

**Norwell Select Board
7-28-21
Open Session
Osborn Room, Town Hall**

TOWN OF NORWELL
TOWN CLERK
2021 AUG 12 AM 10: 23
RECEIVED

The meeting was called to order by Chair Bruce Graham at 7:00pm.

Approval of Agenda

*Motion; made by Bruce Graham, seconded by Pete Smellie, to approve the agenda.
Unanimously voted*

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Motion; made by Andy Reardon, seconded by Pete Smellie, to approve the Open Meeting minutes for 6-30-21. Unanimously voted

BOS Reports and Announcements

Ms. Allen reported that Cross Street Flower Farm received a Best of Boston award. Congratulations to Nikki Bartley and her crew!

Mr. Smellie reported that he met with Rep. Dave DeCoste for an update on State House programs and activities of interest to Norwell and the South Shore. He would like to act as an unofficial board liaison to Rep. DeCoste. He also reported that the Advisory Board Nominating Committee (ABNC) met once and will meet again tomorrow to begin conducting interviews for the vacancies on the Advisory Board.

Mr. Reardon gave kudos to Highway Director Glenn Ferguson and his departments for all their hard work on Town roads and landscaping maintenance. The Town looks great!

Mr. Graham received notification from Conservation Agent Will Saunders that the Town received a grant for \$17.5K, which will be used along with matching Town funds of \$11K for improvements to the Carleton property trail access and connect the two parcels. A future grant application to make these trails ADA compliant is in the works.

Town Administrator

Interviews continue for a new Town Accountant. Town Planner Ken Kirkland resigned to take a new position in Braintree as the Assistant Town Planner. He will be missed by all. HR will post the position and look for interim coverage in the meantime. Mr. Morin will keep the board updated.

The Town received a Complete Streets grant for \$199K to help with the sidewalk construction from Paradise Drive to Lincoln Street. This funding will allow more aggressive progress with continuing construction of the sidewalk beyond the Carleton property, as the wording of the recent Town meeting Article will allow work on the other side of the Carleton property. Ms. Allen thanked Sen. Pat O'Connor for his assistance with obtaining this grant.

Citizen Comments

Sue Kirby, Norwell Farms representative, reported that the organization has had difficulty collecting reimbursement from Cross St. flower farm for their portion of the Jacobs farm utilities expenses during their 3 year collaboration. Although Ms. Kirby has repeatedly tried to contact Nikki Bartley, the \$1500 owed to Norwell Farms has still not been received. Mr. Morin will check into this problem as well as email issues with the Town website.

7:15pm Police Officer Appointment Request – Ryan Doherty

Chief Lee and Officer Doherty were present for this interview. Chief Lee gave a summary of Officer Doherty's background and work experience. He received a warm welcome and support from the board for his transfer from the Abington Police Department to the NPD.

Motion; made by Andy Reardon, seconded by Pete Smellie, that the board approve the appointment of Ryan Doherty to the Norwell Police Department, effective two weeks subsequent to provision of his notice to the Abington Police Department. Unanimously voted

Vote to Accept the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funding from the federal government and to expend such funds for the purpose of such fund

Mr. Morin summarized his request to the board to formally accept the coronavirus local fiscal recovery funding from the federal government and to authorize the expenditure of such funds for the purposes listed in the federal statute. Under the newly elected President, the ARPA fund requires a formal vote.

- Two different sources of funding; a per capita share provided to the Town in two payments; the first is \$500K this year and \$500K next year. Subsequent funds will be made available in the same manner as previously received through the administration of Plymouth County.
- Wide variety of uses for this money: in addition to allowing the Town to replace lost revenue due to COVID, it can be used to assist non-profits and businesses who demonstrate losses from COVID in 2020 and 2021. Mr. Morin has been approached by both types of organizations with requests for such funding. He will share his spreadsheet with the board.
- Waiting for updates from Plymouth County for the amount of available funding. \$948K of eligible spending (under the federal statute) has been identified that was covered through normal budgeting but not reimbursed through the CARES Act. The Town can easily demonstrate lost revenue from COVID restrictions for FY19 to FY20 by review local receipts and comparison of yearly revenues
- Donna Mangan identified eligible expenses that were reimbursable under the CARES Act before she left, mainly from January to June of 2021. Examples: education related expenses such as classroom adjustments and meals distribution, accounting expenses for additional COVID related administration, COA rides, construction delays for the new library caused by COVID restrictions and additional costs for a COVID compliance officer. All are eligible. The new money may close some of the gap.
- The Town was not forced to use Reserves as spending was within appropriations made at Town Meeting for the prior year, but the identified expenses are eligible for reimbursement. This year's Town Meeting expenses would be covered.
- This new distribution differs from prior methods. The per capital funds go directly to each community. The additional money will be distributed by the legislature as well as Plymouth County.
- Ms. Allen asked about the use of this money for infrastructure expenditures such as water expenses. Per Mr. Morin, the Water Dept. has not utilized their prior years' Article money, so this may be reviewed in the future.
- Mr. Morin concluded; there are legitimate expenses incurred that are eligible for reimbursement. There was a definite downturn in local receipts due to COVID. The Town would be foolish to turn down these reimbursement funds.

Motion; made by Ellen Allen, seconded by Pete Smellie, to accept the coronavirus local fiscal recovery funds from the federal government and expend such for the purposes outlined for such funds. Unanimously voted

61A Land on Old Oaken Bucket – Kopacz property; waiver of right to purchase

Mr. Graham summarized the status of this property, which was previously offered to the Select Board as they have the right of first refusal. The board passed on the option to purchase in a prior P & S agreement. The asking price is \$5M. The board discussed ideas for this land if such a purchase by the Town was an option. All agreed that there is probably not enough time to put the funding together, so the right of first refusal should be waived.

