



*City of Taunton
Municipal Council Meeting Minutes
City Hall, 15 Summer Street, Taunton, MA
Minutes, January 18, 2022 at 7:00 O'clock P.M.*

Regular Meeting

Mayor Shaunna L. O'Connell presiding

Prayer was offered by the Mayor

A moment of silence was offered by the Mayor for Brian Sullivan who was a much loved teacher at Taunton High School. He was a graduate of Taunton High School in 1986, went to college and came back to teach at Taunton High School. His passion was teaching special needs. He was most recently a Special Education Director for Math and Science. He served as a Summer School Director, a Freshman Baseball Coach and an Assistant Varsity Hockey Coach. He was very involved in school and in our children's lives. He was also a very avid Boston sports fan and loved hockey especially the Bruins. Brian will be very much missed by all that knew him and their thoughts and prayers are with his family at this time.

*Present at roll call were: Councilors Postell, Quintal, Sanders, Coute, Pottier
McCaul, Borges and Duarte
Councilor Dooner was absent.*

Record of preceding meeting was read by title and approved. So voted.

Opportunity for input by the general public. There was nobody present to speak at public input.

Hearings:

NONE

Communications from the Mayor:

Mayor O'Connell stated they will post communications from the Mayor on the City's Facebook page and the City's website.

Appointments:

Comm. from Mayor O'Connell regarding the appointments for Peter Winters as First Assistant City Solicitor, Tom Gay, Jr. as Second Assistant City Solicitor and David Gay as Special Assistant City Solicitor. **Motion was made to approve. So voted.** Councilor Sanders stated he believes, to his knowledge, Mr. Winters has a separate contract and is an employee of the City as to where David Gay and Tom Gay are both compensated through Gay & Gay Law Firm. The mayor stated yes they are and as well as Matt Costa.

Reappointment of Stephaney Santiago, 17 Pine St., Taunton to serve on the Taunton Cultural Council for a term of three (3) years expiring January 2025. **Motion was made to approve. So voted.**

Communications from City Officers:

Com. from the Budget Director requesting a meeting with the Committee on Finance & Salaries to discuss the Bristol-Plymouth Regional Technical Schools new construction Project (\$305,000,000.00) if the March 5, 2022 ballot question is approved, at the next meeting on January 25, 2022 meeting. **Motion was made to refer to the Committee on Finance and Salaries. So voted.**

Com. from the Assistant Executive Director of Retirement, regarding notification of the retirement for Accidental Disability of Lawrence Gantz of the Taunton Fire Department, as of January 9, 2022 with 19-years and 6-months of creditable service. **Motion was made to move approval and prepare the appropriate scroll. So voted.**

Com. from Police Chief requesting a list for two (2) full-time Police Officers. These positions are already funded and this request is based upon the fact all of the positions were not filled on the last certification request. **Motion was made to refer to the City Clerk to request the list and supply the list to the Committee on Police and Licensing. So voted.**

Com. from the Water Supervisor notifying of a buyout for Anthony Martin of the Department of Public Works who retired on January 2, 2022 in the amount of twenty-eight thousand, fifty dollars and sixteen cents (28,050.16). **Motion was made to move approval. So voted.**

Com. from City Auditor regarding the appointment of Alyssa Berthiaume for the Assistant City Auditor position. **Motion was made to approve. So voted.** Councilor Pottier asked the Mayor and the City Auditor for clarification if this was there hire. The City Auditor stated it's the City Auditors appointment with the Municipal Councils approval.

Com. from Special Assistant City Solicitor regarding a disciplinary hearing requested by the Fire Chief to be held on Tuesday, January 25, 2022 before the Committee of the Council as a Whole or as soon as possible. **Motion was made to refer to the Council as a Whole in Executive Session. So voted.** Councilor Postell asked the City Clerk, due to this being a Civil Service matter, do they need to have the Civil Service Clerk present which she services. The City Clerk explained yes but the council wants it in the Committee of the Council as a Whole. Councilor Postell also asked the City Solicitor, is there any violation of the Law especially a Civil Service Law by not having the Civil Service Clerk present for the hearing if there could possibly be disciplinary actions. The City Solicitor stated no. Councilor Pottier asked the City Solicitor if he is sure that this disciplinary hearing is fine to have in front of the Committee on Council as a Whole and not a Municipal Council meeting. The City Solicitor stated yes he's sure. Councilor Duarte stated he will be meeting with the City Solicitor and Attorney Gay to set a date for this matter. Councilor Postell asked for the Law Department to have something in writing that this will state what he stance will be for the City and the Law Department pertaining to the Civil Service piece of it prior to the date of the meeting. Councilor Pottier asked for

the Law Department to confirm before the meeting if the session is open or closed, if that's up to the employee to decide.

Com. from City Solicitor submitting Xfinity correspondence in regards to Caracol HD ch.3404 and Mexicanal HD ch. 3409 will be added to Xfinity Latino beginning on January 25, 2021. **Motion was made to place on file. So voted.**

Communications from Citizens:

NONE

Petitions:

Class II License - RENEWAL

1. City of Taunton, Requested by Chief Edward Walsh. **Motion was made to approve and refer to Committee on Police and Licenses and the Police Chief. So voted.**

Billiard Table License – RENEWAL

1. Frank's Good Times, Inc. located at 381 Winthrop St., Taunton (1 Table). **Motion was made to approve and refer to Committee on Police and Licenses and the Police Chief. So voted.**

Junk Collector's License – RENEWAL

William Butler Junk Collector located at 195 Field St., Taunton. **Motion was made to approve and refer to Committee on Police and Licenses and the Police Chief. So voted.**

Committee Reports:

Motion was made for Committee reports to be read by title and approved. So Voted. Recommendations adopted to reflect the votes as recorded in committee reports. So Voted.

Unfinished Business:

Councilor Borges asked for more time for the new councilors to review some of the applications for the Treasurer/Collectors position before they put the appointment on the agenda in the upcoming meeting.

Orders, Ordinances and Resolutions:

NONE

New Business:

Councilor Pottier made a motion requested by the Fire Chief for a test to be called for Deputy Chief. Also, a list for three (3) additional Fire personnel. So voted.

Council President Duarte requested a motion to refer to the Department of Public Works the placement of a rebound able crosswalk sign at the new crosswalk on Weir St. before Hill St. **Motion was made to refer to the Committee of Public Works. So voted.**

Council President Duarte requested a motion to refer to the Safety Officer and City Engineer the intersection of Wales St. and Mason St. for potential safety improvements. **Motion was made to refer to the Committee on Police and License. So voted.**

Councilor Borges requests a motion to meet with Detective William Rutherford and the City Planner to discuss Transient Vendor Licenses. **Motion was made to refer to the Committee on Police and License. So voted.**

Councilor Borges requests that representatives from Aries Taunton Biosolids Gasification Project meet with the Solid Waste Committee to provide the Council with an update and presentation. **Motion was made to refer to the Committee on Solid Waste. So voted.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:25 P.M.

A true copy:

Attest:


City Clerk

RMB/KLD

CITY OF TAUNTON
MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
JANUARY 18, 2022

THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND SALARIES

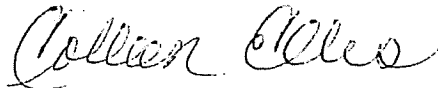
PRESENT WERE: COUNCILOR PHILLIP DUARTE, CHAIRMAN AND COUNCILORS POTTIER AND MCCAUL

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 5:42 P.M.

1. MEET TO REVIEW THE WEEKLY VOUCHERS & PAYROLLS FOR CITY DEPARTMENTS
MOTION: MOVE APPROVAL OF THE PAYROLL WARRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1,239,631.65. SO VOTED.
MOTION: MOVE APPROVAL OF THE INVOICE WARRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$3,711,431.30. SO VOTED.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 5:43 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Colleen M. Ellis
Clerk of Council Committees

CITY OF TAUNTON
JAN 18 2022
IN MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

RECEIVED
CITY CLERK
2022 JAN 27 3:07

REPORTS ACCEPTED. RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED.

Rm Blackwell
CITY CLERK

CITY OF TAUNTON
MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
JANUARY 18, 2022

RECEIVED
CITY CLERK'S OFFICE
2022 JAN 27 P 3:07
T. MENCONI, MA
CITY CLERK

THE COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL AS A WHOLE

PRESENT WERE: COUNCIL PRESIDENT PHILLIP DUARTE AND COUNCILORS BORGES, MCCAUL, POTTIER, COUTE, SANDERS, QUINTAL AND POSTELL. ALSO PRESENT WAS ELECTIONS DIRECTOR PAMELA MENCONI

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 6:05 P.M.

1. MEET WITH THE ELECTIONS DIRECTOR TO DISCUSS RECAP OF ALL ELECTIONS

A letter dated 1/18/22 from the Elections Director was read which provided a briefing on the fall election. (See Attached).

