

**Norwell Board of Selectmen  
3/4/20  
Open Session**

TOWN OF NORWELL  
TOWN CLERK  
2020 APR -9 PM 1:58

RECEIVED

**Present:** Ellen Allen, Gregg McBride, Alison Demong, Jason Brown, Joe Rull, Peter Morin

**Approval of minutes**

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to approve the Executive Meeting minutes, Sessions 1 and 2, of the 2/5/20 meeting. unanimously voted*

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to approve the Open Meeting minutes of the 2/5/20 meeting. Unanimously voted*

The board asked Mr. Morin for a briefing about the dog bite incident that occurred on River Street. The Animal Control Officer was called to the site of the incident, and reported that the dog owner/resident stated that one of her dogs escaped from her fenced yard and attacked the elderly next door neighbor. The dog owner and dogs have an incident history in Marshfield. The neighbor was badly injured. ACO Willard stated that the dog has since been removed from her home and the Town forever.

Mr. Morin contacted the Fire Chief and Deputy Police Chief to inform them that any type of incident such as this should be reported to both Mr. Morin and the BOS. Mr. Morin will follow up with Town Counsel.

**Public Hearing for C. B. Perkins and other future meeting agenda items**

The public hearing for C.B. Perkins, has been continued to 3/25/20. Health Agent Ben Margro informed the board on the Articles to address the BOH bylaws referencing tobacco products and consumption, which will be updated at Town Meeting to comply with the state regulations.

The Park View status update will be on next week's agenda.

Ms. Demong, Mr. Morin, Sen. O'Connor, Ms. Allen were among the group who met at Assinippi Corner to discuss ideas for funding a sidewalk or pathway from the Norwell town line on Route 123 through Hanover to Assinippi Corner. Sen. O'Connor would be willing to use his earmark, but noted that this probably wouldn't be funded. Mr. Rull opposed the use of Norwell taxpayer dollars for a study or construction of this project in the town of Hanover, adding that it should be funded by Hanover or with state money.

The board further discussed the proposed zoning bylaw changes and accompanying road and traffic updates for Pond Street/Accord Park, adding that Rep. DeCoste could use his earmark for this project. Mr. Morin, Mr. Graham, Mr. Ferguson and Ms. Allen will reach out to Rep. DeCoste about this idea. The board discussed potential project options if a state earmark is awarded to the Town. Mr. Rull will follow up with his political contacts. All further discussed the pending bill in the state House and traffic grant money. Ms. Demong will contact the Hanover Town Manager to share the meeting discussion points and the group conclusion that a path instead of a sidewalk is not feasible. The board will follow up with contacts for next steps.

Ms. Allen shared photos of the new library project. She will give an update at the 7:30 Open Session.

All continued the discussion about rotating financial auditors every few years. There is one year remaining on the current contract with Melanson Heath. This policy update would make sense, because it has been a very long time (at least 12 years) since the last switch. Per Mr. Morin, there are 4 firms that do this work and he wants to ensure that this change is cost effective. When the Town got quotes for the current contract, the Melanson Heath and Sullivan Powers

bids were very competitive. Both are good firms. This idea is only a discussion topic at this point, but it would be healthy to have the financials reviewed by a fresh set of eyes.

The board discussed the proposed streetlights project with Mr. Morin and reviewed the handout detailing the cost comparison to convert the Town's streetlights to LED fixtures. If National Grid does the conversion the Town will save approximately \$31K per year, vs. using a private contractor and purchasing the equipment, which would cost about \$190-200K, plus maintenance.

Mr. McBride is convinced that National Grid is the right choice; ownership is not the way to go. He suggested that the Town accept National Grid's offer and put the \$65K in annual savings into free cash.

The Fire Department/Chief Reardon will be at the Open Session to review the grant proposal to add more personnel with the board.

### **Open Session, continued in the Osborn Room**

Ms. Allen continued the meeting at 7:34pm.

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to approve the agenda as written. Unanimously voted*

### **Citizen Comments - None**

### **BOS Reports**

Ms. Allen announced that nomination papers for the upcoming Town election are available until 3/25/20 to residents who wish to run for office, and must be returned to the Town Clerk's office with the required number of signatures by 3/27/20.

The Special and Annual Town meeting will take place on 5/4-5/5/2020. The annual Town election will be held two weeks later on Saturday, 5/16/20.

Ms. Allen again asked all residents to please take the Route 53 traffic study survey on the Town website.

She reported on the new library building project, noting that you can now see the frame.

Mr. Rull thanked the primary election workers for their hard work.

### **Town Administrator Report**

Mr. Morin reported on the meetings that were held for updates on the corona virus and the measures that will be implemented. He participated in a conference call to share information with other Town Administrators on the south shore. The Town website has a link to Mass Public Health which provides daily updates. So far, the Town is coping well.

### **Fire Department Firefighter grant proposal**

Chief Reardon was present to request BOS support for a 3 year federal grant application to add a maximum grant number of four new employees. Chief Reardon reviewed details of his current operations, noting the number of calls missed because of lack of staffing (about 185 calls per year). Per Chief Reardon, this is not "new news". The missing staff, which is due to various reasons such as illness, family leave, military service, etc., causes larger amounts of overtime on a more regular basis. This federal grant would underwrite a percentage of the new employee cost on a sliding scale over a three year period, then the Town would own the full cost of the four new employees. The eventual hit would be about \$400K for salary and benefits. Questions were asked and answered about the difficulty of filling current positions and shift operations with fewer than 6 workers on a shift. Chief Reardon noted that with additional personnel and a second ambulance additional revenue could be earned. The board and Chief Reardon discussed the feasibility and return on investment with a business plan review for this proposal at length. The town already has two ambulances, so wouldn't incur the cost of purchasing a new

one. Further discussion ensued about average ambulance response time in the Town, currently 4-6 minutes compared to Mutual Aid ambulance, which would be in excess of 10 minutes. The Town's paramedics have the ability to go to a call without an ambulance and start administering treatment until the ambulance shows up. The department currently employs 15 paramedics plus EMT's,

Chief Reardon asked the board to consider and support applying for this grant. The timeframe to apply for the grant is October 1<sup>st</sup> (federal fiscal year). If awarded, the department has one year to fill the spots. In response to Mr. Brown's question about the state of the second ambulance, Chief Reardon stated that it is in good working order and meets all safety standards, so no replacement will be needed for a year or two. The total Fire Department budget is about \$2.2M. Mr. Morin added enough in the FY21 budget to fund 4 positions for the last quarter of the year. If this grant program is not implemented, then the department could add personnel incrementally over the next few years. Mr. Graham would like to see a detailed business plan and review of ambulance service and response time.

Mr. Morin expressed concern about the forced overtime that occurs frequently in this small department due to the lack of adequate staff. He supports this grant as a remedy to hire and retain good people. The goal should be to bring overtime down to a higher percentage of straight time. Mr. Morin added that he needs to have all of the data to make a fully informed decision, including all benefits plus salaries, in order to look at the best interest of the Town and department in conjunction with what can we afford. He gave the board examples of the situation with low staffing, noting that this is not the best way to provide a good level of service. Mr. Rull added that, regardless of the money earned, the Town needs to ensure that the department is staffed properly. The board would like to review more cost data analyses at a future meeting. The deadline to apply for this grant is in the fall.

#### **8:00pm - Public Hearing – C.V. Perkins; CVAA applicant, 430 Washington Street**

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham; to open the public hearing for a CVAA license for CV Perkins, 430 Washington Street at 8:10pm. Unanimously voted*  
*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, that the board continue the hearing to March 25, 2020, as the applicant is currently out of the country. The notice of public hearing will be read at the date and time of the continuance. Unanimously voted*

#### **Road Race approval**

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to approve Evan's Run on 5/19/20 5K at 9:30am, with all conditions as required by police and fire department. Unanimously voted*

#### **Street lighting Proposal**

Mr. Morin updated the board on the proposal from National Grid to switch over all current Town streetlights to LED lights and hardware. The Town's estimated annual savings would be \$31,441.49 per year, along with a one-time abatement of \$46K. National Grid would maintain the equipment and incur the expense of installation. Mr. Morin is recommending and requesting permission to enter into negotiations with National Grid, flesh out the details and do additional negotiations.

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to authorize the Town Administrator to pursue and negotiate a contract for LED street lighting with National Grid. Unanimously voted*

#### **Public Hearing – Organic Juice Barn, Inc.**

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to open the public hearing for the Organic Juice Barn, Inc. Unanimously voted*

Clerk Joe Rull read the notice of public hearing.

Owner Luis Sierra was present to review details of the business, adding that he is currently the manager.

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to approve the CV license for Organic Juice Barn, Inc., expiring 12/31/20. Unanimously voted*

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to close the public hearing at 8:26pm. Unanimously voted*

**Elevated Access Warrant Article** – discussion has been rescheduled to the BOS meeting on 3/11/20.

#### **External Auditor Selection and rotation policy discussion**

Ms. Allen gave a quick overview of this topic and opened up discussion to the board.

Mr. Brown stated that this has been discussed in the past, and the conversation comes down to a certain level of comfort with the same audit team each year. It would be good to have a fresh set of eyes look at operations and internal compliance and financials review for the Town, i.e., create an "intentional disruption" to audit operations in the most objective way possible.

Melanson Heath has been the auditor for over a decade. Mr. Brown added that the rotation should be a written policy, with no hard feelings or job performance issues. Mr. Graham added that it is a common best practice for many companies and businesses to rotate external auditors every 3 years or so. The Town could create a policy with the flexibility to provide a cost effective solution for the hiring of auditors on a periodic basis. Mr. Rull would at least like to revisit this topic with an annual discussion. The board asked Mr. Morin to look at other towns' policies. All agreed that the Town doesn't want to get locked into a higher price. Mr. Morin will look at what other towns are doing and get copies of their policies. The board can then decide at a future BOS meeting.

Future agenda item; follow up on responses to the Melanson Heath management letter.  
Perhaps look to DLS for assistance?

#### **Reopen and Close the Warrant for May Annual and Special Town Meeting – Board of Health Articles**

Mr. Morin gave the board a short summary of the bylaw Articles being revoked, which will allow the Town to update its tobacco policies to conform with new state regulations

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to reopen the 2020 Special and Annual Town Meeting Warrant. Unanimously voted*

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to add the BOH Articles to address smoking regulations. Unanimously voted*

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to close the 2020 Special and Annual Town Meeting Warrants. Unanimously voted*

Ms. Allen outline the topics for upcoming BOS meetings.

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to adjourn at 8:38pm. unanimously voted*



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Ellen Allen, Chair