

At a meeting of the Town Council holden in and for the Town of Gloucester on April 4, 2019:

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Members Present: George O. (Buster) Steere, Jr., President; Walter M. O. Steere, III, Vice-President; William E. Reichert; Patricia Henry; and Julian (Jay) Forgue.

Also Present: Jean Fecteau, Town Clerk; Tim Kane, Town Solicitor; Diane Brennan, Finance Director; Kenneth Johnson, Building/Zoning Official; Gary Trembl, Director of Public Works; Robert Shields, Recreation Director; Judith Branch, Human Services Director; and Melissa Bouvier, Senior Center Director.

III. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

IV. Open Forum - For Agenda Items

None.

V. Citations

A. Chepachet Grange #38: Annual Recognition Awards for 2019

Councilor G. Steere stated that the Chepachet Grange has requested Citations be presented from the Town Council at their annual grange awards night to be held on April 16, 2019.

Councilor Reichert read the following Citation into the record:

CITATION #2019-02
Chepachet Grange 2019 "Community Service Awards"

The National Grange founded in 1867 is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, fraternal organization that advocates for rural America and agriculture. With a strong history in grassroots activism, family values and community service, the Chepachet Grange is part of more than 2,100 hometown granges across the United States; and

The Chepachet Grange #38, organized in 1907, has always enriched our community and celebrates

the importance of citizens in our community that share their ideals and give unselfishly of their time and effort; and

The Chepachet Grange, annually, acknowledges the good work of individuals in our community at a Community Service Awards Night; and for 2019 the Chepachet Grange has chosen the following honorees:

William Brown, Citizen of the Year;
Christopher A. Duguid, Law Enforcement Officer of the Year;
Robert F. Shields, Firefighter of the Year;
Diane Lebrun, Teacher of the Year;
Katie E. Steere, Agriculturalist of the Year;
Edward Suess, Granger of the Year;
The Bel-Aires, Group of the Year

The Gloucester Town Council and the Town Clerk wish to congratulate and express our appreciation to these citizens on this occasion and we wish to thank the membership of the Chepachet Grange for their hard work, sense of community, dedication to our Town; and good sense to honor those chosen for the ***2019 Community Service Awards.***

George O. Steere, Jr.
President, Gloucester Town Council

Jean M. Fecteau, CMC, Town Clerk

Dated this 4th day of April, 2019

seconded by Councilor W. Steere.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, W. Steere, Reichert, Henry and Forgue
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

Councilors Forgue and G. Steere stated that they will attend the event.

B. Senior Services: Meals on Wheels Gloucester Volunteers
Councilor G. Steere stated that the Council would like to recognize the volunteers that work with Senior Services to provide Meals on Wheels to our residents. Councilor G. Steere stated that a ceremony will take place in a couple of weeks at which time Meals on Wheels will recognize the people who deliver the meals.

Councilor W. Steere read the following Citation into the record:

CITATION

2019-03

Be it hereby known to all that the Town of Gloucester presents this Citation to the volunteer drivers of “Meals on Wheels” through the Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)

Pam Tessitore
Ruth Parr
Maureen King
Don LaCasse
Ralph Loxley
Jerome O’Connell
Edward Rose

The Gloucester Town Council is proud to recognize and commend you for the service and caring you provide .

The Town Council and the Town Clerk represent all Gloucester residents when we say “thank you” for the time and dedication you give to our homebound residents.

George O. Steere, Jr.
President, Town Council

Jean M. Fecteau, CMC,
Town Clerk

April 4, 2019

seconded by Councilor Forgue.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, W. Steere, Reichert, Henry and Forgue
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

VI. Consent Items - Discussion and/or Action

- A. Approval of Town Council Regular meeting minutes of March 21st & March 25th, 2019

MOTION was made by Councilor Forgue to APPROVE the Town Council regular meeting minutes of March 21, 2019 and the special meeting minutes of March 25, 2019; seconded by Councilor Henry.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, W. Steere, Reichert, Henry and Forgue
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

VII. Unfinished Business

A. Board and Commissions

1. Appointments:

a. Recreation Commission - Discussion and/or Action

Two year term to expire 1/2021

Councilor Henry stated that the Recreation Commission did not meet last week, therefore, she asked for a motion to table this appointment.

MOTION was made by Councilor Henry to TABLE the appointment to the Recreation Commission for a two year term to expire 1/2021; seconded by Councilor Reichert.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, W. Steere, Reichert, Henry and Forgue

NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

b. Land Trust - Discussion and/or Action

Member at Large - Planning Board designee

One year term to expire 2/2020

Councilor G. Steere stated that the Planning Board, at their meeting of March 18, 2019, voted to recommend Janine Pitocco to the Land Trust as the Planning Board's designee.

MOTION was made by Councilor Forgue to APPOINT Janine Pitocco to the Land Trust, Planning Board designee, for a one year term to expire 2/2020; seconded by Councilor W. Steere.

Discussion: Councilor G. Steere noted that Janine Pitocco was elected chair of the Planning Board at their last meeting.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, W. Steere, Reichert, Henry and Forgue

NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

VIII. New Business

A. Earth Day Clean Up - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor Henry stated that we will be having our second annual Earth Day on Saturday April 27th from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Councilor Henry stated that she is holding a meeting at her house with some of the volunteers and she included the Town Council members on the list, however, there cannot be a quorum because it would violate the Open Meetings law.

Councilor Henry stated that she spoke with the 5th graders at Fogarty Elementary School who will

sponsor the event at that location. Councilor Henry stated that she is going to talk to the 5th grade class at West Gloucester Elementary School next week. Councilor Henry thanked Michelle Allen, of the PTO, for putting the event on Facebook and stated that the Town Clerk will run an ad next week. Councilor Henry stated that Public Works has ordered supplies and donations have been made by Dino's and the Gloucester Business Association.

Councilor Henry stated that at the meeting there will be discussion regarding the sites: the Pavilion, the Transfer Station, and the two (2) elementary schools. Councilor W. Steere asked if this would be a Town meeting. Councilor Henry replied in the negative, stating that it would be a meeting of the Sand Dam Association and herself, as volunteers, who put this event together. Councilor W. Steere stated that to avoid any Open Meeting problems, an email should be sent to the Police Chief, EMA and Council members to clarify that they should not attend. Tim Kane, Town Solicitor, replied that as long as there is no quorum of any board, he does not see a problem with the Open Meetings law. Councilor W. Steere expressed concern regarding the line between public and private. T. Kane noted that the group described by Councilor Henry does not meet the definition of a public body under the Open Meetings Act. Councilor Henry stated that she will send an email to the Councilors stating that they are not invited. Councilor Henry added that the Councilors are welcome to attend one of the four (4) sites to help out the day of the event.

Judy Colaluca, president of the Sand Dam Reservoir Association, complimented the Public Works Department for their help regarding the problem of litter in Town. J. Colaluca noted that there is still a problem regarding trash bags on the road due to trucks and trailers not being covered. J. Colaluca stated that they look to the Council to come up with solutions to solve the problem. J. Colaluca stated that the signs that were posted have helped but we need to do more.

J. Colaluca spoke about the second annual Earth Day celebration and stated that many people are interested in participating. J. Colaluca stated that there are wonderful sponsors: Gloucester Conservation Commission, Recreation Commission, Gloucester Business Association, Sand Dam Reservoir Association, Dunkin Donuts and Dino's. J. Colaluca invited the Council members and all present to join them on Saturday, April 27th from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

B. Route 44- Discharge of water (village location)- Discussion and/or Action

Councilor Forgue stated that he and Gary Treml, Director of Public Works, met with the State regarding a situation of water running out of the dental office onto the sidewalk and road which often freezes in the winter. Councilor Forgue noted that a hole was made in the curbing to deliberately dump the water onto the road. Councilor Forgue stated that G. Treml has suggested that the problem could be rectified but it is just the matter of bringing it before the people that own the property to see if they will comply.

Councilor G. Steere stated that the remedy would be to allow them to drain the water toward the Pavilion. G. Treml concurred. Councilor Forgue recommended that this be a temporary fix because if the grade of their parking lot was ever changed the property owners could start dumping anything over there. Councilor Forgue noted that we should be cautious because the problem we want to fix

is on Route 44.

Councilor Henry asked what property the water is originating from. Councilor Forgue replied that it is coming from the dental office and, further, that the director at the Chepachet R.I. DOT garage has said that it is a bad issue. Tim Kane, Town Solicitor, asked when it was put in. Councilor Forgue replied that it was put in when they fixed the road. Councilor G. Steere commented that it used to pump out on top of the ground and when they fixed the road, they put the hole through the curb to prevent the parking lot from getting icy. Councilor Forgue stated that the water is pumping out of the basement and causes a dangerous situation for drivers and people walking on the street in the winter.

Councilor G. Steere asked if we would have to grant the property owners an easement if we send them a letter asking them to fix the problem. T. Kane replied that we would define that it is just the water coming out of the basement. T. Kane asked if the pipe would go on Town property. G. Treml replied that it would go across the parking lot. T. Kane stated that we could give them a license, which is less than an easement, which could be revoked upon 60 days notice. Councilor W. Steere asked where the water would be diverted to. Councilor Forgue replied toward the front of the Pavilion. Councilor W. Steere stated that would be a lot of water coming onto Town property and that area is wet to begin with. Councilor W. Steere stated that if it is a temporary solution, that is fine.

Councilor Forgue stated that the drilling through the granite curbing to install the pipe is definitely a professional job. Councilor G. Steere stated that there is a gully between the driveway and the property line so it would run out to the back and never reach the driveway. G. Treml spoke but was inaudible on the recording.

Councilor Forgue stated that the ultimate fix would be if the road is done over the water could be trenched to the culvert on the other side near the liquor store. Councilor G. Steere noted that the road was just done over a few years ago.

T. Kane asked if we would have the property owner do the work but we would make the area available. Councilor W. Steere stated that there would be no cost to the Town. Councilor Reichert stated that as long as it is something that can be removed or revoked in case we want to add to the Pavilion or somebody buys that property as we don't want to inherit a water problem from next door.

Councilor W. Steere stated that we should let the owners know that this is a temporary solution to a problem they have to come up with a solution for. Councilor W. Steere stated that the State has to weigh in on this as well. There was Council consensus to have the Solicitor draw up a letter to send to the owner of the property with a copy to go to the State. Councilor G. Steere stated that the offer would be good for 90 days and would allow them to dump the water onto the Town's property. Councilor Forgue suggested that the letter state that they should get in touch with the Highway Department Director to show them where it needs to go.

Councilor Henry asked if the Council is setting a precedent for any other property owner that has a water problem and would we be giving same relief. T. Kane replied that it would not set legal precedent because every situation is unique. T. Kane stated that in this case we have drainage that is coming onto a road that our residents are traveling on and the State is not doing anything about the situation.

Councilor W. Steere stated that we need a time certain regarding how long they can do this because, otherwise, they will just continue to use that option. Councilor W. Steere suggested one (1) year to resolve this and come up with another solution. Councilor Henry agreed, stating that we should give them 90 days to do this temporary revocable license but then they should come up with a long range plan.

Councilor W. Steere stated that we should tell the State that we are coming up with a temporary solution but they need to work with this property owner to figure something out. Councilor W. Steere stated that this is not our problem because it is a State road and they created the problem.

Councilor Forgue stated that he is looking for a quick fix right now but we have to get this done before next winter. Councilor Forgue stated that we need to make it clear to the owner that we have a temporary fix for the water situation, and give them two (2) or three (3) years to figure out how to rectify this problem.

Councilor Henry agreed but stated that legally, the Council must be fair to everybody and not create situations that could end up coming back to us. Councilor Forgue replied that the only people he wants to be fair to are the people who drive and walk on that road.

Councilor W. Steere asked what is the consequence to the property owner if they do not comply within a certain amount of time. Councilor Forgue suggested giving them 90 days to agree to it and give them a five-year use. Councilor W. Steere disagreed, stating that with five (5) years, they will never do anything.

Councilor G. Steere stated that G. Treml has run into this while trying to drain roads and has had people allow him to dig a ditch across their property. G. Treml commented that this is a very wet year and how do you stop a resident from pumping out their basement. Councilor W. Steere stated that the property owner must come up with a solution without creating a public safety hazard.

Councilor G. Steere agreed with Councilor Forgue that we should give them 90 days to take advantage of our offer, give them five (5) years to do it, then see what happens. Councilor Henry stated that they are a great business in Town and we don't want to see them relocate. Councilor Forgue agreed that they are a great business but that they put a lot of people at risk in the winter. Councilor Forgue stated that they make plenty of money and can spend several hundred dollars to prevent somebody from getting killed out there in the wintertime. Councilor W. Steere suggested giving them two (2) years instead of five (5).

There was discussion regarding long term solutions such as putting a culvert under the road. Councilor W. Steere stated that the time for that would have been when they redid the road. Councilor G. Steere stated that this is the only solution for now.

Councilor W. Steere stated that if they are dumping water on Town property there should be an assessment. Councilor Forgue stated that he thinks it is awful that water will be dumped on property where we just built a beautiful Pavilion, but agrees it is better there than on Route 44. Councilor G. Steere stated that it is not going to hurt the property or he would not be in favor of it.

Councilor W. Steere again stated that there should be an assessment charged to the property owner for pumping water onto the Town's property. Councilor W. Steere further stated that we are trying to come up with a solution for a property owner who is not doing anything about it, other than creating a public safety hazard.

MOTION was made by Councilor Forgue to direct the Town Solicitor to write a letter to the owner of the dental office, located at 1109 Putnam Pike in Chepachet, giving them permission to dump the water that is coming out of the (1 1/4" to 1 1/2") pipe, that they have going onto Route 44, onto the Town land where the Pavilion is located, for two (2) years, to be re-evaluated after two (2) years, and they will have 90 days from the date they receive the letter to take action;

seconded by Councilor Reichert.

Discussion: Councilor W. Steere asked what are the consequences if they do not take action. T. Kane, Town Solicitor stated that he does not wish to discuss it in public at this time. Councilor W. Steere asked why it would be us as it is a State road. T. Kane replied that the State is not doing anything and we have to protect the citizens of Gloucester regarding public safety.

Councilor G. Steere reiterated that within 90 days, they must act on it, and it will be re-evaluated in two (2) years. T. Kane noted that it is only to take drainage which is being pumped from the basement.

