



## **Randolph Town Council Public Safety Subcommittee**

### **DRAFT Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting Date: Monday, February 27, 2025, at 5:00 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:** Councillor Burgess called the meeting to order.

**Roll Call – Council Members Present:** Richard Brewer (In-Person), James Burgess (In-Person), Natacha Clerger (In-Person)

### **Organization of Officers**

Council President Christos Alexopoulos is present, in person.

Motion to nominate Councillor James Burgess for Chair of the Public Safety Subcommittee made by Councillor Brewer, seconded by Councillor Clerger.

Roll Call Vote: 3-0-0

Motion passes.

Motion to nominate Natacha Clerger as the Vice Chair of the Public Safety Subcommittee made by Councillor Burgess, seconded by Councillor Brewer.

Roll Call Vote: 3-0-0

Motion passes.

### **New Business**

### **Discussion of Resolution Concerning Commitment To All Residents of the Town of Randolph**

Councillor Jesse Gordon is present, in-person.

Councillor Burgess:

1. The Town has made a list of resources and factsheets available on our website. The information comes from the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition.
2. The purpose of the meeting tonight is to discuss the Resolution that was introduced by Councillor Gordon. We will treat this similar to a public hearing where I will allow members of the audience to comment on the Resolution. If the message goes off topic, it will be brought back to topic.
3. Our Police Chief Anthony Marag has been invited to speak on this issue as it relates to Public Safety.

Police Chief Marag: 1. Recognition of the diversity within our Community, 2. I have had conversations with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Coalition and the ways the Randolph Police Department is addressing the issue of ICE entering Randolph. I do not speak about this topic on a national level, I can speak about Randolph and what we are doing locally. Nothing has come from the federal administration changing how we do things on a local level. In relation to immigration, we follow the Lunn V. Commonwealth of Massachusetts decision which is a Supreme Court Decision that in summary means local law enforcement cannot enforce immigration. 3. We've reviewed the policy in the Town's Police handbook relating to immigration. We received guidance from the Massachusetts Police Association and National Association Chief of Police who have put out recommendations. The only time we ask someone about their immigration status is in the booking process so they can speak to someone at the consulate for advice.

Cheryl Tonton, 27 Wales Ave: Even under new administration, people are being directed to go into churches. What would be the course of action there? Chief Marag: The history with the federal government has been that they contact us as a courtesy before they come into the City, and they have been good about contacting us.

Sandy Slavet, 42 Grove Street: What you're already doing is all we're asking for and we just want to make sure everyone in the Town knows that.

Sandy Cohen, 63 Bittersweet Lane: If ICE presents itself at its schools because children can be more easily intimidated and they don't have a warrant, what happens? Chief Marag: We talked about that. The School Department received guidance from the Teachers Union and I gave some guidance as well. I'm not a legal Council on those things so I can't comment on that.

An unnamed individual: I'm on the Randolph Community Partnership Program and the purpose of it is to help immigrants who don't speak english, help them obtain diplomas and get citizenship. Have there been any individuals who have approached you to ask you for any guidance? Chief Marag: We haven't had any, no. Some of the churches have reached out and they will meet with the Civil Rights Unit to spread the word about our department's policy.

Jesse Gordon, 52 West Street: I'd like to hear what would be the process for changing the current policy. My understanding is that the Town Council would tell the Town if policy were going to change. I'm not sure if the Town Council would be governing the changes, in particular if officers of our police department were asked to be ICE deputies. Chief Marag: We don't do any additional volunteering beyond what is required by law currently. We have enough to do on a daily basis, our plate is full. Councillor Gordon: If police policy were to change because of a federal mandate, how would that occur, and how do we tell the process. Chief Marag: With mandates we would have to change our policy. We change policy all the time on an as needed basis as long as it's legal. I would imagine it would happen the same way. I wouldn't feel comfortable as the Chief of Police making changes on this matter without everyone's input.

Valerie Hartgrove, 50 Chestnut Circle: Are there documents folks should carry with them in case they are stopped? Police Chief Marag: I couldn't answer that. You should check out the resources that are available online.

Councillor Burgess thanked Police Chief Anthony Marag for his time and the information provided today.

Councillor Burgess asked Councillor Gordon to speak on this Resolution.

Councillor Gordon: The process started in 2018 when we felt a similar need to address and publicize this issue which is to let the people of Randolph know they have nothing to fear from talking with the police. In particular that the police policy is don't ask, don't tell. The new resolution has been written to be a much more general resolution after receiving input from various groups such as the Randolph Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Coalition, the ACLU, and other organizations. The purpose is the same: if you want to talk to the police about anything, you can do so without fear. The current law is we do what the federal law requires, nothing more, nothing less. I did investigate what sanctuary city means that it has zero legal meaning. To address concerns that we are putting a target on ourselves by naming ourselves by passing this resolution, I think we're saying we are not the right Town to pick on.

Jim Carry, Pond Street: Did anyone from the Democratic Party have something to say? Did you take just one view, which is the democratic view? Councillor Gordon: The Democratic party including Ms. Salvit was responsible for the 2018 Resolution, the 2025 version was modified from that. Mr. Carry: It was almost said at the last Town Council meeting that everyone is welcome in Randolph. With the way things are changing so quickly, is Randolph now going to be the place where people who are leaving their city or town, they're going to come here? As a tax payer here and a minority in this community, I feel we have enough that we're taking in and now we have to provide even more.

Valerie: What I'm hearing is we are not a sanctuary city, so why would people from the sanctuary cities come here?

Sandy Cohen, 63 Bittersweet Lane: In response to this gentlemen's comment: a lot of people from boston have moved here. My neighbors are fine, upstanding, and nothing wrong with them. People move from place to place. People are not going to flock here because we're a welcoming Town.

Mr. Harris: Look at history of Randolph. Randolph was one of the most racist cities and it became so diverse because of the elimination of housing discrimination and we were one of the first towns to do that.

Sandy Slavet: We're not publicizing the people to come to Randolph. The people who are already live here need to feel safe and welcomed.

Councillor Burgess closed the public comments portion of the meeting.

Councillor Clerger: This is an issue dear to my heart. Everyone is already here. Randolph has been a welcoming city even before I came to Randolph. The only way people will come to Randolph is through family members. Randolph is not known to have affordable housing or shelters. They come because they have family members here. When ICE is arresting someone, they don't ask if you are republican or democrat. They will stop you and pick you up if you look like an immigrant. The undocumented immigrants are not a burden to our economy. They get nothing and contribute to everything. They have jobs, pay taxes, buy cars and houses. When I first started to run for office, people were scared and made comments about my accent. People realized Randolph is 50% Haitians. We are educated, we have titles, and contribute to society so I don't want anyone to be scared. If you are a criminal, you will be processed whether you are an immigrant or not. I'm okay with this resolution and I support it. Again, this is just a resolution to state what Randolph is already doing.

Councillor Brewer: I think you're bringing undue attention to Randolph. This resolution is not going to matter when they're here. I think you're bringing us in the limelight and I think that's wrong. I had a discussion with Katrina about a particular section which gives statistics, but there is plenty of research that suggests otherwise. If that section came out, I can support this Resolution and everything else is exactly what we're doing.

Councillor Burgess: I think words have meaning. Anytime a council says something, those words should have consequences. My concern with resolutions is they have no authority. I think resolutions just make the person introducing it feel good and gives themselves a pat on the back while it give some of the most vulnerable people of our community a false sense of security. Immigration cannot be stopped by our police department. I think there were a lot of chefs on this and multiple grievances and it didn't go together. What I want to do is go through each of these paragraphs.

1. The title of the resolution suggests that there is a concern regarding Randolph being a welcoming Town to begin with and that's not the case.
2. You reference the mission of the Town of Randolph- where did you get the mission statement?  
Councillor Gordon: the mission of the Town of Randolph is generic. I don't think there is any intent to state this is the official mission statement.
3. Has the Town Council ever taken a position on what our beliefs are?
4. The Town of Randolph shouldn't condone any harassment from anyone. The resolution misses the residents' responsibility, and just talks about employees and staff.
5. I think you try to put every group here. You don't talk of the profiling of disabled people, people on public assistance, same sex couples, and so you're missing the vote of protecting them. Brutally- so we'll accept other forms of brutality but not racially motivated brutality? When you pick people to recognize, you risk having someone else feel like they are alienated or isolated.
6. Non-white individuals make up the majority of our town, the minority in Randolph is the white population. How do you address that?
7. The study section in 2017 goes against what I think the committee was trying to do. In order to prove the study right or wrong you would have to ask people about their immigration status.
8. A path to citizenship: I don't think the Town Council has provided a position on this. If the Council took the position that the path was to 1. Allow those that have applied properly under federal laws take priority and 2. That the path requires the person to return to their home country's point of entry and submit an application, do you think that meets the spirit of your proposal? Councillor Gordon: No. I think requiring people to return to their home country is a nonstarter for most people who are here. Most Haitian immigrants here in America are under temporary protective status. Additional discussion was had regarding individuals' paths to citizenship.
9. Can you give an example where a service was not provided to a resident based on one of your categories mentioned: "providing equitable protection, respect, and services to all residents, regardless of immigration or refugee status, while upholding the values of fairness, unity, and local governance."?  
Councillor Huff-Larmond: We do have a history of racial profiling. Not since we've had our new Chief. What we are asking is that we ask for this resolution to be seen as a current practice that we have in not profiling because we know that not just in Randolph but in America, there is a history of racial profiling.  
Councillor Burgess: I don't dispute that racial profiling has existed in our country or in our community.  
Councillor Huff-Larmond: We can change the wording to all oppressed people but I doubt you would agree to that. This resolution is directed to our new neighbors, and to make them feel seen, heard and feel as if they have the same rights as anyone else regardless of their documentation status. Resolution doesn't have any teeth. It doesn't matter in this case because we want to send a message to our residents that you are in a safe community. We are not a town interested in detaining you or racially profiling you or disrespecting you. all, regardless of who you are, are welcoming. It doesn't have to be as direct as you make it seem. You're picking apart this resolution. Councillor Burgess: I used your words, and asked questions about what you wrote. and when you're talking about a welcoming resolution you're saying this is only for some people.

Councillor Clerger: The goal for the Council is to be comfortable voting on the resolution, not to fight about it. How as a Subcommittee, are we going to work with the petitioners? How can we make this resolution appealing so we can vote on this resolution at an upcoming council meeting? Councillor Brewer already said if we remove the specific paragraph then he is okay with the rest. I'm okay with that.

Councillor Burgess: I am one of nine Councillors. I am here to ask all the questions so they don't need to be asked at a Council meeting.

Councillor Huff-Larmond: I'm trying to figure out how we can get this resolution passed. I'm worried the way you're trying to make the resolution sound is negative. Councillor Burgess: I haven't asked for anything to be removed. I'm just asking questions about the way it was written. It seemed like there were a lot of chafs in this documents where if you said something, it got in here. It's not concise, it doesn't flow well. When you are picking and choosing groups you want to recognize you risk leaving others that are in a similar group. Councillor Huff-Larmond: You knew that this resolution is being brought forward due to the current status of the United States. We want our immigrant neighbors to know they are a part of our all, that's what Black Lives Matter means. It doesn't mean that only black lives matter, it means your life also matters. My immigration status and the immigration status of most people in this room is not being threatened. So we thought it was right to reach out to the people and organizations who have relationships with immigrants and asked for their input. They said this would be the best for Randolph. I'm sorry you don't think it flows but after asking everyone for their input, we wanted to include people and bring people to the table to interact with the population.

Council President Chris Alexopoulos: You talked about immigrants and new immigrants, are we omitting people who came here in the 80's and 90's in that? I know people who have overstayed a visa, people who have not been here for. Councillor Huff-Larmond: I'm addressing what's happening right now in the state we are in.

Councillor Gordon: 1. The chair brought up a focus on town issues. We wanted the resolution to focus on one thing which was directing Town Staff to do one thing or another, and in particular the police. The other focus is the inclusive word "All" in the Title. The Chair brought up other groups? I welcome you to edit the resolution as you see fit and bring it to the Council with the changes.

Jim Carry: I'm the furthest thing from being racist. By putting this out there, you're not making friends or enemies.

Councillor Brewer: I do think we are drawing attention to ourselves even though you think you're trying to do the right thing. I propose we reconvene next week and give them a chance to clean this Resolution up and pull that paragraph out. If they pull it out they have my vote.

Councillor Huff-Larmond: Councillor Brewer approached me and said if the particular paragraph was removed then he would be okay with the resolution. I did not agree but ultimately I was okay with it. I also want to address the "false hope" that has been mentioned. I think our residents are intelligent enough to know what this does.

Motion to continue this resolution to the next Public Safety Subcommittee meeting on Thursday, March 6, 2025 at 5 PM made by Councillor Brewer, seconded by Councillor Burgess.

Roll Call Vote: 2-0-0 (Councillor Clerger did not vote)

Motion passes.

An unnamed resident: We have to be proactive. People in Randolph are smart enough to know that the resolution is not the law. If you break the law, no matter what you are, then you need to be prosecuted. This proclamation may give you some sense that everything is okay, but deep down inside you know if you do something wrong then you will be prosecuted like a criminal.

**Adjournment:**

Motion to adjourn made by Councillor Brewer, seconded by Councillor Burgess.

Roll Call Vote: 2-1-0 (Nays: Clerger)

Meeting adjourned at 6:40 PM.