



**TOWN OF NORWELL**  
Norwell Town Offices, Room 112  
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Norwell, Massachusetts 02061  
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TOWN CLERK  
2022 APR -5 AM 11:51  
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## **Norwell Advisory Board Meeting Minutes January 27, 2022**

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 Bob Perniola, Rick Goulding, Susan Darnell, Elizabeth Hibbard, Rob Galibois, Peter Leppanen, and Dane Hutchison. Unable to attend was Mark Cleveland.

### **AGENDA**

*Motion made to approve the agenda as submitted. Seconded and passed 8-0-0.*

### **ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the September 9 and 21 meetings and the November 30 meeting were distributed and reviewed.

*Motion made to accept the Minutes of the September 9, 2021 meeting as submitted. Seconded and passed 6-0-1, Mr. Leppanen having abstained.*

*Motion made to accept the Minutes of the September 21, 2021 meeting as submitted. Seconded and passed 5-0-2, Messrs. Leppanen and Goulding having abstained.*

*Motion made to accept the Minutes of the November 30 meeting as edited. Seconded and passed 5-0-2. Messrs. Hutchison and Goulding having abstained.*

**Bills** – None

**Reserve Fund Transfer Requests** – None

**Correspondence/Notices** – None

**Action Items / Discussions** – None

### **FY 2021 BUDGET YTD OVERVIEW**

Town Administrator Peter Morin advised that an 11% increase is estimated in Chapter 70 state aid for education, as well as a substantial increase in local aid. Excise tax revenues are also forecast to be higher. He is waiting to hear from the Town's Joint Purchasing Group, but is anticipating a 2%-3% increase in insurance premiums. He cautioned that the state aid forecast was based on the "House 1" version of the budget; although this iteration is usually more conservative than subsequent ones, it is possible for subsequent iterations to be less generous, which would require adjustments to the Town budget.

Mr. Morin also advised that the Town's South Shore Votech assessment was anticipated to increase by over \$100K, the largest increase in his time as Administrator. At the same time, three other towns in the District, including one with about the same number of students, saw a decrease in their assessment. Mr. Morin noted that if these towns had been assessed at last year's level, it would have reduced the increase in Norwell's assessment. In response to a query from Mr. McSweeney, Mr. Morin indicated that the assessment formula, set at the State level, did not change but the school had other ways to mitigate spikes in assessments that they had not utilized; he has not received a satisfactory explanation from Votech regarding the increase to date.

Mr. Morin also advised that the Town had maintained its AAA rating with Standard & Poor's, who cited the Town's strong budget flexibility and liquidity. The town has had successful bond issues for the Library and Cole School parking lot project, and S&P indicated that an anticipated \$4.5 million bond issue for the upcoming Town Hall renovation will not have a material effect on the town's debt profile, as other debt is being retired.

Mr. Morin has received a majority of the departmental budget requests, and anticipates a 3.5%–4% increase overall; the budget will be mostly “level services” with some enhancements. He will have the schedule for departmental presentations next week.

## **2022 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING ARTICLE OVERVIEW**

Mr. Morin advised that articles for the Annual Town Meeting would include a number of CPC funding articles for upgrades to recreational facilities, as well as articles for capital purchases, to waive dog license fees for the elderly, establish an Accessory Dwelling Unit bylaw, and modify the Demolition Delay bylaw.

All briefly discussed an article to provide property tax relief for seniors using the State's “circuit breaker” mechanism, whereby if a senior's cost of certain utilities exceeded a certain percentage of their income, they would qualify for property tax relief. Mr. Morin indicated that about 200 homeowners would qualify, and there were adequate funds to pay for it. The state would provide a list of residents eligible for the circuit breaker, but residents would still have to apply for the relief at the Town level.

Mr. Morin indicated he was unaware of any citizens petitions having been filed at this time, and suggested that Board members attend CPC meetings, or watch them on Norwell Spotlight TV, to get a sense of the various funding requests. In response to a query from Mr. Perniola, Mr. Morin indicated that the Community Preservation Act fund was healthy and there was a reliable revenue stream to fund these requests.

## **LIAISON ASSIGNMENTS**

Mr. McSweeney advised that he had distributed departmental liaison assignments; anyone who wants a different assignment should contact him. He and Ms. Hibbard will act as liaisons to the School Department and South Shore Votech.

Ms. Darnell noted that certain departments and line items did not have designated liaisons; Mr. McSweeney stated that many of the smaller line items did not typically require liaisons, but Board members should feel free to research any particular areas of interest.

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## **MISCELLANEOUS**

Mr. Galibois advised he would be stepping down from the AB as of January 31, as he was moving out of town to run for office in Barnstable County. He will submit written notice to the Town Clerk and Moderator. All thanked him for his willingness to serve, and wished him luck.

## **FUTURE MEETINGS**

February 3, 8, 10, 15, 17

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

No meetings February vacation week

## **ADJOURNMENT**

*There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn at 7:50 P.M. Seconded and passed 7-0-0.*

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Jesse McSweeney, Chair

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