

**Norwell Board of Selectmen
Open Meeting Minutes
1/29/20**

TOWN OF NORWELL
TOWN CLERK

2020 FEB 28 AM 9:26

Present: Ellen Allen, Jason Brown, Alison Demong, Joe Rull, Bruce Graham, Peter Morin

Open Session – 6:45pm

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to approve the Open Meeting minutes for 12/11/19 and 1/8/19. Unanimously voted

The board discussed the parcel offered to the Town for purchase on Mt. Blue Street. They will pass on this option on a consensus basis until the next meeting, when more information will be available.

The board opined that it might be time to change financial auditors. There is no need to bid out for a new auditor. The BOS could make a motion to hire a new auditor every few years as matter of policy.

Next week's board meeting will include review of the S & P rating letter as part of the borrowing presentation. The start time for the early meeting will be 7pm.

Vin Bucca stopped by to give the board some information about the fire in Paradise, CA. Ellen McKenna will email the link to the board for the Frontline TV program about the fire.

The board is recommending that they not take the 40R zoning Article to the spring Town Meeting as planned, but instead wait a year. Discussion ensued about the draft Article, Accord Pond Street and maintaining a commercial tax base vs. building more housing along Pond Street.

Mr. Rull mentioned the National Grid has made a big mess of their work area under the power lines along Main Street. Mr. Morin will contact National Grid to ask them to clean up the plywood and dirt in their work location.

Ms. Demong led a discussion about recycling and trash disposal in the Town, expressing concern and offering options presented by vendors at the MMA conference. This topic will be added to a future agenda when Peter Dillon is available to attend the meeting and discuss further. Health Agent Ben Margro will be invited as well. With regard to trash and recycling, Mr. Morin reported that the Town is in really good shape. The recycling center is self-sustaining, actually earning a profit from the sale of purple trash bags. The Waste Management contract was renegotiated with a small increase next year, then will be flat for the next two years.

With regard to any composting proposals, this would not be feasible in the Town due to the number of wild animals living in the wooded areas. The smell would attract them to the composting areas.

Open session, cont'd.– Osborn Room

The 7:30 Open Meeting session was continued in the Osborn Room by Chair Ellen Allen, who noted that the meeting is televised and recorded. All rose to recite the pledge of allegiance.

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Approval of Agenda

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Alison Demong, to approve the agenda as written. Unanimously voted

Citizen Comments - None

BOS reports and Announcements

The board offered condolences to the family of former Selectman Peter Smellie, who passed away last week.

The Town Clerk has posted the state election information on the website and in the Town Clerk's office. Early voting will be available the week of 2/24-2/28.

Reminder: the winter Special Town meeting will be held on 2/10/20. The Moderator's meeting is scheduled for 2/4/20.

Notable financial news – the MBTA application for reimbursement for the Town's transportation assessment has been accepted. The application was completed by Ms. Curtin and reduces the assessment from \$70K to \$35K. COA program participation is up 46%. The SHINE program to help residents with health insurance

Program participation is up 46%. The SHINE counseling program to help with Medicare open enrollment. Kudos to Ms. Curtin, Dee Dee Rogers and her staff for a job well done!

Ms. Demong announced that Norwell's MVP program is having their final public meeting next Thursdays at the fire station. She also thanked Ms. Allen for her term as president of the MMA for the last year. Well done!

Town Administrator's Report

Mr. Morin let the board know that preliminary feedback from S & P on the Town's bond rating indicates that with the stable outlook, the AAA rating will be maintained for the issuance of debt for the library project. The board will have additional discussions about this at a future meeting. This is nice recognition from this rating agency.

Beautification Awards

Norwell Beautification Committee (NBC) Chair Peg Norris welcomed everyone to the 31st awards ceremony. Present were state Sen. Patrick O'Connor, Rep. David DeCoste, JEF and Robbin Fitzgerald, Matt McCauley, Ellen Markham and other volunteers for this active Town committee.

Ms. Norris gave a summary of the NBC's programs, adding that volunteers are always needed.

The Fitzgeralds received the annual home and garden award for best local garden, along with certificates of appreciation from both legislators.

Professional landscaper Matt McCauley received an award and certificates of appreciation for helping the NBC create an island at Grove and School Streets, assisting with projects at Gaffield Park and caring for roadside gardens.

The Myrtle McKay award, given to a group or individual for longlasting service to the Town, was given to Nancy Hemingway this year for her outstanding service to Norwell. She also received certificates of appreciation, all of which were accepted on her behalf by Con Com member Ellen Markham. Ms. Norris extended the NBC's thanks and kudos to Con Com for their excellent caring involvement.

Ms. Allen thanked all of the recipients and the NBC for their contributions to the Town.

