

**Town of Norwell
Select Board
Open Meeting Minutes
9/14/22**

TOWN OF NORWELL
TOWN CLERK
2022 OCT -5 AM 11:19

RECEIVED

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

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

Meeting minutes: 8/31/22, Open and Executive Session minutes

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to approve the minutes of the Open and Executive session for 8/31/22. Unanimously voted

Select Board Reports

Mr. Graham extended an invitation to all residents to apply for the open seats on many of the Town committees. A complete list of vacancies is available on the Select Board page of the Town's website.
Please volunteer!

Mr. Brown read an email from Sarah Baker asking the Select Board to donate ice cream for the high school students on the Norwell Cares work day, 9/21/22.
Mr. Morin noted that the Town will pay for the ice cream this year.

Town Administrator Reports

Mr. Morin thanked the Fire Department for their rapid response to the HVAC system burnout at Town Hall.
The cookout hosted by the Fire Department at the COA was a big hit and a great way to connect with the community. The food was excellent and a good time was had by all. Residents will have a tough choice deciding who won the cookout competition; Fire or Police!

Citizen Comments

None

Norwell Cultural Council

Committee Chair Cindy Wright was present to encourage volunteers to serve on the Cultural Council. There must be a minimum of 5 members as a quorum for the committee to continue receiving state grants. 2023 will see 3 current members with mandatory term expirations sitting out for a term before being eligible to return. The committee really needs new people. This is a simple and wonderful group that is important to the Town. Each member takes a role – this is not heavy lifting as the committee only meets 2 to 3 times a year.

Applications are reviewed and grants are awarded using money donated to the Town by the state. Last year the Town received \$6600. The "grant year" starts on 9/1 and is completed by 1/1. Grant awards stay within Town groups for the most part.

Examples of grant recipients are:

- The Cole School for Northeast Passage

- Concert tickets
- Norwell Farms public library programs
- COA Valentine's Day tea
- Field trips
- History programs such as the story of Howard Johnson's restaurants
- Summerfest

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Please pass the word along. The committee can have up to 22 members.

COA/Mass COA: Dementia Friendly Norwell program – Susan Curtin, Patty Sullivan (Mass COA)

After being welcomed by the board, Ms. Curtin and Ms. Sullivan gave background information and highlights of this state sponsored program. Ms. Curtin stated that dementia is not a normal part of aging and gave the board facts about this "epidemic". She hopes to get the support of the board for this project.

Ms. Sullivan, Mass COA program director, gave examples of a dementia friendly community. The challenge is that people don't know where to turn for help when the familial support group fades away. The goal is to have people feel supported and included. Sample steps to make this happen are:

1. Action team – Ms. Curtin is assembling
2. Review and implement next steps on the master checklist
3. The Norwell COA has applied for a grant (\$45K), to fund a dementia coordinator
4. Partnering with memory care facility on Cordwainer Drive
5. The state and Town COA's are presenting a 5-part series of programs
6. Interactive monthly workshops on how to deal with dementia
7. Schedule intergenerational programs with high schools (bringing this program to NHS in October)
8. Encourage community participation
9. Some partnering with Harbor Media is possible
10. Would love to get business community volunteers as well as residents.

The board thanked Ms. Curtin and Ms. Sullivan for making this happen.

Highway Barn Update

Glenn Ferguson, Shane Gokey and architect Ed Forte were present to update the board on the highway barn project. Mr. Graham expressed the hope that the additional funding ask would be less than the last request.

Mr. Forte's presentation reviewed the steps to work the project in phases and answered questions about the bid process and timeline. He noted that they had to reject the low bid received in the spring (\$6.7M on the original project estimate of \$5.7M) as it was not enough money to meet the updated project estimate. A bid can be made subject to Town Meeting approval within 60 days.

Mr. Ferguson and Mr. Forte made the following recommendations:

1. Rebid at the earliest time possible
2. Potential additional soft costs if project slips to 2023
3. Don't prequalify this time, but have certain criteria built into the bid
4. Make the contract subject to Town Meeting approval
5. Allow additional time for bidder to prepare lead time items
6. Not recommending phased project
7. Now asking for \$7,251,269

Questions were asked and answered about the bid process and accuracy of cost predictions. The above number is still much higher than the original estimate. The cost estimator's accuracy was discussed at length.

- Mr. Forte quoted \$6.4M in response to Mr. Morin's question about the \$7.2M number without the "add alts".
- This would allow expanded admin space and vehicle storage.
- Does not include a clerk of the works (should be added)
- Mr. Morin commented that he understands that it is daunting to build something under the levy, but a commitment was made to the residents to do this. \$6.3M could probably be requested and received, but \$7.2M is NOT going to happen. He appreciates the challenges of this project. It was incredibly hard to create this \$5.5M bonding for the original project. Strict budgeting in operations and revenue is the sole reason that this project is possible.
- Reminder: the cost estimators were so far off the mark with the Town Hall renovation that the project cannot take place. The Town will seek facilities other than the building at 345 Main Street.

Mr. Graham noted that this update is still not bringing the cost down. This is the same project in different wrapping. He was hoping for estimates in the \$6.2M range. The board commented that a plan could be created for additional project funding, but the number absolutely must be under \$7.2M, hopefully in the \$6.2M range.

Mr. Ferguson explained his reasons for repeating the same project specs. He doesn't want to confirm a number until the bids are received in the middle of November. The board discussed breaking the project into phases. Most would like to have the "people needs" addressed by completing the administration building first.

Additional funding is a problem. Mr. Reardon would like to hear a more solid contingency plan if Town Meeting votes No. He requested that Mr. Ferguson be prepared to discuss his fallback plan in detail with voters. The project still might need to be broken into two pieces.

Mr. Ferguson's schedule requires notification by October 5th that a Special Town Meeting will be called in early December for this additional spending approval. Mr. Graham agreed to notify Mr. Ferguson.

AFSCME Tree and Grounds MOA approval and vote

Mr. Morin gave an overview of this updated contract with Council 93, Local 1700 union for Tree and Grounds.

The current wage and salary scale was replaced, there is a 2% COLA each year, bringing the wages up to be competitive with surrounding communities. The substance testing is more efficient and longevity payments are now included.

Mr. Morin is recommending the contract to the board, who reviewed it in detail in the Executive Session before this meeting.

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to approve the AFSCME Tree & Grounds MOA, expiring 6/30/25, as presented to the board. Unanimously voted

Norwell Historical Commission (NHC) – Maintenance and Repair schedule for historic properties

Mr. Graham summarized a discussion topic that he presented at the NHC meeting this week. The Town has spent just shy of \$1M to renovate the Jacobs farmhouse. He

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asked that the NHC prepare a 15-year maintenance plan/budget for this property so that the Select Board and residents know what to expect for spending requests. The NHC opined that this very large amount expended was due to years of deferred maintenance.

Open Space and Recreation Plan Implementation Committee

Mr. Graham reviewed the committee membership details with the board. There are 8 specific committee seats, all filled except for:

1. Planning Board Rep
2. Recreation Commission rep

The Select Board has the authority to appoint Alternate members. Con Com Chair Marynel Wahl has requested that the board appoint 4 Alternates as listed below in the board vote.

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to appoint Wendy Bawabe, Fred Bousquet, Ilana Quirk and Heather Hanley to the Open Space and Recreation Plan Implementation Committee for terms expiring 6/30/25. Unanimously voted.

Water Treatment PFAS project – Darleen Sullivan

Ms. Sullivan was present to recap this project funding and request the Select Board to authorize Treasurer Mary Beth Carter to do the borrowing for this project. This is 0% permanent financing. Though not final yet, the loan forgiveness amount will hopefully be \$580K. Ms. Carter reviewed the small costs details, adding that the term length of the loan is still being decided after the project review with the bond rating agency. The debt service will be handled by the Water Department.

Mr. Brown read two motions into the minutes, per Ms. Carter's request. The motions, votes, and signatures paperwork are attached to these minutes.

Appointment – Plumbing/Gas Inspector – Peter Wilson, Jr.

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to appoint Peter Wilson, Jr. as a gas and plumbing inspector for a term expiring 6/30/23. Unanimously voted

Future meetings- 9/28/22, 10/12/22, 10/26/22 (meeting at public library)

Adjournment

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to adjourn at 8:45pm. Unanimously voted



Bruce W. Graham, Chair