

At a Special meeting of the Town Council holden in and for the Town of Gloucester on May 5, 2025

I. Call to Order

The meeting was Called to Order at 6:30 P.M. by William A. Worthy, Jr., President.

II. Roll Call

Members present: Stephanie L. Calise; Cheryl A. Greathouse; Walter M.O. Steere, III, Vice President; William A. Worthy, Jr., President

Member absent: Jonathan E. Burlingame

Also Present: Jean Fecteau, Town Clerk; Christine Mathieu, Deputy Town Clerk

III. Pledge of Allegiance

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

Councilor W. Worthy stated that we now need a motion to convene to closed executive session:

IV. Seek to Convene to Closed Executive Session Pursuant to:

- A. RIGL 42-46-5(a)(2) Sessions pertaining to collective bargaining, litigation or work sessions pertaining to collective bargaining or litigation:
 - 1. Discussion by Council, Vote, or Other Action re: Potential litigation - West Gloucester LLC & Factory Mutual Insurance Company -

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to Convene to Closed Executive Session Pursuant to:

- A. RIGL 42-46-5(a)(2) Sessions pertaining to collective bargaining, litigation or work sessions pertaining to collective bargaining or litigation:
 - 1. Discussion by Council, Vote, or Other Action re: Potential litigation - West Gloucester LLC & Factory Mutual Insurance Company

seconded by Councilor C. Greathouse

Councilor W. Worthy asked the Clerk to call the roll:

Councilor Calise- Aye
Councilor Greathouse- Aye
Councilor Steere- Aye
Councilor Worthy- Aye

Discussion: None

MOTION PASSED

Councilor W. Worthy stated that we will reconvene open session at approximately 7:30 p.m.

RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION

V. Reconvene Open Session; Disclosure of votes taken in Executive Consideration of the Sealing of Minutes- Discussion and/or Action

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to Reconvene Open Session; Disclose zero (0) votes were taken in Executive Session & to seal the minutes of Closed Executive Session; seconded by Councilor S. Calise

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Calise, Greathouse, Steere, Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

VI. FY 2025/2026 Budget

A. Amendments, Additions, Changes to proposed budget - Discussion and/or Action
Councilor W. Worthy stated that at the last meeting of the Council there were a few changes to the proposed budget voted and the final numbers have been determined by the Finance Director.

Councilor W. Worthy stated that after all discussion was completed, there were no further changes proposed as it was determined there is no room for any additions without cutting elsewhere in the budget.

Councilor W. Worthy asked if all Councilors' are ready to go forward with the adoption and if any Councilors wished to speak prior to the adoption.

Discussion: Councilor W. Steere stated that after the last meeting he felt that if there was something to do to help the school that it should be done. Councilor W. Steere stated that E. Beltram, Finance Director, contacted the state regarding the possibility of exceeding the 4% state mandated cap.

E. Beltram, Finance Director, stated that the state informed her that this situation does not qualify as an emergency that would warrant exceeding the 4% cap. E. Beltram stated that both the state municipal finance office and the auditor general's office gave her the same answer.

No action necessary on this item.

B. Adoption of Budget for 2025/26 FTR - Discussion and/or Action
Councilor W. Worthy stated that the Finance Director has presented the Council a budget only slightly different than the budget presented at public hearing. Councilor W. Worthy stated that there were four changes made at the last Council meeting which are as follows:

Change to health benefits due to increased rates
Decrease of \$10,000 to DPW Salt line item

Increase to Bldg/Zoning Dept. and Planning Dept. Clerks to reflect position re-classifications, 2 Senior Clerks to 2 Administrative Aides.

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Calise to ADOPT the 2025/2026 budget presented at Public Hearing on April 21st, as amended by Town Council on May 1, 2025, for presentation to the voters at the Financial Town Referendum to be held on May 20, 2025; seconded by Councilor C. Greathouse

Discussion: Councilor W. Steere stated that the proposed budget, as is, is right at 3.98% so there isn't any room to move. E. Beltram stated that the actual percentage is 3.98765% as the state uses 5 decimal places.

Councilor W. Steere stated that he hopes the people support the budget. Councilor W. Steere stated that if the budget does not pass then the next proposed budget will be even less. Councilor W. Steere stated that the Budget Board brought good ideas out of a difficult situation. Councilor W. Steere stated that the Finance Director did a great job in this difficult process. Councilor W. Steere stated that he hopes the voters understand the Council was trying to do the best they can in this situation.

VOTE: AYES- Calise, Greathouse, Steere, Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

C. Adoption of Ballot Questions for 2025/26 FTR - Discussion and/or Action
Councilor W. Worthy stated that the Clerk, with review by the Finance Director, has created the ballot questions as follows for adoption which he read as follows:

Question #1: Shall the Town Budget for fiscal year 2025/26 appropriate a sum of **\$34, 567,688** which includes Municipal Services & Capital Expenses; Gloucester School Dept. Operating & Capital Expenses; Gloucester's share of the Foster/Glocester Regional Operating & Capital Expenses; and includes a Levy of Property Tax (not including Motor Vehicle taxes) not less than **\$ 26,979,649** or more than **\$ 27,019,649**?

Question #2: Shall the Town Budget include an appropriation of \$75,000 from the surplus for Grant Matching funds? **Said grant, if received, shall be for the renovation of the Town recreation area known as Winsor Park?**

This appropriation will come from surplus and will not increase the amount to be raised by taxes.

Question #3: Shall the Town reappropriate \$151,000 from its' School Capital Improvement Fund to the Local School Fund Balance to be used for the 2024/25 anticipated school budget deficit.

This appropriation will not increase the amount to be raised by taxes and will not affect the Maintenance of Effort for future budgets.

MOTION was made by Councilor C. Greathouse to APPROVE Ballot questions 1, 2,& 3 as read into the record, for the 2025/26 Financial Town Referendum to be held on May 20, 2025; seconded by Councilor W. Steere

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Calise, Greathouse, Steere, Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

VII. Adjourn

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to ADJOURN at 7:55 p.m.; seconded by Councilor S. Calise

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Calise, Greathouse, Steere, Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED