

**Norwell Board of Selectmen**  
**10/14/20**  
**Open Session – Remote meeting**

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TOWN CLERK  
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RECEIVED

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

**Open Session**

The meeting was opened by Chair Ellen Allen at 7:05pm. She announced that all votes will be roll call votes as the meeting participants are using remote access software. The meeting is being 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 amended agenda excluding item j. Unanimously voted by roll call vote*

**BOS Reports**

Ms. Allen reported that Children's Librarian Nancy Perry has retired from the Norwell Public Library. All wished her the best as she enjoys her retirement.

Flu shots clinics dates and hours are listed on the home page of the Town website.

Mr. Brown and Ms. Demong toured the new library building this afternoon. Both were impressed with the progress and gave kudos to Ms. Allen and the Library Building Committee for their hard work.

**Town Administrator Report**

Mr. Morin announced that the Town will allow Halloween trick or treating to take place on 10/31/20, from 4pm-8pm. Further details are available on the website. Norwell is currently at the lowest level of active cases, so residents have earned this privilege!

**Citizen Comments - None**

**Introduce Deputy Fire Chief (DC) Dave Kean**

Chief Simpson introduced Deputy Chief Dave Kean, giving a summary of his background and history with the Norwell Fire Department. DC Kean is an Army National Guard veteran, Mass Maritime graduate and holds a Masters in Public Administration. He is a 20 year member of the department and has done a wide variety of jobs, holds multiple certifications and most recently served as Captain.

The BOS welcomed DC Kean to the meeting and congratulated him on his promotion.

**Committee Applications**

Kristin Britton – Commission on Disabilities

Ms. Britton gave a brief overview of her background and reason for applying.

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to appoint Kristin Britton to the Commission on Disabilities for a 3 year term expiring 6/30/23. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.*

The board thanked Ms. Britton for volunteering to serve on this committee.

**Public Hearing – Village Premier Motors, Inc. /McLaren Boston class 1/class 2 auto license**

The public hearing was opened at 7:15 by Chair Ellen Allen.

*Motion: made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to open the public hearing for Village Premier Motors, dba McLaren Boston, 10 and 22 Pond Street, Norwell, MA, at 7:15pm. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.*

The notice of public hearing was read by Clerk Joe Rull.

Dan DeSantis - McLaren and Andy Fink - Village Premier Motors, joined the meeting to give the details of the sale of McLaren Boston to Village Premier Motors. They would like to request a transfer of this license to the new business owner, Village Premier Motors, LLC.

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to approve the class 1/class 2 auto license for Village Premier Motors, Inc., dba McLaren Boston, expiring 12/31/20. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.*

*Motion, made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to close the public hearing at 7:22pm. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.*

#### **Adoption of FEMA approved Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP)**

- Chief Simpson recognized the hard work and guidance of Conservation Agent Nancy Hemingway on the achievement of this approval, adding that she is very much missed.
- The Town received a FEMA grant to complete the plan with the help of an MAPC consultant. He noted that this was a group effort from many parties. The plan, whose purpose is to address wind, hurricane, storm and snow related disasters etc., must be adopted for the Town to be eligible for hazardous mitigation federal grants.
- The plan has been reviewed and approved by FEMA and is good for 5 years. A large part of this plan addresses flood issues which have arisen in the last 20 years in areas of the Town previously unaffected. It will also hopefully address power related issues. With the plan adoption, the goal is to find backup generators for all of the Town-owned buildings. Questions were asked and answered with regard to covered expenses.
- Ms. Demong added that FEMA wants towns to go through this planning process to adopt a plan and was a necessary step to enable the Town to apply for more grant money.
- The draft plan with edits will be sent back to FEMA for formal approval. In response to questions from the board, Chief Simpson noted that this plan was reviewed at a series of public meetings. Mr. Graham requested a final copy of the draft approved by FEMA for the BOS to do a formal approval. Chief Simpson will make the final draft available to the board to review before the 10/28/20 BOS meeting.
- Ms. Demong noted that there are restrictions on applying for funding to purchase generators with the MVP plan (state) which may also apply to this federal plan's grant money. Mr. Morin will address the request for Town building generators with the Capital Budget Committee when they meet next.
- Mr. Rull stated he is aware of other towns using CARES Act reimbursement funds to address proper ventilation issues, and opined that generators might be a reimbursable expense. He added that the School Dept. could purchase a generator using their own budget, but could also try to get CARES Act reimbursement if appropriate. Mr. Morin stated that he could look into this, but, to date, the Town has processed 5 reimbursement requests totaling \$1.3M, and the funding is running out.

#### **Recognize CERT (Community Emergency Response Team)**

Kudos to all of the CERT team members, led by Art Joseph, from Chief Simpson. This community based team has grown over the years, helping out where needed during Town emergencies and various group events. Training for this worthwhile activity is sponsored by FEMA and is held at the fire station. The COA is the town's only warming and cooling center, courtesy of CERT! Health agent Ben Margro congratulated the team on their hard work helping

him with MEMA and DPH assistance. The Town is lucky to have such a helpful and dedicated group!

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### **Support for NSRWA/North River Commission (NRC) State budget discussion**

Ms. Allen gave a brief summary of this request. Ms. Demong noted that the North River is the only protected scenic river in the state. The NRC wants to fund a person and a boat to patrol and cite speeding and other violations. Two commissioners retired in 2019, and the commission was unable to replace the patrol boat. The purpose of this letter is to lobby the state for \$50K to replace the boat and one employee. The Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) new commissioner cut the funding entirely in this year's budget. The NSWRA has asked the towns along the river to lobby the governor for this funding. JEF Fitzgerald sent an email statement supporting this request. The funding would flow through the NSWRA to the NRC.

- Mr. Rull asked Mr. Morin about the legality of adding this agenda item less than 48 hours before the meeting. Per Mr. Morin, unanticipated agenda items that arise after the original agenda may be voted on. Per Ms. Allen, the amended agenda was properly posted yesterday when this request was received because of its tight response window.
- Mr. Brown noted that Rep. DeCoste supports this request and is working to get it approved.
- Chris Head, Chair of the North River Commission, gave additional reasons to support this budget request. He will send a letter to the governor tomorrow requesting the re-funding of this line item.

The board voiced opinions as follows:

- Mr. Graham considers speeding to be a non-issue. As a property owner and frequent boater on the North River he has not seen many speeders. In his opinion, the phragmites vegetation is a bigger threat to the ecology of the river. The money would be better spent addressing this problem and citing homeowners who grow lawns to the river's edge. All discussed speeding and what recourse is available.
- Mr. Rull stated that he is also an avid boater and fisherman. He doesn't believe in excess bureaucratic red tape. He also has not witnessed many speeders in the area of the river he frequents. He does have an issue with asking the state to fund a Town patrol boat with the authority to stop speeders. He does not see this as a local Town issue and believes it should be handled by the state senators and reps. He cited examples of state funding for unnecessary "pork barrel" projects that appear in newspaper articles as examples of wasted money.
- Ms. Demong responded that the patrol boat would handle the whole 12 miles of the river, handling speeding and other issues.
- Mr. Brown noted that he views the NRC's responsibilities as a broader protection of the river's natural resources.

Steve Lynch, Brigantine Circle, stated his hope that planning will take place to protect this beautiful resource for future generations.

Tim Timmerman supported this funding ask to prevent further geological damage to the river environment. Mr. Graham's comments address a completely different issue and should be part of a separate discussion.

More discussion ensued about environmental protection issues, the responsibilities of the NSWRA, protecting the lesser developed areas of the river as well as speeding and police powers.

