

At a Special meeting of the Town Council holden in and for the Town of Gloucester on May 22, 2024

I. Call to Order

The meeting was Called to Order at 6:30 P.M. by Councilor W. Worthy, Town Council President.

II. Roll Call

Members present: Cheryl A. Greathouse;; Walter M.O. Steere, III; Stephen W. Arnold, Vice President; William A.Worthy, Jr. , President

Member Absent: Jonathan E. Burlingame

Also Present: Jean Fecteau, Town Clerk; Christine Mathieu, Deputy Town Clerk; Jane Steere, Tax Collector; Chief Delprete

III. Pledge of Allegiance

Councilor W. Worthy asked everyone to please stand and join in the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. New Business

A. Discussion and/or Action - Bond Referendum - Discussion and/or Action

1. Determination of date for bond to be considered

Councilor W. Worthy stated that the Council has to decide whether to hold the Bond Referendum for the renovations to the Police Station on **November 5, 2024** at the General Election or at a Special Election, date set by the Secretary of State, **August 6, 2024**.

Discussion:

Councilor W. Worthy stated that he had spoken with Representative M. Chippendale today and he was hoping we would hear something soon regarding the legislation. Councilor W. Steere stated the matter was held up because someone was away. J. Fecteau, Town Clerk, stated that the legislation is in committee. Councilor W. Worthy stated that it is not in committee for any other reason except it needs to go on an agenda.

Chief Delprete stated that he is moving forward with marketing plans and is asking the Council to give him frequently asked questions so he can incorporate that into the marketing plan. Chief Delprete stated some examples of questions are the impact on property taxes and what the bond rate would be .

Councilor S. Arnold asked about the response to the police holding the open house. Chief Delprete stated the response has been positive and he is planning to hold more open houses. Chief Delprete stated that there will also be some social media blasts.

Councilor S. Arnold stated that the number one question that he is being asked is to explain the need. Chief Delprete stated that the question makes sense ; that he has been hearing a lot of positive comments; and , that the renovation will meet the needs.

Councilor S. Arnold asked Chief Delprete if he had a preference for the date of the election. Chief Delprete stated that with the spending of one of the grants and the anticipated cost escalation that he prefers the election be held in August .

J. Fecteau stated that she informed the Board of Canvassers of the question of the election as they run the elections and that the chair was present.

D. Calderara, Chair of Board of Canvassers, stated that from a purely practical stand point that November is preferable because a) it does not require any extra work and b) it is free. D. Calderara stated that the election has to be a title 17 election with all the bells and whistles so that means it can't be done simply like yesterday's election. D. Calderara stated it requires 20 days of early voting and mail ballots. D. Calderara stated that one or two polls may need to be opened as the number of voters is uncertain.

Councilor W. Worthy asked Chief Delprete if any deadlines would be missed if the election were held in November. Chief Delprete stated no but it would be tight. Chief Delprete stated his opinion that the sooner everything gets rolling the better as if it goes into 2026 he expects a 5% to a 10 % increase in cost.

Councilor C. Greathouse asked the cost of a special election. J. Fecteau stated that the cost would be about \$10,000 for one polling place. J. Fecteau stated her concern about the bill being in committee because of the time she needs. J. Fecteau stated that she would have to have the questions on the town council agenda on June 6 and that ads would have to be sent the following week so time is a big concern. J. Fecteau stated that if the bill waits till the end of the session on June 30<sup>th</sup> then the election cannot happen on August 6<sup>th</sup>. J. Fecteau stated that this is the first time that she has been given a date for an election. J. Fecteau stated that typically she could pick a date but there are many cities and towns having elections so the state picked this one date. J. Fecteau stated that there is also a Primary election and a General election right

behind it. J. Fecteau stated that the council could make a motion contingent upon passing of the legislation which would allow her office to start getting everything ready.

Councilor S. Arnold asked the source of the money to pay for the election. Councilor W. Steere asked if Council contingency money could be used and designated to a special account for that purpose. J. Steere, Tax Collector, stated that she can speak with the Finance Director . J. Fecteau stated that she feels that there may be funds available in her current board of canvassers account that can cover much of the cost. Councilor S. Arnold stated that it sounds like the cost can be covered. Councilor W. Steere stated that he has been going back and forth on both dates and stated his opinion that due to it being a presidential election which has its craziness that he prefers August 6<sup>th</sup> for the election.

J. Fecteau asked Chief Delprete if he was planning any sessions with the council with renderings and information. Chief Delprete stated that he was picking up renderings tomorrow and would have one for the town hall. Councilor W. Worthy stated that he is comfortable with August 6<sup>th</sup> for the election. Councilor C. Greathouse stated she is in favor of August 6<sup>th</sup> and agrees with Chief's reasons. Councilor C. Greathouse stated that the open house is a good idea and feels more comfortable that there are funds to allocate.

Councilor W. Steere asked about the turnout for the elections when the senior center and renovations to the regional schools were done. J. Fecteau stated that both were on the general election ballot in November and both passed. J. Fecteau stated that there is only two months so the Town Council needs to promote. Councilor S. Arnold stated his opinion that the Council and the Chief hold joint open houses or informational meetings. J. Fecteau suggested the Council pick dates and that she can start working on items while waiting for the legislation to pass.

Councilor W. Worthy stated that Representative Chippendale made it sound like it could be passed any day. J. Fecteau stated that the bill is not on any agenda yet and there are other agendas posted. J. Fecteau stated her concern and suggested that council make a motion giving her permission to send a letter to the representatives.

MOTION was made by Councilor C. Greathouse to SET the Bond Referendum, approved by Resolution #2024-02 of the Town Council on April 23, 2024, for Police

station renovations/addition for August 6, 2024; pending passage of legislation; seconded by Councilor S. Arnold

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse,W.Steere, S. Arnold , W.Worthy

NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

## 2. Future Planning/Media plan

Discussion: Councilor W. Worthy stated that many of these items were discussed in item 1 of the agenda. Councilor W. Steere stated that Chief Delprete is looking for the Council to give him questions to make into a frequently asked document and that the more questions that can be answered up front the better so there is a need to get moving. Councilor W. Steere stated he likes the idea of an informational meeting sponsored by the town council. Chief Delprete stated that he would like to bring the architect back to one of the meetings. Councilor W. Steere suggested that the bond person be invited to an informational meeting.

Councilors discussed various possible dates for the informational meeting. Councilor S. Arnold suggested to hold it on the regular meeting in June but to start at 6:00 PM. Chief Delprete stated that he will reach out to M. Saccoccio , architect, as to the June meeting. J.Steere stated she would ask the Finance Director to reach out to the bond counsel in response to Councilor W. Steere's question.

MOTION was made by Councilor C. Greathouse to authorize the town clerk to send correspondence to Gloucester's Representatives and to the House Municipal Government and Housing Committee requesting our Bond legislation be expedited due to the limited time frame for implementation of a special election; seconded by Councilor W. Steere

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse,W.Steere, S. Arnold , W.Worthy

NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

## V. Unfinished Business

A. Personnel - Appointment

1. Building/Zoning Official - Full Time - Discussion and/or Action

Discussion: Councilor W. Worthy stated that he spoke to the applicant and he waiting to hear from other offers. Councilor W. Worthy stated that D. Zimmerman will keep the post for the position up.

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Arnold to TABLE the appointment of the Building/Zoning Official; seconded by Councilor W. Steere

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W.Worthy  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

VI. Adjourn

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to ADJOURN at 7:08 p.m.; seconded by Councilor S. Arnold

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED