

**Norwell Board of Selectmen  
Meeting Minutes  
February 15, 2017**

TOWN OF NORWELL  
TOWN CLERK  
2017 MAR -2 PM 1:41

**Present:** Jason Brown, Ellen Allen, Gregg McBride, Alison Demong, Peter Smellie, Peter Morin

**Open Session**

Discussion ensued about the marijuana moratorium and the options being discussed by surrounding communities. Opinion is divided about whether to hold off or move ahead with this plan. All reviewed the moratorium filed by Bridgewater and made comments.

Mr. Brown led the discussion about the Jacobs farmhouse de-leading project proposed by the NHC and talked about the pros and cons of pursuing this avenue. De-leading won't enhance the historic preservation of this property. Mr. Brown talked about the large amount of CPC money that would be needed to do the work vs. using the funds for actual historic preservation.

More discussion ensued, and all agree that this should be put on a future agenda as a discussion topic with the NHC; the tentative date is 3/15/17.

Various rental options were discussed for the property, with no resolution.

Discussion ensued about the Facilities manager and the allocation of his time between the School Department and Town Hall facilities.

*Motion; made by Ellen Allen, seconded by Peter Smellie, to approve the 2/1/17 meeting minutes. Unanimously voted*

**Open Session**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jason Brown.

*Motion; made by Ellen Allen, seconded by Peter Smellie, to approve the agenda as written. Unanimously voted*

**Citizen Comments**

David DeGhetto handed out information on audio issues affecting Town facilities, as well as the lack of comfortable seating for meeting attendees. He offered suggestions to remedy these situations. Mr. Brown thanked him for coming in. Mr. McBride stated that an RFP was recently issued for improvements to the audio equipment in the Osborn room. A vendor will be chosen shortly.

**BOS Announcements**

Ms. Allen attended the first MMA meeting of the year at the state house yesterday. She is on the Governor's local advisory committee. Fact - MA health insurance cost is 40% of the state budget.

A 3.9% increase in revenue is the "official projection", but all are worried that could be unrealistically high. Chapter 70 is increasing only 2% in the Governor's budget, the lowest level since 1993. Ms. Allen highlighted some proposed tax bill ideas from the Governor.

**Town Administrator Announcements**

Mr. Morin expressed gratitude to the Police, Fire and Highway departments for their contributions to the smooth functioning of the Town during the recent snow events. All of these department employees deserve our thanks.

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**7:35 - Public hearing for Junk license, Atlantic Coast Recycling, cont'd.**

Mr. Morin talked to Chief Ross and Chief Reardon after they met with the applicant. Both are comfortable with his business plan. Mr. McBride asked for a building plan and hazardous waste disposal arrangements. Both Chiefs Reardon and Ross forwarded notes to the Building Dept. re: their meeting with the applicant. The computer components will just be resold and will not create a lot of waste. Chief Reardon stated that the meetings with the applicant were productive, and a lot of the questions were answered. However, the business layout needs to be satisfactory to the Building Inspector,

*Motion; made by Ellen Allen, seconded by Peter Smellie, to approve this junk license application subject to the receipt of a business layout acceptable to the Building Inspector, expiration date TBD by the approval date of the license. Unanimously voted*

**7:40 Chief Ross – Appoint Special Police Officer Thomas Paola**

**Police Department Budget**

Chief Ross is here to appoint Thomas Paola as a Special Police Officer.

*Motion; made by Ellen Allen, seconded by Peter Smellie, to appoint Thomas Paola as a Special Police Officer for a term ending 6/30/17. Unanimously voted*

**Police Department Budget**

Chief Ross updated the board on department activities over the past year, reminding all that there is a current shortage of 4 police officers. With academy graduations coming up, he is hoping to interview candidates for some of these positions over the next several months. Although it will be a challenge to get the new recruits up to speed quickly, Chief Ross has a good plan in place. He updated the board on his department's promotions and hires as well as details of the proposed training schedule.

The Police Department's FY18 budget is a level service budget. Most increases are for contractual obligations for the staff, longevity, etc.

The department is proposing to keep 2 cruisers in order to repurpose them.

Chief Ross summarized the funding request for a K9 unit and officer. Most of this cost has been donated in goods and services and will also be covered through fundraising.

In response to questions from the board, Chief Ross explained the benefits of a K9 unit for both the department and the Town, the top priority being the safety of the officers and residents.

There have been several incidents where a neighboring town's K9 unit or state police K9 unit has been utilized. Chief Ross gave examples of instances where this type of unit would be beneficial to the Town. There are two officer candidates for this position who are already on the payroll. One will be chosen as the dog's handler, and will have the dog live with him in order to bond as partners. Options for dog choice, training, and officer training time as well as fundraising were discussed. Examples of fundraising would be to donate the proceeds from the police 5K race. The total cost of the K9 unit would be about \$23K, but NET cost to the Town would be about \$4K.

Norwell Veterinary Hospital has offered to donate the dog's food and medical care for the life of the dog.

This unit could be feasible by some time in FY18. Chief Ross added that the dog is covered under the town's insurance policy; no increase is anticipated. He gave a real-life example of the benefit of using a K9 unit instead of a taser, citing the fugitive incident in the Town in late 2016.

Mr. Morin said that it is typical to fundraise and set up a charitable organization to fund the K9 unit for this fiscal year, and then absorb the additional costs in the following fiscal year. Chief Ross will be researching a grant to help fund this unit.

All thanked him for coming in.

### **Fire Department budget**

Chief Reardon updated the board about the purchase of the new fire truck, which is now at the fire station. He will be going to NJ to do the final inspection of the new ambulance before delivery. This unit should be operational by April or May.

The Fire Department budget includes a grant for the SSRECC operation to purchase \$1 million of breathing apparatus for \$16K. This equipment will be fully functional for a period of 10 years. All 24 units were replaced this past year. From a safety perspective, this purchase was done in conjunction with surrounding communities so that all firefighters are familiar with the equipment.

Changes in the department's FY18 budget include; adjustments to the overtime budget numbers, per the minutes from a previous BOS review of this department's budget. Chief Reardon explained the reasons for overtime (injuries, extra hours to cover personnel serving overseas, etc.), and explained some of the line item budgets dealing with holiday pay, etc. Questions were asked and answered about department personnel numbers.

Chief Reardon reminded all that this "all hazards-based" department has grown from just a "fire-only" department. Call firefighters who are looking for entry into a full time position with the department must be trained as paramedics to be considered. A great deal of training is required to qualify to work in the department; EMT, paramedic, ambulance certification, etc. Questions were asked and answered about the treatment of holiday pay, with a suggestion to consider consolidation into the overtime budget line item. Chief Reardon addressed the board's questions re: increases in line item costs. Per the Chief, annual revenue from ambulance services totals roughly \$800 K. Per Chief Reardon, the cost of each trip is 3-4 times the allowance from Medicare, with an average billing per ride of about \$1250 (examples of different rates for levels of service were given; \$1250 is an average cost). The Department only strives to break even.

Mr. McBride stated that he was surprised years ago by the fact that the purpose of the ambulance operations is to provide a service to the community, not to realize a profit for the department.

He also thanked both chiefs for their excellent efforts for the community, especially the compassion in both departments to the senior residents in the Town. All thanked Chiefs Ross and Reardon for coming in.

### **Recreation Department Budget**

Recreation Superintendent George Grey is here to review the department budget. Per Mr. Grey, his salary is the line item in the budget, with the rest of the departmental cost being self-sustaining. Program fees pay for the rest of the department's administrative expenses. Mr. Brown asked if the department made a profit/surplus on its programs. Per Mr. Grey, there was a loss of \$6K last year, which was considerably less than the prior year's numbers.

Any loss for the department is covered by its Recreation fees revolving account. Mr. Grey gave an overview of various administrative costs for the department. He is hopeful that the program revenue might generate a surplus this fiscal year.

All agreed that the Recreation program fees are very reasonable; they cover departmental costs and provide great services all year round. Over 1100 residents participated in the winter programs. On a yearly basis, there are close to 5K participants.

Mr. Morin is recommending an additional \$7K for playground equipment and professional services for the upkeep of Gaffield and Reynolds parks. If the Recreation Department has custody over these parks they should have a maintenance budget. The BOS have had care and custody of Gaffield Park until this year. There is an Article on the Warrant to transfer care and custody to the Recreation Department. The prior year's Articles have not provided a long-term maintenance plan, so this will remedy the situation. Mr. Morin would like an annual appropriation for maintenance after CPC money completes the rehab in both locations. All board members are in favor of this idea, especially the proposed maintenance plan to follow the CPC rehabs.

The care and custody transfer of Gaffield Park needs a support motion for the BOS Article.  
*Motion; made by Ellen Allen, seconded by Peter Smellie, to propose an Article at the Annual Town Meeting to transfer the care and custody of Gaffield Park to the Recreation Commission. Unanimously voted*

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#### **Conservation Commission budget**

The board gave kudos to Conservation Agent Nancy Hemingway, Con Com Chair Marynel Wahl and Con Com member Bob McMackin for their hard work on the recreation activity accessibility chairs grant application. Thank you!  
Per Agent Hemingway, this is a level budget with no changes, just contractual salaries costs. Mr. McBride asked if there would be any turnbacks; per Agent Hemingway, only a small amount. Budget questions were asked and answered about the Conservation Commission budget. All were in agreement with the proposed budget numbers.

There are 2 housekeeping Articles; 1. 5 pieces of land accepted on behalf of the Commission. Town Counsel did affidavits on the 5 properties. 2. Part of Jacobs Pond area - one parcel is under the care and custody of the BOS, who would like to transfer it to the Con Com. It abuts conservation land.

Agent Hemingway updated the board about the CPC application to link the Town to a new access for Wompatuck State Park off Grove Street that would include a parking area. She added that Wompatuck officials are excited about this prospective project.

#### **Review of STM and ATM Warrant Articles**

Mr. Brown asked Mr. Morin to review the Articles: 9 for the Special Town Meeting, 51 for the Annual Town Meeting. There is very little activity by citizen petition; the majority are yearly business Articles. All reviewed and discussed the list of draft Articles. Ellen Allen asked that a placeholder article for potential land acquisitions be added to both the STM and ATM warrants. Alison Demong asked that the Jacobs Farmhouse de-leading article be moved to the STM. After a brief discussion, the Board also decided to add two placeholders for potential articles regarding a Recreational Marijuana Moratorium and a Recreational Marijuana Ban.  
*Motion; made by Ellen Allen, seconded by Peter Smellie, to close the Warrant for the 2017 Special and Annual Town Meetings. Unanimously voted*

Mr. Brown reminded all that there is no BOS meeting next week. The next scheduled meeting is Wednesday, March 1<sup>st</sup>.

*Motion; made by Ellen Allen, seconded by Peter Smellie, to adjourn at 9:22pm. Unanimously voted*

#### **Upcoming Meeting Agenda – 3/1/17:**

1. Norwell Farms license agreement for Jacobs Farm
2. Highway Supervisor – budget review and road race fees

  
Jason Brown, Chair