

February 25, 2010

The February 25, 2010, Town Council Meeting was called to order by Colette Matarese, President, of the Foster Town Council at the Benjamin Eddy Building, Foster, Rhode Island, at 7:00 p.m.

The following members were present:

Colette Matarese, President,
John Lewis, Vice President,
Lynne S. Rider,
Roger L. Hawes, excused
Joe Cardillo, excused
John J. Bevilacqua, Town Solicitor, excused

The following department heads were present:

Kelli Russ, Treasurer
Ann-Marie Ignasher, Town Planner
Robert E. Coyne, Jr., Police Chief

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**PUBLIC
COMMENT**

Colette Matarese stated that she was in contact with Dorothy Healy concerning the Animal Control Procedures. There is a stretcher that was donated to the town. Dorothy Healy has done some research on the topic and the training available to the town. She stated that the training is very expensive and she did not know if the town could afford it. Ms. Healy handed to the council and clerk some guidelines that she assembled and a copy of the city of Warwick's training manual. Colette Matarese made arrangements to meet with Ms. Healy for more discussion.

REPORTS

Lynne S. Rider read a memo from the Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program concerning "tolling", which is to suspend or stop temporarily the expiration of existing permits and approvals. There are two bills enacted in November 2009, that affected approvals granted by Zoning, Planning, and Building and Zoning departments. The law passed suspends the expiration dates of any approvals in effect as of November 9, 2009, and extends the date to June 30, 2011. This is Public Law Chapter 198 and 199.

WARRANTS

Lynne S. Rider moved, John Lewis seconded, and it was unanimously so voted to approve the following warrants: Payroll Warrant #32 in the amount of \$28,796.38, Payroll Warrant #33 in the amount of \$28,546.98, and General Warrant #16 in the amount of \$63,289.61.

John Lewis aye, Lynne S. Rider aye, Colette Matarese aye.

**MONTHLY
REPORTS**

Lynne S. Rider moved, John Lewis seconded, and it was unanimously so voted to approve the monthly report as submitted from the Planning Department.

Lynne S. Rider aye, John Lewis aye, Colette Matarese aye.

QUARTERLY REPORTS Lynne S. Rider moved, John Lewis seconded, and it was unanimously so voted to approve the quarterly reports as submitted from the Recreation Department and Zoning Board.

John Lewis aye, Lynne S. Rider aye, Colette Matarese aye.

ANIMAL CONTROL PROCEDURES Dorothy Healy presented a copy of a training manual from the city of Warwick that she received from Sgt. Russo of Warwick; she felt that is was a good reference to start with for Foster.

Lynne S. Rider added that when the dog licenses are mailed out, possibly adding a section asking for donations to help fund the equipment that is needed for the dog officer.

PRESENTATION FROM REGIONAL SCHOOL Sarah E. Mangiarelli, Business Manager, thanked the town council for inviting she and Michael S. Barnes, Superintendent, to present the 2010/2011 Foster-Glocester Regional School District Budget. Ms. Mangiarelli highlighted some of the changes in the budget. Although there are “step increases” for the teachers, there is no Cost Of Living Adjustments (COLA) for the staff. She stated that they were still in negotiations with the teachers union(s), but it does not look like we are leaning towards any type of contractual salary increase. The premium for employee benefits has a zero percent increase for next year, we could potentially run into an issue if we come back with a higher premium, then we would have to make a decision to cut other areas or use the fund balance if that was the case for a one time fix. Attached is an “Exhibit A” which is the summary of the submitted budget.

John Lewis stated that during the presentation it was said that there is an increase in the salary line item due to the step increases. Mr. Barnes said that those step increases are State Law. John Lewis agreed that it was state law for the step increases to be in the contracts but does it state that the teachers must get paid for those steps? Mr. Barnes again repeated that the steps are state mandated. Mr. Lewis stated that the Police department took a freeze for eighteen months and all the towns other contractual employees froze all of their raises, no COLA or step increases. His question was why can't the school do that?

Lynne S. Rider, councilmember asked if the step increases in pay are mandated also. Mr. Barnes said that is a question for the legal council and he did not want to make an interpretation.

Sarah E. Mangiarelli, Business Manager, stated that she just wanted to add that yes there is an increase of \$300,000.00 in the salary line item. But we are still cutting our budget by \$250,000.00 which is offset by the debt service.

Mr. Barnes stated that if the regional school asks for a set appropriation for their budget, and the state aid doubles, or gets completely eliminated, the appropriation to the region does not change.

Both Sarah E. Mangiarelli and Michael Barnes stated that the regional school was looking at ways to cut the budget to be fiscally responsible.