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Mr. Graham will present a plan to the board to address options for other 61A properties in the Town on a future agenda.

Motion; made by Ellen Allen, seconded by Pete Smellie, that the board not exercise their right of first refusal to purchase the property known as the Kopacz family trust purchase. Unanimously voted

Approve Town Hall Renovation OPM contract with NV5

Mr. Graham and Mr. Morin gave a brief overview of the NV5 consulting services contract to be signed. NV5 will be the Owner Project Manager for the Town Hall renovation project.

- The Town appropriated \$360K for design and renovation of Town Hall. This will include accessibility for all levels of the building, functionality to reconfigure and expand work and meeting spaces, replacing and upgrading windows, HVAC and electrical service.
- The renovation will greatly improve conditions for workers and residents with more efficiency and a healthier environment. It will look and function like a town hall.
- The total expenditure will be under the levy, with no debt exclusion or override needed. The Town has been working hard to add to reserves in addition to retiring debt. With the ability to smooth the debt and the current excellent rating, the Town can accommodate \$5.5M for the renovation.
- It is important to hire an OPM with experience in ongoing work while renovations are proceeding. The ability of Town Hall employees to work remotely will also be a help.
- NV5 came to the site visit and spent a great deal of time reviewing the specs and gave a great presentation that mirrored what was asked for in the RFP.
- Mr. Morin is recommending that this contract be approved and signed by either himself or the board.
- Mr. Graham attended at least two of the meetings with the architect, adding that this building really needs the renovation. Mr. Morin was aggressive with push back to lower the architect's cost estimate and also recommends this project. The plan is to vote to authorize the project at a Fall Town Meeting. This will be discussed further on a future agenda.

Motion: made by Andy Reardon, seconded by Pete Smellie, to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the OPM contract with NV5 for consulting services. Unanimously voted

Amend Wompatuck /MA Electric Co. Assent Agreement

Mr. Morin summarized the amendment to this agreement with MA Electric to access the land under the high-tension wires for the Wompatuck Park project.

Motion; made by Pete Smellie, seconded by Andy Reardon, to approve the amendment to this agreement. Unanimously voted.

Committee Applications

Julie Quill – Commission On Disabilities

Ms. Quill gave a brief summary of her background and reasons for applying.

Motion; made by Bruce Graham, seconded by Pete Smellie, to appoint Julie Quill to the Commission on Disabilities for a term expiring June 30, 2024. Unanimously voted

Advisory Board Nominating Committee (ABNC) Appointee – discussion and next steps

Ms. Allen relayed concerns of residents who have contacted her about the transparency of the ABNC's appointment process to fill the board's current vacancies. She added that the Select Board's appointee to the ABNC should represent the opinion of the board. Ms. Allen added reasons that the rep should not be her or Mr. Smellie, voicing her concerns about the current perception that the process is not proper or fair. The best candidate for board rep would be Mr. Graham, as there would be no question of his independence on this topic. There is no downside to making this change, which would hopefully allay concerns that are being widely circulated.

Discussion ensued about reasons for this change, which would hopefully preserve the board's standing in the community and might be less of an issue in a future year. Mr. Graham has talked to Mr. Smellie about this issue, which has not gone away and is damaging the reputation of this board. This has become messy, and with all respect to Mr. Smellie, Mr. Graham asked that he stand down from this rep appointment for a year.

Mr. Smellie declined to step down, giving reasons for his decision and adding that he has spent time researching the applicants and discussing the best choices with the ABNC. Discussion ensued, with the board asking questions about the ABNC meeting and application deadlines. Mr. Reardon stated that one of his personal goals as a Select Board member is to minimize the acrimony that the Town experienced at the recent Town Meeting. While he "appreciates the time and effort invested, please consider stepping down. We are the two newest members of this board. This will aid the transparency of the process and allow the board to rise above the chatter. It would be best for the entire community to let the Chair take the reins for this year."

Motion; made by Ellen Allen, seconded by Andy Reardon, to change the Select Board Rep to the Advisory Board Nominating Committee from Pete Smellie to Bruce Graham. Graham, Allen, Reardon voting yes, Smellie voting no. The motion carried.

Ms. Allen would still like to give some thought to this ABNC appointment process. The Advisory Board needs the best possible mix of age, neighborhood, background, skill set and involvement in the Town beyond interest in one Article on the Town Meeting Warrant.

Mr. Reardon agreed with Ms. Allen; diversity is a much-needed quality for the Advisory Board, whose role has changed over the years.

Mr. Smellie opined that a good financial background is important, but not that much. The board should be the Town's conscience, with people who ask a lot of questions, have some inside knowledge of the school budget/Town budget, along with other areas of interest and skills such as forecasting. He added that the ABNC was planning to meet and get everything done tomorrow night.

The arbitrary application deadline was not publicized and there is a concern that open meeting violations were possible with outside conversations. There were also misperceptions, two tiers of candidates and other potential problems.


Mr. Graham will attend the ABNC meeting tomorrow evening and discuss next steps with Chair Matt Greene.

Other Items not reasonable anticipated by the Chair - None

Upcoming Meetings – August 11th and August 25th

Adjournment

Motion; made by Andy Reardon, seconded by Pete Smellie, to adjourn at 8:11pm. Unanimously voted



Bruce Graham, Chair