



**TOWN OF NORWELL**  
Norwell Town Offices, Room 112  
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Norwell, Massachusetts 02061  
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## **Norwell Advisory Board Meeting Minutes March 24, 2022**

The Advisory Board was called to order by Chair Jesse McSweeney at 7:00 P.M. Also present were Town Administrator Peter Morin, Finance Director Darleen Sullivan, and Board Members Mark Cleveland, Bob Perniola, Brian D'Souza, Elizabeth Hibbard, Peter Leppanen, Ned Maguire, and Dane Hutchison. Unable to attend was Susan Darnell.

### **AGENDA**

*Motion by Mr. Perniola to approve the agenda as submitted. Seconded by Mr. Leppanen and unanimously voted.*

### **ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

**Minutes** – None

**Bills** – None

**Reserve Fund Transfer Requests** – None

**Correspondence/Notices** – None

**Action Items / Discussions** – None

### **TOWN MEETING ARTICLE OVERVIEW**

#### **Water Department**

Steve Ivas, Fred St Ours, and Peter Dillon present for the Board of Water Commissioners. Mr. St. Ours advised they would be withdrawing an article requesting \$150K for a water system upgrade and would try to fund the project using leftover departmental funds. Mr. Dillon indicated to Mr. McSweeney that a generator for the South Street plant would also be funded with department funds.

#### **Well Exploration**

The article allocates \$200K for the Department to continue bedrock well exploration activities on land off Bowker Street and three locations off Grove Street. Mr. Dillon noted that there is a need for additional water supply, and DEP encourages redundancy of supply.

Mr. Hibbard asked if well exploration occurred only on town-owned land and if there were use restrictions on such land. Mr. St. Ours indicated that the Water Department owned the Bowker and Grove Street sites. Mr. Dillon added that Water Department land could only be used for department purposes but passive recreation such as walking/hiking was allowed. The Department could ask to test on Conservation land and/or for a land swap or transfer under certain circumstances. Mr. Hutchison asked how long it would potentially take for new wells at these

locations to be brought into service and at what cost; Mr. Dillon felt both time and cost would be minimal as they could tie into existing infrastructure.

Mr. Morin indicated that the anticipated retirement of previous Water Department debt would help the Department pay for additional activity.

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*Motion by Mr. Perniola to approve 2022 Annual Town Meeting article appropriating \$200,000 from surplus Water Department revenues for well exploration activity. Seconded by Mr. Leppanen and unanimously voted by roll call: Hibbard yes, Leppanen yes, Cleveland yes, Perniola yes, McSweeney yes, Hutchison yes, D'Souza yes, Maguire yes.*

#### PFAS Filtering

The article would allocate \$2.9 million in water department revenues to construct four filter stations for PFAS filtering at the South Street treatment plant. The stations would only be used when the plant is used, mostly in the summertime. Two of the filters would be run at a time and the others held in reserve. Mr. Dillon notes that \$2.9 million is the engineers' estimate, and he doesn't think that entire amount will be needed.

Mr. McSweeney asked about the cause of the PFAS issues at South Street; Mr. Dillon opined it could be the Hanover Mall/Target areas, or possibly Route 3 if there was a car fire. Members Hutchison and D'Souza asked about durability and effectiveness of the filters. Mr. Dillon indicated that the filters had been tested and shown to work; they last a long time.

Ms. Hibbard asked about impact on water rates and the possibility of state reimbursement. Mr. St. Ours felt any impact would be short-term and small. Some reimbursement is likely but there is nothing concrete yet. They are planning to issue a 5 or 10 year bond for the work but will apply for any assistance they can get. Ms. Hibbard suggested that they quantify any impacts in preparation for Town Meeting; Mr. Perniola added they should also be ready to speak to resident concerns about water quality.

