



**TOWN OF NORWELL**  
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## **Norwell Advisory Board Meeting Minutes September 21, 2021**

The Advisory Board was called to order by Chair Jesse McSweeney at 7:00 P.M. Also present were Town Administrator Peter Morin and Board Members Mark Cleveland, Bob Perniola, Susan Darnell, Elizabeth Hibbard, and Dane Hutchison. Unable to attend was Rick Goulding.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the June 15 meeting were distributed and reviewed.

*Motion made to accept the Minutes of the June 15, 2021 meeting as printed. Seconded and passed 4-0-2.*

**Bills** – None

**Correspondence/Notices** – None

### **RESERVE FUND TRANSFER REQUESTS**

#### **Clipper Community Complex**

Mr. Morin requested a transfer of \$1400.00 to the Trees and Grounds Field Maintenance account to repair damage to a turf playing field at the Clipper Community Complex due to heavy rains clogging the drainage system in early June. The turf will likely need to be replaced in another year or two. Higher user fees for non-town groups help cover a share of the maintenance cost. He is requesting the transfer now so the vendor can be paid in a timely fashion.

Mr. Cleveland asked about the advantage to using artificial turf as opposed to grass. Mr. Morin indicated that artificial turf fields are more durable and overall maintenance costs are less over time if managed properly. Since artificial turf tends to be more consistent, it is less likely to cause certain injuries. Mr. McSweeney asked about the upcoming cost to replace the turf; Mr. Morin anticipates a cost of between \$400,000–\$600,000 for both fields, depending on market conditions; he has prior experience replacing turf fields for the Town of Braintree and knows how to save money in the process.

Ms. Darnell asked if Clipper Complex maintenance will be a line item expense for Trees & Grounds going forward. Maintenance is technically the responsibility of the Select Board but they lack a maintenance staff, so performance tends to fall to T&G. Mr. Morin is looking to give T&G a more direct role moving forward.

Mr. Perniola asks whether turf replacement would be a CPC funded activity. Mr. Morin indicated most of the funding would come from the User Fee revolving fund. The Complex attracts

considerable interest from outside groups that pay the top tier fee, and Mr. Morin estimates the revolving fund will be able to cover much of the cost.

*Motion made to transfer \$1400.00 from the Reserve Fund to the Trees & Grounds Field Maintenance Account line. Seconded and passed 6-0-0.*

### **Repairs to Cliff Prentiss Bridge**

Mr. Morin advised that the Cliff Prentiss Bridge off Duncan Drive, which provides pedestrian access to the Jacobs Pond trail system from the Jacobs Trail neighborhood, is in need of repairs due to damage to multiple pilings supporting the bridge. The repairs are not due to any construction defects; a nearby beaver dam altering water levels may have played a role. Conservation Agent Will Saunders closed the bridge to the public once he discovered the issue, and has received a quote of \$13,778 to replace the damaged bridge supports. The work will involve driving in new, marine grade pilings and attaching them to the bridge structure.

Mr. Hutchison asked whether multiple quotes were received for the work. Mr. Morin indicated that multiple quotes are only required for projects costing about \$35,000 or more, at which point three quotes are required. Projects over \$45–\$50,000 have to go out to public bid. The contractor providing the quote visually inspected the bridge before doing so.

Mr. Morin characterized the request as a non-recurring expense rather than expense; typically, he would procure the funds through a Town Meeting article but is requesting funding from the Reserve Fund so the bridge doesn't remain unusable until next Spring. There are adequate monies in the Reserve Fund to cover the repairs, and the expenditures out of the Fund have been nominal over the last few years.

*Motion made to transfer \$13,778.00 from the Reserve Fund to the Conservation Trail Maintenance account to cover emergency repairs to the Cliff Prentiss Bridge. Seconded and passed 6-0-0.*

### **Reserve Fund Overview**

Mr. Morin noted that the Reserve Fund is typically valued at about \$300,000, or one half of 1% of the Town's annual operating budget. By statute, each municipality in the state is required to have one, based roughly on the aforementioned percentage, for unforeseen circumstances and emergencies. Mr. Morin takes a cautious approach to reserve fund expenditures, and the largest expense in his time as Administrator was for roof repairs to the Main Street Fire Station, at \$165,000; these funds were replenished at a subsequent Special Town Meeting. The Fund is also used to help cover deficits in snow and ice removal, as this is one of two areas the Town is allowed by law to deficit-spend on. This in turn helps the Town avoid carrying over these expenses into subsequent fiscal years.

Ms. Hibbard asked if a Capital Needs Assessment was done on town-owned buildings. Mr. Morin indicated this was part of the Town's 10 year Capital Plan, which helps the Town plan for large expenditures on buildings and equipment. The part-time Facilities Director for the School Department was converted into a full-time position with responsibility for tracking maintenance and repair needs for all Town buildings except for the Trees & Grounds/Highway facility. The Town has approved bond funding for expansion of the Highway Barn as well as additional funding for renovations to Town Hall.



Ms. Darnell asked whether the monies in the Reserve Fund were invested when not in use; Mr. Morin indicated they were not, and remained in an operational account funded with tax revenue.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

Mr. McSweeney referenced a recent mailer from the Water Department regarding elevated PFA6 levels, and asked if any expenses were anticipated for the Department to address the issue. Mr. Morin noted that the Water Department has retained earnings, as well as prior approved funds on hand to address any expenses. He has been told that the filtration adjustments needed to ensure compliance are not complicated and are needed on just one well, which has been switched off for the current time. State resources are also being made available for towns to address the issue.

Mr. Perniola noted that he had received feedback from residents on this mailing, and the switching of wells may have contributed to recent "brown water" issues; Mr. Morin indicated that Water is working to address the issue. Ms. Hibbard added that the state requirements with respect to PFAS levels are significantly more stringent than the Federal requirement, and just one well in town exceeded the state requirement.

Treasurer-Collector Darleen Sullivan is the Town's new Finance Director, and Christine McCarthy is the new Town Accountant. The new budget will be ready for AB review in January. Mr. Morin suggests that the AB meet in November to discuss the budget review process and appoint departmental liaisons; new members may find recent budgets and Town Meeting warrants useful in getting up to speed. Mr. Morin will provide Mr. McSweeney with a list of last year's liaisons.

### **FUTURE MEETINGS**

TBD

### **ADJOURNMENT**

*There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn at 7:45 P.M. Seconded and passed 6-0-0.*

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Jesse McSweeney, Chair