Harbormaster 2019 Update

Interim Harbormaster JEF Fitzgerald reported to the board on his past year's activities. April 2019 mooring renewals were very busy for a while! He met with members of the original bylaw committee for an overview on the Harbormaster position. Per Mr. Fitzgerald, there were 120 berthing permits issued for slightly more than \$40K total. Mr. Fitzgerald is recommending a change to the wait list process whereby the list is renewed each year, which will allow him to follow up with those waiting for moorings. Questions were asked about the list; it might take a few years (3-5) to reach the top, but it's not nearly as long as the wait list in Scituate.

In Mr. Fitzgerald's opinion, a full harbormaster position is greatly in excess of the Town's needs as the Town does not have a harbor. There were only 2 calls to settle mooring/river issues during all of last year, and any type of dispute could be settled by the Police Department. He recommends changing the position to that of Mooring Administrator. Ms. Allen reminded all about the procedure needed to change this position. Mr. Morin is recommending a Warrant Article at the spring Town Meeting to make this change. He added that it is a pleasure to work with Mr. Fitzgerald and he has received many compliments on a job well done. He is patient and professional! Mr. Fitzgerald would like to be reappointed as the Harbormaster.

Motion: made by Bruce Graham, seconded by Jason Brown, to reappoint JEF Fitzgerald as Harbormaster for a 1 year term expiring 12/31/20. Unanimously voted

FY 2021 Budget – Town Administrator

Mr. Morin gave a high level overview of his budget forecast for the coming fiscal year. A number of assessments on the cherry sheet were lower, which benefited the Town. Taken in total with a smaller assessment, the proposed budget is a 2.85% net increase over the current year, which is doable. He anticipates that the House and Senate will add to the number, but Mr. Morin likes to use the governor's state budget number to start. Local receipts have been strong, but the budget will use conservative estimates. Adjustments will be made to some of the requests and Mr. Morin will ask for level service budgets from all departments. The funding is still a work in progress for a couple of departments.

Funding will be included to allow the Fire Department to apply for a federal grant to hire additional firefighters in the fall. This hiring would increase the salary budget by about 3.5%, which is needed to fund the Town's match of this grant. The funding tapers over four years, after which the full cost becomes part of the the Town's budget. This line item will be a BOS decision in the fall. One option would be to fund the increase through ambulance revenue. The board would like to review a detailed analysis of this grant proposal, probably as a future agenda item. Mr. Morin will have the Fire Dept. make a presentation around the beginning of March at a BOS meeting.

The board discussed the library staffing, which includes a multilevel personnel request that will be considered in increments. Mr. Morin would like to review actual day to day operations in the new facility before committing to any increases or new hires. Budget increases would be for a portion of the fiscal year, and he would like to match the budget to the actual use. Discussion ensued about reclassifications and employees for staffing. Although the larger library will need more staffing, reclassification of personnel creates farther reaching problems. A wait and see approach will be prudent.

The board discussed other department budget requests for the schools and highway. Highway wants temporary and seasonal workers. A budget update will be provided at a future board meeting.

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Capital Budget Overview

As an introduction to this review and discussion, Mr. Morin noted that this spreadsheet is a wish list; not all requests will be granted. The board discussed each line item and its status in conjunction with Articles that have already been voted for funding on some of these items. Some projects will wait for new construction. The majority of requested vehicles and machines will be funded through Article 3 at a cost about \$1M, plus an additional Article, plus Chapter 90 money.

IT enhancements will fall under a separate Article for \$200K, which will include spending for a wide array of purposes.

Questions were asked and answered about ambulance costs and police cruisers with regard to departmental operating budgets vs. capital costs. Mr. Morin noted that judicious review and budget management of these assets is good fiscal policy. The well-funded capital budget enhances bond ratings. The board would like to see an additional column in the schedule for the source of funds. Ms. Demong would like to see sidewalks in this budget; Mr. Rull would like to see traffic calming. Mr. Morin explained that other detailed lists include these more comprehensive inventories.

There is some grant funding for these wish list items. The board further discussed requests from the schools vs. the Town. Ms. Allen reminded all that schools get one lump sum for their expenditures; any excess is theirs to spend as they wish. For Town departments performing inside their budgets, the excess must be returned to free cash. The next capital budget schedule will have a list of outside Articles and sources of funding.

All Are Welcome Committee Resignation

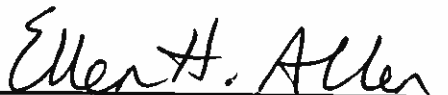
Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Alison Demong, to accept with regret the resignation of John Galvin from the All Are Welcome Committee. Unanimously voted
The board thanked Mr. Galvin for his service.

Future meetings

The board will meet next week on 2/5/20. They will not meet for the following two weeks. The next scheduled meeting will be held on 2/26/20.

Adjournment

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to adjourn at 8:56pm.
Unanimously voted



Ellen H. Allen, Chair