

Norwell Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes
11/29/17

2018 JAN 10 AM 10:02

Present: Peter Smellie, Alison Demong, Ellen Allen, Gregg McBride Peter Morin
Jason Brown is absent

Open session

Alison Demong called the meeting to order at 7:35pm.

Motion; made by Ellen Allen, seconded by Peter Smellie, to approve the agenda as written.

Unanimously voted

Citizen Comments – None

Selectmen's Reports and Announcements

Ms. Demong reminded all about the Special Town Meeting on December 4th, urging residents to attend. If the library Article passes, the election will be held on Saturday, December 8th. There is a BOS Q and A session tomorrow evening at 7pm in the Osborn Room for those who wish to attend.

Mr. McBride announced that the annual holiday tree lighting on the Town Common will be held on Sunday, December 3rd.

The Cable Committee sent a survey to all Town residents asking for input about cable service in Norwell. Please respond ASAP because the Town is getting ready to renegotiate the cable contracts.

Town Administrator's Report - None

7:35 Susan Curtin – Council on Aging (COA) Update

Susan Curtin, COA Director, was present to update the board with the results of their survey. The Elder Economic Survey was mailed to all senior residents 60 and over. The responses received (118) accounted for about 5% of 2400 senior households. Regrettably, the responses are not statistically significant. Ms. Curtin handed out a summary of the survey data for review, including comments from respondents. The COA staff will be reviewing the survey data in more detail over the next few months. The survey summary and data is on file in the BOS office.

Ms. Curtin gave the board other pertinent facts and figures about the available services for residents at the COA. The primary activities which have seen increased use are home delivered meals, volunteer rides to doctor's appointments and shopping as well as assistance with financial aid paperwork. The average age of people served is 74.

The COA provides assistance from certified personnel for residents applying for Medicare services under the SHINE (Mass) and SHIP (federal) programs.

Mr. McBride stated that he would like to have better publicity for the CHT's Senior Grant program. Not enough seniors are taking advantage of this funding for home repairs that directly benefit the health and safety of the residents.

Ms. Curtin also noted that the COA board has lost two long time members, both of whom will be much missed. If anyone has interest in serving on this committee, please apply online or at the BOS office.

Changes to the transportation program (partly due to liability issues) include hiring 3 on-call drivers to take people to medical appointments. Over 500 additional rides have been scheduled in the last two months. Ms. Curtin expanded on other increased activity for the transportation program. There is no fee for these rides, which use about 40 hours per week for paid driver time. The ride program is advertised in the COA newsletter. Ms. Allen asked about MBTA

meetings and getting services for the Town. Mr. Morin is the MBTA rep and will follow up, but this will be an uphill battle.

Discussion ensued about the number of people in Town who are way below the average income level, more than people think. There are many programs available with resources for people in need. Mr. McBride again reminded all that the Senior Grant program is still available, please take advantage of this program. Spread the word. All thanked Ms. Curtin for coming and for her outstanding work at the COA.

8:00pm Avanti Seymour – No Place for Hate Committee

Ms. Seymour gave a summary of her background and reasons for applying to serve on this committee. All thanked her for stepping forward.

Motion; made by Ellen Allen, seconded by Peter Smellie, to appoint Avanti Seymour to the No Place For Hate committee for the duration. Unanimously voted

8:05pm Beata Takahashi – No Place for Hate Committee

Ms. Takahashi gave a summary of her background and reasons for applying to serve on this committee. All thanked her for stepping forward.

Motion; made by Ellen Allen, seconded by Peter Smellie, to appoint Beata Takahashi to the No Place For Hate committee for the duration. Unanimously voted

8:10pm Elizabeth Hilsinger – No Place for Hate Committee

Ms. Takahashi gave a summary of her background and reasons for applying to serve on this committee. All thanked her for stepping forward.

Motion; made by Ellen Allen, seconded by Peter Smellie, to appoint Elizabeth Hilsinger to the No Place For Hate committee for the duration. Unanimously voted

Additional Business

Mr. Morin updated the board about the upcoming meeting agenda items. The MAPC will do a "windshield tour" of the sites to be discussed before their meeting with the BOS next week.

8:15pm – Public Hearing – Tax Levy

Motion; made by Ellen Allen, seconded by Peter Smellie, to open the public hearing at 8:15pm. Unanimously voted

The notice of public hearing was read by Mr. Smellie.

Ms. Demong welcomed and introduced the Board of Assessors; Joan Osborne, Bill Hauser and Sue Kirby. All reviewed the tax levy presentation which is included in the BOS packet. Ms. Osborne, Chair, presented the background information to set the tax rate. If adopted, the new rate would be \$16.34 per \$1000 for the residential property tax amount. This rate is a slight decrease from last year's rate, but there are increases in property values. 2017 has seen growth in the number and value of residential properties, whereas commercial values have remained fairly constant. This means that on average residential taxes will rise more than commercial taxes. Discussion ensued about commercial values in the Town compared to those of surrounding towns. Residential values are strong because of a good community profile. The tax rate is not as significant as the home valuation in calculating a home's tax bill. Properties with a value of \$500K or less may increase more than large older homes because starter homes values saw a greater increase in valuation. The Town's ability to shift the tax burden is limited by the amount of zoned commercial property. All discussed issues with commercial property zoning rules. Ms. Osborne reviewed the range of a theoretical tax shift from residential to commercial property of 1% to 20%. With a split rate, the tax would shift from \$16.34 to \$15.79, however, the BOA feels that it is not appropriate to move to a split rate at this point in time due to the limited total commercial tax base. They voted unanimously to keep the single tax rate for this year and also not to adopt any residential exemptions.

There were no public comments at this point in the meeting.

Motion; made by Ellen Allen, seconded by Peter Smellie, to close the public hearing at 8:37pm. 2018 JUL 10 AM 10:02
Unanimously voted

Motion; made by Ellen Allen, seconded by Peter Smellie, not to adopt a discount for open space for the 2018 tax year. Unanimously voted

Motion; made by Ellen Allen, seconded by Peter Smellie, not to grant a residential or commercial exemption for the 2018 tax year. Unanimously voted

Motion; made by Ellen Allen, seconded by Peter Smellie, to adopt the recommendation for the BOA to have a single tax rate of \$16.34 per \$1000. Unanimously voted

Adjournment

Motion; made by Ellen Allen, seconded by Peter Smellie, to adjourn at 8:40pm. Unanimously voted



Jason Brown, Chair

Alison Demong, Vice Chair (chaired meeting in Mr. Brown's absence)