

**Norwell Board of Selectmen
Remote Open Meeting
6/24/20**

TOWN OF NORWELL
TOWN CLERK
2020 JUL 14 AM 10:35

Present: Ellen Allen, Alison Demong, Jason Brown, Joe Rull, Bruce Graham, Peter Morin, DC Simpson, Chief Reardon, Bill Coffey, Pat Anderson

Open Session

The meeting was called to order by Chair Ellen Allen at 7:01pm. She announced that all votes will be roll call votes as the meeting participants are using remote access software. The meeting was recorded and the audio file will be available on the Town website. Ms. Allen noted that this meeting will be conducted pursuant to the Executive Order dated March 12, 2020 suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, Gen. L. c. 30A §20 et seq. and 940 CMR 29.01 et seq.

Approval of Agenda

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to approve the agenda for June 24th as presented. Unanimously voted by roll call vote

BOS Reports

Town Meeting has been rescheduled to July 25th at 10am, outdoors, behind the Middle School. Ms. Allen reminded residents that all may apply for mail in ballots to vote in the Town election on June 27th. Contact the Town Clerk's office for information or visit the Town website for complete instructions.

Mr. Graham announced that the Water Department has mandated Tier 2 watering restrictions until further notice. A complete list of the restrictions can be found on the Water Department page of the Town website.

Ms. Demong announced the opening of a new state Shared Streets grant program. Glenn Ferguson and Kim Roy are working on an application for a hard space and landscaped area outside the Central Fire Station for picnic tables and benches. Update to follow as the application progresses.

Town Administrator Report

Mr. Morin reported on Town Hall updates:

The SEIU voted 22-6 to accept a COLA freeze. They will join with the contract and personnel plan employees to freeze wages for FY21. Mr. Morin thanked all of the Town Hall employees for demonstrating their care and concern through this action which is in the best interest of the Town.

Discussion/Action Items

Approval of Restaurant Seating Plans

Mr. Morin reported that he approved the service plan for Cheever Tavern a few days ago. They are currently offering curbside pickup for takeout orders and hope to have the final details resolved shortly for the outdoor seating plan approval.

He also approved the outdoor seating for Strawberry Fair. They submitted the correct paperwork and have received inspections and approval from the Building and Health departments.

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to approve the plan approved by the Town Administrator for Cheever Tavern at 690 Main Street as laid out in the documents included in the BOS packet. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to approve the plan approved by the Town Administrator for Strawberry Fair at 14 Pond Street for outdoor seating, as submitted, and inspected. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.

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Appointment of New Fire Chief – Deputy Chief Jeff Simpson

Mr. Morin reported that he has participated in the hiring process of 7 fire chiefs in the Town of Braintree as well as sitting on hiring panels for many other towns. He has been a guest teacher at the Fire Academy in Stowe. He stated that Deputy Chief (DC) Simpson is probably the most prepared of the many candidates for Fire Chief that he has seen over the years. In this instance, a broad and careful hiring process is not necessary, as DC Simpson is the best qualified candidate for the job when Chief Reardon retires on 7/31/20. Chief Reardon commented on DC Simpson's exceptional leadership qualities and depth of knowledge of fire department operations. He is well educated and well prepared.

The board thanked Mr. Morin and Chief Reardon, adding that everyone will miss Chief Reardon very much, but know that the department and the Town are in good hands. DC Simpson thanked the board for their compliments and added that he is committed to doing an excellent job for the department and the Town.

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, that the Board of Selectmen appoint Deputy Chief Jeff Simpson as Fire Chief of the Town of Norwell upon the retirement of current Fire Chief T. Andrew Reardon on 7/31/20, with the thanks of the board to Chief Reardon for his years of devoted service. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.

The board congratulated DC Simpson on his promotion. The appointment a new Deputy Chief will be DC Simpson's job and details on the process will be forthcoming.

Mr. Graham left the meeting at this point.

Community Center Designation

Mr. Morin gave a brief summary of this proposal from Police Chief Ted Ross, Jeff Simpson and the Police Union to create a plaque for the Communications Room at the Fire/Police Department dedicating the room to Chief Reardon. This will be a surprise for Chief Reardon!

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Alison Demong, to create a plaque memorializing the dedication of the Communications Room at the Fire/Police Department to Chief Reardon. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.

Town Administrator – Emergency Expenditure Authority from DOR/DLS for Covid-19 Related Expenses

Mr. Morin stated that he doesn't anticipate having to use this, but it needs to be done so that the DOR will accept expenses incurred in excess of an appropriation. With regard to the CARES Act reimbursement already applied for, he added that the Town will be putting in for additional reimbursement. If the application is rejected for any reason the Town might have to spend into deficit, which could be remedied quickly with reserve fund transfers. This vote is needed for any temporary deficit status.

Per Ms. Mangan, this is just a formality so that free cash isn't utilized and also opens up options at year end.

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Alison Demong, that, pursuant to Mass General Laws Chapter 44 Section 31, the Town of Norwell respectfully requests the State of Massachusetts Director of Accounts to approve emergency liabilities in excess of appropriation estimated at \$487,000, incurred by the Town of Norwell, in relation to the COVID-19 state of emergency declared by the Governor on March 10, 2020. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.

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Adopt policy and procedures for federal grants – review and discussion

Mr. Morin informed the board that Town Hall needs this policy, which is similar to the policy already adopted by the schools. Questions about the Town's current policies for equipment purchase and inventory reconciliation status were asked and answered. This policy is just boilerplate for the adoption motion. Current procedures include creation of a list of fixed assets by each department head for the external auditors. The major fixed assets are already being counted, but the smaller assets such as furniture, etc. need to be included in the inventory process.

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Alison Demong, that the board adopt and approve the federal project management policy and procedures as presented to the board. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.

Highway Barn Project – architect designation

- Mr. Morin reported that consultant Barbara Mello put out a project RFP and received 6 responses.
- The BOS appointed committee reviewed the responses and identified 3 finalists. The committee asked the same set of questions of each, highlighting experience, work style, adherence to project budget cost factors in this environment.
- The committee's unanimous vote identified Forte Architects as their first choice.
- They recommend that the board authorize Mr. Morin to enter into negotiations with this firm.
- Mr. Morin expanded on the reason for choosing this firm, noting all of the work Mr. Forte has already done on the project planning. Mr. Ferguson supports this choice. Mr. Morin added that it is important to at least get to the next step in the planning process, regardless of where the project goes with regard to the current state of emergency.

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Alison Demong, that the Town Administrator enter into negotiations with Forte Architects to produce a design for the highway barn project. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.

Appoint On-call inspector of wires – Kenneth Twigg

- In answer to Mr. Brown's question about Town employees vs. independent contractors, Mr. Morin noted that the Building Inspector has worked hard over the last couple of years to bring inspection fees into line with other towns and commensurate to an amount that could help subsidize the office.
- Inspections are now providing revenue for the Town.
- Independent contractors are required to carry their own liability insurance.
- Now that inspections are producing revenue, Mr. Morin will work with these inspectors on the liability insurance issue going forward.
- Questions were asked by the board about building permit fees and proof of insurance coverage. Mr. Morin will address and resolve this concern at an upcoming meeting. Hopefully the insurance will be covered by MIIA.
- Ms. Mangan added that liability insurance is required before the 1099 employees get paid.

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Alison Demong, that the board approve Kenneth Twigg as on call wire inspector subject to proof of liability insurance coverage through 6/30/21. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.

Town Meeting Plan Update

Ms. Allen gave a report from the group that met and decided on the new location:

- Outdoor Town Meeting to be held on Saturday, 7/25/20 at 10am.

The rain date would be Sunday, 7/26/20 at 12pm.

- Stated the particulars of check in and safe distancing guidelines.
- Brendan Sullivan is doing the layout for Town Meeting and also high school graduation.
- The board is asking everyone to provide their own masks, hand sanitizer, sunscreen and bug spray.
- Excess costs would be reimbursable under the CARES act.
- A postcard will be sent to all residents.
- Final decision has not been made on the meeting scope with regard to full or partial vote on the Articles in the Warrant.
- There is no option for video, so attendees will receive printed presentations. All discussed steps to move the meeting along quickly.
- One person will make all the motions, which will be printed and given as a handout.

Chief Reardon is playing a big part in helping with the set up. In response to questions from the board, Ms. Allen noted that many more details will follow.

Revised Public Hearing Policy – Hybrid Meetings

Ms. Allen provided background information on this proposed update to the recently adopted BOS policy for holding public hearings that would allow participation by the public either in person or via Zoom.

- At least one board member in the Osborn Room, plus Adam Sayre in the control room. The rest of the meeting participants will join via Zoom.
- Public would be allowed to speak in the room set up for social distancing. If necessary, residents who wished to comment could enter and exit through the meeting room, but everything else would essentially remain the same.
- If the room is too full, people can listen in on smart phones.
- The Town could encourage residents to participate electronically.
- The board reviewed and commented on the attached policy draft.

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Alison Demong, that the board adopt the revised policy for a hybrid public hearing process for the Town of Norwell permitting and licensing boards as detailed in the attached policy draft. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.

Approve Planning Board recommendation to allocate \$20K from Sidewalk Improvement fund to Complete Streets Committee – design and planning

This recommendation requires a BOS vote in addition to the Planning Board vote.

Motion; made by Alison Demong, seconded by Jason Brown, that the BOS support the Planning Board recommendation to allocate the funds as stated in their motion. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.

Summer BOS Meeting Schedule

The BOS will meet on July 8th, July 21st (Tuesday), August 5th and August 19th.

Town Administrator – Self Assessment and Performance Evaluation

Mr. Morin's self-assessment (attached to these minutes) was reviewed with the board. Ms. Allen reported that it's been quite a year for the Town Administrator! She thanked Mr. Morin on behalf of the board for all his hard work before and during the COVID-19 state of emergency. Mr. Brown echoed Ms. Allen's comments, with board members giving kudos to Mr. Morin. Board members will give Mr. Morin their evaluations at the next meeting when all are able to participate. The comments will be included in the meeting minutes as part of the public record.

FY21 Committee Reappointments

The board reviewed the lengthy list of committee reappointments as well as volunteers not returning for another term. All commented on the fact that the majority of the Town committees

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have few or no vacancies and thanked all of these volunteer members for donating their time and expertise to the Town.

Multiple Motions; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Alison Demong, to reappoint all committee members requesting reappointments for their specific terms as indicated on the attached Committee Member list. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – 6/10/20 Open and Executive Session minutes

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Alison Demong, to approve the Open Meeting minutes for the 6/10/20 open meeting and the 6/10/20 executive session meeting. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.

Future Meeting Agendas

The board will meet next on 7/8 at 7pm.

Topics will include:

- Town Administrator reviews from the board
- IT upgrades
- Update to stabilization policy
- CB Perkins hearing
- Stone wall maintenance
- Committee appointments if needed

Happy July 4th to all!

Adjournment

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Alison Demong, to adjourn at 8:36pm. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.



Ellen Allen, Chair