Councilor Forgue AMENDED his MOTION to add that it is just the water that is being pumped out of the basement with a sump pump; no other water should be discharged in that area.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, W. Steere, Reichert, Henry and Forgue
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

C. Historic District Commission - Discussion and/or Action
RE: Proposed amendments to Gloucester Code of Ordinance

Charlie Wilson, Chair of the Historic District Commission, stated that the Commission had a meeting with the Town Council to discuss the proposed changes. C. Wilson stated that they have been working with homeowners and businesses regarding different building materials, windows,

etc. and the proposed changes will help with that.

Councilor Forgue stated that he has reviewed the proposed amendments and suggested that C. Wilson go over them with the Town Planner before the Council takes any action. Councilor Forgue stated that the Planner is working on several grants and we should make sure that the changes comply with what she is doing. Tim Kane, Town Solicitor, stated that he will also review the documents with C. Wilson and the Town Planner. Councilor W. Steere suggested that Ken Johnson, Building/Zoning Official, be involved also because he would have to enforce the Ordinance. T. Kane asked for this to be continued to the first meeting in May to allow time for review.

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to TABLE Historic District Commission RE: Proposed Amendments to the Gloucester Code of Ordinance until the Town Council meeting of May 2, 2019; seconded by Councilor Forgue.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, W. Steere, Reichert, Henry and Forgue
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

- D. Personnel - Discussion and/or Action
 - 1. Appointments
 - a. Finance Office - Accountant

Councilor G. Steere read the following request from the Finance Director:

To: **Honorable Town Council Members**
From: Diane L. Brennan, Director of Finance/ HR
Date: April 2, 2019
Re: Accountant Position

An Accountant position was advertised in the Valley Breeze and posted on the town website in March 2019. There were 8 applicants for the job. After 4 interviews, and 2 second interviews, Elizabeth Beltram is being recommended for the position. This was concluded with the assistance of Jane Steere, and Pat Dubois who were present for all of the interviews. Based on her resume and information from the interview process, Elizabeth has the skill set to do the job. She is the only candidate that had municipal auditing experience having worked on the audit for the Town of Gloucester early in her career. I look forward to her becoming part of the Gloucester team and wish to welcome as a town employee.

The position would be 37.5 hours weekly and include a full benefit package. Annual compensation would be is \$52,000. Elizabeth would fall under the rules of the employee handbook and any charter and ordinance provisions that apply to this position. After an annual positive evaluation of her performance, an increase of \$2,500 recommended upon completion of one year. This will be in addition to increases that may be provided to non-union employees during the budget process. The

Glocester Police Department has conducted a BCI check and concluded Elizabeth has no disqualifying information at the bureau of criminal identification in Rhode Island.

The Town council will consider this appointment at the April 4, 2019 council meeting at 7:30 PM in Glocester Town Hall. Upon favorable action, her expected start date is Wednesday May 8, 2019.
(End of memo)

Discussion: None.

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to APPOINT Elizabeth Beltram to the position of Accountant, in the Finance Department, for a 37.5 hour weekly position including a full benefit package, at an Annual compensation of \$52,000 with an increase of \$2,500 after completion of one year with a positive evaluation of her performance. Said employee would fall under the rules of the employee handbook and any charter and ordinance provisions that apply to this position; and be effective May 8, 2019; seconded by Councilor Henry.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, W. Steere, Reichert, Henry and Forgue
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

b. Police Department- Full time Dispatcher

Councilor G. Steere read the following request from the Chief of Police:

To: Honorable Town Council
From: Chief Joseph DelPrete Date: March 28, 2019
Subject: Police Department Dispatcher Position

Dear Council Members,

I would respectfully request to appoint Bianca Borges of Glocester to a full time dispatch position on the Glocester Police Department. She is currently a part time dispatcher on the Glocester Police Department and has extensive police and fire dispatch experience.

I further would request that this appointment become effective starting April 7, 2019 at an **hourly rate of \$19.58 per hour** along with all employee benefits outlined in the Local 1322 R.I. Laborers Dispatcher-Town of Glocester collective bargaining agreement. Mrs. Borges will further be placed on six month probationary status from date of hire.

This appointment is needed to fill the full time dispatcher vacancy after the March 20, 2019 resignation of dispatcher Jacqueline Casale.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joseph DelPrete
(end of memo)

Discussion: None.

