MINUTES OF SMITHFIELD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
Date: Tuesday, October 6, 2026
Place: Smithfield Town Hall
Time: 7:00 p.m.

DRAFT

Present:

Town Council President John J. Tassoni, Jr.
Town Council Member Angelica Bovis
Town Council Member Michael P. Iannotti
Town Council Member Rachel S. Toppi
Town Council Member Thomas Winfield
Town Manager Robert Seltzer
Town Solicitor Anthony Gallone
Clerk Lyn M. Antonuccio

I. President Tassoni calls the Tuesday, October 6, 2026 Smithfield Town Council Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

At 6:00 p.m. a motion is made by Vice President Bovis, seconded by Member Iannotti, to convene into executive session to consider, discuss, and act upon matters pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws Section 42-46-5(a)(1) Personnel; to interview Eric Sparfven for possible appointment to a Town board or commission and to conduct Town Clerk and Town Manager Performance Evaluations, and Section 42-46-5(a)(2); Potential Litigation. ***Mr. Sparfven was not interviewed.***

President Tassoni announces that there were no votes taken in executive session that are required to be reported pursuant to RIGL§ 42-46

II. President Tassoni offers a prayer

III. Salute to the flag

IV. Emergency Evacuation and Health Notification

V. Presentations:

A. Vin Zibelli, Senior Center/Human Services Director - Food Drive Update

A food drive hosted by President Tassoni and Member Winfield took place on the weekend of the rainstorm, and this drive brought the best of the best out. Over 1,200 items were received and over $1,700 was received. The fire/police departments, the DPW, Michael Austin (who donated donuts) were instrumental during this food drive. More than anything this speaks to the people of Smithfield, and to the leadership not only at this table, but throughout the community.

While he cannot speak to how data was collected prior to him starting in April 2025, but two hundred thirty-five (235) people accessed the food pantry in September; the highest number by far. With an extra week in the month, it was an exciting, yet a sad state. He presented before the council in the beginning of September with this data, and it may seem repetitive. With the holidays, winter, HR1, they have seen an uptick in people who are not sure about what Medicaid and SNAP benefits will be providing them. There is confusion with the residents.

The food drive is an example of what the Town can do. More than ever, it is needed. He thanks President Tassoni, Member Winfield, and those that have done this in the past. Over the next several months there is an incredible opportunity, as everyone does what they need to do for the election to reach people. Do not forget to let people know that they can make a difference by reaching out to the Smithfield Human Services Food Pantry. If the trends continue as they have since January 1st, they will not have enough food to get through the winter.

Town Manager Seltzer asks Director Zibelli to talk about the scout's drive. Director Zibelli explains the following: Every year there Scouting for Food takes place on November 7th. Flyers are distributed before November 1st Smithfield Boy Scouts go around to collect anything that is left out. It is an amazing effort which he witnessed for the first time last year. This event provided canned goods and nonperishable items for the six (6) food pantries in Town. This occurred during the SNAP interruption. Residents need to leave out the hanger that the scouts leave on their door and the food outside. Director Zibelli lets all in attendance know what should not be left out.

President Tassoni asks Director Zibelli to discuss with the members his relationship with surrounding markets. Director Zibelli explains the following: One of the goals starting in April 2025 was to build partnerships. The first partnership was with other food pantries, the second is with other people in Town that want to help, but do not know how. In networking all of the resources/connections they have, not for personal or Town benefit, but for the benefit of the residents. Jaswell Farm, Seven Cedars, St. Vincent de Paul, and Mike Austin's donut shop have contributed. The FOP donated a check which gave Human Services the opportunity to target items they need. These partnerships are intricate.

VI. Minutes:

A. Move that the minutes of the September 1, 2026 open session meeting be approved as recorded.

Town Clerk Antonuccio explains the following: On Page 3, the motion for these minutes should not have included the language "seal the minutes". The correction was made and a copy sent to all of the members.

Motion is made by Member Iannotti, seconded by Vice President Bovis, that the minutes of the September 1, 2026 open session meeting be approved as amended. **Motion is approved by a unanimous 5/0 vote.**

B. Move that the minutes of the September 15, 2026 Executive Session held pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws Section 42-46-5(a)(1) Personnel; to interview David Viera for possible appointment or reappointment to a Town board or commission be approved as recorded and sealed.

Motion is made by Vice President Bovis, seconded by Member Iannotti, that the minutes of the September 15, 2026 Executive Session minutes be approved as recorded and sealed. **Motion is approved by a unanimous 5/0 vote.**

C. Move that the minutes of the September 15, 2026 open session meeting be approved as recorded.

Motion is made by Vice President Bovis, seconded by Member Iannotti, that the minutes of the September 15, 2026 open session meeting be approved as recorded. **Motion is approved by a unanimous 5/0 vote.**

VII. Consider, discuss and act upon the following possible appointments and reappointments: None

VIII. Public Hearings:

A. Conduct a public hearing to consider, discuss, and act upon an amendment to Chapters 45 and 46 of the Code of Ordinances entitled "Historic District Commission" and "Historic Preservation Commission," respectively.

President Tassoni declares the public hearing open.

HPC Member Caisse states the following: He has a recommendation to help the Town establish a Certified Local Government (CLG). His presentation (see attached documentation) will go through the key steps to make that happen. The HPC will be asking to repeal and replace Chapter 45 of the Historic District Ordinance. As a part of that, to include Smithfield's first local historic district.

The HPC is asking the council to consider and approve the ordinance language that has been drafted through the Town Planner, Solicitor, and the approval of the RI Historic Preservation Heritage Committee. Within that ordinance to also approve the Town's first local historic district.

Vice President Bovis felt this presentation was amazing, and she questions if the properties that are being proposed would get easements or restrictions with regard to sales. HPC Member Caisse explains the following: Theses properties are Town-owned; therefore, there are no restrictions on what you do with them. The buildings are in a historic zone, and if you were to sell the Allenville Mill Storehouse, whoever it was sold to would still have to follow the guidelines. You could redraw the historic district map and remove the building from it; it is under the council's purview to adjust the map as they see fit. Vice President Bovis would like this to remain a historic district in perpetuity. HPC Member Caisse states this is like any ordinance it can be modified/amended as the council sees fit. HPC Member Caisse further states that right now he is looking to get the CLG to help the Town obtain access to funding.

Vice President Bovis questions the plan for the grant application process and if he will be using the grant writer. HPC Member Caisse reviews the process with the members.

Member Toppi references § 45-5 Historic District Commission (D) in regard to the Planning Department who shall serve as the administrator officer for the commission. Member Toppi questions how much additional work can be expected to be taken on by this department with the adoption of this ordinance now and in the future.

HPC Member Caisse states the following: Planner Guertin is basically a filter. In this case, it would be the Town, and getting approval from the Town to do exterior work on the buildings. Planner Guertin would be familiar with the Property Owner's Guide because he helped to draft it. Planner Guertin would know if it meets the appropriateness. He will fill out a form to go on the agenda for the HPC.

Planner Guertin explains the following: Immediately there will be no additional work.

There will be no additional work in the near future so long as these are the only two (2) properties. The exterior work on the East Smithfield Neighborhood Center is completed; therefore, there should not be anything new that his department would need to review. There will be reviews needed when the Allenville Mill Storehouse comes up. In the future additional properties could be added, both public and private residences, and that is when potential work could be added to the department.

Member Toppi wants confirmation that this ordinance proposes the Planning Department is the administrative officer as it relates to just the Historic District Commission and not the HPC. HPC Member Caisse confirms this.

HPC Member Caisse reiterates that this is to obtain grant funding during tough financial times. HPC Member Caisse states that the first grant he would apply for is the Historic Structures and Conditions Report, which would let them know what is needed. It is a costly endeavor, and if the Town can get this through a grant, that would be $25,000 the Town can apply to something else.

Member Iannotti questions if there are plans to add any other Town properties. HPC Member Caisse states the following: This was discussed. What was learned during the process is once you have one (1) historic district, that is all you need. You can apply any preservation effort outside of the district.

Member Iannotti is questioning adding to this district. HPC Member Caisse states not at this time; he thinks that they are trying to satisfy these requirements. Member Iannotti congratulates HPC Member Caisse on a job well done.

Member Toppi expresses her concerns about grants and questions the Town approving each grant because there are sometimes strings attached. HPC Member Caisse states that if we get CLG status, he will send an email to Town Manager Seltzer asking if he would be fine with him contacting the grant writer, but he is unsure of the process of having to go before the council. Town Manager Seltzer states that many times it has to do with the requirement of the grant process, and they will be approved by the council as needed.

Member Toppi wants to make sure that the council sees it before we are getting into something where the Town's hands are tied. Solicitor Gallone explains that Town Manager Seltzer will have to forward it to the council.

Kenneth Sousa, 2 Williams Road, states the following: He thinks this is a great proposal. He questions sponsorships and tax deductible contributions which could be used for building facilities or enhancements. He suggests sponsors from corporations who could have naming rights, rooms, or buildings. He also suggests a tax deductible situation because someone who may have lived here would donate part of their estate. He questions if either of those are precluded or possible.

Solicitor Gallone thinks it is possible and the HPC would have to take that up; however, there are no legal issues.

Hearing no further comments, President Tassoni closes the public hearing.

Motion is made by Vice President Bovis, seconded by Member Iannotti, that the Smithfield Town Council adopt the Findings as outlined in the September 24, 2026 Planning Staff Memorandum and to adopt the proposed amendments the Smithfield Code of Ordinances by repealing and replacing Chapter 45, Historic District Commission with Chapter 45 Historic District Zoning, amending Chapter 46 Historic Preservation Commission and adopt the "Esmond Historic District Map" dated August 8, 2026 as recommended by the Smithfield Planning Board. **Motion is approved by a unanimous 5/0 vote.**

B. Conduct a public hearing to consider, discuss, and act upon an amendment to the Code of Ordinances to add Chapter 351 entitled "Outdoor Clothes and Book Donation Bins" sponsored by Council President John J. Tassoni, Jr.

