of glass and cans into the dumpster—had actually been implemented. The solicitor highlighted a particular noise violation on February 26 at 11:26 p.m., in which the decibel level reached 80 dB against a 50 dB limit, following a prior written warning when the establishment had been measured at 53 dB over the limit. He further detailed underage drinking incidents on February 2 and March 28, each resulting in municipal court summonses. It was these violations that prompted the request for a show cause hearing and the development of the proposed consent order before the Council.

Solicitor Teitz then summarized in detail the terms of the proposed consent order. Aidan's Pub would plead guilty to the February 26 noise violation and pay the maximum municipal fine of \$500. For the underage service violations, the licensee would admit the offenses and pay a fine of \$500 for the first offense and \$1,000 for each of the second and third offenses, for a total of \$2,500 in underage-related fines, all to be paid within five business days. He explained that these amounts reflected the maximum penalties allowed by the Department of Business Regulation (DBR) for such infractions and represented a form of progressive discipline, short of suspension or revocation.

During his overview of the proposed consent order, Solicitor Teitz advised the Council that a slight revision had been made to Stipulation No. 4 and that updated language had been distributed for review. He explained that the amendment pertained to the hours of the entertainment license and was intended to align the consent order with the existing Town ordinance, Section 5-97(b). Solicitor Teitz clarified that the ordinance already requires all indoor entertainment to cease by 10:00 p.m. Sunday through Thursday. Under the terms of the proposed consent order, however, indoor entertainment on Friday and Saturday nights would be required to end at 11:00 p.m., rather than midnight, reducing those hours by one hour, while weekday indoor entertainment hours would remain unchanged. He further explained that outdoor entertainment would continue to be governed by the existing ordinance, requiring it to end by 10:00 p.m. on Thursday nights and by 11:00 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. He further outlined new conditions requiring the licensee to hire Safety Management Solutions, a third-party firm, to analyze crowd control practices, identify weaknesses, and provide staff training to improve quiet dispersal of patrons; a written report from that firm would be required to be filed with the Town Clerk within 30 days. In addition, the licensee would be obligated to post at least one dedicated security officer

outside at the close of entertainment until the restaurant itself closed, with the specific duty of preventing loitering and ensuring patrons depart promptly. To ensure accountability, the licensee would maintain a written log listing the names and specific hours worked by the dedicated security staff and submit this log to the **Town Clerk by the 10th of each month.** The solicitor also reiterated the continuing restriction against late-night disposal of bottles and cans, specifying that such disposal could not occur before 8:00 a.m. the following morning. He noted that the situation would be revisited at license renewal in November, with the understanding that any failure to abide by the conditions could result in an expedited show cause hearing to consider suspension or revocation of the entertainment and/or alcoholic beverage license.

During Council discussion, members probed whether the proposed consent order adequately captured all current issues and whether it sent a sufficiently strong message about the seriousness of the violations. In response to a question from Councilman Sweeney, Solicitor Teitz stated that he believed the consent order encompassed all known incidents to date and reflected an appropriate level of progressive discipline that would withstand DBR scrutiny on appeal.

Vice Chairwoman Parella, however, expressed concern that waiting only until November for review was insufficient, given the pattern of noncompliance and the seasonal dynamics of both the student population and summer activity near the waterfront. She suggested incorporating an interim review at approximately three-month intervals, with a specific desire to see performance data from the summer period as well as from the fall when college students return. Her comments made clear a significant level of frustration with the licensee, noting that prior assurances to the Council had not been followed by meaningful corrective action. She emphasized that any resolution must convey that the Council considers these issues serious, both for Aidan's and for other license holders, and that "an easy way out" was not acceptable when repeated violations and neighborhood impacts were at stake.

Councilman Ley echoed support for an interim review, describing it as a reasonable and necessary check on progress. He acknowledged the objective of progressive discipline but questioned whether the reduction of outdoor entertainment time by a single hour on certain nights would be sufficiently corrective. He was particularly interested in the potential effectiveness of the management consulting and crowd control measures to address the root causes of the disturbances. Councilman Ley also raised a policy concern about displacement

effects, asking whether ending entertainment earlier at Aidan's might simply move disruptive patrons to other nearby establishments, thereby shifting rather than solving the problem. In response, Chief Lynch explained that the 10:00 p.m. entertainment cutoff applied uniformly across the town Sunday through Thursday and that the bulk of problematic activity had occurred on Thursday nights, often associated with "college night." With all entertainment ending at 10:00 p.m. on those nights at all locations, the Chief believed the potential for displacement would be limited to alcohol consumption without amplified entertainment. Solicitor Teitz added that, while Friday and Saturday entertainment hours would be somewhat more restrictive at Aidan's than at some other venues, any further issues could be addressed as part of a broader enforcement framework.

Throughout this exchange, Council members repeatedly articulated their dissatisfaction and skepticism about the licensee's past performance. Vice Chairwoman Parella highlighted the rarity of show cause hearings in Bristol and noted that this case had reached that threshold precisely because earlier commitments by the licensee were not honored. She described wanting to see comprehensive data on calls for service, the nature and severity of incidents, and how Aidan's compared with other establishments, distinguishing between calls initiated by responsible businesses seeking assistance and those arising from noncompliance. Her comments underscored a desire that Aidan's—and the broader bar and restaurant community—understand that the Council's patience was limited and that ongoing problems would not be tolerated.

The licensee's representatives were then invited to respond. Attorney Sarah Roodenburg, (DarrowEvertett's Office) appeared on behalf of Aidan's Pub and formally confirmed that the licensee agreed to all terms of the proposed consent order. She expressly acknowledged that Aidan's would plead guilty to the February 26 noise violation and to the underage service of alcohol, and would pay fines totaling \$3,000 within the prescribed time frame. In response to the Council's suggestion of an interim review, Roodenburg indicated that her clients were amenable to an August review but noted that Section 7 of the consent order already provided for an expedited show cause hearing should any further violations occur. She implied that this may render an additional scheduled review redundant but stated that, if the Council wished to include such a review, the licensee would not object. When pressed further on corrective measures, she emphasized that Safety Management Solutions—a firm owned by a former Providence police officer—had been proposed by the licensee as a proactive step to identify and address

security and crowd control deficiencies, with the goal of ensuring a more orderly and quiet dispersal of patrons at closing time.

At this point, Chairman Calouro spoke at length and in notably firm terms, making it clear that he was personally frustrated and disappointed. He reminded the licensee that representatives, including general manager Michael, had previously appeared before the Council in November and again in March, promising to correct the problems, only for the Council to find itself "here again" addressing similar complaints. He stressed that the Council had zero tolerance for repeated violations and that the community's quality of life was at stake. Chairman Calouro openly questioned whether Aidan's was operating as a restaurant or had effectively become a nightclub, stating that the current situation felt very different from the establishment he had originally supported. He underscored that while the Council wanted Aidan's to be successful and to remain a good neighbor, it would not continue to accept assurances unaccompanied by substantial, verifiable change. He warned that if the licensee had to come back before the Council again for similar issues, the discussion would be "much more difficult" and that more severe sanctions, including suspension or revocation, would be seriously considered.

Councilman Teixeira then added to the record his own disappointment, noting that although he had been quiet during much of the discussion, he shared the Chairman's concerns fully. Drawing on his prior experience in school discipline, he stressed that the Council was dealing with adults and expected professional, responsible behavior from the licensee. He characterized the situation as one in which the business had "great potential" but was not meeting the standard expected by the town, and he supported the concept of a three-month review as a way to measure whether the Council's chosen approach was having the desired effect or whether a different course—including more severe action—would be required.

Vice Chairwoman Parella further elaborated that the Council's goal was to avoid a revolving door of show cause hearings with multiple establishments and that Aidan's case should serve as a clear signal that the town would intervene when necessary. She suggested that the third-party training and analysis might eventually benefit other license holders as well, if collaborative or joint training opportunities emerged, but again emphasized that Aidan's must take the current situation with utmost seriousness.

In response to questions about the nature of Aidan's business model, Councilman Sweeney observed that Aidan's had historically functioned as a community pub, a family-friendly gathering place and a longstanding fixture in Bristol. He asked directly how and why the business seemed to be drifting away from that identity and into a pattern of disturbances that was incompatible with a successful downtown operation. General Manager Michael Cockcroft, addressed the council, identified himself and stated that he personally did not wish to run a nightclub and preferred to operate a restaurant. He explained that DJ nights had been ongoing since approximately 2008 at the direction of ownership and that the current rotation of DJs was essentially the same as in prior years. Attorney Roodenburg argued that the core issue was not a deliberate shift in business model but rather deficiencies in security and crowd control under current conditions, leading to large crowds and difficulty keeping the situation contained. In response to a question from Vice Chairwoman Parella about whether particular DJs or entertainment acts might be driving larger or more problematic crowds, Mr. Cockcroft responded that the DJs had not significantly changed and that other nearby venues on Thames Street and in the downtown were also busy with DJs and live music. Attorney Roodenburg added that, anecdotally, the "word on the street" was that Aidan's had become the place to go, which may have contributed to the concentration of patrons there.

Prior to the vote being taken, Chairman Calouro opened the public hearing and invited testimony in favor and against.

Tom Bergenholtz of 366 Hope Street addressed the Council. He stated that he had come primarily to observe, noting that he has a vested interest as a neighbor directly across the street from Aidan's Pub. Mr. Bergenholtz remarked that, although he does not always agree with the Chairman, in this matter he shared Chairman Calouro's evident frustration. He characterized the proposed resolution and fines as essentially a "slap on the wrist" in light of the licensee's prior assurances to correct the problems and their failure to follow through. He expressed skepticism that the measures would be sufficient and stated that, if the conditions do not work and the matter returns to the Council, he believed the Town should take stronger action, including "hitting them in the wallet" more significantly, as he did not feel the current fines were substantial enough to deter future violations.

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

Following the conclusion of public comment(s), Councilman Ley asked Solicitor Teitz to confirm that the fines outlined in the proposed consent order represented the maximum penalties permitted under state law and regulations enforced by the Rhode Island Department of Business Regulation (DBR). Councilman Ley stated that his intent was to ensure the Council was acting within its legal authority and that any penalties imposed would withstand regulatory review.

Solicitor Teitz confirmed that the fines contained in the consent order—\$500 for a first offense and \$1,000 for each subsequent offense—represent the maximum statutory penalties allowed for the liquor and noise violations at issue. He further explained that if the Council sought to impose penalties beyond those amounts, it would need to pursue suspension or revocation of the applicable licenses. Solicitor Teitz advised that any appeal of an alcoholic beverage license suspension or revocation would be heard by the DBR, while any appeal involving the entertainment license would be subject to review by petition to the Rhode Island Supreme Court. He noted that the proposed consent order is consistent with a progressive discipline approach, with suspension or revocation serving as the next enforcement step in the event of future violations.

The Council also revisited specific operational issues, including the late-night disposal of bottles and recyclables that had generated noise complaints. When asked by Councilman Teixeira about corrective steps on that front, Attorney Roodenburg confirmed that Aidan's had been following the directive to avoid dumping glass and cans late at night and accepted the clarification that such disposal must be delayed until at least 8:00 a.m. the following day.

There being no further business, upon a motion by Councilman Sweeney, seconded by Councilman Teixeira and voted unanimously, the Chairman declared this meeting to be adjourned at 7:43 pm.

Melissa Cordeiro, Town Clerk
Council Clerk