

April 5, 2007

The April 5, 2007 Town Council Meeting was called to order by Colette J. Matarese President at the Town House, 180 Howard Hill Road, Foster, Rhode Island at 7:30 p.m.

The following members were present :

Colette J. Matarese, President
John Lewis, Vice President,
Peter Baribault
Lynne S. Rider
Harold R. Shippee, Sr.,

John J. Bevilacqua, Jr., Town Solicitor was not present

Staff

Anne Carlson, Tax Assessor was excused
Chief Robert E. Coyne, Jr.
Robert Fallon, Building Official
Nancy Johnston, Human Services Director
Brad Gove, Public Works Director
Randy Rossi, Treasurer

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Council President Colette J. Matarese announced that there was a change in the agenda as item c and f under New Business were no longer on the agenda and the adoption of the budget would be at the end of the agenda.

Colette J. Matarese also announced that Chief Robert E. Coyne, Jr. received a Homeland Security Grant for \$10,553.14 for a thermal imager.

Council President Colette J. Matarese read a letter from an individual living in the Town of Johnston commending Officer Mario Mennella for stopping to help him change his tire after a blowout on Route 295.

Harold R. Shippee, Sr. moved, Peter Baribault seconded and it was unanimously so voted to increase the budget by \$1400 to Foster Center Volunteer Fire Company and to also increase Moosup Valley Volunteer Fire Company by \$1400.

John Lewis, aye, Peter Baribault, aye, Lynne S. Rider, aye Harold R. Shippee, Sr.,
Colette J. Matarese, aye,

David and Roxana Lopes of Foster Center Road volunteered to be on the recreation committee. Roxana Lopes was unable to attend the meeting. David Lopes explained his background to the council and how he and his wife were willing to serve on the recreation committee.

Harold R. Shippee, Sr. moved, Peter Baribault seconded, and it was unanimously so voted to appoint David and Roxana Lopes to the Recreation Committee.

John Lewis, aye, Peter Baribault, aye, Lynne S. Rider, aye Harold R. Shippee, Sr.,
Colette J. Matarese, aye,

Peter Baribault moved, Peter Baribault seconded and it was unanimously so voted to approve the application for a Class F Liquor License from the Thornton Beagle Club for April 29, 2007 for a game dinner.

John Lewis, aye, Peter Baribault, aye, Lynne S. Rider, aye Harold R. Shippee, Sr.,
Colette J. Matarese, aye,

A letter was received from the Armenian National Committee Chairman requesting that the Town of Foster again participate in flying the Armenian flag on April 24, 2007 in memory of the Ottoman Turkish government's attempt to eliminate the Armenians from earth through planned Genocide during World War 1.

Lynne S. Rider moved, John Lewis seconded, and it was unanimously so voted to continue to raise the flag on April 24, 2007.

John Lewis, aye, Peter Baribault, aye, Lynne S. Rider, aye Harold R. Shippee, Sr., Colette J. Matarese, aye,

It was announced that the Foster Land Trust was granted the RI Natural Heritage Preservation Commission Open Space Grant in the amount of \$105,000 for 24 acres along Dolly Cole Brook up to the confluence of the Ponaganset River. The grant was a matching grant and The Nature Conservancy and The Champlin Foundation have agreed to help the Land Trust with a portion of the matching funds needed.

John Lewis explained that he drafted a memo on behalf of the council to the Personnel Board regarding projects that the Personnel Board should look into. He listed four specific issues such as job applications procedures, review existing personnel policy, review job descriptions and review existing employee evaluation procedures.

Peter Baribault moved, Harold R. Shippee, Sr. seconded and it was unanimously so voted so accept the request for review of personnel and employment policies and procedure as submitted.

John Lewis, aye, Peter Baribault, aye, Lynne S. Rider, aye Harold R. Shippee, Sr., Colette J. Matarese, aye,

Peter Baribault was concerned regarding the union position job descriptions. He asked that the union representative be made aware that the job descriptions were going to be reviewed and maybe update.

It was also noted that additional members were needed for the Personnel Board.

Colette J. Matarese remarked that the budget adoption should be placed on the agenda for next Thursday and one issue was a resolution with the building committee. She said a letter should be sent asking for the status of the bond, how much money is left in the bond and what has been spent and what has been committed and what the balance is. Colette J. Matarese also mentioned she wanted a copy of the bid proposal that was received.

