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Donna Laich
BRANFORD TOWN CLERK

Representative Town Meeting

Meeting Minutes

February 9, 2022 8:00 p.m.

Moderator: Dennis T. Flanigan	Clerk: Donna Laich
Majority Leader: Ray Ingraham	Minority Leader: Tracy Everson

A regular meeting of the RTM was held remotely on Wednesday, February 9, 2022 at 8:00 p.m. to consider and act upon the following matters:

1. Roll Call

Representatives present: Alfone, Amore, Anderson, Barron, Black, Bonenberger, Brooks, Conklin, Everson, Erlanger, Flanigan, Greenberg, Healy, Hentschel, Hynes, Ingraham, Laich, Maresca, Riccio, Shrestha, Sires, Stepanek, Sullivan, Twohill, Verderame, Wells

Representative absent: Kelly, Prete, Torelli, Witkowski

2. Approval of minutes of the November 29, 2021 meeting:

Rep. Ingraham made a motion to approve; 2nd by Rep. Maresca. The motion was adopted by a voice vote.

3. Reception of communications, reports of committees, and citizen petitions:

Resident Wayne Cooke sent three pieces communication to the RTM. Moderator Flanigan read Town Meeting Rule A236-9, Section 9.2 which states. "All written communication consisting of 300 words or fewer, deemed appropriate by the Moderator and RTM Clerk, shall be read in full. Communication greater than 300 words, similarly deemed appropriate may be summarized by the Moderator. Moderator Flanigan informed the meeting members that all three were deemed inappropriate and therefore did not read them.

4. To consider, and if appropriate, approve the Branford Representative Town meeting schedule for 2022:

Moderator Flanigan read the calendar of RTM meetings for the remainder of 2022 and January 2023. Rep. Conklin offered a motion to approve that was 2nd by Rep. Erlanger. The motion passed by a voice vote.

5. To consider, and if appropriate, approve an agreement by and between the Town of Branford and the Branford Supervisors Local 818-60 Council 4 AFSCME to June 30, 2025:

Rep. Verderame gave a brief summary of this item. She reported that the Administrative Services committee voted unanimously in favor of the agreement. She moved the item forward for a vote. After a brief statement by Rep. Sullivan, the collective bargaining agreement was adopted by the body in a 25-0 roll call vote. The contract unanimously passed with a roll call vote (25 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions)

6. **To consider, and if appropriate, approve a Sliney Road public access easement between and among the Branford Housing Authority of Branford and the Town of Branford:**
- a. Rep. Verderame reported this item passed 6-1 at the Administrative Services committee meeting after a lengthy discussion. Rep. Verderame gave a summary of the item with visuals to clarify the location of the proposed easement. Rep. Verderame put this item forward for a vote.
 - b. Rep. Sires voted no in committee and gave a brief minority report. She stated she needs to review this item further.
 - c. A lengthy discussion ensued with many questions and comments from several RTM representatives, a member of the public, and clarification from Attorney Gomes and Town Attorney Aniskovich.
 - d. This item passed in a roll call vote (23 Yes, 2 No, 0 abstentions).

7. **Any other Business to come before the RTM:**

- a. Town Clerk Arpin reminded the town budget cycle is coming up the week of March 15th. Budget books will be available just before the hearings begin.
- b. Rep. Riccio apologized for his absence at our last meeting due to the change of date. He stated his opposition to the school administrators contract that we voted on at that meeting. He stated that some members who voted in favor of that contract did so to protect their own children from being targeted by administrators. Rep. Riccio reiterated that the RTM should have a voice at education contract negotiation meetings. Several RTM members commented. Rep. Ingraham mentioned that he and Rep. Brockett sent a letter last year requesting an RTM representative be invited to observe the negotiation process. He said they did not get a response.
- c. Rep. Wells asked for confirmation about the fields and parking lot near Sliney Rd. 1st selectman Cosgrove said the fields and parking lots are on town property and the BHA has no authority over them.
- d. Citizen Todd Petrowski asked about the status of the investigation related to the Tax Department. First Selectman Cosgrove asked if he was referring to the 2020 audit? He further stated the 2021 audit would be done in a few months. Rep. Everson spoke and clarified that the Board of Finance was the body that was conducting the investigation of the Tax office.
- e. Citizen Petrowski asked if all the committees follow the same procedural rules.

See the BCTV recording of this meeting for details of the conversations.

8. **Adjournment:** 9:10 PM; Motion to adjourn by Rep. Amore 2nd by Rep. Anderson

Dated this 15th day of February, 2022

Donna Laich

RTM Clerk

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Wesley E. Appin
BRANFORD TOWN CLERK

May 9, 2021

Branford RTM
1019 Main Street
Branford, CT 06405

Dear Branford RTM:

In regard to your policy of removing a citizen for--in your words--"personally attacking" someone during public comment, would you please explain to the citizens of Branford exactly what a "personal attack" is and why it is grounds for denying an individual his/her constitutionally-guaranteed right to speak freely?

In regard to myself, I have been electronically removed from a number of meetings by your body's unauthorized censor-- Majority Leader Raymond Ingraham-- simply for presenting clear and accurate evidence of corrupt behavior and repeated lying by the first selectman.

Not only does this represent a gross conflict of interest and flagrant abuse of power in providing Ingraham this type of discretion and authority, it further evidences the measures the first selectman and his loyalists with go to silence citizens and conceal this administration's corruption.

Again, it is asked that the moderator provide a clear explanation of what a "personal attack" includes and why it should require Branford citizens being denied their constitutional right to free speech.

Given that "Correspondence" is an agenda item and all citizens are allowed by Town Code to speak to agenda items, the moderator is reminded that the RTM is required to provide public comment on this matter.

Sincerely,

Wayne Cooke

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Wai E. Arpin
BRANFORD TOWN CLERK

February 7, 2022

Dear Branford RTM:

As part of next terms' RTM recruitment campaign, it is suggested the following list of ten reasons to join the RTM be distributed throughout the town.

Sincerely,

Wayne Cooke

Ten Reasons to Join the RTM:

- 1.) Violate Citizen's Rights.
- 2.) Pretend You're Important.
- 3.) Vote On Issues You Know Nothing About
- 4.) Ignore Dishonesty and Corruption.
- 5.) Rid Yourself of Independent Thoughts.
- 6.) Free Cookies, Chips, and Soda.
- 7.) Hang Around Equally Lazy People.
- w8. Give All Your Authority to the 1st Selectman.
- 9.) Believe Every Lie Town Hall Tells You.
- 10.) Catch Up On Your Sleep.

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Ned E. Arpin
BRANFORD TOWN CLERK

Censorship=Corruption
May 9, 2021

Branford RTM
1019 Main Street
Branford, CT 06405

Dear Branford RTM:

In light of the RTM's policy of muting and censoring citizens comments simply because these comments provide evidence of the first selectman's corrupt practices and repeated lies to the public, it is asked that the moderator read aloud--SLOWLY AND CLEARLY--the following reminders of a citizen right to free speech:

Homer: To speak his thoughts is every man's right.

Voltaire: I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.

George Washington: If the freedom of speech is taken away, then dumb and silent we may be led, like sheep to the slaughter.

Napoleon Bonaparte: A people which is able to say everything becomes able to do everything.

Oliver Wendell Holmes: The very aim and end of our institutions is just this: that we may think what we like and say what we think.

Theodore Roosevelt: Free speech, exercised both individually and through a free press, is a necessity in any country where people are themselves free.

John Stuart Mill: We can never be sure that the opinion we are endeavoring to stifle is a false opinion; and if we were sure, stifling it would be an evil still.

Frederick Douglas: To suppress free speech is a double wrong. It violates the rights of the hearer as well as those of the speaker.

John Morley: You have not converted a man because you have silenced him.

Benjamin Franklin: Whoever would overthrow the liberty of a nation must begin by subduing the freeness of speech.

Charles Bradlaugh: Better a thousandfold abuse of free speech, than denial of free speech..

James Madison: The people shall not be deprived or abridged of their right to speak.

Franklin D. Roosevelt: The truth is found when men are free to pursue it.

Mark Twain: Censorship is telling a man he can't have a steak, just because a baby can't chew it.

John Milton: Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely, according to conscience, above all liberties.

James Buchanan: I like the noise of democracy.

Sincerely,

Wayne Cooke