



Randolph Town Council

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Monday, March 4, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

This is a hybrid meeting. The Public is invited to attend this meeting in person or remotely, by telephone or computer access.

Call to Order: Council Vice President Brewer called the meeting to order.

Roll Call – Council Members Present: William Alexopoulos (By Zoom), Richard Brewer (In-Person), Jesse Gordon (In-Person), Katrina Huff-Larmond (In-Person), Kevin O’Connell (In-Person), Brandon Thompson (In-Person).

Pledge of Allegiance: Pledge of Allegiance led by Councillor Brandon Thompson.

Moment of Silent Prayer: Moment of Silent Prayer held.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

- 1. Meeting Minutes of Town Council Meeting April 11, 2022**
- 2. Meeting Minutes of Town Council Meeting February 26, 2024**

Motion to approve minutes of Town Council Meeting, April 11, 2022, made by Councillor Huff-Larmond, seconded by Councillor Gordon.

Roll Call Vote: 4-0-2 (Abstention: O’Connell and Thompson; Absent: C. Alexopoulos, Burgess, Egan)

Motion passes.

Motion to approve minutes of Town Council Meeting, February 26, 2024, made by Councillor Gordon, seconded by Councillor O’Connell.

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0 (Absent: C. Alexopoulos, Burgess, Egan)

Motion passes.

Councillor C. Alexopoulos entered the meeting, in person at 6:05 PM.

Presentations:

1. Digital Equity Plan

Director of Community Programs, Liz LaRosee and Julia Mintz of VHB, Inc. appeared via Zoom to provide a presentation on the Digital Equity Plan.

Ms. LaRosee: Digital equity has become a paramount focus for Randolph sparking our journey in Septemeber 2022. Following the rigorous evaluation of potential consultants, we selected VHB and in January 2023, Ms. Mintz has been an invaluable asset throughout this process, guiding us to develop one of the first digital equity plans in Massachusetts. As we embark on the next phase of our Digital Equity

initiative, with the support from the Massachusetts Broadband Institute, Julia and VHB will shed light on the intricacies of the plan.

Ms. Mintz: With funding from Mass Broadband Institute (MBI), the Town contracted VHN to prepare a digital equity plan for the Randolph community. The intent is to achieve: 1. guide the Town's decision-making and investments, and 2. prepare the Town to apply for funding. The process consisted of three main components: research, dialogue through public meetings and pop-ups, and synthesis (preparing and presenting the Digital Equity Plan).

Some of the digital equity measurements include: 8% of households do not have broadband internet, 14% of public survey respondents report their current household internet does not work well enough to meet their household needs, 5% of households do not have a computer, 93% of respondents report they are concerned about cybersecurity, and 23% of respondents report it is hard to pay their monthly internet bill. The goals of the Digital Equity plan include: 1. Identify a core team of digital equity champions, 2. expand community outreach and strengthen partnerships, 3. promote access to affordable devices and broadband internet, 4. strengthen digital literacy throughout the community, 5. provide targeted support for vulnerable segments of the community, including students, adults seeking jobs, and seniors, 6. track the local broadband market to advocate for consumers and promote job opportunities locally.

Councillor Gordon: I'm wondering about a city-wide wifi plan and I've researched three other cities within the state that have city-wide wifi instead of each household paying for wifi individually. Ms. LaRossee: We do have plans for a mesh network that would be in public parks. The Turner Free Library for instance has access points on the outside of the library so that wireless internet can be accessed outside of the library and expanding on that would be great.

Public Hearings:

1. 6:15 PM: Council Order 2024-008: Debt Authorization Order - Lyons Elementary School Additional Funds

Council Vice Town Council Clerk read the legal notice published in the Patriot Ledger on February 28, 2024. The Council Vice-President opened the public comments portion of the public hearing.

1. Joe Burke, 54 Hills Street: Is this going towards the payments of the residents on their taxes?

There were no more public comments. Council Vice President Brewer closed the public comments portion of the public hearing.

Councillor Gordon: When would we be able to apply for the next grant applicant for a new MSBA project? Superintendent Stovell: We will be eligible to apply for the next round of MSBA funding when the new school opens.

Councillor Huff-Larmond: I'm hoping that we will be able to have a joint meeting with the Town Council and School Committee to talk about any current issues or talk about how we can collaborate on different projects.

Motion to approve Council Order 2024-008 as presented made by Councillor O'Connell, seconded by Councillor C. Alexopoulos.

Roll Call Vote: 7-0-0 (Absent: Burgess and Egan)

Motion passes.

Public Comments:

1. Joe Burke, 54 Hills Street: Why'd it take so long to come forward with the School's Capital Plan?
2. Ginelle Stevens: 1. March is Women's History Month. The Randolph Women's Club is hosting its 6th Annual Randolph Women's Day Luncheon on Sunday, March 10, 2024, from 2-5 PM at the Randolph Elk's Lodge. Tickets are \$45. All are welcome to join. 2. The South Shore Caribbean Connection is offering a Coming-of-Age program for the next generation of successful youth! The program is designed to promote determination, self-awareness, positive imaging, and financial empowerment. There is a \$50 fee to sign up for the program and students have the opportunity to earn \$25 for each workshop they attend. The application deadline is April 5, 2024.

Town Manager's Report:

1. The Massachusetts Department of Transportation is conducting a virtual Public Meeting concerning transportation Route 24 over Canton Street Bridge Replacement on Monday, March 11, 2024 from 6:00 - 7:30 PM. The link to register for the meetin is:
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_NhoCyQSpQVeMSOvbruiKIA#/registration

New Business:

1. Council Order 2024-010: Randolph Public Schools FY24 Capital Improvement Projects

Town Council Clerk read Council Order 2024-010. Town Manager Howard introduced the Council Order and provided additional information regarding the purpose of the Council Order.

Randolph Public School Superintendent Thea Stovell and School Facilities Director Paul Visconti were present to discuss the various projects to be completed through the Capital Improvement Plan. The projects include improvements to fire safety, external security, HVAC upgrades, roofs, and playgrounds.

Councillor Huff-Larmond: How long are you planning to take to complete all of these projects? Mr. Visconti: We are hoping to achieve 50% completion before the end of the summer, if possible. A lot of the projects will depend on the time it takes for us to complete the procurement process and make sure that the items needed are in stock. Councillor Huff-Larmond: While you are looking for vendors are you taking into consideration minority and women-owned businesses? Mr. Visconti: We're always open to anyone who wants to bid on that process that fits that criteria.

Councillor O'Connell: I was under the impression we already received funding for the Young Elementary School Playground. Mr. Visconti: The completion of the playground isn't done yet because some of the items were still on backorder so we'll have it installed in the springtime. Those parts were already paid for. The total cost for the three new playgrounds is \$80,000.

Council Vice President Brewer: Is there a reason we're using JCI controls? Mr. Visconti: The reason I'd like to go with JCI is because they offer a lot of incentives for green initiatives.

Councillor Gordon: I agree it is right to focus on green energy. I think it would be great to have this presentation go on on a future agenda. Town Manager Howard: We are already working with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council regarding the green community application and are going through the process as we speak.

Council Vice President Brewer: This Council Order requires two meetings and a public hearing before it can be voted on so this will be continued to the next Council Meeting on March 18, 2024.

2. Council Order 2024-011: Local Acceptance of M.G.L. Ch. 60, Section 15B Regarding Tax Title Collection Revolving Funds

Town Council Clerk read Council Order 2024-011. Town Manager Howard introduced the Council Order. Town Accountant/Finance Director Janine Smith provided additional information regarding the purpose and function of this Council Order.

Council Vice President Brewer: This Council Order requires two meetings before it can be voted on so this will be continued to the next Council Meeting on March 18, 2024.

3. Council Order 2024-012: Approvals and Authorizations Concerning Application by the Town of Randolph for Financial Assistance State Revolving Fund Lead Service Line Survey Grant Program

Town Council Clerk read Council Order 2024-012. Town Manager Howard introduced the Council Order and provided additional information regarding the purpose of the Council Order.

Council Vice President Brewer: Are there currently any lead lines in the Town? Mr. Howard: Not that I'm aware of but that's why the State has every community going through this process.

Motion to not take action on Resolution 2024-012 made by Councillor Huff-Larmond, seconded by Councillor C. Alexopoulos.

Roll Call Vote: 7-0-0 (Absent: Burgess and Egan)

Motion passes.

Correspondence:

1. Splash Car Wash Express of 33 Mazzeo Drive is celebrating its Grand Opening with a Free Car Wash from Friday, February 8, 2024 through Sunday, March 10, 2024 with a monetary donation to the Friendly Food Pantry.

Council Comments:

Councillor Thompson: Thank you to Councillor Gordon and Randolph Tenants United for having me and speaking on some of their issues. I learned a lot.

Councillor O'Connell: I attended the services for Mr. Ken Simmons. It was amazing to hear some of the stories told by his family.

Councillor Huff-Larmond: 1. Congrats to Larry Grant who is now on the force. We are so excited that you will be joining us here in Randolph. 2. Today I met with Molly, staff at Randolph HS and we talked about ESL classes and the need for adding additional classes for parents of students. The reason this happened is because a highschool alumnus sent over a prosal and wanted to talk to her more about adding more esl classes. we are looking at how we can add more classes to the agenda. 2. Spring of Water is hosting college prep course on march 23 at community center from 2-4. 3. Happy Birthday to my husband, Frank! 4. Happy St. Patricks to all who celebrate!

Councillor Gordon: 1. Tomorrow is Super Tuesday! Polls are open until 8:00 PM. 2. Democratic Town Committee meeting this Saturday at 10:00 AM in the Washington Room. 3. I believe I have figured out a way to get a new warrant on the next Avon Town Meeting to address the blasting at T.L. Edwards which has effected many of our Randolph residents.

Councillor C. Alexopoulos: Happy Birthday, Frank!

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn made by Councillor C. Alexopoulos, seconded by Councillor Huff-Larmond.
Roll Call Vote: 7-0-0 (Absent: Burgess and Egan)
Meeting adjourned at 7:35 PM.