

**Town Council Minutes  
Town Hall Council Chambers  
20 November 2023**

Present: Arthur Mathews, President  
Michael Molisse, Vice President  
John Abbot, Councilor  
Lisa Belmarsh, Councilor  
Pascale Burga, Councilor  
Kenneth DiFazio, Councilor  
Fred Happel, Councilor  
Maureen Kiely, Councilor  
Gary MacDougall, Councilor  
Greg Shanahan, Councilor

Also Present: Kathleen Deree, Town Clerk  
Richard McLeod, Town Solicitor  
Brian Connolly, Town Auditor  
James Malary, Chief Financial Officer  
Tricia O’Kane-Principal Assessor  
Board of Assessors

Recording Secretary: Diane T. Hachey

President Mathews called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Town Clerk Kathleen Deree called the roll. Councilor Belmarsh had a family commitment and will be unable to attend.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councilor Burga announced the annual Holiday Tree Lighting for Sunday 3 December from 3-7 PM. There will be a tree lighting, photos with Santa, food trucks, inflatables and entertainment.

**MINUTES**

Vice President Molisse motioned for approval of the **Ordinance Committee Meeting Minutes of 1 November 2023**. Substitute motion was made by Councilor MacDougall to table the minutes, at the request of Councilor Belmarsh. Motion seconded by Councilor Heffernan, motion passed unanimously.

## **RESIDENT AND COMMUNITY COMMENT**

### **Proposed “Quiet Hours Ordinance”**

**-Karen Sabine Richter of 17 Manchester Street**

Ms. Richter explained that she resides at Stonebridge residences and over the last ten years there has been disruptive noise from the activities at the Sports Complex at Union Point. This occurs well past 10PM at night when people have the right to enjoy quiet. Leaf blowers, snow blowers and other yard tools also cause disruptive noise. With the town developing more and creating new residential neighborhoods which results in more residents, people are dealing with noise after 10 PM and sometimes past midnight. She cited that there are currently no laws or regulations-therefore complaints cannot be answered nor laws enforced. Other surrounding communities have instituted regulations and she is suggesting the same for all of Weymouth as soon as possible.

The proposed ordinance requests to limit loud noise and restrict to weekdays from 7am to 10 pm, weekends and holidays from 8 am to 10 pm. On federal holidays, no excess noise shall be allowed (including leaf blowers, lawn trimmers or loud activities). She further suggests that dog parks and public parks close their gates by 10 pm and post signs explaining rules and the fines that may be imposed.

Councilor MacDougall motioned for referral to the Ordinance Committee, motion seconded by Councilor Burga and voted unanimously.

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

### **23 130-Fiscal Year 2024 Tax Classification**

Councilor Molisse motioned to open the public hearing at 7:46 PM, noting that it was published on 10 November 2023, motion seconded by Councilor Kiely, voted unanimously.

Tricia O’Kane and Paul Haley (Chair of the Board of Assessors) presented the measure for the Council’s consideration. Mr. Haley noted the passing of two board members, Kevin Spellman and Bob Brinkman, who were both long time members of the Board of Assessors. He also noted that the two newest board members were in the audience.

Mr. Haley noted that the values are reflective of 2022 and that at the beginning of the year the assessor begins to accumulate data computer models and calculates the information. On 13 October the assessors reporting was accepted by the DOR. Therefore the next step is to determine what the levy will be.

Mr. Haley noted that the residential value is \$10,690,886,686 which is 86.75%, commercial value is \$894,206,994 which is 7.25%, industrial value is \$431,046,200 which is 3.50% and finally personal property totals \$308,208,350 which is 2.50%. Most of the burden is carried by residential.

The fiscal year 23 levy limit is \$126,135,128; the prop 2 ½ increase represents \$3,153,378; added to new growth forecast for revenue of \$2,216,900; the fiscal year 24 levy limit is \$131,505,406; added to this, the debt exclusion of \$4,893,611—the total maximum allowable tax levy is \$136,399,017.

Mr. Haley further noted that aside from Brockton, Weymouth has the lowest tax rate in the area.

They are requesting approval of a classification tax rate shift of 1.47 for commercial, industrial and personal property taxes with no residential exemption for fiscal year 2024.

Councilor Kiely asked about property tax relief programs. Ms. O’Kane noted that low income seniors and veterans with service connected disabilities are eligible, after certain criteria are met.

The town asked for an increase to the current \$500 exemption and it was doubled to \$1000 and they saw twice the amount of eligible exemptions.

Councilor Kiely continued and asked about the effect on the shift of new developments with commercial on bottom floors with residential above.

Ms. O’Kane noted that buildings are primarily residential and new buildings are assessed on 1 January each year. This means we are taxing based on what is in the location at that time.

Councilor Kiely noted her advocacy of allowing tax incentives for businesses to come to town to occupy empty storefronts.

Councilor Shanahan appreciates the excellent presentation and senses a broader discussion but wants to investigate incentives for properties not renting. Ms. O’Kane noted that TIF’s (Tax Incremental Financing) may be a possible incentive and are currently in effect for certain properties.

Councilor Burga is questioning the effects of the assessments based on location by the ocean, condominiums, or section of town. Ms. O’Kane said that they look at location, size, style and age—which all play into the assessment and all data is viewed collectively.

Councilor Abbott asked if our rate is comparative to other communities. Ms. O’Kane will get that information.

President Mathews asked for comments from the public and zoom participants, to which there was no response.

At 8:03 PM Councilor Molisse motioned to close the public hearing, motion seconded by Councilor Kiely and voted unanimously.

## **COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS FROM THE MAYOR, TOWN OFFICERS, AND TOWN BOARDS**

### **23 134-Appointment to the Historical Commission-Zachary Gerg**

James Malary requests on behalf of the Mayor, to appoint Zachary Gerg of 522 Essex Street for appointment to the Historical Commission for a 3 year term due to expire on 30 June 2026.

Councilor Molisse motioned for referral to the Budget/Management Committee, motion seconded by Councilor Kiely and voted unanimously.

## **REPORTS OF COMMITTEE**

### **Budget/Management Committee - Chair Michael Molisse**

#### **23 130-Fiscal Year 2024 Tax Classification**

Councilor Molisse noted that this was referred on 13 November, the committee met this evening, a public hearing was held. He requests that the Town of Weymouth approve a classification tax rate shift of 1.47 for commercial, industrial and personal property taxes with no residential exemption for fiscal year 24-- he motions for favorable action on behalf of the committee, motion seconded by Councilor Kiely and voted unanimously.

#### **23 131-Lease Term of Wireless Communication Site Lease**

Chair Molisse noted that this was referred to the Budget/Management Committee on 13 November and the committee met earlier this evening and voted unanimous favorable action. He motioned for favorable action that the Town of Weymouth, with the approval of the Mayor, authorize the Mayor to execute a 5 year lease agreement-through 30 September 2028, with an automatic one time 5 year extension term unless written notice of Cellco's intention not to exercise the extension at least 5 months prior to the expiration of the initial term -through 30 September 2033, with Cellco Partnership doing business as Verizon Wireless, for the leasing of space in the lower cupola of Town Hall. Motion seconded by Councilor Kiely, and voted unanimously.

#### **23 132-Appointment to the Cultural Council-Evelyn Czaja**

Ms. Czaja was present at Budget/Management but wasn't able to stay for Town Council. On behalf of the Budget/Management Committee, Vice President Molisse recommended favorable action on measure 23 132 to the full Town Council. He hereby submitted, on behalf of Mayor Robert Hedlund, in accordance with section 2-10 of the town charter, Evelyn Czaja, for appointment to the Cultural Council. This is a 2 year term due to expire on 30 June 2025. Councilor Kiely seconded the motion and passed unanimously.

**23 133-Appointment to the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Committee-Joshua Murray**

President Mathews noted that the appointee was unavailable to attend this evening, and will be invited to the 4 December meetings.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Council President Mathews announced that the next regularly scheduled Town Council meeting will be held on 4 December 2023.

At 8:19 p.m., there being no further business, Vice President Molisse motioned to adjourn the meeting, and was seconded by Councilor Kiely. Motion passes unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted by Diane T. Hachey as Recording Secretary

Approved by Arthur Mathews as President of the Weymouth Town Council

Voted unanimously on 4 December 2023