

# TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER

Board of Civil Authority  
January 11, 2023

DRAFT

Meeting was called to order at 4:31 pm by Greg Jenne, Chair

Present: Donna Williamson, Gloria Martin, Bruce Page, William Young, Nancy Robinson, Clerk and Cindy Ansardy, Asst. Clerk  
Zoom: Jerry Oppenheimer, George Spear and Justin Wardwell, BCA Members  
Vicky Young

Additions/changes to agenda: none

William moved and Gloria seconded to approve the minutes of October 17, 2022. Motion carried.

Discussion of 2023 Town Meeting (Floor Voting) process. Town Meeting is on Tuesday, March 7<sup>th</sup>. School budget and election of board members will take place at town office by Australian Ballot, polls will be open from 8:00 am to 7:00 pm. Depending on turnout, Nancy will organize ballot counting and let BCA members know if they will be needed to assist with election closing and counting. Extra staffing will be required during school voting and town meeting. Donna generally oversees school voting at town office.

Discussion of venue for Town Meeting, options previously used were Long Trail Brewery (room design) and Grange (did not accommodate all in attendance) do not seem to be viable options. Community Center is under renovation and is not available this year. Use of new fire station may be only viable option. Jerry was asked if he would act as liaison between BCA and Fire Dept. Jerry asked to go on record recusing himself from this discussion as he has an alliance to both parties and wished to remain neutral. Greg reported that he would meet with the Fire Dept. at their next meeting scheduled for January 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6:30pm to seek approval of using the fire station for town meeting. Jerry will ask this item to go onto the Fire Meeting agenda. Donna and/or William may also attend with Greg. If use of fire station is approved, set up would have to occur early Tuesday morning. William suggested asking that the Rescue Truck be moved outside the night before so that preliminary set up could occur, at least bringing chairs and tables to site. George asked about safety protocols, covid regulations have been removed, Nancy will supply masks and hand sanitizer for public use.

Discussion of potential legislative action currently be discussed allowing the extension for Selectboards to move town meeting dates and/or allowing Australian Ballot voting without needing voter approval for years of 2023 and 2024. IF this legislation is passed, the selectboard would have to vote at a warned/agenda meeting to change to using Australian Ballot voting and then process of absentee ballots. Last town meeting, ballots were requested to match school processing. If ballots were to be sent to all active voters, school ballots would not be included and would have to be requested separately. This may cause confusion, extra expense and time.

Greg made the motion that if the board changed to Australian Ballot voting, voting would be held in person at the town office and not by drive through. William seconded this motion and motion carried.

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Nancy reviewed the timeline for both voting processes, floor, and Australian ballot. Social Service petitions are due on or before January 19<sup>th</sup>, Candidate Consent forms and petitions are due (currently for school board members) by January 30<sup>th</sup>, Warning which would include meeting venue and articles has to be posted no earlier than January 26 or later than February 5<sup>th</sup> (Sunday), Nancy would post by February 3<sup>rd</sup>. Town report has to be out to public by February 24<sup>th</sup>. If legislative changes are made and the selectboard moves to Australian Ballot, ballots have to be prepared and ready for distribution by February 15<sup>th</sup>. The above dates are all directed by State Statute and are not currently in the discussion of the Australian Ballot change. If changes are made, public notice and education needs to happen immediately.

Nancy will monitor legislative voting and will let selectboard know as soon as she knows anything so that this item can be put onto an agenda for discussion. Board may need to warn for a special meeting to do this.

Being no further business, Greg moved and William seconded to adjourn at 5:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Nancy Robinson*

Nancy Robinson,  
Clerk