

**Norwell Board of Selectmen**  
**10/28/20**  
**Open Session – Remote meeting**

TOWN OF NORWELL  
TOWN CLERK  
2020 NOV 13 AM 10:52

**Present:** Ellen Allen, Alison Demong, Jason Brown, Joe Rull, Bruce Graham, Peter Morin,  
Town Counsel Bob Galvin

**Open Session**

The meeting was opened by Chair Ellen Allen at 7:03pm. She announced that all votes will be roll call votes as the meeting participants are using remote access software. The meeting is being 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 Alison Demong, to approve the amended agenda excluding item g. Unanimously voted by roll call vote*

**BOS Reports**

The board thanked everyone in the Town Clerk's office for their hard work and exceptional support during these big state and national elections. The new options have created a huge surge in the number of votes being cast the office has been working overtime to comply with the state and federal election guidelines.

Reminder; anyone still needing to vote can do so at the Town Hall until Friday, October 30<sup>th</sup>, and then in person at the Middle School on Tuesday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Town Clerk Pat Anderson reported that her office received a \$5K grant to assist with election expenses during the pandemic. This funding helped underwrite UV disinfecting lights for the voting booths and pens.

Mr. Brown announced that the Police Chief Search Committee is busy reviewing applications/resumes to determine who will move forward in the interview process. Over 30 applications were received.

**Town Administrator Report**

Mr. Morin announced that the Town will allow Halloween trick or treating to take place on 10/31/20, from 4pm-8pm, following the procedure guidelines and details posted on the Town website. He asked residents to stay with family groups or housemates. Please avoid gathering in large groups. All of the neighboring communities are following similar guidelines. Please don't have parties, use appropriate precautions, and respect those households who don't wish to participate. If needed, call 911 and police will respond as necessary. The Town has done a good job with corona prevention; keep it up.

**Citizen Comments - None**

**Adoption of FEMA approved Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP)**

Chief Simpson recapped his summary from last week, adding the dedication of this plan to the memory of Nancy Hemingway. A letter will be sent to her family informing them of this dedication in recognition of her hard work on behalf of the Town. The new wildflower field will be dedicated to her memory next fall. The board expressed similar sentiments, and thanked Chief Simpson for this idea.

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to approve the FEMA HMP plan with the dedication to the memory of Conservation Agent Nancy Hemingway, and also send a letter to Ms. Hemingway's family. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.*

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#### **Wompatuck Park parking lot project update**

Pathways Committee Chair Kevin Cafferty, Pathways Committee member Brendan Sullivan, and Town Planner Ken Kirkland were present to talk about this project. Mr. Cafferty gave a brief project summary:

- This will be a parking lot for 36 cars, underwritten with CPC funding. The construction plans were ready to go, but a change in the wetland classification created the need for a bridge, located under the National Grid high tension wires, to access the site.
- This extra cost caused a change in plans and increased project expenses. The cost is now between \$400K-\$800K, which is too expensive.
- The plan now is to hopefully build a footbridge or boardwalk across the wetlands with the help of the Friends of Wompatuck. The committee is also hoping for assistance from volunteers as needed.
- Engineering firm Horsley Witten is currently revising the plans. Mr. Cafferty has requested a bid ASAP in order to be ready for construction in the spring, which would give the committee time to ask for additional funding as needed.
- Questions were asked about the status change of the wetland. There is now an intermittent stream crossing this land; not a defined channel but a grassy area under the high tension wires. Horsley Witten redid the wetlands classification as they missed the stream in earlier assessments. A subsequent personnel turnover allowed this change to go unrecorded. The original project estimate was from the initial Horsley Witten team.

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#### **BOS Letter of Support to maintain ferry service - discussion**

Mr. Morin noted that Joe Rull brought to his attention the issue about maintaining the ferry service out of Hingham and Hull in light of proposed MBTA budget cuts. In addition, the letter should also urge protection of the commuter rail funding for the Greenbush line. Mr. Rull participated in a conference call with the South Shore Chamber of Commerce about potential cuts across the board at the MBTA. The hope is to get the State House involved, as there is worry that the future *could* see permanent eliminations of certain services. All towns affected by these proposed cuts plan to send a letter to the MBTA urging them to protect the ferry service and commuter rail lines. Elimination of these services would severely affect the South Shore in addition to creating more traffic on the roads. Ms. Allen requested Mr. Morin and Mr. Rull to update the letter to include this information, copying the Secretary of Transportation, State Sen. O'Connor and Rep. DeCoste.

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, to approve the letter of support to the MBTA expressing concern over the proposed cuts and a request to maintain both the ferry and commuter rail service. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.*

#### **Draft Policy – handling Town properties coming out of MGL, Chapter 61A-postponed to a future agenda**

#### **Peaceful protest policy discussion**

Mr. Brown summarized the reason for this policy draft discussion, which seems necessary given the current politically charged environment. Such a policy would help keep the Town safe and protect emergency services, among other areas of concern. Town Counsel Bob Galvin summarized his draft policy for review by the board.

Discussion by the board addressed the following questions:

- Charge for police details – yes or no
- Police presence (details) required – pros and cons
- Noise (megaphones, loudspeakers, etc.) in a residential area

- Time restrictions
- Prior approval by Town Administrator and Police department, yes or no
- Pros and cons of having a protest policy at all
- Contingency budget to address these events
- Discussion of police presence, first amendment rights
- Contingency budget to address events, same cost coverage for all protestors

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Mr. Morin made the following suggestions:

- Monitor social media for planned events
- Try to anticipate and reach out to organizers to work together
- Urge protestors to call ahead to give Town Hall some notice to help groups be safe and effective
- Please contact the Town Administrator for more information
- There have been many demonstrations in the past with no problems at all because of good prior planning

Atty. Galvin added that this would not be a bylaw, but only a policy. He will redraft the policy to two simple paragraphs without a lot of restrictions for the board to review and approve at the next meeting.

#### **Approval of BOS meeting minutes - 9/30/20 and 10/14/20**

The approval votes for the open meeting minutes were postponed.

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to approve the following Executive meeting minutes of the board for 9/30/20. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.*

#### **Future meetings:**

**See schedule**

#### **Adjournment**

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to adjourn at 8:11pm. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.*

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Ellen Allen, Chair

