

**Norwell Board of Selectmen  
Open Meeting Minutes  
11/28/18**

2018 DEC 20 AM 11:37

**Present:** Ellen Allen, Gregg McBride, Jason Brown, Alison Demong, Joe Rull, Peter Morin

**Reporter:** Patriot Ledger Reporter Kate Walsh

**Open Session; 7:08pm**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Ellen Allen.

The board discussed the pros and cons of using the tablets issued by the Town. The board would like to implement an efficient task tracking system and less "paper" for the board at meetings. Mr. Brown suggested printing a one page agenda with space for notes, accompanied by meeting packet content on some type of electronic device.

If board members aren't utilizing their tablets, an option might be to return them to the BOS office for use by other Town employees. The board will plan to discuss task tracking software options on a future agenda. Mr. Morin has 3 software packages to review that might work. Ms. Allen, Mr. Morin and Ellen M. will discuss and resolve the tablet issues by the beginning of the year, including next steps for task tracking and the tablet use.

**FUTURE AGENDA item;** tablet use and task tracking software – January meeting

Ms. Allen received a letter from the state regarding the BOS request for a truck traffic study to remove the Bridge St. restriction and consider one for River Street. She read the letter aloud to the board, noting the next steps included in the letter are to implement a traffic study. Mr. McBride reported that the Traffic Study Committee received a study proposal. The Highway Surveyor is in the process of getting the contract approved to begin the study in December, which will utilize radar (invisible to traffic) to do the traffic counts, evaluate the types of vehicles and also include recommendations for future traffic regulations. All discussed expanded regulations for other roads besides River St. and the continued traffic issues with the PA Landers Company. The state cannot help with the study because it would be the final decisionmaker on any proposed changes.

With regard to the state DOT and the tree buffer for the new Route 3 construction, there is no mitigation planned for the near future, per Mr. Brown. The trees that have been planted by the DOT are tiny, and provide no respite from the lights and noise for abutters.

**FUTURE AGENDA item;** discussion about tree buffer mitigation when time permits – maybe next week.

Ms. Allen summarized the meeting with the representatives/developer for the Hanover Crossing project. Mr. Morin gave a summary of the meeting, noting that there will be 297 rental units, none of which will be affordable housing. The developer is asking the ZBA in Hanover for variances on the rate of development and height of the buildings. Mr. Morin sent a memo from the Town to the Hanover ZBA. Per Mr. McBride, this development plan will trigger inquiries and further action by the Massachusetts EPA with the number of trips per day in the environment surrounding the mall area, specifically Third Herring Brook. The Town might need an attorney going forward. The board discussed options for the intersection of South and Mill Streets, including a rotary and closure of South Street at this intersection. Mr. Morin also noted that the actual Town of Norwell border may be as far into the mall area as the Sears building.

**Next Steps:** take stock and develop a plan. Have Mr. Morin consider retaining an attorney (Town Counsel at first) to evaluate the project and record the flaws in the proposal as well as delineate the borders of the Town.

*Motion; made by Gregg McBride, seconded by Joe Rull, to retain Town Counsel to evaluate the Hanover Crossing mall project and record the Town's issues with the development plan.*

*Unanimously voted*

FUTURE AGENDA item; Executive Session next week at the end of Open Session.

### **Open Session Continued at 7:36pm**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Ellen Allen at 7:08pm. She reminded all that the meeting is being televised and recorded. All rose to recite the pledge of allegiance.

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

### **Citizen Comments - None**

### **Selectmen's Reports**

Mr. Rull reported on the meeting with Hanover Crossing developers last week. The board will be discussing this project at future meetings.

The Police Department handled a crisis situation on Farrah Farm Road this past week. The board offered kudos to the first responders for their exceptional work and professionalism.

Ms. Demong reported on last week's meeting with Norwell business owners/BOS meeting about the current sign bylaw. The goal is to begin the process of drafting a new sign bylaw. The board will invite the Town Planner to a BOS meeting in January to discuss this further.

### **Town Administrator Report - None**

### **Harbor Media – Introduction of new Community media team**

Steve Muzrall, Chair of the Cable Committee, introduced the Town's new media team: Michelle Balconi (community engagement manager), Michael Hong (videographer), and Farzad Wafapoor (Executive Director). Ms. Balconi and Mr. Hong were present at the meeting. Ms. Balconi made some welcoming remarks, announcing that the government channels will continue operating as usual and future plans include public access and education channels to be added in the future. Harbor Media has begun the transition process and is planning a "hard launch" of their cable services in February. More information will be available on the Cable Committee web page with links on upcoming scheduling access.

The board would like to put this info on the Town website. Mr. Muzrall will work with Ben Margro to add the information to the Home Page. Mr. McBride welcomed the new team and gave a quick overview of future broadcasting plans for the new library. Mr. Muzrall added that the Cable Committee hopes to take broadcasting on the road to various locations in the Town, such as the COA and the schools. The board and Cable Committee thanked Jon Grabowski for his outstanding work over the last few years. He will be very much missed.

Ms. Allen asked about the turnaround time to upload meeting videos on the website. The Town currently uses Vimeo, which is slower, and the team hopes to put the meetings on a Norwell YouTube channel in February or March. Additional information will also be available, such as advertisement of meetings and events and a Facebook page. Mr. Rull asked about meetings that could be broadcast like the Simon Hill hearings. Per Mr. Muzrall, now that dedicated staff is available, this will allow the Town to have more broadcast opportunities.

Mr. McBride talked about branding options. All welcomed the team to Norwell.

### **Allison Hughan – COA applicant**

Ms. Hughan introduced herself to the board and reviewed her background and reasons for applying to this board.

*Motion; made by Gregg McBride, seconded by Alison Demong, to appoint Allison Hughan to the Council on Aging for a term expiring 6/30/20. Unanimously voted*

**DLS Technical Assistance Program-Zack Blake and an associate - Mass Dept. of Revenue**

Mr. Blake introduced himself and his colleague and explained the role of his office with regard to community assistance, such as forecasting and budgeting thru the Community Compact program.

Mr. Rull explained his reasons for wanting to invite the DOR to the Town for a financial audit and review of best practices. Mr. Blake noted that the DOR is trying to be more proactive in reaching out to communities. Ms. Allen said that the Board of Assessors has recently voted to have DLS do a free consultancy for them. Mr. Brown agreed that the property assessments issue is one that could use more education for the residents. The board noted that the Board of Assessors has had difficulty communicating with residents. With regard to the town's financial condition, the board discussed at length the pros and cons of inviting the DOR to a meeting. The AAA bond rating and prescribed set of financial metrics with good results don't need to be addressed. The elephant in the room is the OPEB liability. The Town's rising taxes really can't be controlled by the BOS. Taxes are controlled by choices voted by the residents for additional and increasingly expensive services. Efficiency isn't something that needs to be addressed, but the board is open to suggestions. Mr. Blake mentioned succession planning, which is increasingly difficult due to the tight job market. Mr. Brown would like to discuss succession planning. Mr. Blake noted that DLS services are free of charge to communities. Financial management for best practices is done through the Community Compact grant program. DLS financial management reviews can be conducted down to the daily transaction flow analysis and internal control level if warranted.

Mr. Morin added that the independent auditor of the Town's financial statements (Melanson & Heath) makes the same notes every year – how Town Hall handles cash receipts. DLS input would be helpful. Mr. Blake noted that the board and Mr. Morin could have offline conversations about best practices. DLS also has videos about process mechanics that might be helpful. Mr. Morin added that he has utilized DLS in his many professional capacities over the years, noting that they provided excellent service and problem solving in various communities.

The board discussed at length the Town's annual clean financial audit and management letter with minimal suggestions, succession planning and best practices.

Per Mr. Blake, there is a 3 month waiting period to get on the DLS calendar. Tasks can take weeks to months. A formal engagement would be handled through the Town Administrator. Even if there is no formal engagement, Mr. Morin knows who to contact for assistance. All thanked them for coming in. The Board will discuss at a future meeting whether to ask DLS to perform any services for the Town.

**Susan Curtin – COA Update, data on Age and dementia friendly communities**

Ms. Curtin introduced John Mahoney, the recently elected Chair of the COA.

The board now has 6 members, counting new member Alison Hughan. The board may consider adding some associate members to the board if allowed. Ms. Allen will check with the Town Counsel and get back to Ms. Curtin.

Updates from the COA include the acquisition of a new ADA compliant vehicle funded by a grant of \$13,560. There are some additional costs, which will be paid by the COA. This new vehicle will allow the COA to expand its very successful ride program.

Ms. Curtin has finished up the Senior Work Program, updates of which will be on a future meeting agenda. There were 47 applicants, and 3 people withdrew. She and her staff are processing the applications and work will start very soon.

Ms. Curtin's 100 cups of coffee program has introduced both residents and Town businesses to the COA and its wide range of activities and services. This has been a very successful form of a 1:1 meeting. Ms. Curtin has had "43 cups" to date with the goal of reaching "100 cups" by March of 2019. Please call or stop by the COA to set up a coffee date – all are welcome.

Ms. Curtin and her staff are working with the town of Hanover's COA to put together a senior outdoor program. Social media has been very good at spreading the word for the COA, with about 300 people per week accessing its information. She met with the Cable Committee, who

is excited to bring access TV to the COA. A local cable channel will hopefully "expand" the hours of the COA to reach people who still work. She also encouraged residents to register with the COA and use their scan card system.

The COA is partnering with the Scituate COA on a trip program with the hope that more people will take advantage of the planned outings.

Ms. Curtin reported that Gov. Baker issued criteria for towns in the state to become Age and Dementia friendly. The requirements to become an Age Friendly Community were reviewed with the board. Ms. Curtin noted that there are multiple support systems from the state to achieve this designation, but it is an initiative that will require a lot of collaboration among community members and businesses. Ms. Curtin will begin the review process for the age friendly criteria and determine what is needed by the Town. Criteria to become a dementia friendly community are tougher and communities are struggling to find services to support family members who care for someone with this issue. She noted that these present day health conditions are reframing the way people do business. Ms. Curtin's choice would be to work on the dementia criteria first, then age friendly compliance.

She complimented her support staff at the COA for their excellence in service and assistance to the Town. Questions were asked by the board about these programs.

In response to Ms. Allen's question about receiving a credit from the state for the Town's MBTA assessment, Ms. Curtin noted that the refund application has multiple steps. The goal will be the ability to have a credit back from the state for the cherry sheet charge to the Town for the rides supplied by the COA. The board thanked Ms. Curtin and Mr. Mahoney for coming in.

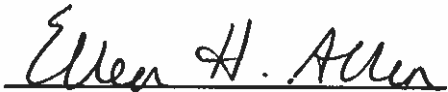
#### **Adjournment**

*Motion; made by Gregg McBride, seconded by Alison Demong, to adjourn at 9:01pm.  
Unanimously voted*

#### **Future meetings additions**

#### **OPEB update**

**Kaitlyn White (Carleton Committee) – plastic bag ban in the Town**



**Ellen Allen, Chair**