

At a meeting of the Town Council holden in and for the Town of Gloucester on February 15, 2018:

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; Edward C. Burlingame, Vice-President; Walter M. O. Steere, III; William E. Reichert and Patricia Henry.

Also present: Jean Fecteau, Town Clerk; Timothy Kane, Town Solicitor; Susan Harris, Deputy Town Clerk; Gary Treml, Director of Public Works; Diane Brennan, Finance Director; Ken Johnson, Building/Zoning Official; Joseph DelPrete, Chief of Police; Karen Scott, Town Planner; Gerald Mosca, Emergency Management Director; Lori DeSantis, Tax Assessor; Judy 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

Ericka Dauphinais approached the Council to speak regarding the discussion at the Special Town Council meeting held on February 6, 2018. E. Dauphinais was advised that this is not on tonight's agenda. Councilor G. Steere stated that E. Dauphinais can speak in Open Forum at the end of the meeting if she wishes.

V. Consent Items - Discussion and/or action

- A. Approval of Town Council meeting minutes of February 1 & February 6, 2018
- B. Tax Assessor's Additions & Abatements - January 2018
- C. Finance Director's Report - January 2018
- D. Pole Grant - Pray Hill Road (New joint owned pole location)

MOTION was made by Councilor Reichert to APPROVE the Town Council meeting minutes of February 1<sup>st</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018; to APPROVE the Tax Assessor's ABATEMENTS to the 2016 Tax Roll in the amount of \$1,030.42 and the 2017 Tax Roll in the amount of \$815.24, no ADDITIONS for January 2018; to ACCEPT the Finance Director's Report for January 2018; and GRANT the pole grant on Pray Hill Road for a new joint owned pole location; seconded by Councilor Burlingame.

Discussion: Councilor W. Steere noted that he was not present at the meeting of February 6<sup>th</sup> and asked how he could recuse himself from that and still vote on the other items. Tim Kane, Town Solicitor, replied that the Council would have to redo the vote. Councilor W. Steere stated that he will recuse himself from all consent items.

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

MOTION PASSED

VI. Unfinished Business

A. Boards & Commissions

1. Appointments - Discussion and/or action
  - a. Zoning Board Clerk

Councilor G. Steere asked about the status of this appointment, stating that we have a letter from Judi Rix indicating that she would like to resign from the Planning Board and switch to the Zoning Board. Diane Brennan, Finance Director, stated that this was held over from the last Council meeting because the letter was received that day and the Council did not have any advance notice. D. Brennan stated that Judi Rix has requested that she be appointed as the Zoning Board clerk but we don't have the resignation that she submitted to the Planning Board in conjunction with that. Councilor G. Steere noted that her letter stated that if she is appointed, she would continue on Planning for a month until a replacement is found. Councilor G. Steere suggested that the Council appoint her to the Zoning Board and advertise for the Planning Board. D. Brennan stated that she will go back to see if there are any applicants on file that are still interested. D. Brennan stated that she will ask the Council to accept the resignation from the Planning Board at the next Town Council meeting.

MOTION was made by Councilor Burlingame to APPOINT Judi Rix to the position of Zoning Board clerk; seconded by Councilor Reichert.

Discussion: None.

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

MOTION PASSED

b. Land Trust

1. One Member-at-large one year term to expire 2/2019  
Planning Board member-at-large

Councilor G. Steere stated that the Town Clerk has received an email from the Planner stating the Planning Board appointed Janine Pitocco to be their representative to the Land Trust at their meeting of February 5, 2018.

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to APPOINT Janine Pitocco to the position of member-at-large for a one year term to expire 2/2019; seconded by Councilor Reichert.

Discussion: None

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

MOTION PASSED

VII. New Business

A. Fiscal Year 2018/2019 Budget

1. **Additional** Personnel proposals for budget - Discussion and/or action

Councilor G. Steere stated that the Chief of Police has submitted the following request:

TO: Honorable Town Council  
From: Joseph DelPrete, Chief of Police  
Date: February 8, 2018  
RE: Personnel Salary Changes

I am respectfully requesting to raise the Emergency Management Director salary for fiscal year 2019 from \$9,000 to \$11,000. A fifty percent portion of this salary will be supported by emergency management grants and/or Health Department MEDs program grants in the next fiscal year.

I would also request to raise the police officer recruit salary from \$500.00 to \$750.00 per week when in the Rhode Island Municipal Police Academy. This increase is needed to be fair and competitive with other local police departments during the recruit selection process.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Chief Joseph DelPrete  
(end of memo)

Discussion: None.

MOTION was made by Councilor Burlingame to approve the Chief of Police's request; seconded by Councilor Reichert.

Discussion: Councilor G. Steere asked Joseph DelPrete to explain the grants that cover 50% of the EMA Director's salary. J. DelPrete replied that every year, we have the Emergency Management Program grants as well as our participation in the MEDS program with the Health Department. J. DelPrete further stated that there are grant funds from Storm Ready that could be utilized for the EMA Director's salary. J. DelPrete stated that this salary increase will not affect the Budget.

Councilor G. Steere asked about the increase in salary for the Police recruit. J. DelPrete stated that we are probably the only department in the State that does not start recruits in the Academy at the first step. J. DelPrete pointed out that he is not asking for first step, but just to raise the stipend to be more competitive. Councilor Burlingame stated that this is just a \$250 increase. J. DelPrete stated that we have had it at \$500 since before he started and he has been thinking about raising it for the last couple of years. Councilor G. Steere noted that it is still below the first step.

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

NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

B. Statewide E-Permitting: Authorization to move forward - Discussion and/or action  
Councilor G. Steere read the following memo from the Town Clerk:

Council,

The Clerk, Bldg/Zoning Official and his staff, the Assessor, the Planner and Matt Floor reviewed information received to date regarding the state's e-permitting program. Discussion included hidden costs, lack of compatibility to existing programs, and the lack of solid information.

All agreed there was not enough information, at this time, to bring this project to the Council. Staff will continue to attend informational meetings and seek out more details before presenting.

J. Fecteau

(end of memo)

Discussion: Councilor G. Steere stated that it appears that we are not ready to move on this. Councilor Henry stated that at the Department Head meeting, Matt Floor mentioned that by June 30<sup>th</sup> we would lose the money, but maybe we can pull something together before that.

MOTION was made by Councilor Henry to TABLE Statewide E-Permitting - Authorization to move forward, until the next Town Council meeting; seconded by Councilor W. Steere.

Discussion: Councilor G. Steere mentioned the UHIP program and the problems the State is having with it due to incompatibility.

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

NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

C. Adjustment to rate of compensation for snow removal for Public Works Director - Discussion and/or action

Councilor G. Steere stated that the Council has received the following request from the Public Works Director:

I am requesting that my rate of compensation for snow removal be adjusted to the rate of compensation for the departments foreman.

This would result in an increase of \$5.99/hr. The increase would commence with the next snow event.

Respectfully,

Gary Trembl

(end of memo)

Discussion: None.

MOTION was made by Councilor Reichert to adjust the rate of compensation for snow removal by the Public Works Director to equal the rate of compensation for the department foreman, resulting in an increase of \$5.99 per hour, effective immediately; seconded by Councilor Burlingame.

Discussion: None.

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

MOTION PASSED

- D. Personnel
  - 1. Finance Dept.
    - a. Resignation
      - 1. Tax Assessor Clerk - Discussion and/or action

Councilor G. Steere stated that the Town Clerk has received the resignation of Tax Assessor Clerk, Susan LaPlante, effective upon receipt.

MOTION was made by Councilor Burlingame to ACCEPT the resignation of Susan LaPlante from the position of Tax Assessor Clerk, effective February 9, 2018; seconded by Reichert.

Discussion: None.

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

MOTION PASSED

- b. Replacement of Tax Assessor Clerk - Discussion and/or action

Diane Brennan, Finance Director, stated that she has spoken with the Tax Assessor and has started to review some of the job descriptions for Clerk I, Clerk II and Senior Clerk. D. Brennan stated that they would like to consider having a Senior Clerk for the job which would first go out to all of the employees as a promotional opportunity or for a lateral change for anyone in the bargaining unit. D. Brennan stated that the union contract states that it must be posted for seven (7) days so she should have more information by the next Council meeting on March 1<sup>st</sup>.

D. Brennan explained that the Clerk I position will be brought up to Senior Clerk to have a different level of experience to bring to the table. D. Brennan stated that we had a Clerk I for a couple of years who had no municipal experience at all. D. Brennan stated that the role in the Assessor's Office allows for education and training for a wide range of information and we would like to have a person who would be able to go to these classes. D. Brennan stated that if this would be a long process, she would like to get some temporary help for clerical functions because it is tax roll time, the exemptions are coming in and the motor vehicles just got loaded in tonight.

Councilor Burlingame expressed his opinion that it makes sense to look at a higher level for that

position and this is an opportunity within the bargaining unit. Councilor Burlingame also agreed that we should give authorization for some temporary help, as needed. if this thing gets prolonged.

D. Brennan stated that at this level it would definitely go to the bargaining unit and stated that it doesn't seem that there has been any ability to have lateral moves within the Clerk's Union. D. Brennan commented that if we advertised for a Clerk I, she does not believe we would have anyone within the Town that would want it, but to do it as a Senior Clerk, we would provide that opportunity to existing staff.

Tim Kane, Town Solicitor, asked if we have a compensation rate on the temp help. D. Brennan replied in the negative.

Councilor W. Steere questioned, if nobody in the bargaining unit applies for the position, are we still going to advertise it as a Senior Clerk. Councilor W. Steere stated that we hired the last person with no experience as a Clerk I, and if we have to go outside and get someone with no experience, are we still going to pay them the Senior Clerk rate. D. Brennan replied that one of the reasons we are looking for a Senior Clerk is because the job description asks for municipal experience up to four (4) years, and the job qualification for Clerk I is just a high school education with minimum office experience. D. Brennan stated that we are struggling to find people to come into municipalities. Councilor W. Steere asked if it should be commensurate with experience. D. Brennan stated that March 1<sup>st</sup> is the Council meeting and she hopes to have more information at that time. D. Brennan stated that it is advantageous for people to have some municipal experience in that position and we have the opportunity to provide additional training within the Assessor's network in Rhode Island. D. Brennan commented that Lori DeSantis just received her certification as a Tax Assessor because she just met the one year requirement in the position.

Tim Kane asked if the rate of compensation for a temp can be left open until the next meeting. D. Brennan stated that she doesn't know what the going rate is, but she will call a temp agency to find out. Councilor Burlingame stated that we can set that at the next meeting. D. Brennan stated that she is not anticipating that we will need somebody before the next meeting.

MOTION was made by Councilor Burlingame to 1)authorize the Senior Clerk position to first be advertised in-house; 2)if that doesn't work, we go outside and advertise at the level of Senior Clerk; 3)authorize, in the event that temp help is needed, that we go with the temp agency rate; seconded by Councilor Reichert.

Discussion: None.

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

MOTION PASSED

E. Role of Town Council - Discussion and/or action

Councilor W. Steere stated that he asked for this because back in July of 2017, we had a similar agenda item to discuss the role of the Council and what they can and cannot do, according to the Charter. Councilor W. Steere stated that it is now February of 2018 and we are looking at some allegations of, at the least, a Charter violation. Councilor W. Steere stated that the Council needs to discuss how they are going to handle this.

Councilor G. Steere stated that there are some allegations/accusations and the Town Solicitor has advised that the best way would be to have a meeting next week and to possibly hire Jeff Kasle or one of these people who deal with these issues.

Tim Kane, Town Solicitor, recommended that the Council meet in closed session, which they are allowed to do according to the Open Meetings Law, based on allegations of civil misconduct. T. Kane stated that he has spoken with Jeff Kasle, who would be available on Wednesday or Thursday night for a closed session. T. Kane explained that the Council would give J. Kasle some parameters and he would do an investigation, take statements from people and review Town documents, and would report back to the Town Council with recommendations and findings. T. Kane stated that this is an independent person who can go out in an independent way, who is skilled and trained, and has served the Town well over the last ten (10) years when we have needed him.

Councilor Burlingame agreed with T. Kane's recommendation and stated that we have used J. Kasle before and he has done a good job. Councilor G. Steere also agreed, stating that J. Kasle has always been fair and reasonable.

MOTION was made by Councilor Burlingame to schedule a Special Town Council meeting on Wednesday, February 21, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. to address the issues of Town Council roles and personnel matters that have been brought to the Council's attention; seconded by Councilor Reichert.

Discussion: None.

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

MOTION PASSED

- F. Transfer of Funds (relative to Motor Vehicle Phase Out) - Discussion and/or action
  - 1. Reduction from: Fees - Taxes (current year)  
Increase to: State Aid Excise Tax Revenue (current year)

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

To: **Honorable Town Council Members**  
From: Diane L. Brennan, Director of Finance  
Date: February 13, 2018  
Re: Transfers and Supplements

As a result of the changes in the state reimbursement for motor vehicles, there has been a shift in the revenue amounts for the town.

Please reduce the amount to be raised by taxes by \$294,707 and increase the amount to be received from the state MV excise tax by the same. The following codes will be changed.

01-082-1120-EX State Aid- Excise Tax Revenue \$294,707  
01-082-1250-NUSE Fees-Taxes- Current year-Town (\$294,707)

These changes will reflect the actions taken by the general assembly.

There is a second transfer to be made based on a council approved increase in salary during the year.

01-034-2004 Salary Tax Collector \$4,000  
01-034-2018 Longevity \$ 150  
01-034-2250 FICA \$ 318  
01-034-2260 Municipal Pension \$ 432

01-082-2273 Reclassifications & Salary Negotiations (\$4,900)

Based on the charter provision § C **15-8 Transfer of accounts and appropriations**, I propose the recommendations for transfers as described. The budget in total has not changed.

(End of memo)

Discussion: None.

MOTION was made by Councilor Burlingame to APPROVE the Finance Director's specific recommendations regarding transfers as discussed; seconded by Councilor Reichert.

Discussion: Councilor W. Steere spoke about the Reclassifications and Salary Negotiations and asked if that was from the fund that was voted upon last year for the Budget. D. Brennan replied that she wanted to make a correction because it was not on the agenda, but the one that she wanted the Council to really look at was for taxes and fees. D. Brennan noted that when the approval had been made for the change to the Tax Collector, she could have done those transfers then. D. Brennan stated that she is trying to get all of the accounts where they should be, but the agenda did not have that item so she would be fine with whatever the Council wants to do. Councilor Burlingame stated that technically, the only one the Council can address is the \$294,000 item. Councilor Burlingame stated that he revises his motion to that effect.

Councilor W. Steere asked if these items are for the 2017/2018 Budget. D. Brennan replied in the affirmative. Councilor W. Steere asked if we planned for the Excise Tax to come in at this amount. D. Brennan replied in the negative, stating that it did not pass the General Assembly until

August, when tax bills had already been sent out. Councilor W. Steere asked if this \$294,000 would be considered a surplus. D. Brennan stated that we cannot raise taxes by that amount because we had to refund people.

Councilor Burlingame stated that the piece that we're okay with is the one on the motor vehicle tax, as far as the agenda is concerned. Councilor Burlingame stated that the Council already approved the other one and the Finance Director should make the transfers based on that approval.

Councilor Burlingame AMENDED his Motion as follows:

MOTION was made by Councilor Burlingame to reduce the amount to be raised by taxes by \$294,707 and increase the amount to be received from the state MV excise tax by the same. The following codes will be changed:

01-082-1120-EX State Aid- Excise Tax Revenue \$294,707

01-082-1250-NUSE Fees-Taxes- Current year-Town (\$294,707)

These changes will reflect the actions taken by the general assembly; seconded by Councilor Reichert.

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

MOTION PASSED

- G. Authorization for Town Council President signature:  
Pollution Discharge Elimination System (RIPDES) Annual Report – Discussion and/or action

Councilor G. Steere read the following request from the Town Planner:

To: Town Council Members

From: Karen Scott, Town Planner

Date: February 12, 2018

Re: Rhode Island Discharge Elimination System (RIPDES) Small Municipal Separate Storm System Sewer System (MS4) Annual Report

The Town is required to submit a RIPDES Small MS4 Annual Report each year to RIDEM. This is Year 14 of the current permit. The completed draft report which is attached, was advertised, as required, for public comments between February 15, 2018 and March 1, 2018. At the close of the public comment period, I would like to obtain a signature from the Town Council President and submit the report to RIDEM by the due date which is March 10, 2018.

Thank you for your consideration

MOTION was made by Councilor Reichert to AUTHORIZE the Town Council President to sign the RIPDES Small MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm System Sewer System) Annual Report to be forwarded to R.I.D.E.M. by March 10, 2018; seconded by Councilor W. Steere.

Discussion: None.

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

MOTION PASSED

VIII. Town Council Correspondence /Discussion

- A. Councilor G. Steere stated that the Council received a request for the use of the Senior Center for a fund-raiser on Friday, March 16<sup>th</sup> to support the Vietnam Veterans' Moving Wall Memorial display. Councilor G. Steere noted that the request came from Chris Stanley, a teacher at the Region. Councilor G. Steere stated that the event will run from approximately 5 PM to 8 PM and will consist of soup and raffles. Councilor G. Steere stated that this would require a Council member to sponsor the event. Jean Fecteau, Town Clerk, stated that the Council amended the process in June of 2011 to give the Council some leeway to approve these requests, as long as someone on the Council takes responsibility for the building being locked up. Councilor G. Steere stated that the soup is being donated by a restaurant and is already prepared. Councilor Burlingame offered to sponsor the event.
- B. Councilor G. Steere stated that correspondence was received from the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank saying that funds are available to lend to towns at below-market rates.
- C. Councilor G. Steere stated that a request was received from RLM LLC, the owners of the mobile home park next to the Police Station, asking the Town to reinstate the nine (9) units that were taken away years ago due to deficiencies that existed at the time. Councilor G. Steere stated that the letter indicates that extensive work has been done since 2005.
- D. Councilor G. Steere stated that a letter was received from the Statewide Planning Council regarding a public meeting on February 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- E. Councilor G. Steere stated that a letter was received from the Trust concerning Drug & Alcohol Consortium Meeting on March 27<sup>th</sup>.

IX. Department Head Reports/Discussion

- A. Jean Fecteau, Town Clerk, stated that she has received a request from Rob Rock, Director of Elections at the Secretary of State's office, regarding legislation to implement early voting. J. Fecteau noted that each year for the past 10 years, they have tweaked the mail ballot process, making it more difficult for her office.. J. Fecteau stated that they want to have true early voting to accommodate people who want to vote early. J. Fecteau stated that there would be some costs but R. Rock has assured her that if the legislation is passed, people who have done it will be on the

committee to formulate the regulations. J. Fecteau stated that it would not be effective until 2020, giving plenty of time to plan ahead. R. Rock has offered to come to the Council meeting on March 1<sup>st</sup> to answer any questions the Council may have.

J. Fecteau stated that she did not speak for the Council, but told R. Rock that previous Councils have always been in favor of any type of initiative that would help the voters have every opportunity to cast a ballot. J. Fecteau stated that early voting would start 20 days prior to an election. J. Fecteau stated that the Secretary of State's office is looking for support from communities.

Councilor Burlingame asked J. Fecteau how much extra work it would create for her office. J. Fecteau stated that she has discussed with R. Rock the possibility of closing one of the polling locations if enough voters come and vote prior to an election. J. Fecteau commented that it would be more work, but many other states are doing it. J. Fecteau noted that in the beginning, she had concerns about the financing, but she now is in support of the legislation. There was Council consensus to have Rob Rock come to the next meeting to explain the legislation.

Regarding the request from RLM to reinstate nine (9) mobile home sites, Jean Fecteau asked if the Council wants her to respond. J. Fecteau stated that if RLM had asked for one (1) more site than was originally granted with their Mobile Home license, they would be looking at an expansion of that license, which would require going back to the Planning Board followed by a Town Council Public Hearing. J. Fecteau stated that she sent Tim Kane, Town Solicitor, some of the legal documents from 1991 when the nine (9) sites were removed because the park was in such bad condition. J. Fecteau noted that RLM has done an immense amount of work since that time. J. Fecteau stated that she and T. Kane have not found the Supreme Court Order which took the sites away, adding that RLM will try to track it down. There was Council consensus to wait to hear back from RLM.

- B. Diane Brennan, Finance Director, stated that she has given the Council a copy of a proposal with regard to a compensation study from an organization that had been recommended from prior Councils.

Councilor Burlingame stated that this pertains to discussion at the last meeting concerning getting a study of department heads and directors. Councilor Burlingame stated that we have the RFP and the Council can now decide what to do going forward. Councilor W. Steere commented that it could be expanded beyond department heads. There was Council consensus to have this discussion on the next agenda.

- C. Karen Scott, Town Planner, stated that the Town is required to have a Natural Hazard

Mitigation Plan and she has been working on getting ours updated because it has expired. K. Scott stated that there is a \$7,500 grant from the RIEMA if we can get the update done by then. K. Scott noted that she has been able to update much of the information in-house but would need a little help on the final step. K. Scott stated that she will work together with Gerry Mosca, EMA Director, and the Chief of Police to put together the RFP and asked if the Council would want to see it first.

Councilor G. Steere asked if time was of the essence. Gerry Mosca stated that the grant has been extended three (3) times and suggested that we act soon before we lose the grant money. Councilor G. Steere asked if there is any reason why the Council should look at it before just saying go ahead with it. G. Mosca stated that it is actually a \$10,000 grant, \$7,500 of which is Federal. G. Mosca spoke further but was inaudible on the recording.

Councilor Burlingame stated that the Council can do a consensus at this point and then ratify it at the next Council meeting. Tim Kane, Town Solicitor, concurred.

K. Scott reported that at the Planning Board meeting of February 12<sup>th</sup>, the Board recommended approval of the revised Comprehensive Plan, and they will be coming to the Council for a Public Hearing.

- D. Councilor W. Steere stated that he anticipates that a question will be asked in Open Forum regarding the Elderly Tax Exemption and stated that the Tax Assessor might need some guidance. Tim Kane, Town Solicitor, stated that he and the Tax Assessor will get together to clarify the issue.
- E. Gerald Mosca, Emergency Management Director, stated that our severe weather response plan was approved by the Federal government, FEMA and the National Weather Service. G. Mosca stated that there was a ceremony at the State House where each of the communities that were designated as “Storm Ready” received a sign that can be placed wherever they choose. G. Mosca explained that the one of the advantages of being a Storm Ready community is that we received a grant to purchase weather radios and lightning detectors. G. Mosca further stated that as a Storm Ready community, it gives us points for the FEMA Flood Insurance Plan for any resident that has flood insurance and their premiums should go down.

X. Bds. and Commissions Reports/ Discussion  
None.

XI. Open Forum

- A. Ericka Dauphinais introduced herself and stated that her husband works for the Town. E. Dauphinais stated that she reviewed the minutes from the last meeting and has questions regarding the department head non-union salary compensation review.

E. Dauphinais stated that according to the meeting minutes, from last week as well as previous meetings, there has been an ongoing compensation analysis starting back in March of 2017. E. Dauphinais stated that at that time, Councilor Burlingame stated that the Town was in the process of conducting a study in which salaries of department heads and directors were being reviewed and would be included as part of a line item to upgrade positions going forward. E. Dauphinais stated that she is not suggesting that the increased compensation was not warranted, but she just wants to understand the process. E. Dauphinais stated that she voted for the Budget passing and saw that there was \$50,000 indicated for additional department head compensation, but as she looks through some of the meeting minutes, she sees it stated that the Council did not have enough information to make a decision appropriately. E. Dauphinais stated that there was discussion regarding getting an outside firm, but that was not done and motions were made to remove it as an agenda topic.

E. Dauphinais stated that subsequently, in October, there was discussion about an exploratory subcommittee for a Town Manager, which she feels is a great idea. E. Dauphinais stated that on February 1<sup>st</sup>, there was discussion regarding additional compensation based upon a competitive analysis. E. Dauphinais questioned what was the competitive analysis that was conducted, because we heard tonight that Diane Brennan, Finance Director, stated that we are now working with somebody to do a competitive analysis. E. Dauphinais asked for clarification.

Councilor G. Steere stated that this is Open Forum and not on the agenda. Tim Kane, Town Solicitor, stated that Council is supposed to listen to things but not discuss them. E. Dauphinais stated that this is fair, but since it will be discussed in the future, when we are talking about compensation improvements based upon a competitive analysis that was done, when the Council says things like “individuals do an incredible job” and “we’ve spent long hours reviewing this” as well as saying “it’s great because we’re paying for performance”, paying for performance is very different than a compensation analysis that is being done across municipalities that are similar.

E. Dauphinais stated that at the company she works for, there is notification to the individuals that are being reviewed for compensation and job descriptions and salaries are looked at. E. Dauphinais stated that a lot of criteria goes into it and that criteria should be made public, however it was utilized. E. Dauphinais stated that throughout the last year, there have been a number of indications that there has been discussion about this and asked if this falls into Open Meetings, where we can identify what criteria was used, because at this point, it has been mentioned that every member within the Council had discussions about it. E. Dauphinais stated that as this is added to the agenda, she will come back and look for answers.

- B. Tom Sanzi spoke regarding the changes made to the senior transportation program, asking if there is any lenience on the 22-mile radius which was approved. T. Sanzi asked if East Providence is included because some of the services from RI Hospital have been moved from Providence to a medical center in East Providence. T. Sanzi noted that the difference is only 2 to 4 miles. T. Sanzi stated that he had an alternative ride the other day, but they can't seem to get him to his appointments on time.

Councilor Burlingame stated that it would be up to the Director of Human Services to make that decision. T. Sanzi replied that he informed the Director that the medical services have moved, but he will talk to her further. Councilor Burlingame again stated that it is not the Council's call. Councilor G. Steere stated that this is Open Forum and the Council cannot discuss it, but they did discuss it once and it is up to the Director. Councilor G. Steere stated that she does make exceptions when she can to try to help people.

Councilor W. Steere stated that he did a Google search which indicates that the distance from Chepachet to East Providence is 21.7 miles, which is "in the ballpark".

- C. Walter Steere, Jr. spoke regarding the Senior Exemption, stating that there are some gray areas in the changes that were made this year. W. Steere, Jr. stated that there are situations that could come up that we didn't think about that could cause a problem. W. Steere, Jr. stated that we were told that everybody that is in the program already would be "grandfathered" in. W. Steere, Jr. stated that there were a few changes in the variable part of it, eliminating the yearly increases between 65 and 80, then at 80 you would get another \$1,000 reduction. W. Steere, Jr. stated that there may be some situations that could come up and he doesn't feel it is fair to the Tax Assessor to have to make decisions on something that is a gray area. W. Steere, Jr. suggested that the Council take a look at this to avoid any unintended consequences.

Walter Steere, Jr. also spoke regarding compensation for department heads, stating that the Council has already given raises when we haven't come up with a plan on how to do it. W. Steere, Jr. stated that the \$50,000 was put into the Budget last year before it was really thought out how to reward people. W. Steere, Jr. stated that he is in favor of it if someone is doing a good job, but there should be a process for everyone to know what they have to do to get a raise.

Councilor Burlingame responded by saying that we have a proposal for an outside firm to do just that, where it will be all laid out. W. Steere, Jr. stated that it seems that we may have jumped the gun.

## XII. Adjourn

MOTION was made by Councilor Burlingame to ADJOURN at 8:39 p.m.; seconded by Councilor

Reichert.

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

MOTION PASSED