MOTION was made by Councilor Reichert to APPOINT Bianca Borges to the position of full time Police Dispatcher at an **hourly rate of \$19.58 per hour** to include all employee benefits outlined in the Local 1322 R.I. Laborers Dispatcher-Town of Gloucester collective bargaining agreement. Effective date of hire to be April 7, 2019, said appointment subject to a six month probationary status from date of hire; seconded by Councilor Forgue.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, W. Steere, Reichert, Henry and Forgue
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

E. Boards & Commissions - Disband for the record (defunct boards) - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor G. Steere stated that the Town Clerk has several boards that have become defunct over time and she is requesting Council formally disband these boards for the record. Councilor G. Steere explained that the Planner typically gets appointed every two years, but Karen Scott, Town Planner, inquired and these boards no longer exist or meet:

Woonasquatucket River Committee, Scituate Watershed Committee, & Blackstone Valley Watershed Committee

MOTION was made by Councilor Forgue to DISBAND the Gloucester charge for the Woonasquatucket River Committee; the Scituate Watershed Committee; and the Blackstone Valley Watershed Committee; seconded by Councilor Reichert.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, W. Steere, Reichert, Henry and Forgue
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

IX. Town Council Correspondence and/or Discussion

A. Councilor G. Steere stated that a letter was received from the RI Town and City Clerks Association Scholarship Committee stating that they have awarded Susan Harris, Deputy Town Clerk, a \$725 scholarship toward funding her second year at the New England Clerks Institute.

B. Councilor G. Steere stated that a complaint was received from a resident, Rick Nadeau, regarding DEM not spraying for gypsy moths last year. Councilor G. Steere stated that R. Nadeau felt that DEM knew what the devastation would be to

forest land, including his own property.

- C. Councilor G. Steere stated that a letter was received from the U.S. Small Business Administration inviting us to celebrate the first week in May as Small Business Week.
- D. Councilor G. Steere stated that several Resolutions were received from Smithfield with a request for our support. Councilor G. Steere stated that they are as follows:
 - 1. Opposing binding arbitration for teacher and school employee contracts
 - 2. Opposing mandatory continuation of existing teacher contracts
 - 3. Supporting an act requiring the General Assembly to recognize that education is a fundamental right of every citizen of Rhode Island
 - 4. Supporting the ban of all firearms on school grounds except by licensed police officers.
 - 5. A Resolution to ensure that all schools have courses that include personal finance
- E. Councilor W. Steere referred to the issue on Route 44 that was previously discussed and asked if our Senator and Representatives can do something with DOT to help resolve it. Councilor Forgue suggested that they receive copies of the letter that Tim Kane is sending to the property owner.

Councilor G. Steere commented that Chepachet Hardware has a huge problem with water runoff from the road which needs to have a drain and pipe run east to the next culvert that crosses the road. Councilor G. Steere stated that it has been a couple of years and nothing has been done. Councilor G. Steere stated that we can try to get our representatives involved, but he does not think it will get us too far.

X. Department Head Reports/Discussion

- A. Councilor G. Steere asked Gary Treml, Director of Public Works, what was the result of the HVAC study regarding the Police Station and the Senior Center. G. Treml stated that he and the energy engineer from Prism Energy Services did a walk-through of both facilities to get options of what we can do.

G. Treml stated that, at the Senior Center, we can fix what we have for an estimated \$91,000. G. Treml stated that the engineer advised that the system is fine but needs updating. G. Treml stated that the boiler would remain but would have a hot water coil installed. Councilor W. Steere inquired about the life span of the system. G. Treml replied that this was just a walk-through to get some ballpark figures but the engineer is coming back with a contractor on April 12th to give us a better idea. Councilor G. Steere stated that we have \$90,000 set aside so that is a workable number.

Regarding the possible addition at the Police Station, G. Treml stated that the engineer does not believe we should put a 10-ton unit on the roof because of the noise it would generate. G. Treml stated the engineer recommends replacing with two (2) 7½ ton units which would cost about \$158,000, including everything that would be needed. G. Treml stated that if the budget is approved as presented we would need another \$125,000 to complete the project, stressing that we have to complete that project.

Councilor G. Steere explained that one of the reasons it is so high is because part of the system was hit by lightning years ago and many of the thermostats were disconnected. G. Treml noted that this would take into account the problem in the dispatch area, which is very warm due to the computers. G. Treml stated that something would be dedicated just to that area to alleviate that problem. Councilor Forgue asked if we are going from 10 ton to 15 ton. G. Treml stated that he had asked if we should put one 7½ ton and one 10 ton in anticipation of putting on an addition. G. Treml stated that it was recommended that the addition have its own system at an estimated \$30,000, which would be incorporated into the addition.

G. Treml stated that there will have to be discussion at the Public Hearing if we are going to allocate more funds for this project. G. Treml commented that without this project, we will not have heat in that building next winter.

Councilor Forgue stated that regarding the Senior Center, we are pretty close. Councilor Forgue stated that he agrees with G. Treml that the Police Station needs to get done. Councilor G. Steere stated that we will discuss this at the Budget Public Hearing as that is the only place the Budget can be changed.

B. Councilor W. Steere asked Bob Shields, Recreation Director, if the girls' softball team that is using our fields will rake the infield when they are done. B. Shields replied that they do not have any supplies currently but he could talk to Tom Marcello if the Council wants them to take care of that. Councilor W. Steere commented that it would help with the upkeep. B. Shields stated that he has at least one hand drag that is used at the beach that he can bring over to GMP. B. Shields further stated that he has been working on a Facility Usage Form where everything will be spelled out. B. Shields stated that he should have the form ready by the next Town Council meeting.

C. Councilor G. Steere asked Judy Branch, Director of Human Services, how everything is going in her department. J. Branch replied that everything is okay right now.

XI. Bds. and Commissions Reports/ Discussion
None.

XII. Open Forum

- A. Charlie Wilson, representing the GBA, stated that they are proposing raising money for a second set of banners in the Village. C. Wilson stated that they have come up with a plan for sponsorship plaques to be hung below the pole banners. C. Wilson stated that the GBA came before the Historic District Commission with the proposal and the HDC voted in favor of it. C. Wilson showed the Council an example of the banners. C. Wilson stated that the banners will be changed every six (6) months and they are hoping to get sponsors to raise the funds needed to keep this going.

Councilor Henry asked where the plaque would appear. C. Wilson replied that it would go directly below the banner, on the pole. Councilor Henry stated that her initial reaction is that it does not fit in with the historic look. Councilor Henry stated that the banner and pole lighting looks nice, but not the advertising. Vin Lepore, president of the GBA, stated that it is not advertising, it is sponsorship. Councilor W. Steere stated that it is the same thing and expressed agreement with Councilor Henry's comments. Councilor W. Steere stated that it is not against the businesses because they do a lot for the Town, but we have enough signs as it is. Councilor W. Steere stated that the banners we have now look great but he is against putting more up. Councilor W. Steere suggested doing something in the parking area across from Brown & Hopkins instead.

Councilor Forgue asked who maintains the banners now. V. Lepore replied the GBA owns them and paid for the first seven with their own money. Councilor Forgue asked what happens if they get broken or torn down and the GBA does not have the funds to fix them. C. Wilson replied that they would be gone forever. Councilor Henry stated that in that case someone or a business could come forward and meet that need.

Councilor Forgue suggested that the Council give permission for them to hang one (1) sign so we can see if it would be intrusive, rather than just make a decision to say no. Councilor Henry stated her opinion that the signs would be visual clutter and we should stay true to our vision of the Village being classy and clean. Councilor Forgue stated that he applauds anybody that wants to create some sort of activity in the Village to maintain what we have now. Councilor Forgue commented that any momentum is better than no momentum at all.

Councilor G. Steere agreed with Councilor Forgue and stated that the sign does not look bad in the picture. Councilor G. Steere also suggested that we allow them to hang it up for a month to get some feedback.

Vin Lepore stated that 20 years ago we had "Welcome to Gloucester" signs that were owned by the GBA and they came up with a sponsorship program so they could

keep the signs in good repair. V. Lepore stated that advertising is not allowed with phone numbers and websites. Councilor W. Steere noted that there is a name so that is advertising. V. Lepore disagreed, stating that it is sponsorship. Councilor W. Steere stated that this is just semantics. V. Lepore again disagreed and stated that there is difference between advertising and sponsorship, according to Federal Law. V. Lepore stated that we need a sustainable way to keep Main Street alive, clean and kept up. Councilor W. Steere stated that there are other ways of doing that, such as a nice sign for all the businesses at the parking area or the Pavilion.

Councilor Henry asked if there would be a sign on every post. V. Lepore replied there would be approximately 10 to 12 signs, depending on the reaction from members who want to sponsor a sign. V. Lepore stated that the GBA wants to partner with the Council on this matter and to have funds available to update the signs and keep them sustainable.

Councilor G. Steere asked Tim Kane, Town Solicitor, if the Council can get a consensus to allow one (1) sign to be put up. T. Kane replied in the affirmative. Councilor Forgue recommended that we put one up and see how it looks and what the reactions are. V. Lepore clarified that there are only 18 banners that have potential sponsorship; the others are seasonal banners.

Bob Shields, Recreation Director, asked if this is a discussion about aesthetics or about sponsorship. B. Shields stated that if you are looking at just aesthetics, it makes more sense that every other sign is either a sponsorship sign or welcome sign, alternating between the two (2) types. Councilor W. Steere stated that his concern is the aesthetics. Councilor Forgue pointed out that there are some houses and businesses in Town that are defunct and not in line with the Historic District. Councilor Forgue stated his opinion that any stimulation for the Town right now is a good thing.

Councilor Forgue asked how many light poles are in the Village. V. Lepore replied 38. Councilor Forgue asked how many of them have "Welcome to Gloucester" banners on them. V. Lepore replied 18. Councilor Forgue asked if those people could be converted to buying a banner instead. V. Lepore replied probably not as those are quite expensive.

Councilor G. Steere stated that we could talk about it all night, but his personal opinion is to let them put it up somewhere for a month, then talk about it again. Councilor W. Steere stated that we should have a vote at the next meeting. Councilor W. Steere stated that he is against it and has offered an alternative. Councilor Forgue stated that the GBA is looking for the exposure right on Main Street. T. Kane advised the Council to put this on the agenda for the first meeting in May.

Councilor Henry stated for the record that for 2 ½ years she has tried to get the businesses to comply with the sign ordinance and cannot even get compliance to an ordinance that we have on the books. To that point, Councilor G. Steere stated that there are several businesses that are not complying to the sign ordinance and asked if they are members of the GBA. The response was that they are not members.

- B. Michelle Allen, of 27 Bolton Street, stated that at the Gloucester School Committee meeting on Tuesday, April 2nd, Councilor Henry had an interaction with School Committee member Cindy Joyce and stated “that as Town Council members, they have to be responsible for the best interest of all of the residents in Gloucester”. M. Allen stated that in that same interaction, Mrs. Joyce said that the “Town Council rejected, against the advisement of the Budget Board, to give the Gloucester School Committee \$200,000 for the 2018/2019 school year”. Because of that refusal, M. Allen stated that her son and 52 of his peers are currently jammed into two (2) classrooms. M. Allen asked “Are they not Gloucester residents? Is this in their best interest?” M. Allen stated the answer is no.

M. Allen stated that currently, for school year 2019/2020, the Town of Gloucester has asked the Gloucester School Committee to reduce their proposed budget by \$237,000. M. Allen stated that by reducing this amount, nine (9) fifth graders will be displaced due to overcrowding and their peers, 95 students in two schools, will be disrupted. M. Allen again asked: “Are they not Gloucester residents? Is this in their best interest?”, the answer again is no. M. Allen acknowledged that children are resilient and will adjust, but unfortunately it will be the children, current and future residents, that will suffer.

M. Allen stated that Mrs. Joyce asked the Gloucester Finance Director how much money is in the Unassigned Fund Balance, and the answer was \$5.4 million. M. Allen stated that while it would be fiscally irresponsible to spend irrationally, this request is not irrational. M. Allen stated what is irrational is the continued concerns of people that complain about everything, such as zip codes and high taxes they cannot afford. M. Allen stated these folks had no issues when their children were in school. M. Allen stated that it is time for the adults to “play nice” and stop sacrificing the children. M. Allen commented that people move to Gloucester for the schools, stating that the schools are the future of this Town and should be funded properly. Councilor G. Steere thanked M. Allen for her opinion.

Councilor W. Steere responded that the Gloucester School Committee, which is also the Regional School Committee, (which M. Allen disagreed with) chose not to cut at the Region and as he has said all along, there is one (1) pool of money and only so much money to go around. Councilor W. Steere stated that there were increases at the Region when cuts could have been made, so now the elementary schools

suffer. Councilor W. Steere stated that we want the children to have a good education but there is only so much money to go around. Councilor W. Steere added that when they grow up they cannot afford to stay here. Councilor W. Steere stated that he respects M. Allen's opinion but it is the School Committee that makes these choices, not the Town Council. Councilor W. Steere stated that if Gloucester's Budget is not approved, we still have to pay the Region and will have to make more cuts in Town, including the schools. Councilor W. Steere stated we have level funded as long as he can remember. M. Allen stated they are not level funded they are down, you have to move students. Councilor W. Steere stated that is not correct.

Councilor Henry pointed out to M. Allen that the schools have a 4% increase over last year. Councilor Henry further stated that we gave the schools the \$200,000 last year that M. Allen said we did not. Councilor Henry stated that it was put in a separate line appropriation and not added to the Maintenance of Effort. Councilor Henry stated we moved \$107,000 of that money to the school this year and gave a 4% increase over last year. Councilor Henry stated that we have more than supported the Gloucester Schools. Councilor Henry stated she did not want to get started on what we gave the Region as this is not the issue here tonight.

Councilor W. Steere stated that the Gloucester School Committee, knowing it was already going to be tight, gave approximately \$30,000 in pass-through funds to the Region which should have come back to the local schools to help support them. Councilor Henry stated that was another decision the school committee made. Councilor W. Steere stated that it is not us; we all have to work together and there is only so much to go around.

Councilor G. Steere asked M. Allen how long she has been in this Town to witness this. M. Allen replied 14 years. Councilor G. Steere stated he has been here for about 55 years. Councilor Henry commented that she has been here 30 years and has not put any children through the school system. Councilor Henry stated that she did not move to Gloucester for the schools but because she wanted a rural way of life.

Councilor W. Steere stated that we have tried working with the School Committee in the past but the Region does whatever they want. Councilor W. Steere stated the only time the Region comes to Council is when they need something like legislative help. Councilor W. Steere stated he has been doing this for ten years. Councilor Henry stated she cannot go to any more meetings then she currently goes to and at the Regional level she gets nothing.

Councilor W. Steere stated that he respects M. Allen's viewpoints on these matters, but some of her information is not correct.

M. Allen stated Council should just say I am not paying the bill to the Region.

Councilor W. Steere stated it is the taxpayers that decide what to pay the Region.

Councilor Henry referred to the phrase “the children are suffering”, stating that this is emotional drama. Councilor Henry stated that the majority of children in Gloucester are not suffering and are doing very well. Councilor Henry stated that she was told by the Principal and Superintendent Barnes that when RIDE walks through our school buildings, they feel they are “premier” to any other facility in the state. Councilor Henry stated our children are not in substandard facilities. Councilor Henry stated that for a School Committee member to say to the audience “Remember this when it comes time to vote for your Councilors”, was a cheap shot to her fellow Councilors, because every one of them work very hard to come forward with a balanced budget. Councilor Henry again stated she has to challenge M. Allen when she states that our children are suffering in the Gloucester school system. Councilor Henry stated that the Council’s job is to support not only the taxpayers who are putting children through the school system, but every taxpayer in the community; the elderly and middle aged, who do not have children and who want to continue to live here. Councilor Henry commented that many people put their children through the school system and move out of town after the last one graduates because they cannot afford to stay here. Councilor Henry stated that, as a former teacher, she feels that the children are not suffering.

M. Allen stated that the children have needs. Councilor Henry replied that our schools meet those needs. M. Allen stated that we are jamming the students into a classroom and they are overcrowded. Councilor Henry stated that the Council would not be doing its job if we asked the taxpayers to fund another classroom for Fogarty when we have a classroom at West Gloucester with 11 children in it. Councilor Henry stated that would be a poor decision, but it is not a Council decision it is the School Committee. Councilor G. Steere noted that the majority of the School Committee felt the same way.

M. Allen stated that she is passionate about this subject and she will speak out, however this was not personal against Councilor Henry. Councilor G. Steere stated that before the 10 months that M. Allen has been making an appearance, the Council members have all been there for years. M. Allen stated that she appreciates that and when she ran for Town Council last year, it was not because she thought any of them were doing a poor job.

Councilor Forgue stated that he met with Superintendent Barnes to tour the middle and high schools and he commented that they are like a college campus. Councilor Forgue stated that he told Dr. Barnes that the more that is asked for the middle and high school, more is taken away from the grammar schools, the next class coming up. Councilor Forgue stated the biggest part of our funds goes to the Region. Councilor Henry commented that the Superintendent does not live in Gloucester so

he doesn't care if he raises our taxes. Councilor Henry stated that we should make an ordinance that our superintendents must live in our community so they can feel the burden that lay on us at times.

Councilor W. Steere stated that we all want great schools but there is a cost for that and there is only so much money available. M. Allen stated she is not just complaining, she tries to come up with solutions. Councilor Forgue explained that we have a maximum amount that we can raise taxes and it all starts with what the Region takes, then we have to figure out how to make it work.

Councilor G. Steere stated that the School Committee has to realize that they don't work for Michael Barnes; he works for them. Councilor G. Steere stated that might be a first big step.

Councilor Forgue thanked M. Allen for bringing this issue to the Council and asked her to understand that the Council does the best they can with what is left after the Region takes its bite out of the budget. Councilor Forgue stated he respects what the schools do in this town but we have to find more ways to feed this "monster".

Councilor W. Steere stated that he appreciates that M. Allen comes to almost every meeting and he respects her viewpoints.

Councilor Henry noted that when Mrs. Joyce stated that the Council did not support the schools last year, that was a misstatement. Councilor Henry offered to sit down and go through the budget with M. Allen. Councilor Henry stated that we need to be knowledgeable if we are going to stand up in public and make those statements.

- C. Councilor Reichert stated that he has received many calls regarding the elderly tax exemption, asking why it has to be filed every year. Councilor Reichert stated that he has called other towns and we are the only one that requires people to reapply every year. Councilor Henry suggested that we have Lori DeSantis, Tax Assessor, attend the next Council meeting to explain the reason for this. Councilor G. Steere stated that it used to be income-based as well as age, but we did away with the scale. Councilor Reichert asked the Council members if they want to change the requirement. Some Councilors agreed if there was a good reason to change they would agree with changing. There was Council consensus to ask the Tax Assessor for an explanation at the next Council meeting.

- XIII. MOTION was made by Councilor Forgue to Seek to Convene to Executive Session Pursuant to: R.I.G.L. 42-46-5 (a)(2) Collective Bargaining - Discussion and/or Action; seconded by Councilor Reichert.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, W. Steere, Reichert, Henry and Forgue
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

XIV. Reconvene Open Session

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to SEAL the minutes of Closed Executive Session pursuant to R.I.G.L. 42-46-5 and to DISCLOSE that no votes were taken in Closed Executive Session; seconded by Councilor Reichert.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, W. Steere, Reichert, Henry and Forgue
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

XV. MOTION was made by Councilor Forgue to Adjourn at 10:45 p.m; seconded by Councilor Henry.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, W. Steere, Reichert, Henry and Forgue
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED