

**TOWN OF NORWELL  
Advisory Board  
Meeting Minutes  
February 7, 2019**

TOWN OF NORWELL  
TOWN CLERK

2019 MAR 12 PM 3:34

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The Advisory Board was called to order by Susan Powell at 7:00 pm. Present were Mark Cleveland, Kate Steele, Peter W. Smellie, Julie Sim, Karen Reynolds, Susan Powell, Mark Maiellano and Harry Solis. Brian Greenburg was not in attendance. Town Administrator, Peter Morin, was also present.

**ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

**Minutes -- None**

**Bill(s) -- None**

**Reserve Fund Transfer Requests -- None**

**Correspondence/Notices -- None**

**DEPARTMENT FY20 BUDGET PRESENTATIONS:**

**Town Clerk**

Patricia Anderson, Town Clerk, gave a detailed presentation for the 4 areas of her department: Town Clerk, Elections, Board of Registrars, and Town Meeting.

Patricia reported that the Town Clerk's office will pilot electronic voting this coming May at Town Meeting. The technology will be available via an app that the voter can download on a smartphone. Tablets will be provided at Town Meeting for anyone who does not have their own device. The pilot is free of charge to the Town and will be provided by VOATZ.

Patricia reported that early voting had been extended to last year's State Election (it had originally been advised that early voting would only be available for Presidential Elections). There were 1,670 early voters, or 21% of the electorate that participated over 11 days prior to the election. The Town received a grant in the amount of \$3,500 which covered the majority of early voting costs. There were 366 applications for absentee ballots, or 5% of eligible voters. A total 8,016 residents were eligible to vote last year. Total voting participation was 74%.

Some challenges that the Town Clerk's office face is the potential for any unforeseen special elections, Special Town Meetings, or unfunded mandates. Patricia noted the lack of physical vault/office storage space needed for vital records. She is exploring a new software program that may eliminate the need for some paper records, and hence, reduce the physical storage requirements.

The Town Clerk's office turned back \$27,175 to free cash at end of FY18.

**Town Clerk-- Motion made to accept TA FY20 recommended budget \$179,998.  
Seconded and passed 8-0**

**Elections -- Motion made to accept TA FY20 recommended budget \$20,374.**

**Seconded and passed 8-0**

**Board of Registrars -- Motion made to accept TA FY20 recommended budget \$5,200.**

**Seconded and passed 8-0**

**Town Meeting -- Motion made to accept TA FY20 recommended budget \$6,370.**

**Seconded and passed 8-0**

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### **Town Accountant**

Donna Mangan, Town Accountant, gave a comprehensive report for this department. The FY20 salary and expense budget request is level service. The request for \$39,755 in the professional services line represents mandated CPA auditing services in the amount of \$39,250, plus an application fee for the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), in the amount of \$505.

Some of the essential functions of this office are reconciling to the penny the Town expenditures every month, maintaining the general ledger, and verifying monies are being collected and disbursed in accordance with the law.

Norwell is one of only 60 of the 351 cities and towns in MA to have achieved AAA bond rating (FY18). Donna proudly reported that the Finance Department has also been awarded a certificate of Financial Reporting Achievement for a second consecutive year by the Government Finance Officers' Association, USA and Canada. Only 41 of the 351 MA municipalities received this highest level of recognition. This recognition, and the AAA bond rating is very beneficial to the Town to negotiate favorable bond rates. Some challenges the Accountant's face is maintaining a AAA bond rating and successfully completing the very detailed and time consuming CAFR. Donna also relayed, that similar to the Town Clerk's office, they also have space issues. The office employs three full-time employees and the space is too small for them and the financial filing needs of the Town.

**Town Accountant -- Motion made to accept TA FY20 recommended budget \$295,338.**

**Seconded and passed 8-0**

### **Treasurer/Collector**

Darleen Sullivan oversees the Treasurer's/Collector's office. She explained that they collect, deposit, invest, post, and reconcile all Town revenues. The office works wonderfully with other town departments, and there is a clear sense of 'team' Town wide. Over the last couple of years, this department has filled two vacancies in FY18, and has filled one of two vacancies in FY19. The interview process is underway for the one position not yet filled. Despite the vacancies, and the natural re-training that occurs as a result, the office has done a phenomenal job delivering quality work. Darleen noted that one major challenge her department saw over the last year was transitioning from MMHG to MIIA for health insurance.

For FY20, the total department budget request is level service funded.

**Treasurer/Collector -- Motion made to accept TA FY20 recommended budget \$381,932.**

**Seconded and passed 8-0**

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### **Board of Assessors**

Joan Osborne, Board of Assessors' Chair, and Barbara Gingras, presented to the AB. Joan said the department saw an increase in inquiries over the last year, from homeowners regarding how properties are assessed. A web page is currently being developed to help residents with these questions and inquiries. The Board of Assessors employs 2 full-time staff members and a part-time employee for 10 hours/week.

The FY20 budget request is level service.

**Board of Assessors -- Motion made to accept TA FY20 recommended budget \$164,449.**

**Seconded and passed 8-0**

### **Debt Retirement**

This is a non-discretionary expense. The TA explained that the Town is seeing a reduction in total debt service.

**Total Debt Service -- Motion made to accept TA FY20 recommended budget \$2,923,488.**

**Seconded and passed 8-0**

**Total Plymouth County Retirement Fund -- Motion made to accept TA FY20 recommended budget \$2,600,777. Seconded and passed 8-0**

**Total Unemployment -- Motion made to accept TA FY20 recommended budget \$40,000.**

**Seconded and passed 8-0**

### **Group Insurance**

The TA negotiated new Group Insurance last year transitioning from MMHG to MIIA. A BCBS HMO plan was selected for the Town. Employee plans are comparable to that previously provided by Harvard Pilgrim.

**Total Group Insurance -- Motion made to accept TA FY20 recommended budget \$6,406,893.**

**Seconded and passed 8-0**

**Total Town Insurance -- Motion made to accept TA FY20 recommended budget \$418,000.**

**Seconded and passed 8-0**

**Total Transfers Out -- Motion made to accept TA FY20 recommended budget \$253,025.**

**Seconded and passed 8-0**

### **Department Budgets Previously Discussed - Board Vote**

**Board of Selectmen -- Re-vote to reflect revised TA Salary line as negotiated with BOS.**

**Motion made to accept TA FY20 recommended budget \$430,597. Seconded and passed 8-0**

### **FUTURE MEETINGS:**

**February 12th**

**February 26th**

March 5th  
March 7th  
March 12th  
March 14th  
March 19th

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Adjourn - Motion made to Adjourn. **Seconded and passed 8-0**

  
Susan Powell, Chair