

**Norwell Select Board
2-16-22
Open Session Minutes**

TOWN OF NORWELL
TOWN CLERK
2022 MAR -4 AM 11:51

Mr. Graham called the Open Session to order at 7:07pm.

Approval of Agenda

Motion; made by Pete Smellie, seconded by Andy Reardon to approve the agenda.

Unanimously voted by roll call vote.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Motion; made by Ellen Allen, seconded by Pete Smellie, to approve the Open and Executive Meeting minutes of the 2-16-22 meeting as written. Unanimously voted.

Select Board Reports and Announcements

Mr. Graham noted that resident Tim Wall has stated that his public records requests have not been filled in a timely manner.

The board will make a statement on this topic at the Select Board meeting on March 2nd.

The Town Clerk reminds all that anyone interested in running for election must pull papers by 3/30/22 at 5pm and return them to the Clerk's office by 4/1/22 at 12pm.

Town Administrator - None

Citizen Comments - None

FY21 Audit Review – Darleen Sullivan, Christine McCarthy, Scott McIntyre, Partner-Melanson

New engagement partner (to the Norwell team) Scott McIntyre was present via Zoom to review the FY2021 audit results. Mr. McIntyre reported that everything went well; the Town is in good working order and key account balances were reconciled on a timely basis. The auditors did not propose any significant adjustments or differences in GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles) reporting. Mr. McIntyre reviewed the Net Pension and Net OPEB Liability reporting changes with the board.

Highlights of the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report: (a complete copy of this report is available on the Town website, Town Accountant webpage)

- Representation Letter with clean opinion (highest rating)
- Management Letter – suggestions and comments from the audit team
- Statement of net position
- Balance sheet: Unassigned fund balance of \$8.2M (Stabilization fund - \$2.2M, General fund \$6M) which represents an increase of \$500K from the prior year
- Unassigned fund balance is \$2.5 for the Capital and OPEB accounts
- Increase in the Fund Balance of \$996K from prior year
- Net Cash provided from Operations of \$504K, which covers the principal and interest payments with funds left over
- There is \$5.5M in trust to reduce the OPEB liability, which is 11% funded. The Town is better funded than most in the Commonwealth

The board asked questions and discussed various information in the report with Mr. McIntyre, Ms. Sullivan and Ms. McCarthy, highlighting the OPEB liability and pension reporting. Ms. Allen reminded the board that the Town makes payments into the OPEB Trust each year, which is funded by the meals tax plus \$130K. The Town is currently targeted to be fully funded by 2029, but could postpone until 2040. The discount rate used matches the current rate of return. The board thanked Mr. McIntyre for his presentation.

Financial policy compliance review

Ms. Sullivan's presentation reviews the Town's financial performance measures for FY2021 and includes both the Town's financial goals and polices. The power point presentation is available on the Town Accountant's page of the Town website. Per Ms. Sullivan, the Town has met or exceeded all its annual financial compliance goals. The board thanked Ms. Sullivan and Ms. McCarthy for their hard work and excellent presentations. The Town is in very good shape.

Police Chief Annual Review

Chief Ed Lee was present to discuss his evaluation with the board for his annual performance review. He was asked to do a self-evaluation, which is attached to these minutes. The board comments and questions are listed below:

Ellen Allen

Who did you reach out to in the community? Answer: Council on Aging, schools, parents, teachers, road race participants, the library and the business community, especially businesses who sponsored Town events. Ms. Allen added that she liked the presentation of accomplishments in Chief Lee's evaluation, noting that the Accreditation work will be a great addition to the department.

Pete Smellie

Mr. Smellie reported that he has received excellent feedback from everyone he has talked to.

Jason Brown

Mr. Brown reported that he is very happy with the unanimous choice of the Police Chief Search Committee from a number of qualified candidates. He has received excellent feedback from department members, Town employees and residents.

Mr. Brown pointed out one aspect of the position that residents don't see - the continuity of leadership and organizational culture. It is not typical for both police and fire to get along. This partnership aspect in the Town which has continued with two new chiefs is so important. Kudos to you and Chief Kean for the consistent cordial working relationship. Well done!

Chief Lee agreed that the departments' relationship is excellent.

Andy Reardon

Mr. Reardon cited an incident in the Town where Chief Lee came to a Fire Department call to offer support and assistance. He has been a real presence in the Town.

Bruce Graham

Mr. Graham has been very pleased with Chief Lee's performance, especially noting his extra effort to include his team in attendance at Select Board meetings.

Fire Chief Annual Review

Chief Kean was present to discuss his evaluation with the board for his annual performance review. He was also asked to do a self-evaluation, which is attached to these minutes. The board questions and comments are listed below:

Ellen Allen

Ms. Allen appreciated Chief Kean's unique statement, which included a great narrative, covered many aspects of the job and his notable achievement of Fire Chief Certification. She commended his "learning on the job" approach and performance goals.

Pete Smellie

Chief Kean has done a great job under difficult circumstances at first. His team hasn't missed a beat. Mr. Smellie has heard great things from the firefighters.

Jason Brown

Mr. Brown echoed Mr. Smellie's comments, adding that he is very happy the board chose Chief Kean for the job. He was initially inclined to pursue the same path as the police chief search committee, citing concerns about choosing on such short notice after Jeff Simpson's abrupt departure. The decision not to have one was a gamble, per Mr. Brown, but "the Select Board meetings gave the board a good sense of who you are". He is confident that Chief Kean would have been the top choice and it has worked out very well.

- TO: THE TOWN HALL
TOWN HALL
2022 MAR -4 AM 11:51
RECEIVED
- Welcomed Shane Gokey as the new assistant Highway Surveyor
 - Complete Phase 4 of the Main Street sidewalk to Lincoln Street with improvements to stone walls. Benches will be added in the spring
 - Traffic calming measures around the Town, more to come
 - Gaffield Park parking lot almost completed
 - New pathway behind Town Hall to the east recreation field
 - Recapped the October storm damage; \$400K-500K
 - New Highway building plans are moving along with RFQ's out in March
Mr. Ferguson will act as OPM for the project
 - Tree cleanup is ongoing
 - Boundary issues with some Town boards over project responsibility and maintenance budgets (or lack of)
 - Budgeting issues were discussed for highway, roads, Chapter 90 funding, public road acceptance parameters

All thanked Mr. Ferguson for the update and his hard work. Well done.

Future Meetings

The next board meeting will be held on March 2, 2022

Adjournment

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to adjourn at 9:38pm. Unanimously voted



Bruce W. Graham, Chair

Chief Kean has always provided information and updates as requested. Both Fire and Police cultures continue to work well together in this new command structure, on both chief and deputy levels.

Andy Reardon

Mr. Reardon – “I cannot tell you how proud I am of the work you’ve done since your promotion! Again, you took over in a unique situation and you’re hitting a home run for the Town.”

Chief Kean thanked the board for their comments. He would like to publicly recognize the relationship with the police department, which is excellent and not what existed when he started in the department. There is excellent problem resolution at the staff level before it even gets to the chief level, which wouldn’t have been the case 20 years ago. It is very nice to have the police in such a collegial relationship. Thank you!

Select Board and TA focus areas – finalize

The board reviewed the original draft and made the following comments:

Mr. Reardon will have a better idea of the CHT’s plans when they meet next on 3/1/22. They will be discussing Accessory Dwellings and 61A properties in the Town.

Mr. Reardon gave examples of a Continuity Of Operations Plan (COOP) for the Town, such as a declaration of emergency procedure and next steps. This would include assignment of legal powers during an emergency.

Once edits are made and a final draft is voted, the Focus Areas will be posted on the board’s webpage.

Town Meeting warrant

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to reopen the Special and Annual Town Meeting Warrant for 2022. Unanimously voted

The board discussed the addition of Articles to the list for both meetings.

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to accept the additional Articles to both the Special and Annual Town Meetings as follows: Central Street Land Purchase, Central Street Land Transfer, 22G Article/Veterans Exemptions, Dog Poop Stations, Maintenance/improvement of trail systems, Circuit Street Easement, Change Harbormaster Title, Acceptance of Statute Change, Wetlands Bylaw Amendments. Unanimously voted

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to close the Special and Annual Town Meeting Warrant for 2022. Unanimously voted

At Mr. Smellie’s request, the Board agreed to discuss the possible addition of an article to transfer the remaining Carleton property to Conservation.

Glenn Ferguson

Highway Surveyor Glenn Ferguson was present at the meeting to report on the department’s accomplishments and list of goals for this year.

2021 Accomplishments, 2022 Goals

- Paved over 8 miles of road and worked/improved 40 culverts
- Improved the infrastructure to the pathway system
- Paved Cole School parking lot
- Paved and reworked access to Washington Street Cemetery
- Improved, expanded and added to Stetson Meadows Cemetery access and structure
- Phase II of Eversource’s “Beach Betterment Project” on River Street had several issues. Traffic, police details and bad snow plow damage due to poor road repairs by Eversource created problems for the department. The next phase of the project received a monetary commitment from Eversource, plus \$415K to repave River Street from Common St. to Green St.