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Alison Demong, that the BOS draft a letter of support for this NSWRA request to restore the funding for this line item in the state budget.*

*Voting by roll call vote; Allen, Brown, Demong - yes, Graham - no, Rull - abstain. The motion carried.*

**Draft Policy – handling Town properties coming out of MGL, Chapter 61A-postponed to a future agenda**

**Discussion – term limits for Town committee/board Chairs**

Mr. Rull gave a summary of his proposal that Board of Selectmen Chairs serve no more than two consecutive years, adding that two one year terms are enough to cover a good agenda. It would be a fair way to move the Town forward into the future. He added that this discussion is not a criticism of Ms. Allen as Chair.

Mr. Graham opined that if the current Chair is doing a good job and would like to continue, such a parameter would limit his or her ability to continue to do good work. He has not seen any instance where proposed agenda items were not scheduled for upcoming meetings. Mr. Graham gave examples of other boards where he served as Chair for multiple year terms. The board discussed the pros and cons of this proposal.

Mr. Brown reviewed the history of the Norwell Board of Selectmen, noting its prior composition of 3 board members, which was expanded to 5 board members with the adoption of the Town charter. During the 3 member board period, each board member served as the Chair for his last year in office. With the advent of the 5 member board, a number of Selectmen served multiple terms as Chair.

Ms. Demong opined that some board members are not comfortable in a leadership role, and everyone brings a different contribution to the table. To put artificial constructs or time limits on the Chair position in a volunteer board is not helpful or conducive to productive decision making. As the BOS is an elected board representing the Town, Chair term limits would have pros and cons.

Board members voiced different opinions on this topic, ranging from viewing it as healthy to rotate the chairmanship among the members to permitting one member to serve multiple terms as Chair. Note: the Chair does not set the agenda; the agenda is set by board members and the Town Administrator.

The chairmanship is a difficult job which represents a significant increase in the workload. There is already a precedent that the board reorganize every year after the Town election. In addition, some board members do not have the time or interest in being Chair.

Ms. Allen opined on this issue, noting that in her long experience serving on government committees, some members have no interest in being Chair. She has seen a variety of formats across the state; some BOS boards have the same Chair for 10 years, others change every year. She added that that a two year change rule is restricting and would be reluctant to make such a requirement for this and/or other boards. If another board member would like to be BOS Chair, please feel free to make the offer.

Mr. Brown stated that he feels that he has a good working relationship with the other board members. He added that, as Chair, the reorganization process is awkward and uncomfortable to have to vote or nominate someone who is part of the team. There are BOS boards in other towns that have extreme controversy, hostility between board members, which may color the process. He would be willing to serve as Chair again, but is happy to just be a board member.

Ms. Allen asked for a consensus of the board to create a policy for other boards to limit the Chair terms. Answer, no interest with respect to other committees.

Re: the BOS – policy for the BOS.

- Mr. Rull stated that he would like a long term policy for the future. He stated that he wanted to be clear; he thinks Ms. Allen is doing a great job as Chair, even though they disagree probably more than most.

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- Mr. Graham opined that he would be a competent Chair for the board in the future. However, at this time, he cannot make such a time commitment because of his work schedule.
  - Ms. Allen would not be interested in a policy, but perhaps a more robust discussion during the next reorganization of the board. Perhaps a discussion at the prior meeting. She also invited the board to ask for a reorganization to be put on the agenda if they wished.
  - Ms. Demong would like Ms. Allen to remain as Chair, and is not interested in a policy.

*Motion; made by Joe Rull, seconded by Jason Brown, that the Board of Selectmen adopt a policy that a board member shall serve as Chair for not more than 2 consecutive years. By roll call vote: Mr. Rull and Mr. Brown voting yes, Ms. Demong, Ms. Allen and Mr. Graham voting no. Motion fails to carry by a vote of 2-3.*

**Approval of BOS meeting minutes – postponed to 10/28/20 meeting**

**Future meetings:**  
**See schedule**

**Adjournment**

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to adjourn at 8:44pm. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.*

*Ellen H. Allen*

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Ellen Allen, Chair