



**Town of Norwell
Board of Assessors
345 Main St., Norwell, MA 02061**

Open Session Minutes

Date: October 26, 2020
Time: 6:00 PM
Location: Zoom Meeting (remote), pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order (dated March 12, 2020, temporarily modifying certain provisions of Open Meeting Law, G. L. c. 30A § 20(d) and 940 CMR 29.10(4)(b).)
Meeting ID: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/5946649167>

Board Members Present: Rob Allen, Joan Osborne, Mary Horowitz

Staff Present: Pam Davis & Barbara Childs

Of note: Because this meeting was held remotely, the votes were taken by roll call.

Mr. Allen called the meeting to order at 6:00pm, and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Ms. Osborne moved to open the meeting, Ms. Horowitz seconded the motion and Mr. Allen, Ms. Osborne, and Ms. Horowitz all voted in favor.

Ms. Osborne moved to accept the minutes from the 9/21/20 Open Session, and Ms. Horowitz seconded the motion. All three Board members voted to accept the minutes as written.

The Board reviewed the monthly reports for September as prepared by the Assessor's office, and accepted these reports by unanimous consent. The following reports were reviewed and accepted:

- Bills Payable (Vision: \$4,160)
- Bills Payable (Plymouth County Register of Deeds: \$34)
- Bills Payable (Mass. Association of Assessing Officers: \$250)
- Bills Payable (Plymouth County Assessors Association: \$150)
- Bills Payable (Real Estate Research Consultants: \$4060, for personal property appraisal services)
- Bills Payable (WB Mason: 5 bills--\$63.92, \$610.63, \$29.98, \$16.13, \$21.48)
- 2020 Motor Vehicle Abatement Report (September 2020--\$4094.56)

With regard to the \$610.63 WB Mason bill, the board discussed how to handle it, because it was specifically to purchase air filters for the assessor's office to improve air quality due to pandemic concerns. While accepting and agreeing to pay the bill, the Board feels it would be prudent to

present the bill to Mr. Morin's office in case this expense can be reimbursed through Covid safety-related funding or another source. Ms. Davis will ensure Mr. Morin gets a copy of this bill.

The Board reviewed Motor Vehicle Excise Warrant #5, totaling \$81,288.73. Ms. Horowitz moved to accept the warrant, Ms. Osborne seconded the motion, and all three Board members voted in favor of the warrant.

The Board received an update on affordable housing units in town. (Please see minutes from 9/14/20 open meeting for background). Ms. Davis has prepared letters for each property owner explaining the situation and advising them either that their property taxes will be increasing for FY2021, or that their property taxes will be decreasing for FY2021. Mr. Allen will sign these letters on behalf of the Board. After discussion, the Board agrees that these homeowners should have a chance to speak to the whole board at once (and directly) to address the under/over-assessments, how we got here, how the FY2021 values were calculated, next steps for any homeowner who was overassessed previously, etc. The Board also believes that hosting an open meeting specifically to address this situation without other items on the agenda helps to convey our interest in transparency to these taxpayers. This meeting date will be on November 16, time TBD, held by Zoom.

The Board received and reviewed a proposal from Real Estate Research Consultants, Inc (RRC). Ms. Davis updated the Board that going forward, ATB has ruled that utilities must be valued using a new method, and RRC is able to competently provide this valuation service to Norwell. (Utilities = utility infrastructure throughout the town). Given that this is a company who we generally work with for personal property assessment valuations, the Board feels that continuing to use their services at the proposed rates is prudent. The proposal includes \$4,000 for utility assessments, \$8180 for personal property assessments, and \$1500 for software support. Ms. Osborne moved to accept this proposal, Ms. Horowitz seconded the motion, and all Board members voted in favor.

The Board discussed the Classification Hearing, including a brief discussion of updating the powerpoint used in the presentation, and what the procedures have been for the hearing previously.

Before adjourning, the Board agreed on the following dates for future meetings:

- November 16, 6pm: Open Meeting for affordable housing discussion with residents.
- November 19, 6pm: Regularly scheduled Open Meeting.
- (Tentative, need to check BOS schedule): December 2: Possible Board of Selectmen meeting r/e classification.

Of note: at a point approximately halfway through the open meeting, several non-Board and non-Staff participants began showing lewd images on their screens, which were visible to all present. Mr. Allen acted swiftly by muting participants and removing the offenders from the meeting, but shortly thereafter, the Board decided to lock the meeting with only the Board and Staff members remaining to prevent this from happening again. The discussions regarding affordables, RRC proposal, and classification hearing were held after the meeting was locked.

With no other business outstanding, Mr. Allen entertained a motion to close the Open Session and enter Executive Session, noting that the Board would not be returning to an Open Session following the Executive Session.

The purpose of the Executive Session falls under allowable Purpose 7 (G.L. c. 59 §60 requirement related to confidentiality, and G.L. 214 §1B general right to privacy).

Ms. Horowitz moved to adjourn the open meeting at 6:58pm. Ms. Osborne seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

The following documents and exhibits were referenced during this meeting, and will be retained in the Assessor's Office, in accordance with the Commonwealth's public records retention schedules.

- Bills Payable (Vision: \$4,160)
- Bills Payable (Plymouth County Register of Deeds: \$34)
- Bills Payable (Mass. Association of Assessing Officers: \$250)
- Bills Payable (Plymouth County Assessors Association: \$150)
- Bills Payable (Real Estate Research Consultants: \$4060, for personal property appraisal services)
- Bills Payable (WB Mason: 5 bills--\$63.92, \$610.63, \$29.98, \$16.13, \$21.48)
- Town of Norwell Abatement/Exemption Certificate Listing: September 2020 Motor Vehicle Abatements--2020 tax year (\$4,094.56)
- Motor Vehicle Excise Warrant #5, totaling \$81,288.73
- Real Estate Research Consultants Proposal dated 10/14/20.
- Spreadsheet of Affordable Units and valuations, prepared by Ms. Davis.

Submitted by: Mary Horowitz, Clerk