

**Town of Norwell
Board of Selectmen
Open Meeting Minutes
March 14, 2018**

TOWN OF NORWELL
TOWN CLERK
2018 APR 30 PM 3:41
RECEIVED

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:03pm by Chair Jason Brown.

Mr. Brown and the board discussed current storm procedures and suggestions to improve communication for future storms. An upcoming BOS meeting will address how to use technology, sheltering scenarios, school closings vs the shelter schedule, a generator for the designated shelter and other storm readiness topics. The Emergency Center will meet first to develop a To Do list and then with the BOS for discussion and public feedback. The Technology Committee should be involved in the discussion on communications. National Grid should also attend the public meeting to address questions directly with residents. Discussion ensued about first communications departments like Police and Fire with regard to social media. All agreed that social media is a double edged sword which is impossible to control.

Ms. Allen suggested that a Code Red be sent to tell residents to sign up before the next storm, perhaps tomorrow.

Mr. Morin told the board he had a meeting with a medical marijuana company who is putting a bid on the Cordwainer property owned by Mass Medi Spa.

Motion; made by Alison Demong, seconded by Peter Smellie, to approve the open meeting minutes of the 2/21/18 BOS meeting. Unanimously voted

All discussed having a Whiting Fields license for John Haskins to hay the fields and whether it is time yet to put one in place since the town doesn't yet own the property. Mr. McBride suggested that the BOS ask Mr. Haskins to do his usual farming plan for the current year, and hopefully the purchase of the property at Town Meeting will go forward to allow him to do an agreement with the Town next year.

Motion; made by Alison Demong, seconded by Gregg McBride, to put in place a straightforward license agreement with John Haskins to hay the Whiting Fields, running from 7/1/18 through 12/31/18, then generate a new license agreement beginning 1/1/19. Unanimously voted

Open Session

Mr. Brown opened the meeting in the Osborn Room, welcoming all after the storm.

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

Citizen Comments – None

Report of the Board of Selectmen – None

Town Administrator Report - None

Facilities Manager Ted Nichols

Mr. Nichols reviewed his department's budget with the board. He gave a short overview of all the Town buildings and what is needed for each. His goal is to spend as little as possible on Town Hall because of the expected move. Questions were asked and answered about his budget. Mr. Morin reminded the board Town Hall is absorbing the full salary of this position in the budget as opposed to last year when it was covered approximately 20% by the School Department. Mr. Morin also addressed expenses that will be offset by the solar credits. He is looking to augment training expenses in the future for Mr. Nichols to have training in procurement and other areas. Mr. McBride asked if individual department maintenance line items would be consolidated into one budget next year to streamline reporting and operation of the facilities maintenance budget for all the Town buildings.

All gave Mr. Nichols kudos for his work on the Jacobs Farmhouse and his help with the new library planning.

Fire Department Budget

Chief Reardon was present to discuss his department budget. He also gave kudos to the safety staff, the BOS, department heads and residents for their help during the storms. Chief Reardon advised all that, fortunately and unfortunately, Norwell has a large number of old trees that are fragile and wet. These have caused the largest amount of damage in the recent storms.

Budget

This is a level service budget with no new personnel. The department will continue to provide the same high level of emergency service. Chief Reardon reviewed the budget line items with the board. Ms. Allen reminded all that the department's two mechanics on staff are also firefighters. Regarding the overtime issue, without overtime the current level of service will not be possible. Chief Reardon expanded on this line item and why it operates the way it does, giving examples of why overtime is needed. Ambulance fees are billing what it costs to provide the service, which is working well. If the state decides to regulate and limit ambulance fees it would have about a 40% negative impact on reimbursable ambulance expenses. Fires are down, emergency services are up, which is a good thing for pre-hospital care.

Code Red has been installed and works well. If all residents would install the app on cell phones they would be very well informed about Town issues, including storm information.

Questions were asked and answered by Chief Reardon. Mr. McBride asked about the 34% increase in firefighters' salaries. Per Mr. Morin, education expenses are now rolled into the Salaries line item, as well as cost of living and other small items. There are some retroactive pay increases also included. This represents about a 5 ¼% increase overall. Chief Reardon expanded on the Education expenses line item and why it is integral to running a proactive and educated department. Further questions concerned utilities, which are shared with the Police Department. There have been improvements made to the Fire department side that will make the building more energy efficient.

Ms. Allen asked about State Police 911 calls. Per Chief Reardon, the Town is close to being able to work with them on these calls. The current volume of calls is the amount that the State Police Department will give to SSRECC (who wants to absorb this business a step at a time). This will provide some additional funding. Mr. McBride asked if the FLSA overtime is funded. Per Mr. Morin, it is level funded.

Water Department Budget

Jack McInnis, Fred St. Ours, and Steve Ivas were present to discuss the budget. Mr. St. Ours reviewed the line items with the board. This budget is mostly maintenance, which is hard to predict. Per Mr. Morin, wage increases were collectively bargained over two years. He also explained the buyout for health insurance and the COLA's for the small department. Questions were asked about their surplus budgeting, which allows the department to ask for less funding the following year. It is also used for capital purchases such as land and equipment. There is a small amount of overtime associated with the storms to monitor water usage and equipment. All thanked the department for coming in.

Council on Aging Budget

Director Susan Curtin was present to discuss her budget. In her overview of the COA budget, she explained that the 14% increase from last year is primarily salaries and some expenses that were formerly underwritten by a formula grant. Components of the increase are coordination of the Senior Work Program and the hours of the Senior Outreach Coordinator (expanding the Meals on Wheels program). In addition, the Program Coordinator hours are increasing from 25 to 30 hours per week. Operating expenses have increased due to contractual costs, the COA elevator, alarm cost and the generator contract (new). Mr. Brown asked Ms. Allen about a transportation reimbursement from the MBTA, perhaps for a van. Ms. Allen thinks it might happen next year. Mr. McBride asked Ms. Curtin to expand on the number of people that the COA serves. The number is trending upward - the COA served about 600 people last year. The COA does SHINE counseling (healthcare choices), which is important because this aging part of the resident population is expanding. This budget provides stability for the workers providing the services - that way if grants are affected this will absorb the excess. All congratulated Ms. Curtin for a job well done. Per Ms. Curtin, if every person 60 and older in the Town took advantage of the COA it would cost \$102 per person. She also let everyone know about her "100 cups of coffee" program to meet new people.

Treasurer/Collector Budget – Darleen Sullivan

Ms. Sullivan reviewed her budget with the board, providing details for the increases in banking services and professional services such as financial advisor services. Two line items decreased, postage and bonding costs. The Town is still receiving premiums on Town bonds, so it is safe to decrease that expense.

Mr. McBride asked about electronic (online) bill payments. Ms. Sullivan explained that not a lot of people are using this option. Questions were asked and answered about this service. The board thanked Ms. Sullivan for her excellent work.

No Place For Hate Committee Appointment

Motion; made by Alison Demong, seconded by Peter Smellie, to appoint Victor Posada to the No Place For Hate Committee for the duration. Unanimously voted

TOWN OF NORWELL
TOWN CLERK

RECEIVED

1. **Quick Announcement:** *There is a 4th storm predicted. Please sign up for CODE RED to receive complete information for Town issues - storms and otherwise. Although social media is an option, Code Red is the official communication instrument of the Town.*

Mr. McBride asked all residents to keep contact information up to date, noting that user preferences can always be changed.

Future Meeting Agendas

1. Mr. Morin would like to review Warrant Articles next week as there are some additions.
2. Move Police Chief, Fire Chief and Highway Surveyor to a future BOS meeting after the Traffic Committee has met to discuss traffic issues in the Town.
3. Mr. Morin would like an agenda item to discuss storm management/readiness/shelter options and the community's emergency response team.

Adjournment

Motion; made by Alison Demong, seconded by Peter Smellie, to adjourn at 8:45pm. Unanimously voted



Jason Brown, Chair