

2020 AUG 14 AM 9:45

**Norwell Board of Selectmen
Remote Open Meeting
7/21/20**

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Present: Ellen Allen, Jason Brown, Alison Demong, Bruce Graham, Joe Rull, Peter Morin

Open Session

The meeting was called to order by Chair Ellen Allen at 7:06pm. She announced that all votes will be roll call votes as the meeting participants are using remote access software. The meeting was recorded and the audio file will be available on the Town website. Ms. Allen noted that this meeting will be conducted pursuant to the Executive Order dated March 12, 2020 suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, Gen. L. c. 30A §20 et seq. and 940 CMR 29.01 et seq.

Approval of Agenda

Motion; made by Bruce Graham, seconded by Alison Demong, to approve the agenda for July 21, 2020 as presented. Unanimously voted by roll call vote

BOS Reports

Ms. Demong updated the board on the School Committee meeting last night, giving kudos to Supt. Keegan and the school board for tackling the difficult and constantly changing task of planning and budgeting for the upcoming school year.

Town Administrator Report

Mr. Morin reported that the town received its first CARES Act expenses reimbursement in the amount of \$226,815, approximately 80% of the application amount of \$283,611. The \$56,796 difference was composed of ineligible school bus charges and other miscellaneous expenses. This reimbursement check will help Town's cash flow. The next reimbursement application will be filed on Thursday for approximately \$200K.

Discussion/Action Items

Chief Ross Announcement

With much regret, Police Chief Ross's letter of resignation was read into the record. He is retiring on 11/29/20 and leaving a job that he loves. He has been with the Police Department for almost 33 years, and emphasized how much he will miss both the department and residents of the Town.

Ms. Allen and the board thanked Chief Ross for his exemplary service to the Town and leadership of the department. All expressed their regret that he will be leaving.

Tonight the board will focus on this news, not how to fill the position of Police Chief.

There is plenty of time to search for a successor, which will not be easy.

Mr. Morin commented that Chief Ross has been a pleasure to work with and very supportive. He works exceptionally well with the Fire Chief, making the Town incredibly fortunate to have such a high level of service and support. His willingness to "do the hard thing" helps to keep the organization well run. Chief Ross demands high performance of both himself and his department and always has the best interest of the Town at heart. It has been a genuine pleasure to work with him.

Chief Ross thanked the board and Mr. Morin, adding that the support of the BOS has been much appreciated, and he couldn't ask for a better boss and colleague than the Town Administrator. He also thanked the men and women of the Norwell Police

Department for their hard work and for handling the many challenges with professionalism. He also thanked especially Deputy Chief Carol Brzuszek and Administrative Assistant Marion Kaskiewicz for their outstanding work and support.

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Town Meeting Logistics and Articles Update

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Accord Pond Business Zoning Annual Town Meeting Article 9 Amendment

Mr. Graham updated the board on this Article and its amendment to move two parcels in the Pond street Zone to the Accord Pond Loop zone. The Accord Pond Loop zone allows for auto dealerships while Pond Street does not and the owners of the two parcels in question petitioned the Town asking to be put into the district that allows car dealerships by right. The Planning Board already voted to approve this amendment. The board discussed the pros and cons of this amendment at length with some members expressing concern over the removal of auto dealership as a by-right use in the Pond Street district. Concerns were also raised about the existing Pond Street car dealerships and their ability to retain their use over time should the zoning change to no longer allow that use by right. Attorney Marinelli, legal counsel for the property owner at 98 Accord Park Drive (auto dealer) who is in favor of this amendment, participated in this discussion. There was discussion about making an amendment to put the Auto dealership use back into the Pond Street district but that would require yet another Planning Board hearing and at this late date is not feasible. Ms. Allen asked the BOS to have a formal vote of support on record. Mr. Graham would make the amendment at Town Meeting.

- Mr. Morin explained that the property owners of the current Pond Street auto dealerships would be allowed to continue their businesses in the future.
- This amendment is part of the economic plan that the MAPC recommended to help increase the commercial tax base in the Town.
- Mr. Morin redirected the conversation back to the amendment's purpose asking the board for a formal endorsement. Go to Town Meeting and get this done. The overall zoning benefits are very important to the Town.
- If there are remaining issues pertaining to auto dealership use allowance, we can correct it at a future Town Meeting.

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, that the board support this amendment to move the 3 proposed lots from the Pond Street district to the Accord Pond district. 4 voting yes by roll call vote, 1 abstaining by roll call vote. Motion carried.

Town Meeting Logistics

The board is posted to meet at 9:30am on Saturday, July 25th for a short meeting before Town Meeting.

Ms. Allen directed residents to the Town website for all information and any updates for Town Meeting, urging everyone to attend. Keep an eye on the weather and prepare accordingly. Check-in is through the gym and then outside to the field in back of the school. Signage will be on the front door.

Appointment to the Town Technology Committee - Nick Salvatoriello

In keeping with the discussion at the last meeting, the board appointed Nick Salvatoriello to the committee. If Mr. Ben Yosef decides to rejoin, he can be appointed as an alternate member.

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to appoint Nick Salvatoriello to the Town Technology Committee for a term expiring 6/30/23. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.

