

**Norwell Board of Selectmen  
Open Meeting Minutes  
1/9/19**

TOWN OF NORWELL  
TOWN CLERK  
2019 FEB 19 PM 3:23  
RECEIVED

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

All discussed the proposed limousine license policy. See the draft for edits. This will be last on the agenda for next week's 7pm session for approval. Note: Uber and Lyft are not subject to this policy and license requirement.

**Future Meeting Agendas**

Mr. Morin will invite Ed Forte to the 1/23/19 meeting to discuss the Sparrell School project. All discussed upcoming meeting agendas items including a proposed OPEB strategy.

**Approval of Personal Contract – Town Accountant/Finance Director**

The board discussed the proposed new 3-year contract for Ms. Mangan, which runs through 6/30/21. The new terms are a raise of 2.5% in the first two years and a wage reopener in year three.

*Motion; made by Gregg McBride, seconded by Alison Demong, to approve the Town Accountant/Finance Director contract as updated. Yes votes-4, No vote- 1 with Mr. Rull voting No. Motion carried.*

**Open Session at 7:20pm**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Ellen Allen at 7:20pm. She reminded all that the meeting 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 Reports** – Mr. Brown and Mr. Morin attended the Hanover BOS forum about the Hanover mall redevelopment project. There were no decisions made. The forum was only a meeting for residents to hear from the developers, who took the opportunity to reposition themselves on the property. The proposed residential apartment complex has caused concern in both communities. The plan is really for mixed use development, with residential units at the rear of the property. Other plans not yet vetted include no residences but other commercial development in that location instead. Hanover residents are concerned about the same issues as Norwell. Hanover residents claim that the residential addition is spot zoning, and would require a zoning change that was not initially in the plan. The new development would contribute approximately \$1M in tax revenue per year, with a reduction in Hanover residential taxes, but that statement is not yet confirmed. The developer would like to move forward, but will probably be challenged. The next scheduled meeting is 1/30/19 in Hanover.

**Town Administrator Report – None**

**Beautification Committee Awards – Peg Norris, Chair**

Ms. Norris gave the opening remarks, welcoming Sen. O'Connor and Rep. DeCoste to the ceremony. This year's award recipients are resident Laurie Detwiler, the Block family from Norwell Package Store, and resident Dave DeGhetto. Ms. Norris reminded all that volunteers are always needed and listed all the programs which make the Town cleaner and more attractive.

Laurie Detwiler – Roadside Garden Award – for the inspired maintenance and planting of the large urn across from the James Library. Both Sen. O'Connor and Rep. DeCoste presented official citations from their respective houses of the MA state legislature.

David DeGhetto - Home Garden Award –for the beautiful gardens at his house, designed with assistance from Scott Fredrickson. It was noted that Mr. DeGhetto also shares produce with town organizations. Both Sen. O'Connor and Rep. DeCoste presented official citations from their respective houses of the MA state legislature.

Norwell Package and General Store – Business Award – owners Marty and Diana Block and their employees have done a splendid job keeping the storefront decorated in all seasons. Both Sen. O'Connor and Rep. DeCoste presented official citations from their respective houses of the MA state legislature.

South Shore Natural Science Center - Myrtle McKay Award for the beautiful gardens at the Town center and also at the Science Center.  
Both Sen. O'Connor and Rep. DeCoste presented official citations from their respective houses of the MA state legislature.

**Melanson & Heath Auditors – exit interview – Erica Lussier, Manager**

Ms. Lussier gave an overview of the audit process that is used by Melanson & Heath. The audit team does risk assessment and year end process review, internal controls and policies and procedures. Each year the team selects different departments for review and compliance testing and internal control review. Once the Town Accountant has provided the financials, they are reviewed using the agreed upon scope.

The financial statement review is more comprehensive as it includes the CAFR procedures instead of just financial statements. The CAFR (Comprehensive Annual Financial Report) is submitted to the GFOA (Government Finance Officers Assn.) for their certification program. 2016 was the first award for the Town. As noted in prior years, this is awarded to only 14% of the towns in MA. Ms. Lussier reviewed the contents of the auditors' report with the board. The full report is available in the BOS office and has a complete description and results of the audit and CAFR. The Town was again issued a clean opinion according to GAAP.

The net pension liability is \$19M+, which is the proportionate share for the Town at the Plymouth County Contributory Retirement Board.

The net total OPEB liability is \$38M. The town's annual contributions to the OPEB trust fund help reduce the OPEB liability. The Town's AAA bond rating is partly due to the strong financials and fund balances. The Free Cash amount has been consistently in the \$2M+ range and this year is \$2,062,000. Ms. Lussier discussed highlights of the financial statements, which are presented on an accrual basis.

Regarding OPEB, Town Treasurer Darleen Sullivan added that the actuarial calculation has changed with the GASB updates. The OPEB liability number dropped from about \$50M to the current \$38M partly due to the ability to use a higher rate of return in the projections. The Town's actuary will be here with Ms. Sullivan on 2/27/19 to discuss the OPEB liability. Ms. Allen asked about internal audits. Per Ms. Lussier, the auditors rotate review of the Town Hall departments to help identify risks in financial processes.

Mr. Morin commented on the good experience of working with Melanson & Heath to look at internal processes for the identified departments. He thanked the auditors for their work and assistance, and also thanked the Treasurer/Collector's office and the Accounting Office.

**Storm Preparation- Police Chief, Fire Chief and Highway Surveyor**

Fire Chief Reardon noted that the Town is in much better shape than in previous years. Great volunteers have completed many projects on the list. The COA is now a warming center with their new generator installed. The sheltering question is solved with the use of regional shelters in Weymouth.

The powerpoint presentation by Chief Reardon (which is available on the Town website) includes numbers to call for emergencies, department communications and residential update information. He urged residents to register to get emergency alerts. Storm updates will be available on the Town website, Facebook, Spotlight TV, WATD radio and the Town's cable channels.

For contacting utilities, National Grid's number is 800-465-1212. For bad storms a liaison will be assigned from National Grid. During a storm, the Town will try to get information out periodically throughout the day.

Mr. Brown thought the team did a phenomenal job last year. All discussed options for at-risk seniors; COA communication or a voluntary database, which would allow relatives to get updates about their seniors who are Town residents. Per Chief Reardon, Reverse 911 allows registration of voluntary information to set up a demographic sheet for residents who might need assistance. However, it captures the phone number, but not the residence if the phone is not linked to an address. Registration is through the Town website.

He also gave examples of the Highway Surveyor giving access to blocked roads for medical emergencies. Ms. Demong asked about communication through Norwell Social, a non-town FaceBook group, which is not really the most appropriate way to circulate information. Could one person have the role to post official town information on Norwell Social? Per Chief Reardon, each of the organizations listed on the presentation will get info out on Norwell Social, but there are many people who don't use social media. Per Police Chief Ross, there is always criticism about the way the Town communicates. The departments are working tirelessly to update the Town, but cannot possibly respond to individual posts. Please choose and sign up for your choice of communication.

Re: food for the volunteers – Ms. Demong noted that the Fire Department has purchased an extra freezer and can stockpile food for these emergencies. All discussed warming centers in addition to the COA warming center. Per Chief Reardon, maybe in the future, if the roads are REALLY bad and the Town doesn't require a great deal of sheltering, the Middle School could again be opened. However, Weymouth makes the most sense as it has a variety of resources and is able to provide a much better product. If the school is used, the center would be cobbled together with volunteer staffing.

Ms. Allen asked Highway Surveyor Glenn Ferguson about his storm readiness. Per Mr. Ferguson, he is all set. The plow rates are in line with other towns. He added that National Grid did a great job giving everyone accurate estimates for return of power. Last year's March 4<sup>th</sup> storm was the most destructive storm in many years, and the Town departments did a good job pulling together and clearing roads. He added that residents have unrealistic expectations that create stress when there is a bad storm.

Mr. Ferguson introduced his Assistant Highway Director Joe Conlon to the board, who welcomed him to the Town.

Mr. Rull thanked the Chiefs and Mr. Ferguson for doing a great job. Mr. Morin noted that the Town could not be better served than by these three excellent public servants. The March 4<sup>th</sup> storm was awful and created several crisis points that were well handled by the team. People need to be patient and recognize the limitations of the Town's services. The Town did address the lateness of the response from National Grid last year, which will hopefully set up more timely responses if there is another emergency this year.

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**Set Date for Special and Annual Town Meetings and Town Election**

*Motion; made by Gregg McBride, seconded by Alison Demong, to set the dates for the Special and Annual Town Meeting as May 6, 7 and 9<sup>th</sup> (if needed) and the Town Election as May 18<sup>th</sup>.*

*Unanimously voted*

The Warrant is now open and will close on February 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Adjournment**

*Motion; made by Gregg McBride, seconded by Alison Demong, to adjourn at 9:30. Unanimously voted*

  
Ellen Allen, Chair