

**Norwell Board of Selectmen  
Open Meeting Minutes  
1/31/18**

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**Open Session – 7:30pm**

Jason Brown called the meeting to order in the Osborn Room at 7:33pm. He reminded all that the meeting is recorded and televised.

*Motion; made by Alison Demong, seconded by Peter Smellie, to approve the agenda as written.  
Unanimously voted*

**Citizen Comments – None**

**Selectmen's Reports and Announcements**

Ms. Allen reported that the No Place For Hate (NPFH) committee was launched last week. A Chair was elected and the purpose and mission statement were discussed.

Ms. Allen testified at a State House hearing on housing issues. Many large groups who testified were united in their voice about the rights of towns in the Commonwealth with regard to this potential legislation.

1. Proposed legislation would change the zoning bylaws from a 2/3 vote to a majority vote for certain issues designed to expand housing. Towns would have the option, but not the requirement to adopt them. There is a new zoning concept for starter homes, which may be worthwhile to consider for the Town.
2. The proposed legislation would include a "toolbox" of ways to help communities build housing. Most of the AH in the state has been built in Boston or the close-in suburbs, so there's pressure for outlier towns to step up. Ms. Allen will be at the MMA mtg. on Tuesday to weigh in on next steps to help the "tool box" work for the Town. Mr. McBride added that the timing is good for this topic as the Affordable Housing Plan is due to be rewritten this year. Hopefully, a more effective plan will be constructed this time around, as the Community Housing Trust has more experience and can provide better insight. All discussed various types of AH and which direction the state will pursue; more laws at the state level or helping communities with a more custom approach. The board discussed mobile homes and their AH status with regard to the AH inventory in the Town.
3. Mr. McBride updated all on his follow-up discussion about LED street lights. The inventory of street lights and utility bills for the Town will be reviewed by the vendor, who will provide a quote.

**Town Administrator's Report**

Green Community projects and reports have been filed with the help of Seth Pickering. Mr. Morin will apply for more grants this spring. Funding for LED street lighting would be a good grant option, with potential/additional assistance from National Grid.

**Vote to use Pedestrian Enhancement Fund for a sidewalk on Main Street**

Mr. Brown summarized the alternative funding sources for this project, with a short recap of the history of this discussion. There has been strong support in the Town for a sidewalk. This would be a funding that does not involve an override or a CPA application. Ms. Demong introduced Ellen Moshier, Chair of the Complete Streets Committee (CSC). Also present were Town Planner Ken Kirkland and Town resident Peter Bloomfield. Ms. Moshier reviewed the CSC's prioritization plan; the first project is a sidewalk on Main Street from South Street to the Middle School at a cost of ~\$450K. The state grant would be \$200K, with the balance potentially coming from Chapter 90 money. The Planning Board voted to approve the use of \$100K from



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the Pedestrian Enhancement Fund for this project. The use of fund money must also have the approval of the BOS. Ms. Demong is planning a Warrant Article from the CSC to ask for the additional funding to extend the sidewalk to Circuit Street. Mr. Morin will put in a placeholder Article. This project has yet to be discussed in depth by the BOS. In answer to Mr. Brown's question about beginning the project with \$300K, Ms. Moshier stated that all of the funding must be in place in order to begin construction.

Per Mr. Kirkland, the Pedestrian Enhancement Fund was created in 1999 as a gift account option for developers to donate funds to the Town in lieu of building development "sidewalks to nowhere". There were no further specifics attached to the fund and the projects eligible for funding were purposely left vague. This is not tax revenue, but developer funding. Money from various developments has been deposited into this fund. The current account balance is \$129,869.25.

*Motion; made by Alison Demong, seconded by Peter Smellie, to approve the Planning Board's decision to make available \$100K from the Pedestrian Enhancement Fund as a match to the state funding for the purpose of constructing a sidewalk from South Street to the Middle School. Unanimously voted*

#### **McCourt Road Race Request**

The board reviewed the paperwork for this event. All departments have approved the route and plan.

*Motion; made by Alison Demong, seconded by Peter Smellie, to approve the McCourt Road Race request for the date of 9/22/18, subject to any conditions set by the Police and Fire Departments. Unanimously voted*

#### **Calle's Miracle Run**

This race course runs throughout the Town of Norwell and is a charity event. Mr. Morin would consider charging a nominal fee to offset the cost to the Town. He will make a decision after talking to the Highway Surveyor.

*Motion; made by Alison Demong, seconded by Peter Smellie, to approve the Calle's Miracle Run road race for the date of April 8, 2018, subject to any conditions set by the Police and Fire Departments. Unanimously voted*

#### **2018 Standard Mileage Rates**

*Motion; made by Alison Demong, seconded by Peter Smellie, to adopt the standard mileage rates for 2018 of 54.5 cents per mile. Unanimously voted*

#### **Preliminary Budget Discussion**

The preliminary financial forecast for the FY19 operating budget is in the meeting booklet. Mr. Morin's goal is to bring in a budget with about a 4% increase over last year's budget. Labor, health insurance and recurring costs are responsible for most of the increase. Cost containment this year reflects lower expenses - down from a 25% increase over the prior two years (with a 2018 premium increase of 11% in FY18) to about a 5% increase for health insurance due to the Town's move from Mayflower to MIIA (providing more stability for health care plan expenses). The budget will include a couple of new positions but is basically a level services budget. New positions funding will be offset by decreases in other budget areas. Mr. Morin is reviewing the current round of requests and is close to finalizing a balanced budget. He is looking at both revenue assumptions and expense trimming. Questions were asked and answered about the Schools' proposed budget increase of 3.49%. They are again asking for money from the SPED stabilization fund. The BOS is concerned that this request is showing a trend on the Schools' part and noted that this item needs to be properly budgeted instead of tapping this fund every year.

The budget is still within Prop. 2 ½. Per Mr. Morin, the annual budgets have increased between 3.4% and 4.4% in the past several years. Operating expenses that can be controlled are



compensating for operating expenses that are out of the Town's control, so the Town is managing very well. There has been no operating override for six years.

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### **BOS Focus Areas – FY 2018**

Mr. Brown led the review and discussion of the six - month status review and update of the BOS Focus Areas.

#### **#1 Economic Development**

A public forum is being scheduled for March 7<sup>th</sup>. Business owners and residents will be invited to provide feedback on this topic and get involved in planning ideas to increase business activity in the Town. The MAPC is making progress on their economic survey and data collection.

#### **#2. Capital Plans**

The Capital Plan is being used to ID and budget road maintenance. Financing options have been reviewed with Darleen Sullivan and the bonding advisor Peter Frazier. Discussion ensued about capital project options going forward and categorizing wants vs. needs in the Town's infrastructure. Capital plan asset maintenance as part of the operating budget was discussed at length. Mr. Brown is concerned about adding maintenance expense for assets that are new or in the planning stages. Mr. Morin summarized the operating budget's ability to absorb these maintenance costs by moving them into the various departments.

**#3 AH strategy** – Mr. McBride talked about the update to the 5-year Affordable Housing Plan due this year. The Community Housing Trust will be involved as well as the BOS in rewriting this plan.

#### **#4 Communications with Residents and Increase Civic Involvement**

##### **See #1 above for MAPC reference**

Regarding development of a strategy for the Town Technology Committee: Town Hall is in transition with technical support from the schools. Mr. Morin recapped the difficulty with the financial software vendor. Our supplier was acquired and their consolidated customer service is awful. Accurate data reporting is both challenging and time consuming. Hopefully the Town Technology Committee could help with the current situation or evaluate new software. Next steps; a meeting will be set up between the Technology Committee and the Finance Department. Mr. Morin would like a formal meeting with the department heads and the Technology Committee for a prioritized list of technology and support issues. Discussion ensued about the potential move of Town Hall to the Sparrell Building and the tech support needed.

The board discussed using some of the PEG funds to construct a media center to broadcast meetings from the new library's community room. Per Mr. McBride, the Cable Committee is also engaged in a conversation/negotiation with Marshfield Cable (MCTV) but there is no resolution yet. Should MCTV manage the system and have some access to these funds? Discussion ensued about this issue and next steps. All agreed that the Town would still want a local studio even if MCTV manages this activity.

#### **#5 Public Safety**

All discussed traffic safety measures being addressed, and data being gathered by the Police Chief. Speed limit Articles should be discussed before putting them on the Warrant. Residents have requested lowered speed limits on Main Street, Grove Street and other streets in the Town, but lowered speed limits don't always provide a traffic calming solution. Mr. McBride stated that the Town needs to discuss a consistent philosophy for speed limits. The Traffic Committee could meet to discuss next steps.

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**#6 Establish a No Place for Hate Committee. – Done**

**#7 Health insurance cost controls.** The Town has switched to a new health care plan, which should provide stability for budgeting purposes. The transition is progressing well, per Mr. Morin.

Further discussion ensued about combining The Highway and Tree and Grounds departments. Mr. Ferguson has hired a consultant and is awaiting a cost estimate. This department consolidation is not in the cards for this year's Town Meeting Warrant but hopefully would be an option next year with different funding.

All agreed that good progress has been made on the BOS Focus Areas.

Tomorrow morning is the State of the Town breakfast; all will attend.

*Motion; made by Alison Demon, seconded by Peter Smellie, to adjourn at 9:10pm.  
Unanimously voted*

  
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Jason Brown, Chair