Town Administrator Performance Evaluation

Ms. Allen invited Mr. Rull to add his evaluation comments for the minutes.

Joe Rull

Peter Morin has done a tremendous job over the past year. He has dealt with curve balls and unprecedented crises surrounding the COVID-19 state of emergency, with hard work and dedication, has kept the bills paid and the lights on. Mr. Rull stated that he was very impressed with the emails sent to the Town Hall staff on a weekly basis during the worst of the pandemic. Even in this environment of concern, Mr. Morin has always been a good sounding board. The Town is lucky to have him at the helm.

Jason Brown

- Not much different than last year's comments. Mr. Morin has 5 "supervisors" with different agendas and requests. Mr. Brown practices his personal management style with Mr. Morin, including not micromanaging. He respects Mr. Morin's time as he holds a demanding position.
- With regard to accomplishments this year, the tendency is to focus on "what didn't get done" and areas for improvement, because everyone has room for improvement. As a reminder, to the targeted projects for this year now add the whole COVID-19 emergency situation. Mr. Morin has stepped up and met a number of challenges.
- He has identified a number of budget cuts for the board to discuss and consider in light of impending state and federal budget reductions.
- Completed projects highlight: the Hanover Mall negotiated mitigation settlement of \$300K for the Town. Kudos for a job well done.
- This has been a challenging year and Mr. Morin met these challenges head on.
- This is a demanding position with a limited staff, resulting in many tasks on Mr. Morin's "plate" without an assistant Town Administrator.
- The only thing, not really a criticism and should be taken with a grain of salt, Mr. Brown has heard from some residents that they are not satisfied with Mr. Morin's response time. The Town Administrator is not at their beck and call, and perhaps his response is not always what they want to hear.
- He is very busy and the board should look at his accomplishments. This is one person divided among many different issues and responsibilities. Perhaps the public should also be aware of a little battle fatigue in this strained environment.
 - This is just something to be aware of – no criticisms or complaints.

Alison Demong

- When reviewing Mr. Morin's list of accomplishments, there is a lot to celebrate, especially with the pandemic and its far reaching issues.
- Similar sentiments to Mr. Brown's comments.
- Very appreciative of his time and energy and the difficult decision making processes with little guidance from the state with regard to local aid.

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- Very appreciative of his command of the Town's finances and budget. "We are fortunate that through your leadership Norwell today is in very good shape with respect to both public health and finances. Thank you!"
- The board very active and has a long list of potential projects, which is too much for one Town Administrator to handle. All are aware that an assistant Town Administrator is currently not an affordable position, but would like to keep this on the back burner.
- The board appreciates and respects how hard these past few months have been and would like to thank Mr. Morin for handling this ongoing crisis with skill and dedication.

Bruce Graham

- He remains pro-Peter, as noted in last year's review when his board term had just begun.
- Mr. Graham summarized the IT issues as discussed earlier in this meeting, noting that we are moving ahead. Mr. Morin has stated to Mr. Graham that working with an IT professional will provide good support to move this project forward.
- Differs philosophically with Mr. Morin on shutting down Town Hall during the worst of the pandemic, acknowledging that Mr. Morin had the wellbeing of the employees as his primary concern. Mr. Graham would have perhaps taken a different approach with some risk with regard to inspections and contractors who were looking for a more immediate response with Town services. The point is that we have a strong Town Administrator who makes his own decisions rather than just following a Selectman's request. "It all worked out fine", per Mr. Graham.
- In conclusion, Mr. Graham remains pro-Peter.

Ellen Allen

- This must have been the hardest year of Peter's tenure because of COVID-19. There has been at least 3 times as much work as usual and Mr. Morin really stepped up to show his multi-tasking skills and how well he works under pressure.
- It's easy to be unaware of the incredible amount of time he spends on Personnel issues, which by nature is out of the public view because it has to be. Mr. Morin is extremely talented in dealing with many difficult issues, including (of course) all these budget related renegotiations. Kudos to him for his budget knowledge and expertise.
- The benefits of his management style are reflected in how the department heads have worked through the COVID pandemic. His strong relationship with the school administration has worked well during this crisis. These benefits are the direct result of the long term approach that Mr. Morin takes to maintaining his work relationships with department heads and employees. Thank you very much, Peter, for all the hard work. No light at the end of the tunnel yet with Town Meeting and the budget, but hopefully you will enjoy a phone call free vacation coming up!

Mr. Morin thanked the board for their kind words, insightful comments and constructive criticism.

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FY21 Focus Areas

A draft of the FY21 BOS Focus Areas is attached to these minutes. **RECEIVED**

Approval of Meeting Minutes – 7/8/20 Open Session minutes

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to approve the minutes for the 7/8/20 Open meeting. Unanimously voted by roll call vote. Mr. Rull abstained as he was absent.

Future Meeting Agendas

The board will meet next on 8/5 at 7pm.

Topics will include:

Park View Inn – Exec. Session at 8/5 meeting

Reorganization and appointments

Town Clerk- info session on Mail in ballots

August 19th – IT update

Adjournment

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Alison Demong, to adjourn at 8:23pm. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.

Ellen Allen, Chair