Ronald Cervasio of Old Plainfield Pike said he could speak as a citizen as a Chairman of where the Regional School Committee is. He said that the councils are proposing that the region take the ESCO project and move it to capital debt service. He said that he had met with Ms. Matarese and the two finance directors and he did point out to them that if it is moved to debt service.....Colette Matarese asked if it was pertaining to when the council would have a budget. Mr. Cervasio said that he could not give her what she wanted without her understanding that she cannot get it. He said that if the school committee moves it to debt service where the council wants it would cut their base. Mr. Cervasio remarked that Foster has been brought into a Gloucester Town financial problem the Town Solicitor. He said that if the School Committee takes a Million Dollars and move it to capital debt service as he presented it before the tax payers would pay double on certain events. He said that if it was moved to capital debt sever as the number he had at that moment the taxpayers would pay twice. He said if it is moved to debt service the budget at the region would be cut by a million dollars. He said that if the budget is cut by a million dollars it will be cut by a million dollars. He said they would never recapture to Pavia –Weed. Mr. Cervasio said that the council passed a resolution that they were concerned about the children and they cannot be concerned about the children and capture Three Million or a million and take that away a million dollars from the region and say you are concerned about the children. He said the resolution was self defeating.

Colette J. Matarese answered that the reality is that it that this year it was not a million it is about Three Hundred and Seventy Thousand Dollars for the payment for ESCO and the other side is the fuel cost which would not come out of the budget this time. She said it would be a payment for ESCO that came out and went into capital investments. She said that if you keep that money in there for the next few years that amount would jump expeditiously from Three Hundred Thousand Dollars to over a Million. She said that they cannot obtain that increase in your operating budget within Paiva –Weed which means you would have to cut many programs in the future. Colette J. Matarese said that she was trying to protect the children because that cost is not fuel it was a real payment to ESCO for 12.8 Million Dollars worth of capital items. She noted that fuel will remain within the budget at the reduced cost. She said for 9 years programs will be cut and the first 4 years it could be handled but the 13 year there would be a flood of over One Million Dollars in the operating side and the people of both towns don't want an automatic One Million Dollar increase anymore than they want to see children suffering for 9 years because of the insistence of the Regional School Committee to put the ESCO into operating instead of where it belongs in capital.

Ronald Cervasio said that the council has failed to take in account the cost savings coming in on the other side. He said it has been done by a team of professionals and a company and the only person he knows that is running the set of numbers is from Gloucester. He said that she was misleading the people and she has been misled. He said that the Town of Gloucester is short \$600,000 and in order for them to stay in their 5.25 they need to get \$600,000 and they are going to take \$100,000 from the grade schools and they need to take \$500,000 from the region and they need to kill Pavia-Weed. He said they need to do this to stay within Pavia-Weed and she is helping and hurting the schools. He said that numerous times he has come to negotiate and she has bought what the Town Solicitor John Bevilacqua has told her. He said that the Solicitor was operating in both towns and it was a direct conflict of interest.

Colette J. Matarese said that no one tells her how to vote and no one influences her she researchers things herself. She noted that she has researched ESCO herself. She said that it is only in operating for 3-4 years and anything over that is usually in the capital budget. She also noted that most ESCO's go before the town people for a vote.

Mr. Cervasio said that the idea that we will capture a million dollars in 13 years from now is not correct. He said again that it was a Gloucester town financial problem that they cannot solve where they are. He said that she was helping them solve their financial problem at the cost of the children. He said that the council does not have all the facts...

John Lewis said that the capital budget has to be increased to cover the grant that has been awarded.

John Lewis moved Lynne Rider seconded and it was unanimously so voted to add to the capital budget \$28,750 and \$33,437 subject to receiving the Department of Transportation grant money.

John Lewis, aye, Peter Baribault, aye, Lynne S. Rider, aye Harold R. Shippee, Sr., Colette J. Matarese, aye,

John Lewis moved, Harold R. Shippee, Sr. seconded and it was unanimously so voted to increase the Police Chief's salary line item by \$500.00

John Lewis, aye, Peter Baribault, aye, Lynne S. Rider, aye Harold R. Shippee, Sr., Colette J. Matarese, aye

John Lewis moved, Peter Baribault seconded and it was unanimously so voted to adopt the budget for presentation to the townspeople in the amount of \$12,970,897.

John Lewis, aye, Peter Baribault, aye, Lynne S. Rider, aye Harold R. Shippee, Sr., Colette J. Matarese, aye

Colette J. Matarese announced a 5 minute recess and Town employees could go home.

Colette J. Matarese showed a picture of the new rescue and read an invitation for an Open House on April 14, 2007 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Ronald Cervasio of Old Plainfield Pike spoke under concerned citizens regarding the school budget.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Submitted by,

Anne M. Irons
Town Clerk

An electronic tape is made a part of the record for a complete account of the council meeting. This tape is on file in the vault at town hall.