Colette Matarese, Council President asked if anyone else had any questions concerning the regional school budget. Mr. Barnes asked if the town council supported the budget as presented by the regional school. Colette Matarese stated that she knows that the staff has worked very hard on the budget, and that it was a lot of work involved with it and that she would like more time to review the budget and she would like to see more

PRESENTATION CONT. negotiations made with the teachers, so that they would step up to the plate like all of the other town employees have done last year and also this year. This would mean there would be no step increases for this year. John Lewis agreed, that he would need more time to review the budget, and he would like to see further negotiations made with the teachers. The town is always asked to do more with less money. More, meaning increases in state regulations and with less money from the state.

ADDITIONS AND ABATEMENTS John Lewis moved, Lynne S. Rider seconded, and it was unanimously so voted to approve the additions in the amount of \$89.85 and the prorated abatements in the amount of \$7.46 as recommended by Anne Carlson, Tax Assessor

John Lewis aye, Lynne S. Rider aye, Colette Matarese aye.

RESIGNATION OF MIKE WOOD Lynne S. Rider moved, John Lewis seconded, and it was unanimously so voted to accept the letter of resignation, with regret from Edward "Mike" Wood of the Conservation Commission.

Lynne S. Rider aye, John Lewis aye, Colette Matarese aye.

PWSB VALUES & TAXES Colette Matarese stated that Anne Carlson, Tax Assessor wrote a request to the town council for the continuation of the discussions with the Providence Water Supply Board regarding the values on the PWSB property. The PWSB would like to start discussions in early March in hopes to of reaching an agreement on the valuations and the taxes on the property.

Lynne S. Rider moved, John Lewis seconded and it was unanimously so voted to assemble a committee to have discussions with the PWSB in hopes to reach an agreement for values and taxes for their property. The members are Colette Matarese, Council President, John Lewis, Council Vice President, Anne Carlson, Tax Assessor and Kelli Russ, Treasurer.

John Lewis aye, Lynne S. Rider aye, Colette Matarese aye.

RESOLUTION Colette Matarese, read the following Resolution;
FOR H 5931 &
S 606

The State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

Town of Foster

WHEREAS, Legislation was passed in 2006, referred to as the “Madeline Walker Bill” that amended Tax Laws to require local Tax Collectors to notify RI Housing & Mortgage Finance Corp. of pending Tax Sales in their City or Town. Said notification was to be made 90 days prior to the sale and gives Rhode Island Housing first option to act on a sale;

WHEREAS, amendments to that act. H 5931 & S 606 are now proposed. These proposed amendments, if passed, would reduce the Rhode Island Housing foreclosure period from five years to one or two years depending upon property owned circumstances; and

WHEREAS, the Rhode Island Tax Collectors Association recommends changing the process to eliminate RI Housing & Mortgage Finance Corporation from the initial tax sale process, thus reducing both the cost and work associated with the tax sale. Switching from the pre-sale process to a process at the end of the one year right to redeem deadline would also reduce the legal and processing costs passed on to defaulting.

WHEREAS, this change would move the state housing agency’s role from the costly and risky position of acquiring tax liens to a more appropriate job offering counseling and financing help to the homeowners at the point where they have exhausted all other avenues. This could ultimately save the homeowners money and possibly their homes while assisting the General Assembly in creating a more efficient and effective process; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this Resolution in opposition to House Bill 5931 and Senate Bill 606, be forward to all our cities and towns as well as our State Senator and State Representatives for their support.

Colette Matarese, President
Foster Town Council

John Lewis moved, Lynne S. Rider seconded and it was unanimously so voted to approve the Resolution as written.

Lynne S. Rider aye, John Lewis aye, Colette Matarese aye.

John Lewis, Council Vice President announced that the town council has received in their packets, the budgets requests from all of the departments.

Lynne S. Rider moved, John Lewis seconded, and it was unanimously so voted to adjourn the meeting.

CONCERNED No one spoke under concerned citizens.
CITIZENS

Colette Matarese announced that there was no legal council present at this meeting and that there was an item under personnel that was to be discussed. John Lewis stated that the topic should be discussed, even without legal council.

EXECUTIVE Lynne S. Rider moved, John Lewis seconded, and it was unanimously so voted to go
SESSION into Executive Session according 42-46-5a (1) Personnel and to reconvene in open session and further to keep the minutes of said meeting closed and the minutes of all Executive Sessions held previous to this meeting be closed and remain to provisions of the General Laws of Rhode Island 42-46-4 & 5

John Lewis aye, Colette Matarese aye, Lynne S. Rider aye.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

There were no votes taken in Executive Session.

The executive session portion of the meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

A digital sound file is made a part of the record for a complete account of the council meeting.

Submitted By

Tina W. Freeman
Town Clerk