



TOWN OF NORWELL
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TOWN OF NORWELL
TOWN CLERK

2022 APR -5 AM 11:28

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Norwell Advisory Board Meeting Minutes February 17, 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, Peter Leppanen, and Dane Hutchison. Unable to attend were Elizabeth Hibbard, Susan Darnell, and Rick Goulding.

AGENDA

Motion made to approve the agenda as printed. Seconded and passed 5-0-0.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Minutes

The minutes of the February 8 meeting were distributed and reviewed.

Motion made to accept the Minutes of the February 8, 2022 meeting as printed. Seconded and passed 5-0-0.

Bills – None

Reserve Fund Transfer Requests – None

Correspondence/Notices – None

Action Items / Discussions

FY 2023 BUDGET OVERVIEW

Town Administrator Peter Morin gave a brief overview of the following budgetary requests. Recommendations will be made late March.

Zoning Board of Appeals

The proposed budget of \$27,520 includes a contractually negotiated increase for the Board's Administrative Assistant plus \$1600 for office expenses. Chair Lois Barbour advised they are also requesting \$1500 for education and professional dues, as this would help bring several new members up to speed. The admin position was added in 2017 to assist with legal advertising and document preparation.

Building Department

Mr. Morin indicated he had no issue with Building Inspector Tom Barry's proposed budget, as he has brought in additional permitting revenue and reduced cost. The Department recently implemented a new compensation system for inspectors under which they are paid a flat rate per inspection; the previous system was based on a percentage of the value of building permit, resulting in insufficient revenue to town.

Mr. Leppanen asked about the Professional Services line; this covers fees for the PermitEyes system as well as the hiring of outside inspectors utilized for certain commercial projects. Mr. Perniola asked about a discrepancy in the mileage figures in the “department requested” and “TA recommended” budgets; Mr. Morin indicated that his figure more closely reflects Mr. Barry’s actual use.

Mr. Cleveland commented that the cost savings in Inspector Salaries seemed to be canceled out by the increase in Inspection Services; Mr. Morin believes this reflects an increase in permitting activity as well as additional administrative staff hours; he will provide additional permitting revenue figures for the Board’s inspection.

Historical Commission

Mr. Morin noted that the \$4K budget funds support staff to assist with administration of the demolition delay bylaw, which can be labor-intensive, as well as printing and distribution of flyers.

Conservation Commission

Conservation Agent Will Saunders advised that his budget is primarily “level services” but requests additional \$10K in Engineering Services related to implementation of the stormwater management bylaw as well as legally required dam inspections and action plans. There are also increases in Professional Services reflecting \$15K in reoccurring GIS services and Wages/Salaries reflecting contractual increases, increased hours for the Administrative Assistant, and \$2500 for a deed research intern to ensure all Conservation properties are properly recorded.

Mr. Morin praised Mr. Saunders’ performance in his first year, as he works well with applicants but also enforces the state and local regulations. GIS was previously a shared cost between the Water Department and the Town that is now part of the Conservation budget; the \$15K requested is the same amount the Town was paying to a previous vendor.

Mr. McSweeney asked about a discrepancy in the Salaries/Wages line between the requested and recommended budgets. Mr. Morin indicated his budget increases the hours for the Administrative Assistant, but not to the full extent requested. Mr. Perniola asked about a similar discrepancy in the “Trail Maintenance” line. Mr. Morin reduced this line from \$25K to \$5K in Conservation but increased the “Trail Maintenance” line in Trees & Grounds. This work is split between volunteers overseen by the Conservation Office and Trees & Grounds personnel, but Mr. Morin wants to keep the bulk of the work, especially trail hazard removal, in Trees & Grounds.

Mr. McSweeney also asked about the Maintenance line; this funds maintenance of trail crew equipment and a “Gator” utility vehicle for hauling equipment and debris.

Advisory Board

The Board’s budget is level-funded at \$2500, which allows for the utilization of a recording clerk to take meeting minutes.

Street Lighting

An increase to \$60K is proposed. Leftover solar credits purchased by the School Department are given to the Town and applied to the lighting bills from National Grid. The Town is in negotiations with another solar provider that would provide additional credits of around \$12K. The Town recently converted all streetlights to LED bulbs; this was handled by National Grid at no cost in

exchange for their retaining their maintenance contract with the Town. The Town looked at bringing maintenance in-house, but the cost/benefit was questionable and National Grid's offer was competitive.

Mr. Leppanen asked about the \$89K FY '21 lighting cost; Mr. Morin believes this higher figure reflects lower than expected solar credits and pre-LED conversion power costs.

2022 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING ARTICLE OVERVIEW

Mr. Morin indicated that several articles, including those dealing with the Harbormaster and a land transaction, had been added to the warrant.

MISCELLANEOUS

Mr. McSweeney indicated that the February 15 meeting had been canceled due to technical issues; most of the discussions scheduled for then will be heard tonight.

Mr. Cleveland advised that the Advisory Board Nominating Committee would be meeting next Tuesday, and will be considering the previously interviewed candidates. Mr. McSweeney asked Mr. Cleveland to make sure these candidates are still interested.

Mr. Perniola asked if any additional details were available regarding the budgets the Board receives. More detailed budgets are not created, but Mr. Morin can get additional details and Board members can talk to department heads/committee chairs for more information. Mr. Perniola also asked if there were documentation requirements to request additional personnel. Mr. Morin talks to department heads directly about such requests and usually knows when they are coming.

Mr. Leppanen asked about IT security in light of issues in recent towns. The Town had recently undergone an IT security audit and outsourced IT services to allow for increased cybersecurity as well as a transition to cloud-based e-mail and recordkeeping. The town recently received a grant for the State to test the Town's information security and provide additional cybersecurity training to employees.

FUTURE MEETINGS

March 1, 3, 8, 10, 15, 17, 22, 24, 29, 31

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn at 7:55 P.M. Seconded and passed 5-0-0.

Jesse McSweeney, Chair