

**Norwell Select Board  
Open Meeting Minutes  
3-30-22**

TOWN OF NORWELL  
TOWN CLERK

2022 APR 15 AM 10: 54

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**Present:** Ellen Allen, Jason Brown, Bruce Graham, Andy Reardon, Peter Smellie, Peter Morin

The meeting was called to order at 7pm by Mr. Graham.

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to approve the agenda as presented. Unanimously voted*

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to approve the minutes of the 3-16-22 Open Meeting minutes with edits as presented. Unanimously voted*

**Select Board Report**

The Select Board offered sincere condolences to those impacted by the tragic car accident over the past weekend, and sympathy to first responders involved in this event. Board members added that drinking and driving is always a recipe for a sad ending, and this is a tough time of year with graduations, proms and parties.

Ms. Allen thanked the Facilities Manager for verifying that the flags in the Osborn room are correctly displayed.

**Town Administrator's Report**

Mr. Morin thanked the Police Department and Sgt. Brian Resnick for conducting active shooter training. Sgt. Resnick did an excellent job. It is an unfortunate fact that we have to prepare for an event like this.

Mr. Morin announced that he will be retiring when he is eligible for maximum pension benefits on 12-2-22. He will stay on as a consultant. There is a good plan in place for the transition, with staff and personnel in place to continue in a manner that people expect and deserve. It has been a pleasure to work here and he looks forward to continuing as a consultant on a part time basis.

Mr. Graham thanked Mr. Morin for doing a great job financially. The board offered kudos to Mr. Morin on a job well done.

**Citizens Comments - None**

**Grant ARPA agreement for Plymouth County – Select Board signatures**

Finance Director Darleen Sullivan and Town Accountant Christine McCarthy gave a power point presentation breaking down the components of this federal grant ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) for Massachusetts of \$8.7Billion.

The state grant SLFRF (State & Local Fiscal Recovery Fund ) is a provision under ARPA, which includes \$350Billion to state, local & tribal governments, counties and municipalities. New rules take effect 4-1-22, which allow greater flexibility.

- Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Funds (CSFRF) – \$350Billion for Massachusetts Recovery Plan

TOWN OF NORWELL  
TOWN CLERK  
2022 APR 15 AM 10:55

- Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (CLFRF) – \$350Billion for Massachusetts Recovery Plan

The purpose of these grants:

- Support entities' response to and recovery from the COVID-19 public health emergency
- Build a strong, resilient and equitable recovery through investments that support long-term growth and opportunity
- Maintain vital public services, even amid declines in revenue
- Fight the pandemic and support families and businesses struggling with public health and economic impacts (if qualified)

The allowable use of funds:

- Revenue loss
- Public health response
- Economic impact of COVID-19 response
- Premium pay
- Water & sewer infrastructure
- Broadband infrastructure

The direct federal funds of \$1,167,368 distributed to the Town (2 tranches):

- \$583,684 – rec'd 8/10/21
- \$583,684 – to be rec'd in May '22

Plymouth County Distribution of \$2,101,349 (from U.S. Treasury)

- Awarded \$101,237,378, received 50% 7/21, made 25% available to member units so far
- Funds to be released in 4 phases:  
Phase 1 (25%) \$525,337 – funds available to Norwell after submitting signed Grant Agreement and discuss "Recovery Plan". Then submit application for approval. (Can only plan to use available funds under Phase 1)

The county advised that they will host a meeting of Town Administrators in the next week or so to continue discussions about using the "revenue loss" option, which could also create additional funding.

The following dates apply to this funding:

12/31/24: last day for costs to be obligated

12/31/26: last day for costs to be expended

Annual report goes to treasury

Quarterly filing to county

Per Ms. Sullivan; "Think of this as an additional funding source, which could be used for capital items such as an ambulance or fire truck. The Town could also build some capital reserves". Discussion ensued about various options for the grant money. The funds could not be used to reduce the OPEB debt, debt service, to replenish reserves or settlement of judgement payments.

Ms. Sullivan recommended 'revenue loss' as the use, with the choice of "standard allowance" as the method. Both the new highway barn or Town Hall projects are also options. Funding could be used for any project the Town was going to bond instead of borrowing. The funds would not drop to Free Cash. The plan decided by the board is how it will be spent. Please think strategically. Mr. Morin, Ms. Sullivan and Ms. McCarthy will come back to the board with options.



TOWN OF NORWELL  
TOWN CLERK  
2012 APR 15 AM 10:55  
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Mr. Morin's preference would be that any capital expenditure would be approved by this board. This money, with a modest amount from the Capital Stabilization fund, could buy a fire engine and an ambulance. It would be an easy purchase with an easy paper trail.

Further discussion ensued about spending restrictions and options. Mr. Morin will have more information after the Town Administrators meeting. The board will sign the grant agreement this evening. All thanked Ms. Sullivan and Ms. McCarthy for an excellent presentation.

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to approve the ARPA agreement as presented to the board this evening. Unanimously voted*

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Peter Smellie, that the board approve the recommended path of the CLFRF for spending of these grant funds. Unanimously voted*

### **Council on Aging (COA)/Recreation Community Center Proposal/Draft Warrant Article**

COA Director Susan Curtin and Recreation Superintendent George Grey were present to review this request for a feasibility study and answer questions from the board.

The request is for \$250K to study options for a future community center to provide better recreational space and a larger COA facility. The vision is to promote a healthy lifestyle with this multigenerational facility for all ages. Ms. Curtin recapped the Town's population by age group and percentage. A combination facility would serve an estimated 59% of the Town's population. The senior population is growing, which argues for expanding the COA program roster. The staff and activities have outgrown the current senior center. Many surrounding communities have built or opened larger senior centers. Support services are an integral part of the COA program.

The Recreation program space is inadequate for the large number of activities and participants. The proposed facility would allow the Town to put the right programming in safe and suitable spaces. The expanded program now hosts 366 programs with over 2500 participants. The Town runs all of these Rec. programs out of one office with a full time director, part time staff assistant and part time teachers, coaches and counselors. They share space in other buildings and playgrounds with the schools. There is a good relationship between Recreation and the school department. This option would create much needed storage space and create space to expand both programs.

Ms. Curtin would like to consider converting the current COA space into a facility for adults with cognitive impairment to fill a gap in this area. The COA will participate in a case study to see what would be required for this.

Questions were asked and answered:

- A facility of 30-40K in space would be desirable
- No specific location ideas yet – hopefully this study will provide suggestions
- Town owned property would be preferred
- Municipal buildings are the most expensive because of prevailing wage
- Concern was expressed because this is a huge ask. Hopefully there will be grant opportunities
- There are other priorities on the list such as a new Town Hall and the Highway barn
- Maybe consider renting in a commercial building
- Do this upfront work now, and maybe 2-3 years down the road will produce some feasible options



2022 APR 15 AM 10:55

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- The board would prefer not to own more real estate due to high maintenance costs
- A Town-wide needs assessment should be done first
- Both Ms. Curtin and Mr. Grey cited social engagement, large numbers of people using these programs, unmet recreational needs such as vacation break programs, summer programming, afternoon services for middle schoolers to reinforce the need for such an option
- Mr. Morin noted that both Ms. Curtin and Mr. Grey did this at his suggestion. They have done an outstanding job in both programs with modest yearly increases. This study would be in the mix of other demands on the town. It is a big ask.

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, that the board favorably recommend and endorse the article for this feasibility study. Unanimously voted.*

### **Proposed Town Hall Office Space RFP**

Mr. Morin noted that the discussion and proposal for a Town Hall RFQ will be postponed to the meeting on 4-13-22.

### **Select Board Vote to Refer 3 Zoning Articles**

Mr. Morin noted that this is a procedural vote to refer these articles back to the originating board (Planning Board).

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, per MGL Ch. 40, sec. 5, to refer the 3 zoning articles back to the Planning Board as named: 1) Article to amend Chapter 201 to substitute "Select Board" for the term "Board of Selectmen", 2) Article to amend Chapter 201, Section 201-3.3 Special Permits, 3) Article to amend Chapter 201, Sections 201-1.2 and 201-8.D.4 to amend the Accessory Dwelling Zoning Bylaw.*

*Unanimously voted*

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, that the Select Board co-sponsor the 3 zoning Articles named in the motion above for the 2022 Annual Town Meeting. Unanimously voted*

### **St. Helen's Property Discussion**

Mr. Graham gave a synopsis of this property status. The Diocese expects to put the property on the market in the next two to three years. The Community Housing Trust (CHT) has a strong interest in a purchase and the abutting neighborhoods need correct information. The board needs to explore options for the Town. There are two parcels, both zoned residential only, containing about 11 acres of upland. The CHT has offered to fund an appraisal. There are many possibilities for the use of this land, but the Town needs to determine 1) affordability and 2) the appropriate use(s) that will mesh well with its neighborhood. This is a complex issue, and the board needs to create an effective and efficient process to make such decisions. The appraisal won't happen until May or June. There is a possibility that the Town cannot afford to buy both parcels or even one, but at least the appraisal will provide a tool to help make a decision.

The board agreed that a committee similar to the Carleton Property Committee should be created to study the options for both purchase and use. The committee should be composed of at least one to two Select board members, a CHT member, and a mix of neighborhood residents and selected other committee members. The neighbors definitely need input. All discussed several options, including rezoning and buying part of the property.

TOWN OF NORWELL  
TOWN CLERK  
2022 APR 13 AM 10:55  
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The committee should also generate other ideas for the area. If the Town can't afford the purchase, then perhaps the committee could approach the buyer with ideas for space. The Town should also be prepared to explore zoning options that benefit the Town.

Residents were present to voice worries about future development and request that they be included in the decision making process.

Resident James Berg, 65 Brantwood Road, would like to be part of this committee. The board will come back with a proposal for the committee composition at the next meeting.

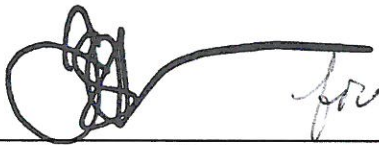
### **2022 Select Board Focus Areas**

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to approve the 2022 Select Board Focus Areas as edited and reviewed by the board. Unanimously voted*

The next board meeting will be on April 13, 2022 at 7pm.

### **Adjournment**

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to adjourn at 9:15pm. Unanimously voted*



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Bruce W. Graham, Chair