

TOWN OF NORWELL
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**Norwell Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes
March 22, 2017**

Open Session

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jason Brown at 7:30. Mr. Brown updated all on the meeting prior to 7:33.

Motion; made by Ellen Allen, seconded by Peter Smellie, to approve the agenda. Unanimously voted

Citizen Comments – Susan Curtin, COA director, was present to update the board about two open spots on the Commission on Disabilities. She is looking for new members. She would also like to publicly recognize Jim Kelliher for all of his tireless efforts on behalf of the Town to assist with the resolution of the accessibility issues.

The COA is sending out a town-wide survey on elder services. Please complete and return it; the more responses the better! There is a link on the COA webpage to download and print the survey. There are also copies available at the Library, COA and Town Hall.

Ms. Curtin added that most residents don't realize that there is grant money available for small home improvements affecting residents' health and safety through the Community Housing Trust's (CHT) Senior Grant Program. There is also a variety of options for financial and other types of assistance.

BOS Announcements - Mr. McBride announced that Metro West Development and the CHT are having an open house/community update meeting on the 40 River Street Senior Housing project. The meeting will be at the Cushing Center on April 8th at 10am. All are welcome to attend.

Town Administrator Announcements

The Mayflower Municipal health plan increase for the upcoming fiscal year will be 11.6%, which is within the projected budget. Mayflower took a positive step towards having different rates for different programs. The Town's projected rate is roughly in the middle of the range. Mr. Morin will report back to the board on the vote at tomorrow's meeting to confirm the rates. If the new variable rate allocation doesn't fly it will bolster the need to look elsewhere for a new health plan.

Non-Traditional Tax Collection Functions

Treasurer/Collector Darleen Sullivan was present to give the board an overview of the different tax collections functions of her office.

Ms. Sullivan stated that most tax collections are done under Chapter 60 of the MA general code, where most collections lie. Everything starts with her office; beginning with the tax commitment list with correct values. Then a warrant is generated to give her the authority to collect this money. Timing is everything! There are due dates to collect these funds which require a lot of communications to coordinate both the due dates and collections, of which there are many. She gave an overview of the various kinds of taxes and their collection dates, along with the procedures for collections if they are not paid. There is not a high percentage of demands in the

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Town. "Kind" letters to tax offenders to give them a heads up about the collection procedures. Her department will go to the registry to put a tax title (lien) on the property fairly quickly so as not to lose the ability to collect for the Town. This is called a tax taking. Accounts are created for each of these properties. If no payments are received, then foreclosure proceedings start. The Town's tax liability has priority over a mortgage; the Town is first in the line of creditors. However, it is common for the department to work with lenders to pay off the tax liability so that they can keep their place in "line" for ownership. The Town works with a company called Core Logic to get tax notices out by sending electronic files to the lenders to keep them updated about tax payments.

Questions were asked and answered about such topics as tax title before foreclosure. The balance at the end of January was about \$1.3 million in tax title. In 2016 the Town collected about \$300K in tax title funds. There is an ebb and flow of this money; balances are paid off and then more is accrued.

It takes a great deal of time to collect this money, and Ms. Sullivan's department works hard to accommodate payers in the Town.

Personal property is tangible personal property - items within the house/business, but not the primary residence unless it's being used for business. This category would apply mostly to second homes and businesses.

The owner is usually given the opportunity to "self-report" the value thru the tax form. There has been significant growth in personal property in the Town due to the influx of business equipment.

The Treasurer's office does a good job of cleaning up the receivables after the bulk of the tax receipts come in. In FY 16, outstanding receivables were under 1%. This is partly due to the efforts of the Treasurer's office and partly to the good resident payers.

Approval of the Norwell Farms License with Jacobs Farm.

The board reviewed the license agreement noting the corrections made at last week's BOS meeting. Ms. Allen gave all a quick overview of the agreement.

Motion; made by Ellen Allen, seconded by Peter Smellie, to approve the license agreement with Norwell Farms. Unanimously voted

All gave kudos to Ms. Demong for her hard work and tremendous amount of effort on this agreement.

Town Website Review and Discussion

Mr. Brown gave a short recap of the background reasons for this review, including frustrations with the format of the new website versus the old website.

Ms. Allen summarized her website discussion with Sarah Baker of the Beautification Committee and Marynel Wahl, Con Com Chair, who have come together informally to make suggestions.

The following is a summary of the meeting points:

1. Users can't email the whole board at the same time. However, committee Chairs can receive an email and forward it to the appropriate committee members.
2. The website lacks guidelines and consistency for committee page updates. There needs to be a dedicated web person to interact with the various boards. Per Mr. Morin, three people were identified as contacts when the website was updated; but the committee information clearly needs to be addressed and maintained on a regular basis.
3. The Town's bylaws can't be viewed easily from the website.
4. The group suggested using Town meeting to show people the E-Alerts button. Residents can sign up to receive agendas, updates and announcements. Town departments should populate this feature with more items. Code red signup ought to be on this page.
5. Ms. Allen focused on what they would like to include on the E-Alerts page

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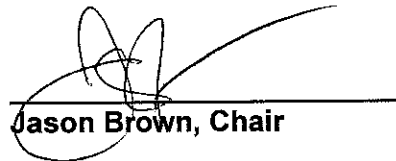
6. A web person should be deleting the old news. Guidelines and somebody to manage this function are needed.
7. Should this be a job position for someone...yes? No?
8. Some functions work well. Other areas need updating.
9. Ask each committee to update their website info and contact one of the Town Hall personnel who can do updates.
10. Send people to the School Calendar; connection is on the home page of the website.
11. Need better information to send volunteer forms and job applications
12. The many issues that should be addressed would be well served by scheduling a meeting with Nancy Hemingway and Ben Margro, both of whom are very capable web administrators. Ms. Allen will follow-up on this.
13. Someone should be identified to assume responsibility for the resolution of these issues.
14. A plan to do regular web maintenance and updates needs to be constructed. All discussed different options for personnel assignments. Future meetings will address this issue and include the rep from Virtual Town Hall to join in.
15. Ask Virtual Town hall for the names of towns using their software who are doing the best job using the website functions.

Adjourn to Executive Session

Motion; made by Ellen Allen, seconded by Peter Smellie, to adjourn to Executive Session at 8:22pm, not returning to Open Session. Unanimously voted

Mr. Brown polled the board, Ellen Allen voting yes, Gregg McBride voting yes, Peter Smellie voting yes, Jason Brown voting yes.

Note: there is no BOS meeting on March 29th.



Jason Brown, Chair