*Motion by Mr. Perniola to approve the South Street Water Treatment article of the 2022 Special Town Meeting for \$2.9 million. Seconded by Mr. Leppanen and unanimously voted by roll call: Hibbard yes, Leppanen yes, Cleveland yes, Perniola yes, McSweeney yes, Hutchison yes, D'Souza yes, Maguire yes.*

#### **Council on Aging / Community Center**

COA Director Sue Curtin and Recreation Superintendent George Grey present to discuss an article allocating \$250,000 to fund a site assessment for an all-ages Community Center. Mr. Grey noted that the Recreation Department currently had access to very limited space on the lower level of Town Hall, and use of school and library space is subject to availability. The Department would be able to offer more programs if they had the space for them. Ms. Curtin added that the Council on Aging building, even with the addition put on 10 years ago, only had about 840 sq ft available for programming. Additional space could allow them to offer adult day/memory care programs, for which grant funding might be available. Pembroke, Sandwich, and Randolph had recently constructed community centers or were doing so.

Members Cleveland and Hibbard asked for additional details regarding the building and possible locations. Mr. Grey indicated they were interested in constructing a 30–50K sq ft facility with modular spaces and gym with walking track. They were looking at the retiring DPW yard site, as



its location next to the library and near the high school would be an advantage, but were open to other possibilities. Mr. Perniola asked about the possible cost to build; Mr. Grey advised that Pembroke's Center had cost about \$17 million for a 40K sq foot building. Messrs. Perniola and Cleveland praised the intergenerational potential of the facility, which might encourage residents to stay in town after their kids had graduated from school.

All present discussed possible funding sources, including CPC and state grants. Mr. Morin indicated that CPC funds could not be used for the study or most aspects of construction, but might help pay for equipment for the facility. Ms. Curtin added that possible funding sources will be a part of the study. Mr. Perniola asked about optimally timing town funding for construction with the retirement of other debt; Mr. Morin felt the additional information a study provided would help with the timing, noting that other towns had been able to manage the cost of a center.

*Motion by Mr. Perniola to approve the Community Center Study article of the 2022 Annual Town Meeting for \$250,000. Seconded by Mr. Leppanen and unanimously voted by roll call: Hibbard yes, Leppanen yes, Cleveland yes, Perniola yes, McSweeney yes, Hutchison yes, D'Souza yes, Maguire yes.*

#### Dog License Waiver for Seniors

This article would waive the dog license fee for senior owners over 70, as allowed under state law. Ms. Curtin noted that the waiver had been adopted in Duxbury and Hanover; estimated revenue loss would be about \$5000 annually.

*Motion by Mr. Perniola to approve the 70 and Older Dog License Fee Waiver article of the 2022 Annual Town Meeting. Seconded by Mr. Leppanen and unanimously voted by roll call: Hibbard yes, Leppanen yes, Cleveland yes, Perniola yes, McSweeney yes, Hutchison yes, D'Souza yes, Maguire yes.*

#### **Board of Assessors**

Tabled to allow Board members more time to review.

#### **Conservation Commission**

Conservation Agent Will Saunders present.

#### Dog Waste Stations

Mr. Saunders noted that there has been an ongoing issue with people leaving their used dog waste bags at the trailheads and entrances to Conservation properties. A commissioner has identified a company that installs dog waste stations, including bins and bags, and provides bag pickup and station maintenance/replenishment. The article would allocate \$20K for the installation of 10 waste stations at the busiest Conservation properties and along the Town Pathway, as well as one year of pickup and maintenance. Mr. Saunders characterized this as a pilot program that they would incorporate into the operating budget if successful.

Mr. Maguire expressed concern that the service would license irresponsible dog owners to be more irresponsible by encouraging them to leave behind their bags, and that people would continue to do so even if the waste stations were removed. Ms. Hibbard sympathized but notes that left-behind bags are a frequent complaint and would be willing to try the service. Mr. Leppanen commented that the idea and cost seemed reasonable, and asked if it had been tried anywhere local. Mr.



Cleveland indicated that a similar program had been successful in Duxbury, as people don't want to put the bags in their vehicles.

Ms. Hibbard asked about problems with overstuffed bins and people using the bins as a trash can; the company offers additional pickups if necessary. Mr. Morin's experience is any receptacle placed on the properties will be used for trash to some extent. Trees and Grounds has not prioritized trash or waste pickup at the properties in the past.

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After further discussion about increasing dog license fees to cover the cost, and whether the service would encourage good or bad behavior by dog owners, Mr. Morin suggested that the Board consider recommending the article for \$10,000, half the original request. Mr. Saunders indicated they would accommodate the reduction by limiting stations to the busiest properties.

*Motion by Mr. Perniola to approve the Dog Waste Stations article of the 2022 Annual Town Meeting for \$10,000. Seconded by Mr. Leppanen and approved 7-1-0 by roll call: Hibbard yes, Leppanen yes, Cleveland yes, Perniola yes, McSweeney yes, Hutchison yes, D'Souza yes, Maguire no.*

#### Conservation Fund Replenishment

The article allocates \$200K to the Conservation Commission's Conservation Fund. Mr. Saunders noted that the last time the Fund was replenished was in 2011 from CPC funds. Recent expenditures including the Jacobs Pond dam inspection and action plan update, tree removals, and boardwalk maintenance projects had brought down the fund's balance, and the article would allow the Commission to act quickly to purchase and protect desirable land that might become available.

Board members asked what the current balance was, what Mr. Saunders wanted the balance to be, and why they were asking for additional funds now. The fund had a balance of \$530K as of 2021 year end, \$300K of which was set aside for land purchases. Mr. Saunders believed the additional 200K from this article would allow for a reasonable land purchase while still leaving enough funds for maintenance and unexpected expenses.

Mr. Morin advised that this fund was established by statute when the Conservation Commission was first established; this gives the Commission the ability to have funds on hand that can be used to acquire land for conservation purposes. The fund can be replenished from CPC funds, free cash, developer contributions, or Town Meeting. Mr. Morin opined that some replenishment was in order given the recent Jacobs Dam expenses.

Members Cleveland and Hibbard expressed discomfort at the nonspecific nature of the request for funds, and Mr. Hutchison asked if the request could be funded by CPC. Mr. Morin indicated it was too late to reallocate this year's CPC funds, and suggested that the Board consider recommending the article for \$100,000, half the requested amount. The Commission could request additional funds from CPC next year if needed.

*Motion by Mr. Perniola to approve the Conservation Fund supplement article of the 2022 Annual Town Meeting for \$100,000. Seconded by Mr. Cleveland and passed 5-3-0 by roll call: Hibbard no, Leppanen no, Cleveland yes, Perniola yes, McSweeney yes, Hutchison yes, D'Souza no, Maguire yes.*

### **IT Services**

This article, as part of an ongoing upgrade to IT infrastructure, requests \$100K in funding to purchase school computer lab equipment and perform additional upgrades in Town Hall, including increased digitized records storage. Some of this cost may be eligible for CARES Act reimbursement.

Ms. Hibbard asked if it typical for school IT to be funded outside the school budget. Mr. Morin indicated this was not usual, but is an opportunity to help the School Department with its own budget. Some of the funds allocated last year also went to the schools.

*Motion by Mr. Perniola to approve the IT Services article of the 2022 Annual Town Meeting. Seconded by Mr. Leppanen and unanimously voted by roll call: Hibbard yes, Leppanen yes, Cleveland yes, Perniola yes, McSweeney yes, Hutchison yes, D'Souza yes, Maguire yes.*

### **Main Street Sidewalk**

This article requests \$500K to complete construction of the Main Street sidewalk, from Homestead Farm to Norwell Center. Mr. Morin requested that the Board not vote on the article as this time, as he was still waiting to hear about possible grant funding and available free cash.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

Mr. McSweeney advised of the deadline for the submission of nomination papers for members who wished to run for an additional term.

Mr. Morin noted that all articles voted on by the Board in March will have a printed recommendation in the warrant; recommendations for articles not voted in March will be made on the floor.

Mr. McSweeney advised that two meetings in April would be needed for reserve fund transfers and to set "both sides" speakers for items that had a closely split recommendation vote. He will also post a meeting for the day of Town Meeting in case of any last minute issues. The dates for the April meetings will be set at the next meeting.

### **FUTURE MEETINGS**

March 29, 31; two April meetings; May 9

### **ADJOURNMENT**

*There being no further business, a motion was made by Ms. Hibbard to adjourn at 8:16 P.M. Seconded by Mr. Cleveland and unanimously voted.*

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Jesse McSweeney, Chair