



**TOWN OF NORWELL**  
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TOWN OF NORWELL  
TOWN CLERK  
2021 JUL 28 PM 12:58

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**Norwell Advisory Board Meeting Minutes  
2/4/2021**

The Advisory Board was called to order by Chair Peter Smellie at 7:00 P.M. Also present were Town Administrator Peter Morin, Town Accountant Donna Mangan, Selectman Ellen McKenna and Board Members Mark Cleveland, Bob Perniola, Susan Darnell, Rick Goulding, Jesse McSweeney, Andrew Reardon, Julie Sim, and Kate Steele.

**ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

**Minutes**

The minutes of the January 28 meeting were distributed and reviewed.

*Motion made to accept the Minutes of the January 28, 2021 meeting as submitted. Seconded and passed 7-0-2 by roll call, members Steele and Perniola having abstained.*

**Bills**

None

**Reserve Fund Transfer Requests**

None

**Correspondence/Notices**

None

**Action Items / Discussions**

Chair Smellie welcomed Bob Perniola to the Board.

**FY 2022 BUDGET OVERVIEW**

Town Administrator Peter Morin briefly discussed the Financial Forecast at the beginning of the proposed FY 2022 Town budget. This gives an overview of the town finances going and back five years. The Forecast includes an estimate of about \$48 million in property tax revenues (2.5% increase plus projected growth due to new construction or substantial rehabilitation of properties), \$5,386,479 in state aid (including education and general), and \$3.457 million in local receipts.

The total FY 22 proposed budget as of this meeting is approximately \$57,694,000. Some increases within the individual budgets reflect restoration of funding previously cut due to the pandemic. Mr. McSweeney noted that there seemed to be little margin for error in the projections. but Mr. Morin indicated that the revenue projections were very conservative, so there was actually more cushion than it might appear.

### **Town Meeting**

A reduction from \$10,372 to \$9790 is proposed. Mr. Cleveland asked if an outside Town Meeting would increase costs; Mr. Morin indicated that it would, but these expenses could be funded from the reserve fund or a Town Meeting article; CARES Act funding would be another possibility if the Act receives another allotment of funds.

*Motion made to accept FY 22 Town Meeting budget as proposed. Seconded and passed 9-0-0 by roll call.*

### **Board of Selectmen**

This line item includes the Town Administrator, Human Resource Manager, and two clerical salaries, which are set by contract, consultant fees, a travel stipend, and supplies. The proposed budget reflects contractually negotiated salary increases. Consultants are utilized to assist Mr. Morin on specific projects as an alternative to hiring an Assistant Town Administrator.

*Motion made to accept FY 22 Selectmen budget as proposed. Seconded and passed 9-0-0 by roll call.*

### **Advisory Board**

Level-funded at \$2500; this allows for the utilization of a recording clerk to take the meeting minutes, saving the Board significant time and labor.

*Motion made to accept the FY 22 Advisory Board budget as proposed. Seconded and passed 9-0-0 by roll call.*

### **Reserve Fund**

Mr. Morin noted that his usual guideline for this line item was that it be at least half of 1% of the annual budget; he requested that the Board delay voting to allow for future adjustments.

### **Legal Services**

This line item is currently set at \$65K, a figure Mr. Morin is comfortable with but would like to supplement if possible. These funds are paid to Town Counsel Bob Galvin, as well as KP Law and other firms for certain cases. As an attorney, Mr. Morin occasionally drafts documents to save costs.

### **Personnel Board**

Unchanged from last year: \$500 to cover printing and supply expenses, or possibly a recording secretary.

### **Information Technology**

Mr. Morin indicated that there would be some changes to how IT services would be rendered. Previously, the Town had an agreement with the School Department in which School IT employees provided support to Town Hall and the Town supplemented these salaries out of this budget. This year, the Town will be outsourcing IT services to Unify, which is reflected in a reduction in Salary/Wages but increase in Professional Services to \$80,000. This increase will fund increased cybersecurity protection as well as a transition from server-based to cloud-based e-mail for Town accounts, which in turn will enhance the ability of employees to work remotely.

In response to a query from Mr. Smellie, Mr. Morin clarified that this line item covered IT services for Town Hall, Highway/Trees & Grounds, and the Council on Aging. Schools, Police, and Fire have their own separate IT budgets. The School Department utilizes Unify's services under a separate contract because schools are eligible for grant funding that the Town is not. Mr. Morin may further supplement this line item's funding.

*Motion made to accept the FY 22 Information Technology budget as proposed and passed 9-0-0 by roll call.*

#### **Plymouth County Retirement Fund**

Member Andrew Reardon recused from the discussion and vote. This line item is funded from employer/employee contributions as well as an investment portfolio. The Fund is seeking an 8.84% increase in assessment, which partly reflects an effort to retire debt. The Fund will be reducing its projected rate of return over the next few years to bring it in line with actuary recommendations.

Mr. McSweeney expressed concern at the rate of increase in assessments and asked if towns had conveyed these concerns to the Retirement Board. Mr. Morin felt this increase was manageable but acknowledged it was the cause of some discussion among administrators.

*Motion made to accept the FY 22 Plymouth County Retirement Fund budget as proposed. Seconded and passed 8-0-0 by roll call, Member Reardon having recused from the vote.*

#### **MISCELLANEOUS**

Departmental budget presentations will be starting next week. There is a need for a new Animal Control Officer; this is a part-time position shared with the towns of Cohasset and Hull.

#### **FUTURE MEETINGS**

2/9/21, 2/11/21, 2/23/21, 2/25/21, 3/2/21, 3/4/21, 3/9/20, 3/11/21, 3/16/21, 3/18/21, 3/23/21, 3/25/21, 3/30/21, 4/1/21

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

*There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn at 8:11 P.M. Seconded and passed 9-0-0 by roll call.*

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Peter Smellie, Chair