There was a special meeting of the above referenced subcommittee held on Monday, February 19, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. in Conference Room #5, Bloomfield Town Hall, 800 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield, CT.

Committee members present were: Councilors Rickford Kirton, Chair, Patrick DeLorenzo (via phone) and Mayor Suzette DeBeatham-Brown

Also present were: Robert E. Smith, Town Manager, Sharron Howe, Assistant to the Town Manager, Councilor Stephanie Calhoun and India Rodgers, Clerk of Council

Absent was: Deputy Mayor David Mann

Guest: Mark Saunders, 13 Pent Road

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

New Business

Council Referred Item: FY 19/20-37: Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Guidelines for Recording/Televising Public Meetings

Councilor Rickford Kirton gave a brief background describing the reason for a policy to be approved and instituted regarding guidelines for recording/televising public meetings.

The following draft policy is being considered:

Recording, Broadcasting or Photographing of Meetings

In accordance with Connecticut General Statutes §1-226, the Bloomfield Town Council shall permit the electronic recording, broadcasting, or photographing (collectively “Recording”) of Town Council and Committee meetings, provided the following guidelines are adhered to:

1. Party who intends to conduct the Recording shall notify the Mayor and Town Manager, or their designee(s), of their intention to record the meeting, at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the meeting they intend to Record, and shall discuss when, where and how their Recording equipment shall be set up. Reasonable exceptions to this notice provision will be made, at the discretion of the Mayor and Town Manager, or their designee(s).

2. Recording equipment shall be set up at least ten (10) minutes prior to the commencement of the meeting being recorded, in locations established by the Mayor and Town Manager, or their designee(s). Equipment shall not be set up, taken down, or moved around during the course of a meeting.
3. Recording shall in no way disturb the proceedings of the Town Council or Committee.

4. Personnel and equipment used for Recording shall be located as inconspicuously as possible, and shall not obstruct the view between members of the audience and the Town Council or Committee.

5. Persons conducting the Recording shall not hold interviews, or provide commentary in a manner that distracts Council or Committee Members or the audience.

6. No Recording is permitted of Executive Sessions.

Councilor DeLorenzo suggested the following changes to this draft policy initially presented to Council on February 10, 2020:

- Section I. - “notify the Mayor, Town Manager, or their designee and the subcommittee Chair”
- Section II. - “commencement of the subcommittee meeting being recorded…” and “in locations established by the Mayor and Town Manager, or their designee and subcommittee Chair”
- Section III. - specify “subcommittee” instead of “committee” in entire document
- Add new Section VII. - “No flash photography is permitted at any time during a Town Council or subcommittee meeting”
- Add new Section VIII. - “The Town Manager, or his designee is responsible for requests to record any other meeting (not Council or subcommittee meetings), which may include statutory requirements to record Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) and Town Plan and Zoning (TPZ) not described herein”

There ensued a discussion regarding the suggested changes to the draft policy of Recording, Broadcasting/Televising Public Meetings.

Councilor Kirton commented on ensuring adequate space for the individual recording. There are some procedural safety issues to be considered.

Mr. Mark Saunders of 13 Pent Road inquired about the need for a formal policy.

Mr. Robert E. Smith, Town Manager explained the need for consistence across the board. He identified the purpose and reasoning for a formal policy.

Councilor Calhoun commented on the lack of notification to subcommittee Chairs. In addition, she expressed concerns with perceptions that can possibly be taken out of context from actual recording that could be used negatively in the future.

Mayor DeBeatham-Brown and Councilor Kirton suggested to have BATV to record all Council and subcommittee meetings.

Mr. Saunders noted that there should be a clear and direct contact for notifications.

Councilor Kirton also stated that there is no reason that they Mayor should not be notified and considered as a “political” concern.
Mr. Smith stated that he does not think that notifying the Mayor as well as committee members is a major concern.

Councilor DeLorenzo suggested adding the link to the Town website for all contact information for Councilors and Town Manager at the bottom of the policy.

It was moved by Councilor DeLorenzo, seconded by Mayor DeBeatham-Brown and voted to recommend to the full Council, the draft Recording, Broadcasting/Televising and Photographing policy with suggested changes and review by the Town Attorney, redistributed to Council for final approval.

Adjournment

At 7:00 p.m., it was moved by Mayor DeBeatham-Brown, seconded by Councilor DeLorenzo and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.