MOTION: LETTER TO BE PART OF THE RECORD. SO VOTED.

Mrs. Menconi said she feels overall the election was a positive experience. As the letter said there were a few bumps in the road which she feels are natural. She is satisfied in the way the elections turned out but is interested in any feedback or recommendations. Councilor Pottier asked under what guidance or under what process do they ask for ID's at the polls.

Mrs. Menconi said there are specific situations in which ID is allowed to be asked for. They are outlined by the Secretary of State. If you have a voter that is inactive and an inactive voter is somebody that is a voter however they do not have a current census form returned from them, so to link the person with the address, ID would be asked for in that situation. If it is a voter's first Federal election they may be required to show ID as well. Those are the situations in which it is acceptable to ask for an ID. There is also a way that they can scan an ID for efficiency and ease but it is not to check ID or to confirm who you are who you say you are. It is simply just to expedite the process. There should be signs indicating that it is optional to scan your license if you would like to do so. It is not a requirement, it is there as an option.

Councilor Pottier said for elections, typically candidates would have runners at the polls at the close to get the counts. In some instances those people are allowed photos of the slip but in other instances it is insisted that they can only read them and in rare occasions they say they are not going to give them to the runner at all. He would just ask that over the next elections, particularly the next local election, that this be uniform throughout all 16 precincts, and that the candidates themselves know what the rules are, what they can ask for, when they can show up, as that would be helpful.

Mrs. Menconi said that is one of the areas they are continually working on with the poll workers to ensure that it is uniform so that they have a uniform procedure in place. They are reminding all of their workers of that to make sure there is consistency across the board.

Councilor Sanders said when a poll worker leads with "can I have your ID" it implies that there is an expectation that you have to produce the ID. He knows that it is a concern

PAGE TWO

JANUARY 18, 2022

THE COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL AS A WHOLE – CONTINUED

for a lot of folks. He asked that Mrs. Menconi clarify that messaging on election day even if it is just a simple sign on the wall saying you will be asked for an ID, however it is not necessary for you to provide an ID unless certain circumstances apply. He feels if they were clearer about this at the front door it would be helpful.

Mrs. Menconi said she agrees. Also that some of the confusion comes from the poll pads and maybe if there is specific language, if it is clear and concise from the beginning it may eliminate any of the confusion.

Councilor Sanders then asked if a poll worker had to sign on for the whole day.

Mrs. Menconi said right now they are keeping the poll workers as they historically were staffed so they are doing full day shifts, however her office has had a couple of discussions about maybe doing split shifts which she feels would open the door for more availability and maybe a more diverse crowd of poll workers. They may be able to get some college students or maybe some people that don't work at night time or vice versa, so that is something they are definitely looking into for future elections. A 12 or 13 hour is a long day and she would hate to lose experienced poll workers because a full day is too much.

Councilor Sanders then asked how it is decided whether or not to have early voting.

Mrs. Menconi said it is decided by the Legislation and historically they have never allowed in person early voting for municipal elections. They did start off in 2016 allowing it for the Presidential election and they were only going to do it for the midterm elections. The Legislation had expanded that to include the Presidential primary in 2020. When covid hit and there were a lot of adjustments that needed to be made to the election process, they did decide that allowing in person early voting for municipal elections was at the discretion of the municipality for their own local elections. In that case it would have needed to be recommended and after weighing the options it was decided that because vote by mail early no excuse voting was still available, that it wasn't feasible to offer the in person early voting as well. There was a significant study that had been done amongst the City Clerks and the other Election Officials that held elections in the fall and the majority of the municipalities felt that vote by mail was sufficient to make sure that nobody lost an opportunity to vote because of covid.

Councilor Sanders confirmed that the municipality was allowed to decide this on their own, to which Mrs. Menconi said they were allowed to decide if they would recommend it, but ultimately it would be the Council's decision. With the information that the Election Commissioners had, they voted to not recommend in person early voting and to utilize vote by mail, no excuse for everybody.

Councilor Sanders clarified that Mrs. Menconi could have recommended to the Council that early voting in person would be available, but there was a decision made to not do

PAGE THREE

JANUARY 18, 2022

THE COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL AS A WHOLE – CONTINUED

that. Mrs. Menconi said the Commission was the deciding factor based on information that she provided to them. Mrs. Menconi did not provide any recommendation to the Commission, she provided information to them so that they could make the decision. The Commission has the ability to vote to recommend it to the Council. She also thinks there were a lot of financial issues with it as well. They did weigh the decision heavily, there was a lot of discussion, they had a lot of different comparative tools to decide what was the best course of action and ultimately reached their decision.

Councilor Sanders then asked what a reasonable turn around for OCPF reports is, they all submit OCPF reports, so what is a reasonable time in which they would see those posted on the City's website.

Mrs. Menconi said this past election she waited until after the deadline then she posted them all. For the primary she feels it was a little bit longer then she wanted it to be, but they were a lot more efficient for the November election. She is now trying to do them as they come in, but if for some reason they are not up by the deadline, which is January 20th, so the 21st, she asked the Council to call her. She further said she feels it is a little bit more organized if they do them all at once which is why she would like to wait until the deadline.

Councilor Duarte clarified that early in person voting was not permitted by law for municipal elections until the pandemic, to which Mrs. Menconi said that is correct, it was an extension made as a provision to covid. Councilor Duarte then said in 2019 the City did not have early in person voting and Mrs. Menconi said for municipal elections, no.

Councilor Borges asked what the financial impact is for in person early voting and what impact it would have on Mrs. Menconi's office. It was said that if they had in person early voting for municipal elections the Legislation that had existed allowed the ability, they did not have any set days for a Presidential or midterm election, it is was 10 or 14 days the last time straight through so that required weekend hours and it was mandated to be open for that window. With municipal it is a little gray right now. If they do allow municipal in person early voting it has not been determined if the State will set the rules or if it is something that they will allow each municipality to do. They would need to staff a polling location at City Hall and if it was on a 2 week period it would involve staffing the check in list, it would involve staffing to direct people, to check people out and to put their ballot in the proper place. You would need additional staff to process the daily ballots which is something that needs to be done on a daily basis so that they can reconcile to confirm that every ballot is accounted for so it would require overtime hours before and after the close of the polls. To put a dollar amount on this she does not know without knowing how long it would be, one week or two weeks. It would also involve a Police detail as well for that time period. A lot of the

PAGE FOUR

JANUARY 18, 2022

THE COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL AS A WHOLE – CONTINUED

time early voting needs to be reconciled on a weekend so it would involve weekend hours for staff members. In her past experience they have been able to hire poll workers to work the in person early voting and a lot of times they would utilize them not to do the actual reconciling but the organizing and putting them in order. The payroll does increase quite a bit with that.

Councilor Borges then said if they were to have that for the September and November elections, how much notice would she need. She knows it is up to the Commission but maybe the City Council could write a letter of support to the Commission if they felt as though early in person voting was something that the Council would be beneficial just because it has been something that was brought to her attention on many occasions that it was really beneficial.

MOTION: TO ALLOW PUBLIC INPUT. SO VOTED.

Kathryn Cunningham addressed the Committee. She said that early voting was successful under the City Clerk. If it is not allowed it is eliminating a voting option which is called voting suppression. She further said the cost for early voting is only \$1,011 so it is not a lot of money. She is upset that this option is being taken away. She hopes the State House will pass this because people want to utilize this option. She also said asking for an ID makes it harder for people to vote.

2. MEET WITH THE ELECTIONS DIRECTOR TO DISCUSS BRISTOL PLYMOUTH REGIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT WIDE ELECTION

A letter dated January 18, 2022 from Mrs. Menconi was read. (See Attached).

MOTION: LETTER TO BE PART OF THE RECORD. SO VOTED.

Mrs. Menconi just wanted to say that they are concentrating on making sure that anybody who does qualify and wants to vote absentee has the ability to do so. They will be doing a heavy marketing campaign for that on their website. They are in the process of talking with their vendor who mails out the census and are looking to mail out something to every household informing them of the election with the specific date, times, polling locations and things of that nature.

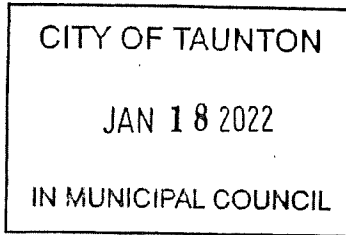
Councilor Duarte said in the second sentence of the letter when it references the expiration of vote by mail and early voting in person, that has expired due to the Legislation, which expired on December 15th, so the extension of those programs is at the will of the Legislature and not in the City's hands at this moment.

PAGE FIVE

JANUARY 18, 2022

THE COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL AS A WHOLE – CONTINUED

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 6:56 P.M.



Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Colleen Ellis".

Colleen M. Ellis
Clerk of Council Committees

REPORTS ACCEPTED. RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "RM Blackwell".
CITY CLERK