President Tassoni declares the public hearing open.

Thomas Hodgkins, 200 Farnum Pike, states the following: He supports this ordinance; however, he thinks the Town's target should be focused on the owner of the property because they are the captive person the Town will have to hold accountable. He references Page 2 of the ordinance, "Prohibited Placement of Materials" which states "no person shall deposit". He feels that the violation should be directed at the owner and the operator of the bin. He feels that the Town should clearly state "it shall be a violation of this ordinance for the owner/operator to permit any materials to exist or be placed outside of the bin, on the ground, near the bin at any time". The Town's enforcement officials can write it up when they see a violation.

He asks the council to add a provision under "Enforcement" that states "if an owner/operator is issued three (3) violations within a calendar year, the clerk shall revoke the permit". The matter would not come back before the council; this would happen administratively. They could reapply. The Town would really send out a message with this.

President Tassoni states the following: The issue is the people that own the bins are not emptying them often enough. The people that own the property, most of them are getting paid to have the bins on their property. He understands Mr. Hodgkin's "three strikes"; however, that is too long. He feels that the council could look at a fine for "x" amount of dollars for the first time, and a fine for "x" amount of dollars for the second time. The third time the bans will be removed. He is fine with making some changes. Right now, there is not a great deal of policing.

Mr. Hodgkins thinks this will fall on deaf ears. President Tassoni states there are bins on Town property, and some have been removed from Town property because of that issue.

Member Iannotti questions "no person shall deposit" being all inclusive. Mr. Hodgkins states the following: He thinks that "No person" would be all inclusive. However, if the police issue a ticket and the owner comes to municipal court, they will see that they did not place/leave it there. The police officer would appear at municipal court only to tell the judge that he did not see the person place/leave it there. In that instance it may not be a violation. He thinks that the Town should say it very clearly, and the "no person" language could also remain. He thinks that in addition to "deposit, place, leave, discard or otherwise cause" the language "or otherwise allow or permit" any of that stuff to be there for any period of time.

This should not be a burden to the Town; this should be very easy for the enforcement officials.

Jack Blatchford, CFO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of RI, states the following: He is in favor of this ordinance amendment. Their bins are their brand. If people are dropping items next to it, they think Big Brothers Big Sisters' the one on one mentoring is not substantial because they cannot maintain their bins. They sign Memorandum's of Agreement with any location they place a bin. If they are called for a pick up, they arrive within twenty-four (24) hours. They are located in RI and service all thirty-nine (39) cities/towns. There are two (2) bins located in Smithfield (The Commons and Dr. Daycare), and they attend the events held by the DPW.

He is in favor of this because it keeps the outsiders that come once a month, out of the picture. He asks that the illegal acts of individuals do not hurt the children of RI. The money made from the textiles is for the children

Hearing no further comments, President Tassoni closes the public hearing.

Member Toppi questions the definition of commercial/industrial and if churches are included or exempt. President Tassoni states that churches are included. Member Toppi questions definition of commercial including religious organizations because there is no mention of churches.

Solicitor Gallone explains that it applies to whomever is housing these bins; however, the council can have an exemption for religious organizations.

President Tassoni states the following: If the council does one (1), there will be an issue. He thinks it should be all inclusive. Businesses are getting paid to have these bins on their property so they must take care of them.

Member Toppi questions if it is legal to include churches in this. Solicitor Gallone states that it would be legal to include anyone that has a donation bin; therefore, churches would be included.

Member Toppi questions the properties that were referenced. President Tassoni states he does not want to single anyone out. Town Manager Seltzer states that there are three (3) properties that seem to be the abusers. Member Toppi asks Town Manager Seltzer email those names to the members.

Member Iannotti questions if any of them are churches. President Tassoni states that none of them are churches.

President Tassoni states that the Solicitor will research this and suggest placing this on the next council meeting agenda.

Motion is made by Vice President Bovis, seconded by Member Winfield, that the Smithfield Town Council continue the public hearing to October 20, 2026. **Motion is approved by a unanimous 5/0 vote.**

C. Schedule a public hearing on October 20, 2026 to consider, discuss, and act upon an amendment to Chapter 60 of the Code of Ordinances entitled "Municipal Court".

Town Clerk Antonuccio explains the following: This amendment is being requested because the Building Official serves on a board outside of the Town Hall. He will be serving on this board in a larger capacity, and not able to attend the regularly scheduled session.

The regularly scheduled session is currently held on the third Thursday of each month and would change to the fourth Thursday of each month. Member Toppi questions if this was fine with the judge. Town Clerk Antonuccio confirms that the Prosecutor has been in contact with her and the municipal court judge.

Motion is made by Vice President Bovis, seconded by Member Winfield that the Smithfield Town Council hereby schedules a public hearing on October 20, 2026 to consider, discuss, and act upon an amendment to Chapter 60 of the Code of Ordinances entitled "Municipal Court".
Motion is approved by a unanimous 5/0 vote.

IX. Licenses:

A. Consider, discuss, and act upon approving two (2) One-Day Beer/Wine Licenses for the Smithfield Senior Center as follows:

- **"Halloween Party" to be held on Thursday, October 29, 2026 from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.**
- **"Christmas Party" to be held on Thursday, December 10, 2026 from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

The parties will take place at the Smithfield Senior Center, 1 William J. Hawkins, Jr. Trail from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., as applied, subject to all State regulations and local ordinances.

Motion is made by Vice President Bovis, seconded by Member Winfield, that the Smithfield Town Council approve two (2) One-Day Beer/Wine Licenses as follows:

- "Halloween Party" to be held on Thursday, October 29, 2026 from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- "Christmas Party" to be held on Thursday, December 10, 2026 from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

The parties will take place at the Smithfield Senior Center, 1 William J. Hawkins, Jr. Trail from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., as applied, subject to all State regulations and local ordinances.

Motion is approved by a unanimous 5/0 vote.

X. Old Business:

A. Consider, discuss, and act upon adopting a resolution for the institution of a policy for the negotiation and ratification of Collective Bargaining Agreements.

Motion is made by Member Winfield, seconded by Vice President Bovis, to move this item to the bottom of the agenda. Motion is approved by a 3/2 vote. ***Member Iannotti and Member Toppi vote nay.***

XI. New Business:

A. Consider, discuss, and act upon adopting a resolution to establish quarterly joint meetings between the School Committee and Town Council.

Town Manager Seltzer states that this was sent by the School Committee to present to the members. President Tassoni thinks that the council already voted on something similar. Member Iannotti thinks that the members agreed to that with the School Committee, and it appears that the School Committee had a meeting and passed a resolution having specific dates.

Member Winfield states that he does not have an issue doing this; however, he would leave the specific dates up to the next council. Member Toppi states that the resolution does say, "unless otherwise mutually agreed upon by the two (2) bodies".

Town Clerk Antonuccio states that this on the November ballot and questions if a resolution is required. Town Clerk Antonuccio feels it could be confusing for the voters. Member Toppi states that no one will probably know that this happened.

Vice President Bovis states the following: The CRC specifically said four (4) annual meetings rather than using the language quarterly. This is because they wanted to give the council and School Committee flexibility as to when the meetings would occur. She has no issues meeting with the School Committee four (4) times annually. She feels that in order to avoid confusion the language in the resolution should match the language on the ballot. She would vote to approve this with the "tailoring" of section 1 with the specific dates to match the ballot question.

Member Iannotti states the following: If we do not have specific dates, these meetings do not seem to occur. He prefers to keep them in, and he thinks that the last couple of years have demonstrated that these meetings are essential for the efficient operation of government.

Member Toppi questions if the council can amend a resolution that has already been passed by another body. Member Toppi states that this gives the council an option to change the dates, and it tells the voters that the council is committed to this. Member Toppi further states this makes it easy for the council, and the dates make sense. President Tassoni states that the dates are mutually agreed upon anyway.

Motion is made by Member Toppi, seconded by Member Iannotti, that the Smithfield Town Council hereby adopts a resolution to establish quarterly joint meetings between the School Committee and Town Council. **Motion is approved by a unanimous 5/0 vote.**

B. Consider, discuss, and act upon authorizing a sole source purchase of an Actiflo Ferric Metering Pump #3 from the Maher Corporation in the amount of eighteen thousand, three hundred fifty-two dollars and zero cents ($18,352.00) to be funded from the Sewer Authority's Repair and Replacement budget.

Member Iannotti questions what the Renewal & Replacement fund is. Engineer Jelley explains the following: In the twenty (20) year plan for the operating of WWTP there are certain items that are an obligations in that contract. One of them is the Renewal & Replacement fund which is $165,000. In the contract, it specifies anything under $1,000 Veolia Water facilitates and takes care of.

Anything over that amount comes out of this fund. Member Iannotti questions how that fund is maintained. Engineer Jelley states the funds come out of the Enterprise Fund; anything sewer related comes out of that fund.

Motion is made by Vice President Bovis, seconded by Member Iannotti, that the Smithfield Town Council moves to approve the purchase of a replacement Actiflo Ferric Metering Pump #3 from the Maher Corporation in the amount of $18,352.00, to be funded through Repair & Replacement budget. **Motion is approved by a unanimous 5/0 vote.**

C. Sitting as the Smithfield Water Supply Board, consider, discuss, and act upon authorizing the Town Manager to enter into contract with Beta Group of Lincoln, RI in the amount of one hundred, forty-one thousand dollars and zero cents ($141,000.00) for the 2027 Water Supply Management Plan Five-Year Update to be paid for from the Water Supply Board's Operating Budget.

DPW Director Gene Allen explains the following: He has been before the council with several plans that were required by state law to be updated every five (5) years. The Risk and Resiliency Assessment was certified on June 30, 2026, and he is currently working on an Emergency Response Plan which will be completed by December 2026. This is the overall master plan which looks at operations of the Water Supply Board, and it is required by law that we submit this every five (5) years.

Member Iannotti questions if this funding was under Professional Services in the operating budget. DPW Director Allen explains that he budgeted $230,000 for this and it is part of Professional Services.

Motion is made by Vice President Bovis, seconded by Member Winfield, that the Smithfield Town Council, sitting as the Smithfield Water Supply Board, authorizes the Town Manager to contract with Beta Group, of 701 George Washington Highway, Lincoln, RI 02865, for the 2027 Water Supply System Management Plan five-year update, for the not to exceed sum of $141,000. **Motion is approved by a unanimous 5/0 vote.**

D. Sitting as the Smithfield Water Supply Board, consider, discuss, and act upon authorizing the Town Manager to enter into Contract, through the Interlocal Purchasing System Contract #230601, with Berry Dunn, McNeil & Parker, LLC of Portland, ME in the amount of seventeen thousand, four hundred dollars and zero cents ($17,400.00) to conduct a water rate study to be funded from the Water Supply Board's Operating Budget.

DPW Director Allen explains that following: The last time the rates were reviewed was four (4) years ago. We anticipated certain increases and have been able to cover all of our expenses. He wants to ensure they keep on top of all of their expenses and operating costs. He likes to do a rate study every three (3) or four (4) years. This is to authorize the study to take place.

Motion is made by Member Winfield, seconded by Member Toppi, that the Smithfield Town Council, sitting as the Smithfield Water Supply Board, authorizes the Town Manager to contract with Berry, Dunn McNeil & Parker, LLC, of 2211 Congress Street, ME, 04102, through The Interlocal Purchasing System – Contract #230601 to conduct a water rate study in the amount of $17,400. **Motion is approved by a unanimous 5/0 vote.**

E. Consider, discuss, and act upon authorizing payment of Town Aided Funds in the amount of one thousand dollars and zero cents ($1,000.00) to the Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island.

Thomas Hodgkins, 200 Farnum Pike, states the following: In his view we should not be collecting tax dollars and sending them out of Town as donations. These funds have no strings attached. They are not grants because there are no requirements, there is no reporting requirements, and the organizations tells the Town after the fact how they spent the money.

This is not the kind of spending the Town can afford at this point. The Town has an over budget situation from last year and the extent of it is unclear. There are line items this year that are overbudget. With respect to the spending that took place in the last fiscal year, the overspending never came before the council. He questions the department heads being aware that they were overspending when it occurred, if the overspending was approved by the administration. If the overspending was approved, then why wasn't the council notified/asked to approve that. There is potentially $1M coming from the reserve fund that was not anticipated.

The money coming from the reserve fund has been exhausted over the past several years; the Town has not contributed to the reserve fund in a positive way. That positive way is on an annual basis. If we continue to spend it down, we are probably seven (7) years away from having no reserves.

These Town-aided organizations are doing good work; however, is it something that the taxpayers should be paying in this compulsory way. When the recommendation came to the BFRB over the past two (2) or three (3) years, his recommendation was to have the organizations apply and there would be an open application period. This did not happen.

These "handpicked" organizations that the Town has been giving money to for a number of years has been asked to submit an application for this year, and the council has that. The Town still does not have an open application process.

With respect to the budget situation, he thinks the council needs to handle this situation from last year as soon as possible. I also think this should be an agenda item for the next meeting, so that council can get answers on how the overspending occurred.

He suggests that the council should freeze all nonessential funding as of now. This would be until you can figure out what happened last year, the amount of the overspending, where it is going to come from, and how it will be addressed this year. This should include the Town-aided programs.

He reviewed the monthly financial reports from last year, and to him, it looked like the appropriation for several of these organizations was not disbursed until the second half of the fiscal year. There does not seem be any rush to vote on these appropriations. If the council goes forward with these, it would be more appropriate to get answers to the questions: What happened last year, what are we going to do about it, how are we going to pay for it, and how are we doing this year. He also suggests getting a "six (6) month run" then revisiting this issue in January, February or when the budget situation is figured out.

Frank Ricci, 14 Karen Ann Drive, states the following: He agrees with Mr. Hodgkins. Tonight we heard from the HS Director that we do not have enough food.

A big issue is that they do not have enough refrigeration to store what they have. He volunteered at a food pantry, and they were able to take in tractor trailers of food. Markets must move the food by a certain date.

We are giving this money away; we should be taking care of the Town first. The pantry had plenty of dry goods, but nothing that could be refrigerated or fresh. He thinks the money should be put towards things that are needed. There will not be food for the holidays, and we are giving away this money.

Meals on Wheels has a budget of $3.57M; therefore, they will not miss $1,000. Let's feed Smithfield first.

President Tassoni states that they do feed Smithfield first and go to the community center three (3) days a week. Mr. Ricci states that Meals on Wheels is justified and questions the rest of them.

Vice President Bovis states the following: She thinks that the public has serious misconceptions about what these Town-aided funds are. She encourages Mr. Ricci and all of the public to read the applications that were submitted. The council has a nonprofit organization that thoroughly filled out the application that was given to them by the Town. They cite statistics for what they are doing for the Town specifically.

Personally, she supports those organizations that are able to quantify the help given to Town residents specifically. Further on the agenda, she plans to make a motion to continue one (1) of the items because to her, the application does not cite the Town specifically.

This application cites 6,164 meals that were given to Town residents specifically; this is approximately $6.00 per meal with the Town's $1,000. A meal does not cost $6.00 including the staff that is delivering it. If we were to feed 6,164 people, it would cost much more than $1,000. Outsourcing is usually not more cost-efficient; however, in this scenario it is. She reiterates these funds are Smithfield specific. She assures everyone that this is putting Smithfield first and helping our residents. As a council person she has an obligation to help the Town's residents first.

She detests that the budget cannot handle this, because it can. This was budgeted for an unanimously voted on by this council to pass these items. She clarifies that the budget does not draw from the fund balance.

Mr. Ricci agrees with Vice President Bovis that the charities that supplied the breakdowns for everything, should be funded 100%. If the breakdowns have not been supplied, they should not pass.

Member Toppi states the following: No one is denying the good work that these nonprofits do. She is concerned about the Town's financial situation. She has been speaking with the BFRB Chair, and he has mentioned that so far this year, approximately fifteen (15) departments in FY27 and approximately 125 department accounts in FY26 exceeded appropriations.

Although last year's budget included $63,800 for Town aided programs, the BFRB Chair expects FY26 to close around approximately $1.1M over budget. We do not have official numbers yet because we do not have the financial audit. This will not be completed until December. That reality requires careful review of nonessential appropriation.

She agrees with Mr. Hodgkins. At the very least, the most responsible thing to do is to defer and freeze funds until the Town receives the yearend audit to see what position we are in.

She does not think that we should be given taxpayer money to nonessential Town services. She asks that the council reconsider the motion and put a freeze on this until after the audit is received.

Member Iannotti questions Meals on Wheels being a federal program. President Tassoni states that this is a state program. Member Iannotti questions why a municipality would be giving money to a state program.

Member Toppi states the following: Once again these organizations are not present for anyone to ask questions. She would like to ask them if they need this money today and can they wait a few months. Meals on Wheels has $8.1M in gross receipts, Tri-County had $39M in gross receipts for 2023. She does not think they need the money today; however, she wants to ask them and give them the opportunity.

Town Manager Seltzer, as a point of order, states the following: No fund balance monies were used last year to support the budget. He is unsure of where this information is coming from, but it is not true. No fund balance is being used this year to support this year's budget. People are making a great deal of speculation about the budget. However, no one is asking the person who runs the budget, what is going on. He is unsure of where this information is coming from, but the Town is not in a massive financial problem now. If the Town is, it is not showing up in the books or the audit.

Motion is made by Vice President Bovis, seconded by Member Winfield, that the Smithfield Town Council hereby authorizing payment of Town Aided Funds in the amount of one thousand dollars and zero cents ($1,000.00) to the Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island. **Motion is approved by a 3/2 vote.** ***Member Toppi and Member Iannotti vote nay.***

F. Consider, discuss, and act upon authorizing payment of Town Aided Funds in the amount of twenty thousand dollars and zero cents ($20,000.00) to the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council.

Motion is made by Vice President Bovis, seconded by Member Winfield, to approve this item with an amendment, in the amount of eight thousand five hundred and zero cents ($8,500) to the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council. **Motion is approved by a 3/2 vote.** ***Member Iannotti and Member Toppi vote nay.***

(the original asked for dollars was $20,000 and the budgeted line item was $8,500.00. The application did quantify $20,000 worth of work; however, the Town budgeted $8,500.00)

G. Consider, discuss, and act upon authorizing payment of Town Aided Funds in the amount of two thousand dollars and zero cents ($2,000.00) to the Wildlife Clinic of Rhode Island.

Vice President Bovis states that, in her opinion, the Wildlife Clinic of RI did not quantify a Smithfield benefit thoroughly enough. She asks that they respond to that and take this matter up at a later date.

Motion is made by Vice President Bovis, seconded by Member Winfield, to continue this item to a later date. **Motion is approved by a unanimous 5/0 vote.**

H. Consider, discuss, and act upon authorizing payment of Town Aided Funds in the amount of twenty thousand dollars and zero cents ($20,000.00) to Tri-County Community Action Agency.

President Tassoni states that he will be recusing himself from this item.

Motion is made by Member Winfield that the Smithfield Town Council hereby authorizes payment of Town Aided Funds in the amount of twenty thousand dollars and zero cents ($20,000.00) to Tri-County Community Action Agency. ***This motion is not seconded and no other motions were presented.***

I. Consider, discuss, and act upon authorizing the Conservation Commission to work with the Town Planner on the design of trails and tree planting projects at 60 Austin Avenue.

Chair of the Conservation Commission, Elizabeth Leach, explains the following: This preliminary proposal includes the reforestation of a small area of Overbrook Academy. Along the edge of the existing forest were it abuts the existing open fields in order to reforest three hundred (300) trees in honor of Smithfield's Tercentennial.

Town Manager Seltzer advised the Conservation Commission communicate with the Planning Department specifically for grant funding to the extent that there would be some cost, and their budget would not be able to absorb that.

Vice President Bovis likes that these are native trees because sometimes landscaping is not native trees. Chair Leach states that they need to examine what trees exist in the forest and then bring them forward a bit; the area would be roughly one half acre.

Member Iannotti states the following: He is glad that this is being discussed because connecting the trails is a great idea since they are adjacent to the cascade brook trails. With respect to the trees, he wants to ensure that the trees are not put in an area where there may be a possible sale of Town land. While he is unsure where they are going, there is a proposal to put an indoor soccer facility on this property. There is also a proposal from the YMCA. He wants to ensure that the Conservation Commission is aware of this.

Town Manager Seltzer states that the Town Planner has been assigned to work directly with the commission, and he thinks this is a great idea.

Member Toppi also agrees that this is a great idea, and she questions what the Town appropriated to the commission. Chair Leach explains that the commission has $23,000 in their account of which the bulk is for the OSCAR Program, which "eats up" the bulk of their budget. Chair Leach further explains that the remainder is for Tree Day, keeping up the Bouchard Center, and trail work.

Member Toppi questions if the commission has considered fundraising. Chair Leach states that there are grant opportunities and the RIDEM forestry division has community/urban grant programs for some of these ideas.

Member Toppi questions the final plan being brought before the council. Solicitor Gallone confirms this.

Motion is made by Vice President Bovis, seconded by Member Winfield, to approve the Smithfield Conservation Commission to work with the Town Planner to complete the details/design of the Overbrook Campus trails and tree planting projects. **Motion is approved by a unanimous 5/0 vote.**

J. Consider, discuss, and act upon adopting a resolution establishing a Technology, Innovation and Efficiency Commission sponsored by Council Vice President Angelica L. Bovis.

Vice President Bovis explains the following: This commission would act like all the other existing commissions. Town residents with expertise can volunteer. This commission would be an advisory board to the council.

This stemmed from speaking with a resident, Mr. Costantino, who is present this evening. The purpose of this is to not only use technology in a positive way and see how the Town can benefit in a positive way. The commission would also notify the council of potential adverse technology. It is a multi-faceted commission. She worked collaboratively with Mr. Costantino on this resolution.

Member Toppi states that she has no issue with this; however, she suggests that the resolution more clearly defines reporting to the council which she thinks is lacking for boards/commissions. Member Toppi references Section 6(3).

Vice President Bovis explains the following: The reason she kept this vague when she drafted it, is because she does not want to mandate conversations if the commission could report to the council every week or once a year if there is a great deal going on.

Member Toppi suggests adding “to report the groups’ s findings to the Town Council at least once a year”. Vice President Bovis is fine with that amendment.

Thomas Hodgkins, 200 Farnum Pike, questions if this commission would handle the use of surveillance cameras, the storage of that data, and how it is currently being handled. Vice President Bovis does not think that they have a separate contract with the police.

Mr. Hodgkins thinks that the Town should consider an ordinance about the use and management of those cameras because this is something that never came before the council and addressed.

Member Iannotti states that the Governor has appointed or has asked for a sixty (60) day moratorium while coming up with recommendations for the entire state on this issue. Member Iannotti thinks we should be taking a look at what will be happening statewide with the use of that data.

Mr. Hodgkins questions support from Town staff because this commission would need support and information flowing from the staff. Mr. Hodgkins questions if the council should be directing the commission on certain projects, so it is clear that the council is making a directive. Mr. Hodgkins also questions if it is more effective if the commission takes up its own projects.

Vice President Bovis states the following: The IT Director or his designee, would be a part of this board; therefore, there would be Town staff sitting on this commission. She envisioned this committee as them identifying issues then bringing them to the Town for consideration.

Member Iannotti thanks Vice President Bovis for bringing this forward and working on this.

Motion is made by Vice President Bovis , seconded by Member Winfield, that the Smithfield Town Council hereby adopts a resolution establishing a Technology, Innovation and Efficiency Commission with the amendment. **Motion is approved by a unanimous 5/0 vote.**

Old Business:

A. Consider, discuss, and act upon adopting a resolution for the institution of a policy for the negotiation and ratification of Collective Bargaining Agreements.

Town Manager Seltzer states that Solicitor Gallone made the amendment to Section C as requested at the last council meeting.

Member Iannotti states that the language added was that "Town Manager shall at his discretion post the actual contract or a summary of the contents thereof prepared by the Town's labor attorney".

Motion is made by Member Toppi, seconded by Member Iannotti, to approve the Resolution for the Institution of a Policy for the Negotiation and Ratification of Collective Bargaining Agreements as amended to the language agreed upon at the September 15, 2026 Town Council Meeting. **Motion fails by a 2/3 vote.** ***President Tassoni, Vice President Bovis, and Member Winfield vote nay.***

XII. Public Comment:

Thomas Hodgkins, 200 Farnum Pike, states the following: He expresses his concerns about the budget process and the spending not being dealt with until some time later. This has been an ongoing issue. He thinks this is why we are not getting accountability. The audit has not been produced until days before a council meeting in January.

This past year when he asked for a copy of the audit so he could participate at the workshop and council meeting, the administration refused his request to review the audit. That is not transparency. The public is invited to ask questions about the budget, spending, and finances. He has asked this question for years and the response he received has been refusal, obstruction, and denial.

When he attended the workshop and attempted to ask the auditor questions, the administration directed the auditor to not answer his questions because the prior Town Manager had entered into a confidentiality agreement with the auditor to prevent the public from asking questions.

The confidentiality agreement was never approved by the council, and it is still in place. That was used as a shield to prevent the public from asking questions about the budget and audited financials. If it is said that anything you want to know about the budget, just ask, is completely wrong. It misrepresents the past practices of the Town and the administration in preventing the public from knowing what is going on with the budget and the audit.

Robert Nikolopolus, 26 Deerfield Drive, states the following: He wants to speak about procedural transparency, accessibility for an aging community, and closing long standing agenda items.

The senior tax freeze was on the September 1, 2026 council agenda. He wants to understand if any public notice, other than the agenda, was provided. Town Manager Seltzer states the following: He is aware that the Tax Assessor reached out to meet with Mr. Nikolopolus. The agenda item was to allow our state legislators to add to our governing legislation for the Town to have the ability to do tax credits in addition to a tax freeze. Town Manager Seltzer assures Mr. Nikolopolus this had nothing to do with changing the ordinance. It was something that the Tax Assessor was going to explain to the council whether or not they wanted to do this. The council decided not to hear it that night.

Member Iannotti states that the council did not decide anything, this was "jumped over" on the agenda. Mr. Nikolopolus states that it is permissible to skip or reorder agenda items; however, permissible to skip or reorder of agenda items that leaves residents feeling ignored and overly frustrated. He sees what is happening with reordering agenda items without a formal motion, and it becoming a trend. The council should be strictly adhering to Robert's Rules for tabling or reordering items out of respect for citizens that give up their evening to attend a meeting. The public deserves clarity on whether preliminary terms/conditions exist in the event this resolution moved forward to the General Assembly. He questions if the Town had preliminary terms/conditions that would have followed upon the passage of the resolution. Town Manager Seltzer reiterates that the purpose for the Tax Assessor was to explain the options. Town Manager Seltzer explains that there is nothing in place and the BFRB has been assigned to work on this.

Mr. Nikolopolus continues to explain the following: With respect to accessibility and closed captioning for official Town meetings. According to the last census, nearly a quarter of the Town's population consists of seniors or those with a disability. This demographic is growing and topics affecting to them must be handled with sensitivity and clear administrative channels. He would like to understand how long ago this request was made to have this in the chambers. President Tassoni explains that he was asked by a constituent who is in the back approximately a month ago, and he asked Town Manager Seltzer try to get it "up and running". Mr. Nikolopolus still thinks there is a lack of having in chambers real time transcript of what is happening. President Tassoni states that we are continuing to work on this to make it better. Mr. Nikolopolus questions the cost of CART services. Town Manager Seltzer states that over the last two (2) years there has been no requests, and Mr. Nikolopolus' proposal has been forward to the IT Director. Mr. Nikolopolus states that his research showed a cost of $500-$900 for the CART services. He thanks the Town Manager for his email response because he was the only one that responded. He thinks that the Town must take action and immediately get something in place because it affects a major portion of our residents.

Lastly Mr. Nikolopolus states the following: He has reviewed numerous sets of council minutes, and he does not like how often agenda items are left open. These are liabilities for the Town, and personally, he is frustrated. Specifically, those that are of a polarizing nature. He gives an example of the additional Class A Liquor License that does not have a process in order to be issued and an ethics ordinance.

XIII. Adjournment:

Motion is made by Vice President Bovis, seconded by Member Winfield, to adjourn the meeting. **Motion is approved by a unanimous 5/0 vote.**

Meeting adjourns at 8:43 p.m.

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Town Clerk