

At a meeting of the Town Council holden in and for the Town of Gloucester on August 3, 2023

I. Call to Order

The meeting was Called to Order at 6:30 P.M. by Councilor W. Worthy, Town Council President.

II. Roll Call

Members present: Cheryl A. Greathouse; Walter M. O. Steere, III; Jonathan E. Burlingame; Stephen W. Arnold, Vice President; William A. Worthy, Jr., President

Also Present: Jean Fecteau, Town Clerk; David Igliozi, Town Solicitor ; Christine Mathieu, Deputy Town Clerk; Robert Shields, Recreation Director; Jane Steere, Tax Collector; Gary Treml, Director Public Works; Jessica Parker, Tax Assessor; Ken Johnson, Building Official; Gerry Mosca, EMA Director

III. Pledge of Allegiance

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance

IV. Councilor W. Worthy stated that Council will now convene to Executive Session, and asked for a Motion to seek to convene into executive session.

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to Convene to Executive Session pursuant to R.I.G.L. 42-46-5 (a)(1) Any discussions , considerations, vote or other actions by the Town Council related to Sessions pertaining to “Any discussions of the job performance, etc” ; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame

Discussion: None

Councilor W. Worthy requested the Clerk poll the Council:

Councilor C. Greathouse - Aye

Councilor W. Steere -Aye

Councilor J. Burlingame -Aye

Councilor S. Arnold -Aye

Councilor W. Worthy -Aye

MOTION PASSED

**7:30 OPEN SESSION**

V. Reconvene Open Session - Disclosure of votes take in Executive Session & Consideration of the Sealing of Minutes - Discussion and/or Action

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to RECONVENE Open Session,

Disclose one (1) vote was taken in Executive Session, Item. A. Personnel and to Seal the minutes of Closed Executive Session; seconded by Councilor S. Arnold

Discussion: None

Councilor W. Worthy requested the Clerk poll the Council:

Councilor C. Greathouse - Aye  
Councilor W. Steere -Aye  
Councilor J. Burlingame -Aye  
Councilor S. Arnold -Aye  
Councilor W. Worthy -Aye

MOTION PASSED

#### VI. Open Forum - For Agenda Items

Councilor W. Worthy stated that this item is an open forum for agenda items.  
Councilor W. Worthy asked if anyone wished to speak .

None

#### VII. Consent Items - Discussion and/or Action

- A. Approval of Town Council Minutes: Regular meeting of July 20, 2023

MOTION was made by Councilor C. Greathouse to APPROVE the Town Council Minutes of July 20, 2023; seconded by Councilor S. Arnold

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse , J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

#### VIII. Unfinished Business

- A. Boards and Commissions
  - 1. Appointments- Terms to run concurrent with the Town Council- Discussion and /or Action
    - a. EDC- Position # 2- two year term to expire 12/2024

Councilor W. Worthy stated that the Clerk has not received a recommendation from the Chair and if Council does not have a name to bring forward, we can table to the next meeting.

MOTION was made by Councilor J. Burlingame to TABLE the appointment to the EDC, Position #2; seconded by Councilor C. Greathouse

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse , J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

B. Town Owned Property:

1. Discussion/Action - Town owned building, Adelaide Road

Councilor W. Worthy stated that Council members were asked to view the structure on town owned property before continuing the conversation on ideas for the property.

Discussion: Councilor J. Burlingame stated he viewed the property and it is as previously described as being in poor condition. Councilor S. Arnold stated he also viewed the property and agrees as to the condition described. Councilor S. Arnold stated that maybe Council could ask K. Scott, Town Planner, if she has any other thoughts as to the use for the property. Councilor W. Steere agrees with the idea to ask K. Scott. Councilor W. Steere stated that the building is secure so perhaps we could take a few weeks to see if there are other uses.

D. Igliazzi, Town Solicitor, stated that the Council should have some type of written report as to the building's condition that would then be used to support any decision Council may make in the future. D. Igliazzi stated that if the Building Official can't do the inspection then the Council could have someone who has done demolition work to do the inspection.

Councilor S. Arnold recommended that they get an update from K. Scott for the next meeting.

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Arnold to TABLE the discussion on the town owned building on Adelaide road; seconded by Councilor Burlingame

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse , J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

C. Authorization to Approve/Sign

1. Contract Amendment Between CLNJS, LLC & Town of Gloucester (for previously approved National Park Service's Historic Revitalization Subgrant) - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Worthy stated that the Planner has requested this item be tabled to the next meeting (August 17, 2023)

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to TABLE the contract amendment between CLNJS, LLC & Town of Gloucester to the next Town Council meeting, August 17, 2023; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse , J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

- D. Ratification of signature and Town Council Approval: Vision Coverage Contract (Per Town of Gloucester Clerks Contract, Effective: July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2025) - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Worthy stated that this item is just for ratification of the vision coverage rider being added to the town's existing medical coverage plan for the Clerk's Union. Councilor W. Worthy stated that the addition was approved with the ratification of the latest clerk's contract. Councilor W. Worthy stated that the coverage contract was signed by the Acting Finance Director and now needs to be ratified by the Council.

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Arnold to RATIFY the vision coverage rider contract to be submitted to the RI Interlocal Trust for the addition of approved vision coverage (adopted with the ratification of the Clerk's Contract effective 7/1/2022); seconded by Councilor C. Greathouse

Discussion: Councilor J. Burlingame asked why this was not done with the contract. J. Fecteau , Town Clerk , stated that this is the bill for the contract which can only be authorized by the Council.

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse , J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

#### IX. New Business

- A. Board of Contracts & Purchases: Bid Award - IFB 2024-01 Hot Mix Asphalt - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Worthy stated that Council has received a recommendation from the Board of Contracts & Purchases which he read as follows:

DATE: 8/2/23  
TO: Honorable Town Council  
FROM: Board of Contracts and Purchases  
RE: IFB2024-01 Hot Mixed Asphalt

At a meeting of the Board of Contracts and Purchases on Tuesday, August 1, 2023, regarding IFB 2024-01 Hot Mixed Asphalt, the Board voted to forward the Public Works Director's recommendation to the Town Council as follows:

From: Gary Trembl  
Public Works Director  
Re: IFB#2024-01 Hot Mix Asphalt Bid

On July 13, 2023, IFB#2024-01 Hot Mix Asphalt was advertised in the Observer and on the Town's

website. We received 3 bids that were opened at a Board of Contract & Purchases meeting on 7/24/23. I reviewed all 3 bids and made a recommendation at the Board of Contract & Purchases meeting on 8/1/23 to award the bid to the low bidder, T. Miozzi, LLC. I ask you to approve the award of IFB#2024-01 Hot Mix Asphalt Bid be to T. Miozzi, LLC.  
(End of memo)

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Arnold to AWARD IFB 2024-01 Hot Mix Asphalt to T. Miozzi, LLC for the bid prices of : \$119 per ton 3" compacted in place; \$119 per ton 4" compacted in place; \$8 per lineal ft. to construct Cape Cod berm; & \$.65 per sq. yd. for Tack coat; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse , J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

B. American Rescue Plan Act Funds

1. Radio Communications (existing ARPA allocation, Project #17) - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Worthy stated that the Council has previously discussed this project with the Fire Chiefs and the status of the allocation is still listed as “Funding contingent upon satisfactory needs assessment”.

Discussion: Chief C. Labutti, West Gloucester Fire Department, stated that the company has completed the needs assessment. Chief Labutti stated that the recommendations, original concerns, scope of work and price are included in the handout given to Council.

06/22/2023

Subject: APRA Funding  
To: Gloucester Town Counsel  
From: West Gloucester Fire Department  
Harmony Fire Department  
Chepachet Fire Department

Council Members,

Please accept this letter as documentation that the three Gloucester Fire Departments have completed their due diligence as requested by the council regarding the procurement of the APRA funds previously put aside for the improvement of radio communications within the town. As you are aware we have been engaged with Goosetown Communications for over a year. We came to the counsel originally looking for truck mounted equipment to assist with bridging the gap in communications.

However, along the way we gathered data that has been aggregated and presented to us which indicates that we can make significantly better improvements by upgrading the network

components of the system we currently have, rerouting the tower paths and adding 2 sites to the existing 4, creating a total of 6 communications sites which will cover all populated areas that are currently causing communications issues.

Thus, reducing the dead spots to small remote unpopulated areas on the outskirts of the town. The cost is significant, and the 3 departments have decided that we should proceed with these improvements based on the engineering data that has been presented to us and reviewed. There will be a significant cost that each of the 3 departments will need to bear over and above the APRA funds in the amount of \$190,983.00 that we are requesting be released.

Additionally, to protect our Investment and minimize the amount of involvement of the Police department staff when there are issues, we have decided to purchase a yearly service contract that provides 24/7 system monitoring, response and repair of any issues that may arise with the system. To date We have relied heavily on PD staff to handle Issues due to us not having an avenue through our current vendor for service and monitoring. We are confident that this approach is the most prudent way to proceed and will provide us with the best long-term solution to our current problem. Please advise if you would like to discuss further or how we should proceed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chief Chris LaButti, West Gloucester Fire Department

On behalf of:

Chief Dennis Huestis, Chepachet Fire Department

Chief Waterman, Harmony Fire Department

(end of memo)

Chief Labutti stated that the three fire departments will have to put in a significant investment themselves. Councilor W. Steere asked if the fire departments will be asking the town for more money in addition to the ARPA funds. Chief Labutti stated the fire departments would need additional funds but they would not ask the town.

Chief Labutti described the areas in town that will have significant coverage but stated there will be a dead zone far out in West Gloucester.

Councilor W. Steere asked if the town would be in a better position and Chief Labutti stated yes.

Councilor W. Worthy asked about the reservation given to towns for the top of the towers. Chief Labutti explained that the top of towers can be granted to the town if it is part of the deal when permission is granted. Chief Labutti stated it is not necessarily a given reserved spot for the town. Chief Huestis, Chepachet Fire Department, stated that the opportunity for the top spot occurs at the time of installation or the town could lose that spot on the tower.

Chief Huestis stated that the company has been fantastic to work with; that they spent a month monitoring the system; that they spent a lot of time and money to present an accurate report. Chief Labutti stated his opinion that he feels this proposal is the best way to go. Councilor S. Arnold thanked the fire chiefs for the time spent to do due diligence to get the right program.

Chief Labutti said the fundamental system is okay and that there will be tweaks to the system to improve and make it better. Chief Huestis stated there will be a yearly fee to maintain for five years but that fee will be absorbed by the fire department. Chief Labutti stated that the company will monitor 24/7 and fix if down. Councilor W. Worthy asked for the future proof of the system. Chief Huestis stated the system can be increased. Chief Waterman, stated that there will be updates

performed just like there are with cell phones. Chie Labutti stated that the company will add newer upgraded parts to gain function.

Councilor W. Steere stated that he appreciates all the work and asked the next step as the money was designated. Councilor S. Arnold stated the money was allocated by Council in a vote and is still allocated. D. Iglizzi stated that they can submit a purchase order to the Finance Department. J. Fecteau stated the Council approved in April subject to satisfaction of the needs assessment. D. Iglizzi stated that Council could acknowledge that they were satisfied with the report. D. Iglizzi stated that the departments can submit the purchase order to the Finance Department and they will pay the company directly.

No action taken by Council

- C. Request for concurrence by R.I.D.O.T. re: Improvements - Reservoir Road & Putnam Pike Pavement Improvements Project (Installation of Rumble Strips) - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Worthy stated that Rhode Island D.O.T. has submitted to the town their proposed plan for road improvements. Councilor W. Worthy stated that D.O.T. has stated in that correspondence the following which he read as follows:

“RIDOT is requesting the Town's concurrence of the rumble strip installation. RIDOT's policy is not to install rumble strips without the Towns support, and we must remove this work from the project if we do not receive a written response”.

(end of text)

Discussion:

Councilor W. Steere stated that correspondence was received from Chief Delprete. Councilor W. Steere stated that he agrees with the Chief as to rumble strips due to the severity of accidents that have occurred on 44. Councilor W. Steere stated that he does not feel rumble strips are a good idea on the sides but are needed on the center line. Councilor W. Steere stated that when the state did rumble strips on the sides of Snake Hill Road the noise was loud to the residents. Councilor J. Burlingame stated the center line is the issue.

MOTION was made by Councilor C. Greathouse to AUTHORIZE the Town Clerk to respond in writing to R.I.D.O.T. regarding the Council’s concurrence of “Centerline Rumble Strip” for the project identified as: Pavement Improvements - Putnam Pike and Reservoir Road, PTSID:2605N, Construction Rhode Island Contract No. 2023-CH-030, Construction Federal Aid Project No. STP-RESF-453; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame

Discussion: Councilor W. Steere questioned whether the rumble strips would be the length of Reservoir Road because he thought it was to be just Putnam Pike down to Money Hill Road. Councilor S. Arnold stated that Reservoir is residential and rumble strips will keep people up all night long. Councilor J. Burlingame stated that it says in the project the limits are Reservoir Road from South Main Street to Putnam Pike ; then Putnam Pike at Reservoir Road to Money Hill Road.

J. Fecteau stated that she thinks it is just Route 44 because later down it says rumble strips on Putnam Pike. Councilor W. Steere stated that South Main Street is in Pascoag and asked if the motion can be modified. Councilor S. Arnold stated the suggestion to exclude Reservoir Road as Route 44 is the main concern. Councilor J. Burlingame stated that it says rumble strips on 44 and it doesn't say rumble strips on Reservoir Road. Councilor S. Arnold stated his suggestion to revise the motion to exclude Reservoir Road.

Councilor J. Burlingame withdrew his second. Councilor C. Greathouse withdrew her second.

AMENDED MOTION was made by Councilor C. Greathouse to AUTHORIZE the Town Clerk to respond in writing to R.I.D.O.T. regarding the Council's concurrence of "Centerline Rumble Strip" for the project identified as: Pavement Improvements - Putnam Pike , PTSID:2605N, Construction Rhode Island Contract No. 2023-CH-030, Construction Federal Aid Project No. STP-RESF-453 to exclude Reservoir Road; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse , J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

- D. Special Event Request - (Per Code of Ordinance, Chapter 175)
  - 1. Gloucester Business Association - Trick or Treat on Main Street
    - a. Council consideration/approval of waiver of Public Hearing - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Worthy stated that Council has received an application from the Gloucester Business Association for Trick or Treat on Main Street. Councilor W. Worthy stated that the request is to hold the event on October 28<sup>th</sup> from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Councilor W. Worthy stated that the event is basically the same as prior years and no complaints have been received by the Clerk's office.

Councilor W. Worthy stated per the Code, if an event is year to year with no change and no complaints, Council can waive the public hearing if they chose to.

Discussion: Councilor S. Arnold stated that it does not seem as if there are any changes from the past.

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Arnold to WAIVE a Public Hearing for a reoccurring Special Event for the Gloucester Business Association, Per Chapter 175 of the Code of Ordinance; said event is proposed as the "Trick or Treat on Main Street" requested for October 28<sup>th</sup>; seconded by Councilor W. Steere

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse , J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy  
NAYS-0



MOTION PASSED

- b. Council consideration/approval of Special Event (if waiver of Public Hearing approved) - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Worthy stated that if the waiver is approved, then Council can discuss and decide whether to grant the request, if Council is ready.

Discussion: None

MOTION was made by Councilor J. Burlingame to APPROVE the application for a Special Event, GBA Trick or Treat, on October 28, 2023 from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., starting location the Pavilion at Kent Field; said use of town property subject to stipulations of previously adopted "Pavilion at Kent Field Use Policy". Waivers from policy or additional stipulations may be made and added by a vote of the Town Council prior to event; seconded by Councilor S. Arnold

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse , J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

- c. Council consideration/approval of waiver of Pavilion Rules - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Worthy stated that the GBA is requesting the use of the pavilion as a start location for their Special Event. Councilor W. Worthy stated that they are asking for several waivers of the adopted rules for the use of the pavilion .

Councilor W. Worthy stated that the first requested waiver is from Chapter 221-18 I where the GBA states their request is for permission to display their 8'x2' "Trick or Treat on Main Street" banner on the pavilion grounds.

Councilor W. Worthy stated that section 18 I states that no materials, including signage, shall be posted, attached to or adhered to, in any way, on any structures or on the grounds of the property unless previously approved by the Recreation Director.

Councilor W. Worthy stated that the second requested waiver is from Chapter 221-18 N where the GBA states their request for permission to distribute local business coupons and other promotional items to the parents during the event.

Councilor W. Worthy stated that section 18 N states that no person shall distribute or exhibit any printed or written material of a commercial nature without permission from the Town Council.

Councilor W. Worthy stated that the GBA was also requesting that the northern entrance to the parking lot at the Pavilion be blocked off for pedestrian safety

Discussion:

J. Fecteau stated that the Recreation Director states he is all right with the first one. Councilor W. Steere asked what would be handed out. J. Fecteau stated that it would be items like business coupons, advertisement cards, other promotional items and samples of that nature.

Councilor W. Worthy asked to look at from the point of what does the Council not want handed out. Councilor W. Steere stated they should come to us . J. Fecteau stated that this request states it is for local business coupons. Councilor J. Burlingame stated that they are not allowed to hand out commercial items as that is against our ordinance. A. Goulet stated he is the co chair and the items to be handed out are trick or treat bags to the children and individual members promoting their businesses.

Councilor W. Steere stated his concern that because it is town property that the Council needs to make sure the items are appropriate. A. Goulet stated that the GBA has control over what is being handed out as members will be staffing the tables and handing the items out. A. Goulet asked what kind of items was Councilor W. Steere concerned about. Councilor W. Steere stated inappropriate items and that he does not expect this will occur here but he is just thinking out loud to protect everybody. A. Goulet stated they have had a successful program for seven years so they have a history of knowing what they are doing. Councilor S. Arnold asked if there have been handouts during the last seven years. A. Goulet stated that there have been handouts and that the event is very successful. A. Goulet stated that the GBA would not do anything to put a slant in the opposite direction. Councilor C. Greathouse asked if the handouts were supervised. A. Goulet stated that the handouts are supervised by staff members who are also business leaders who do not want to jeopardize anything.

MOTION was made by Councilor C. Greathouse to WAIVE Item #18-I & Item #18-N of the adopted Pavilion Rules of Use and to allow the northern entrance to the parking lot at the Pavilion to be blocked off; seconded by Councilor S. Arnold.

Discussion: A. Goulet stated his thanks.

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse , J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

E. Personnel

1. Discussion and/or Action Re: Creation of job description for Hybrid Clerk position (Finance Offices)

Councilor W. Worthy stated that this item was discussed at the last Council Meeting and added to this agenda to authorize the preparation of a job description for a hybrid clerk position. Councilor W. Worthy stated that when completed the Council will discuss, approve and present to the Clerk's Union.

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Arnold to TABLE this item until August 17, 2023; seconded by Councilor W. Steere

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse , J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

2. Discussion and/or Action Re: Amendment to Employee Handbook Vision Coverage Benefit

Councilor W. Worthy stated that in the last contract ratified for the Clerk’s Union the Vision Coverage Benefit was added to medical coverage. Councilor W. Worthy stated that the question before Council is does the Council want to also give that benefit to non-union employees that qualify for medical coverage. Councilor W. Worthy stated that traditionally, when the Clerk’s negotiated an additional benefit it was passed on to the eligible non union employees. Councilor W. Worthy stated that if Council wishes to do so then, a statement could be added to Personnel Handbook, under Medical Coverage,

Discussion: Councilor J. Burlingame stated that he feels this is the right thing to do. Councilor S. Arnold stated he requested this item as he did not understand the history. Councilor S. Arnold stated that he has learned that this is traditionally what has always been done and that putting it in the handbook takes the gray area out. Councilor S. Arnold stated that having this item in the handbook makes it crystal clear. Councilor W. Steere stated it makes sense.

MOTION was made by Councilor J. Burlingame to AMEND the Personnel Handbook to include the following under the Medical Coverage section “to include the vision rider for eligible non-union employees” seconded by Councilor C. Greathouse

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse , J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

3. Discussion and/or Action Re: Finance Office - Clerk II to Senior Clerk Promotion

Councilor W. Worthy stated that during the recent budget process the former Finance Director presented a promotion for an employee, in the Finance Office, to the Budget Board and his Council Liaison. Councilor W. Worthy stated that all agreed and the additional salary was included in the budget presented to the Council at Public Hearing and finally voted on. Councilor W. Worthy stated that the former Finance Director did not submit a request to the Council, nor did he discuss the promotion at the Public Hearing. Councilor W. Worthy stated that the employee was informed, by the former Finance Director, that effective July 1, 2023 her position would be changed to Senior Clerk. Councilor W. Worthy stated that Council would now need to consider approving the promotion to correct the former Finance Director’s procedural error.

Discussion:

Councilor J. Burlingame asked if the matter was already communicated to the employee. J. Fecteau stated it had. Councilor W. Steere stated that the Council were the ones who did not know. Councilor S. Arnold stated that the procedural error was also on him; that the finance director left; and, that July 1<sup>st</sup> came and went. Councilor S. Arnold stated that the expectation was always there starting from the Budget Board.

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Arnold to APPROVE the step promotion to Finance Clerk, Dawn Amaral from Clerk II status to Senior Clerk at the hourly rate of \$25.57 per the Clerk's current contract, effective July 1, 2023; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse , J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

F. Town Council Correspondence

1. Letter of "Thanks" to Bay Crane - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Worthy stated that during the extensive improvements to Gloucester Memorial Park, Bay Crane donated a crane and driver to assist the DPW department with the pavilion work. Councilor W. Worthy stated that Council would like to forward extend their appreciation in a letter of thanks.

Discussion: Councilor W. Worthy stated that this is a great idea. Councilor S. Arnold stated that there was great cooperation and a great job by DPW for collaboration on this project. Councilor W. Steere stated that it was looking good at GMP.

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Arnold to AUTHORIZE the Town Council President to sign a letter of thanks to Bay Crane for their generous assistance to the Town of Gloucester during the Gloucester Memorial Park improvements; seconded by Councilor W. Steere

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse , J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

G. Historical Cemetery Maintenance - Future Plans - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Worthy stated that Council received a proposal from Bill Brown, Gloucester Historical Cemeteries Committee, asking Council to incorporate the committee into a town department.

Discussion: Councilor S. Arnold stated that this topic goes back to a March meeting when Bill Brown presented a proposal in Council correspondence. Councilor S. Arnold stated that B. Brown presented a different proposal at the last Council meeting which included 3-4 town employees to take over the cemetery maintenance as a town department. Councilor S. Arnold stated that at this time no changes can be made until the town enters a new fiscal year. Councilor S. Arnold stated that

he believes Jess Parker, Tax Assessor, has been doing some work to be able to extend the legacy of all this incredible work that Mr. Brown and his group have been doing.

J. Parker, Tax Assessor, stated she has been working on a proposal to overhaul the exemptions and in doing that she is trying to include cemeteries. J. Parker stated that she gave B. Brown a copy of Burrillville's ordinance which gives property owners a \$100 decrease on their taxes. J. Parker stated her concern that the responsibility is on the property owner so if they do not want the responsibility then the cemetery won't be maintained. J. Parker stated a suggestion that the town could handle cemetery maintenance as they do any other finance project and get quotes, then have the Council approve and finance in the next fiscal year.

J. Parker stated that she does not feel the town needs three full time employees and that the amount of money she is putting back into the tax roll with overhauling exemptions will be lost if the three people are hired full time. J. Parker suggested that the Historic District could possibly help.

Councilor W. Steere stated he was not aware of the exemption "overhaul" being talked about. Councilor W. Steere asked what other communities do. J. Parker stated that there are 128 cemeteries that would qualify for an exemption. J. Parker stated that Burrillville does inspections in their town but she does not have the manpower to do that and suggested a volunteer committee could do the work. B. Brown stated that not all cemeteries have owners but they all need care. B. Brown stated that only about one half have owners.

Councilor J. Burlingame asked why there weren't owners. B. Brown stated that the owners are unknown as they were mostly family cemeteries. B. Brown stated that as the land was surveyed and lots created the properties abutted the cemeteries and that the deeds had no reference. B. Brown stated that families died off and the property changed hands. B. Brown stated that if a property owner was open to taking care of the cemetery then they should get the exemption.

B. Brown stated that three years ago he felt the tax abatement was a good idea but now he realizes it would not be good for all cemeteries. B. Brown stated that he feels you can't offer one abatement figure for all cemeteries because there are so many different sized cemeteries. B. Brown also stated that adding more people or town committees would complicate the established routine he has devised. B. Brown stated that one body, like his group, needs to continue the work they are doing and not spread it out to individuals.

Councilor W. Worthy asked what other towns did. B. Brown stated that Barrington, Bristol and Exeter provide cemetery upkeep by the town as they have the money and they do not have as many cemeteries. B. Brown stated that he has set up a routine from April to December for the maintenance of the cemeteries and it must be kept up in order not to get behind and have the growth take over. B. Brown stated that other towns like Coventry have a Preservation committee or Conservation committee who are calling him for advice as to funding, volunteers and equipment. B. Brown stated that his group has set the bar for the state.

Councilor W. Worthy asked if there were any grants. B. Brown stated he has received grants from the House and Senate as well as the town. Councilor W. Steere stated that the town has given funds but it is not a town program. B. Brown stated that the town is invested and has given the funds for

the perpetual care of the four largest cemeteries in town but that needs to be kept up.

B. Brown stated it has taken him five years to put together and it is a well oiled machine but they can't do it forever. B. Brown stated he knows the answer won't occur overnight and he is willing to sit down and discuss. Councilor s. Arnold stated that B. Brown has set the bar. B. Brown stated he is very proud of what his group has accomplished. Councilor S. Arnold stated that there is a lot of exploring to do and nothing can be done till the next fiscal year. Councilor S. Arnold suggested maybe Karen Scott, Town Planner, may be a source to find grants.

J. Parker stated she is not against helping bu the town needs to be cautious on spending and she is open to suggestions. J. Parker suggested the owners of cemeteries could receive the exemption and then maybe the abutting owners of an unknown cemetery could band together. B. Brown stated that any tax relief is specific to the owner so if the property changes hands the new owner would have to be informed and agree to sign on . B. Brown stated that if a town group was doing the work then there would be no issues if a property changed owners.

No action taken by Council

#### X. Town Council Correspondence/ Discussion

Councilor W. Worthy stated that Council has received the following correspondence:

1. A request from the Chepachet Village Schoolhouse, a daycare, to tie into the Town's public water supply.
2. The annual report of the Meals on Wheels association. The report is filed in the Clerk's office.
3. Correspondence on behalf of the Vicksburg National Military Park, Friends of Vicksburg National Military Park and Campaign, and the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, inviting the Council to attend our Rhode Island Memorial Rededication at Vicksburg National Military Park, in Vicksburg, Mississippi in November.

#### XI. Department Head Reports/Discussion

Councilor W. Worthy asked if any dept. heads had anything to report or does Council have any questions for dept. heads.

1. K. Johnson, Building Official, stated that he knew that at the last couple of Council meetings there were questions from the public about the gravel pit in West Gloucester. K. Johnson stated that he had a meeting with Smithfield Peat this past week and he had also spoken with D. Igliazzi regarding what needs to be done. K. Johnson stated that D. Igliazzi explained that the violation first needs to be off and the material removed.

K. Johnson stated that Smithfield Peat would like to meet with their attorney and D. Igliazzi to formulate a path. K. Johnson stated that the issue is looking at the particulars and determining what the restrictions will be on the property. K. Johnson stated that the possible paths may be a change of use or a special use permit. Councilor W. Steere stated that the path is to go to Planning and then Zoning. K. Johnson stated that Smithfield Peat is looking to store equipment and maybe build an office and he had a preliminary plan in his office if any councilor wished to see. Councilor W. Steere

stated that the path is to go to Planning and Zoning and not the Town Council as it is not a Council matter unless it were for a gravel permit. K. Johnson stated that he is working on this matter and wanted Council to know.

2. K. Johnson stated that he still has not gotten the special use permit application from B. Reichert for the propane filling store. Councilor W. Steere asked if he was selling propane. Councilor C. Greathouse stated that she saw an employee filling a propane tank. Councilor W. Steere stated that this is a zoning issue. K. Johnson agreed with Councilor W. Steere. K. Johnson stated that he has had B. Reichert in his office and it is in the process but he is not being very cooperative. Councilor W. Steere stated that this is a zoning matter.

## XII. Bds. and Commissions Reports/ Discussion

Councilor W. Worthy asked if any boards or commissions had anything to report or if Council had any questions for board or commission members.

None

## XIII. Open Forum

Councilor W. Worthy asked if anyone had anything to discuss and if so, please state your name when you come to the microphone.

1. M. Verrier, resident, stated that he had heard that B. Reichert had wiring and other work done and received permits. M. Verrier stated that Councilor W. Steere just stated that Smithfield Peat could not get any permits until the violation was lifted. M. Verrier stated that B. Reichert was in violation and got permits for work. M. Verrier stated his opinion that suggested it was because B. Reichert was the former town council president. Councilor W. Steere stated that he does not think that B. Reichert was on the Council when he received the permits. M. Verrier stated that B. Reichert did not get permits. Councilor W. Steere asked K. Johnson if B. Reichert had received permits. Councilor W. Steere stated that this matter is a zoning issue and not a town council issue and that K. Johnson said the matter was being worked on.

K. Johnson stated that permits had been pulled. K. Johnson stated that B. Reichert thought he was grand fathered in to sell propane through the prior owner. K. Johnson saw the work being done without permits so he confronted them and they came in and pulled permits. K. Johnson stated that a special use permit has not been applied for in regards to the propane filling station.

Councilor J. Burlingame asked the recourse. K. Johnson stated that he can shut the propane business down until he gets his special use permit. Councilor J. Burlingame stated that is kind of how K. Johnson shut down Smithfield Peat. K. Johnson stated his agreement and added that is probably what will happen. K. Johnson stated that B. Reichert came into his office last Friday, shook his hand, said he would take care of the special use permit and took an application. Councilor J. Burlingame asked why Reichert wasn't shut down if Smithfield Peat was shut down.

Councilor W. Steere stated that this is a zoning matter. K. Johnson stated that it is his office and that the question is not the permits that were pulled but the special use permit. K. Johnson stated that he has not received the special use permit application to dispense propane from B. Reichert. Councilor

J. Burlingame stated his opinion that B. Reichert should be shut down.

K. Johnson stated he would speak with B. Reichert tomorrow and tell him that he can't sell propane until he submits the special use permit. Councilor J. Burlingame asked the recourse if B. Reichert does not comply. K. Johnson stated that the recourse would be a cease and desist order. Councilor C. Greathouse asked what would happen if B. Reichert failed to comply. K. Johnson stated he did not know. K. Johnson stated that B. Reichert is aware of the situation and the issue is a hotbed one now that he is trying to get rectified.

Councilor W. Steere stated is opinion that K. Johnson is caught in the middle and that the issue is also a political one. K. Johnson stated he will get the matter straightened out and will get the special use permit but he may have to shut him down. Councilor J. Burlingame stated that was K. Johnson's job and not the Town Council. K. Johnson stated that he wanted the Council to know of the situation. M. Verrier stated he appreciates what K. Johnson is doing but he is speaking from a competitive business.

2. R. Watts, 60 year town resident, stated he loves the town but that he is not happy with the tax situation. R. Watts asked the Council if Vision was the company that did the valuations and if the tax money was being used to pay Vision and the Council agreed.

R. Watts stated that Vision should be held accountable under 44-5-26 RI Laws because they were supposed to do an accurate account and they have not. R. Watts stated that when the original valuation came out that he followed the process to question the valuation and called Vision. R. Watts stated he spoke with a Vision employee who agreed that his tax amount should be decreased. R. Watts stated he never heard anything else from Vision and thought everything was fine. R. Watts stated that when he received his bill that there was no decrease on it.

R. Watts described his property as being less than one acre of land and that the value had increased by \$200,000 from last year. R. Watts stated that he made no improvements. R. Watts questioned what formula did Vision use to value his property.

R. Watts stated that he knows of one property that had an addition added to it and their taxes went up \$100. R. Watts said he made no improvements and his taxes increased by \$1400. R. Watts stated his opinion that Vision should be held accountable. R. Watts stated his opinion that Vision did not do what they said they were going to do and that they have not done a very good job. R. Watts stated his opinion that it was crazy as to how they came up with the numbers. R.. Watts asked the Council if they were going to do anything.

Councilor W. Worthy stated that when this was first going down that Adam ( Muccino- former finance director) was dealing with Vision directly and that he had been in the process to get more time open but that nothing had been done since.

R. Watts stated that he never received a call or a letter after his phone call with Vision. R. Watts stated that he is on a fixed income and it will be hard for him to pay. R. Watts stated he would like the Council to do something about the situation.



A woman from the audience asked how much Vision was being paid. Councilor W. Steere stated that the number could be obtained and that Council also has some questions as to things that have happened recently so Mr. Watts is not alone. Councilor W. Steere stated that his taxes also increased. J. Parker stated that Vision sent the letters to taxpayers.

Councilor J. Burlingame asked R. Watts if the land was vacant. R. Watts stated that the lot is vacant but combined with the house lot so it is total less than one acre. Councilor W. Worthy asked R. Watts about his comment when he came to speak to Councilor W. Worthy regarding the Providence Water. R. Watts stated that Providence Water owns the land and that his property is water view but Vision is valuing it as waterfront.

Councilor S. Arnold stated that he is very frustrated as well and that Vision not following up with a letter or call is something the Council could work on.

R. Watts stated that Providence Water owns a 20 foot strip of land at the water which makes his property water view and not waterfront because his property is behind this strip. R. Watts stated that the Vision person he spoke with also agreed that his value should be reduced to reflect that he has a cesspool and not a septic system.

W. Steere, resident, stated his agreement with R. Watts. W. Steere stated his opinion that in reading the law Vision is to do an accurate valuation and he does not believe it was done. W. Steere stated that there may be some people like Mr. Watts who could have his taxes decreased but overall most people would just have to go on because there are only one to two companies who do these valuations.

R. Watts stated that he feels the valuations were not done properly as some only went up \$100. Councilor W. Worthy stated it is a third each. W. Steere stated he spoke with someone at Vision who said they drove by all houses but he does not believe it.

W. Steere stated that he feels rumble strips are needed in the west end of town as that is where accidents happen. W. Steere stated his opinion that rumble strips are not needed in the center of town.

Councilor W. Worthy asked J. Parker if she could put a little push back at Vision. J. Parker stated that the sites visited were new construction, sales and permits.

Councilor J. Burlingame asked J. Parker to look into R. Watts situation. J. Parker stated that he filed an appeal so she can check.

#### XIV. Adjourn

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to ADJOURN at 9:10 p.m.; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse, J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold, W. Worthy  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED