



**TOWN OF NORWELL**  
Norwell Town Offices, Room 112  
345 Main Street  
Norwell, Massachusetts 02061  
(781) 659-8000

## **Norwell Advisory Board Meeting Minutes January 25, 2024**

The Advisory Board was called to order by Vice Chair Elizabeth Hibbard at 7:30 PM. Also present were Town Administrator Darleen Sullivan, Town Accountant Christine McCarthy, and Board Members Bob Perniola, Brian D'Souza, John McGrath, Matthew Hanson, Thomas Sullivan, Ed Maguire, John LaCara, and Dane Hutchison.

### **AGENDA**

*Motion by Mr. Perniola to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Mr. Hutchison and unanimously voted.*

### **ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the May 8 and November 28 meetings were distributed and reviewed. Ms. Sullivan will verify the May 8 minutes were properly approved given the change in the Board's composition since then.

*Motion by Mr. Perniola to accept the minutes of the May 8, 2023 meeting as amended. Seconded by Mr. LaCara and approved 4-0-5 by roll call: LaCara aye, D'Souza aye, Hanson abstain, Perniola aye, Hibbard aye, Hutchison abstain, Maguire abstain, Sullivan abstain, McGrath abstain.*

*Motion by Mr. Hutchison to accept the minutes of the November 28, 2023 meeting as submitted. Seconded by Mr. Perniola and approved 6-0-3 by roll call: LaCara aye, D'Souza aye, Hanson abstain, Perniola aye, Hibbard aye, Hutchison aye, Maguire abstain, Sullivan abstain, McGrath aye.*

#### **Reserve Fund Transfer Requests**

None

#### **Board Reorganization**

Ms. Hibbard noted that the appointment of Chair, Vice Chair, and Clerk had been tabled until there was a full slate of members, and gave a brief description of each role. The Chair helps set agendas, runs meetings, and reads the Advisory Board recommendations at Town Meeting. The Vice Chair assumes the Chair responsibilities in his or her absence, and steps in if Chair steps down. The Clerk distributes minutes once prepared, and takes minutes for short or floor meetings. They also need to appoint a liaison to the Advisory Board Nominating Committee given Peter Leppanen's departure. The handbook distributed to all members includes a description of the roles.

Ms. Hibbard was willing to be the Chair and Mr. Perniola the Vice Chair; Mr. Hutchison will not have time to be Clerk this year.

*Motion by Mr. Perniola to appoint Ms. Hibbard as Chair. Seconded by Mr. Hutchison and unanimously voted.*

*Motion by Mr. McGrath to appoint Mr. Perniola as Vice Chair. Seconded by Mr. Hanson and unanimously voted.*

*Motion by Mr. Perniola to appoint Mr. D'Souza as Clerk. Seconded by Mr. LaCara and unanimously voted.*

*Motion by Mr. Perniola to nominate Mr. LaCara as ABNC liaison. Seconded by Mr. McGrath and unanimously voted.*

### **New Members**

Ms. Hibbard welcomed new members Matthew Hanson and Thomas Sullivan; all Board members introduced themselves, noting how long they had lived in town and their involvement in other activities. Ms. Hibbard also thanked former member Peter Leppanen, who recently moved out of town, for his service. Ms. Sullivan and Ms. McCarthy also introduced themselves to the Board and described their background and role in the review process. Assistant Town Administrator Kim Roy will also be involved.

### **Departmental Liaisons**

Ms. Hibbard distributed a spreadsheet showing the preliminary liaison assignments for Board members. Some of the larger departments, including the schools, have more than one liaison to make the task less daunting. Mr. Hutchison noted that any Board member can reach out to any Department regardless of the assignment.

School Superintendent Matthew Keegan invited Board members to the School Committee's Executive Budget presentation on Monday, which will be televised, and budget workshop on Wednesday. He will try to get all information to the Board as early as possible and is willing to meet with members individually. Ms. Hibbard noted that the School Department was the largest budget in the Town and recommended that the liaisons attend as long as a quorum of Board members was not present; any other members wishing to attend should notify Administrator Ellen McKenna in advance to ensure this.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

Ms. Hibbard would like to rely more on liaison reports to reduce the redundancy of questions at meetings, and suggests that liaisons reach out to their respective departments within the next two weeks and prepare an executive summary to be given to the Board; this should be sent to Ellen McKenna, cc'ing Ms. Sullivan and Ms. McCarthy, who will forward it to the other members.

Mr. Hutchison would like to have a binder of warrant articles so the Board can review; Ms. Sullivan is assembling one for the Board. He would also like to see potential articles in advance; these will be available in Ms. Sullivan's office.

Ms. Sullivan would like to schedule reviews such that departmental budgets can be voted on at the end of the discussion, while they are still fresh in the Board's memory. Mr. Hutchinson suggested that any follow up discussions only discuss new information. Ms. Sullivan noted that she may ask

for a revote if she has to adjust line items to balance the budget, but she will try to schedule discussions to avoid revotes. Some of the smaller budgets are ready for votes now.

Ms. Hibbard reminded members to complete their online ethics training; they should also keep their e-mail addresses updated and consider setting up a separate e-mail address for Board or Town business. Mr. Hutchison asked about Board members receiving “Town of Norwell” e-mail address for this purpose. Ms. Sullivan indicated the Town would have to pay for this.

Town Counsel has recommended that if Board members comment on social media, they make it clear they are speaking in their capacity as an individual resident; a quorum of members should not comment on or react to any individual post.

Ms. Sullivan gave a brief update on the outfitting of the new Town Hall building on Longwater Circle. Next year’s meetings should be in the new building.

All agreed to cancel the proposed 1/30 and 2/1 meetings to accommodate scheduling conflicts and allow for liaison meetings; meetings will start at 7:30 unless the agenda is heavy.

### **FUTURE MEETINGS**

2/6, 2/8, 2/13, 2/15, 2/27, 2/29, 3/5, 3/7, 3/12, 3/14, 3/19, 3/21, 3/26, 3/28

### **ADJOURNMENT**

*There being no further business, a motion was made by Mr. Perniola to adjourn at 8:36 PM. Seconded by Mr. Hutchison and unanimously voted.*

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