

**Town of Norwell  
Select Board Meeting  
Open Session  
4-12-23**

Present: Bruce Graham, Jason Brown, Andy Reardon, Ellen Allen, Pete Smellie, Darleen Sullivan

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to exit Executive Session at 7:02pm, returning to Open Session. Allen -yes, Brown – yes, Graham – yes, Reardon – yes, Smellie – yes.*

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

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to approve the amended minutes of the Open Meeting on 3/29/23. Unanimously voted*

**Select Board Reports**

Mr. Reardon updated the board on his meetings with MBTA Advisory Board. That board has asked that the Select Board sign a letter of support for their capital improvement plan, which includes project funding (among other projects) to improve the rail line from Greenbush to Boston and supports continuing ferry service out of Hingham and Hull to Boston. Mr. Reardon will provide a copy of the support letter, which is needed by April 24<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Allen proposed a properly posted Zoom/phone meeting to approve a letter of support.

**Town Administrator Report**

Ms. Sullivan announced that the CERT team is looking for volunteers to join the group. The home page of the Town website has information about the training schedule and how to sign up.

A rabies clinic will be held by Norwell Veterinary Hospital at the Central Fire Station, 622 Main Street on Saturday, April 15<sup>th</sup>. Please see the Home page of the Town website for complete information.

**Citizens Comments – None**

**Introduction of new Treasurer – Pamela Adduci**

Ms. Adduci was welcomed by Ms. Sullivan and the board. Her first day was 4/3/23. She thanked the board for the opportunity to work with the Town.

**Appointment of Special Police Officer Christos Koci – Chief Lee**

Chief Lee was present to introduce Officer Koci and recommend this appointment to the board. He gave a summary of Officer Koci's background and answered questions from the board.

*Motion: made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to appoint Christos Koci as a Special Police Officer for the town of Norwell. Unanimously voted*

### **Animal Control Officer (ACO); overview and FAQ's – Officer Josh Kimball**

Officer Kimball was present to give a summary of his job duties and answer questions about what he is and is not permitted to do.

The confusion over his contact phone number was ironed out. The best way to reach Officer Kimball is to call the main number at the Cohasset Police Department; 781-383-1212. His work hours are Monday through Friday, 8am to 4pm. After hours callers can leave voicemails for nonemergency issues. There is a reciprocal agreement with Rockland, Hingham and Hull for coverage when Officer Kimball is not available. Emergencies are handled by police department personnel. Dispatch has protocols to follow when the ACO is both on and off duty.

Questions were asked and answered about calls concerning private property access. The ACO can only access private property to handle a wild animal if it is sick, injured or there is a potential emergency risk (ex. A bat inside a home, which presents a risk of rabies transmission if anyone is bitten). Further examples of situations were discussed in which 'problem animal control' issues would be handled by a licensed animal control company (ex. - raccoons in a chimney).

All discussed the call volume in relation to the geographical service area and how it affects response times. Chief Lee, DC McDevitt and Officer Kimball are comfortable that the job is being managed effectively with assistance from police when the ACO is not available. There are approximately 20 to 30 calls for service each day, plus after-hours calls. The ACO job is split between Cohasset and Norwell; 30 hours per week for Cohasset and 10 hours per week for Norwell. However, Officer Kimball stated that he does not view the job in that context, but rather goes to where the work is needed, regardless of the location.

Further questions were asked and answered. An updated description of the ACO duties and FAQ's will be put on the Town website.

The board requested that Officer Kimball fine tune the long weekend return calls response time if possible. Chief Lee noted that the Town will always send an officer in an emergency situation.

Mr. Graham and board thanked Officer Kimball and Chief Lee for coming in.

### **Recreation Commission Application: Dustin Reardon**

Dustin Reardon gave a summary of his background and reasons for applying.

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to appoint Dustin Reardon as an At Large member of the Recreation Committee for a 3 year term expiring 6/30/26. Unanimously voted*

### **MSBA Statement of Interest application; board vote, authorization for Supt. Keegan document, signed by Town Clerk**

Supt. Matt Keegan, Mr. Warren MacCallum and Christina Kane (Chair, School Committee) were present to request that the Select Board sign off on a statement of interest for the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) to consider eligibility for state funding to help underwrite emergency repairs. Although the funding period is currently closed, the MSBA's recommendation was to submit this application. Eligibility will be determined between now and December when the MSBA does a site visit. The next phase will be a feasibility study, which may take 2 or 3 years to determine which

course to pursue; repairs or a new building. Supt. Keegan presented an overview of the school's capital plan with repair details for this 50 year old building. He presented current class statistics and future planning options, noting that the schools are at capacity now. With an expanding school population, the Town may have to look at adding modular units. Ms. Allen urged Supt. Keegan to involve Sen. O'Connor as a resource in this process as he was instrumental with funding assistance for the new library.

Questions were asked and answered about the eligibility process and next steps (this is only Step 1).

Mr. Reardon expressed his concerns, noting that 22 years ago a large amount of money was spent on the high school. He asked about ongoing maintenance since that time. Supt. Keegan recapped repairs and maintenance projects over the 22-year time period. Ms. Kane added that the high school is obviously in constant use by a large number of occupants every day. In response to Mr. Reardon's concern about the affordability of such a daunting financial expenditure for senior residents, Ms. Kane assured him that the school board understands this problem and well aware of the impact that this project would have on residential taxes. Ms. Allen opined that repairs would be dramatically less than building a new high school. Discussion ensued about funding options and strategic thinking for the management of this Town building.

**Select Board vote to authorize Town Administrator to sign as CEO on MSBA form:**

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie:*

Resolved: Having convened in an open meeting on April 12, 2023, prior to the SOI submission closing date, the Select Board of the Town of Norwell, in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated April 14, 2023 for the Norwell High School located at 18 South St. which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category(s) for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future. Priority #4 Prevention of severe overcrowding expected to result from increased enrollments – NESDEC enrollment projections indicate an increasing enrollment at the elementary level, requiring restructuring of our grade levels with the 5<sup>th</sup> grade moving to the middle school and the 8<sup>th</sup> grade moving to the high school as well as the Pre-K moving to the high school. Priority #5 Replacement, renovation or modernization of school facility systems, such as roofs, windows, boilers, heating, and ventilation systems, to increase energy conservation and decrease energy related costs in a school facility – the high school was built in 1972. The boilers are original to the building and most internal mechanicals need upgrading and or replacing, cement work is crumbling and massive repairs will be required in the near future unless the building is replaced; and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Norwell Public Schools to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

*Unanimously voted by the Select Board.*

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, To authorize the Select Board to certify and sign the Massachusetts School Building Authority Closed Schools 3-page information form, as proposed. Unanimously voted by the Select Board.*

### **Junk Dealer's license transfer, name change**

Bob Woodill was present to update the board on this property's antiques business and name change. He inherited the building and business when his mother passed away. The name change from Stone House Antiques to Stone House Antiques Shop will distinguish his business on the internet from others of the same name.

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to approve the Junk Collector's license transfer and name change for Stone House Antiques Shop, expiring 4/30/24. Unanimously voted*

### **Select Board Approval of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Spending**

Town Accountant Christine McCarthy was present to review this spending option with the board, which authorizes revenue replacement funds for capital projects. Several projects were identified across different categories such as public safety, public works, etc. *Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to authorize the Town Accountant to allocate the ARPA funds as noted. Unanimously voted*

### **Proposed purchase of 93 Longwater Circle – Discussion**

Liz. Bersell – 29 Knollwood Road, was present to recap her original questions and the answer sheet prepared by Ms. Sullivan. The board again reminded her that Town Meeting Articles can be put on the Warrant multiple times for a revote – there is no limit. Mr. Graham is hoping that a more comprehensive presentation about the Town Hall purchase Article will sell the concept. Ms. Allen added that it will be the last opportunity for a better outcome than a huge override to rehab the current Town Hall. Mr. Smellie invited Ms. Bersell and her neighbors to tour this building to better understand the pressing need for a better space. The cost options are: \$5M for new space, over \$15M to rehab the current building and about \$30M for new construction on the current site. Mr. Reardon asked what other information Ms. Bersell needs.

Mr. Graham asked that all agree that the January STM Town Hall purchase presentation was sub-standard and move on to the fact that a better attended Town Meeting in May might allow people to vote for a less impactful tax burden.

Mr. Reardon asked for specific questions that have not been answered. Ms. Bersell noted that she thought the answers were preliminary responses.

John McGrath – 15 Brantwood Road; asked about the future of the current Town Hall. The board replied that its future doesn't make any difference to the decision to purchase or not purchase 93 Longwater Circle. There will probably be a committee set up to research that question. There is no plan yet. Recreation may continue to use part of this building. Experts would be hired to review and present options for the future of the current building. The decision for its future would be a Town Meeting vote. The process would have to follow a certain order, the first step being permission to vacate this building. Mr. Brown added that a vacated Town Hall would be a non-productive asset. Residents would ultimately have to decide its future.

Mr. McGrath requested that this order of steps for the current Town Hall be included in the presentation. The board suggested some future options for 93 Longwater Circle if it is purchased and then repurposed at some point.

Mr. Reardon reminded all that 48 hours' notice is needed to post an agenda item for the next meeting. In response to Ms. Bersell's repeated questions, further discussion addressed her perception that the answer sheet contained preliminary answers from the board. Mr. Graham reminded all that to discuss this or any topic outside a posted agenda was an Open Meeting law violation. Ms. Bersell added that she herself did not have any additional questions at this time, but her neighbors may want that opportunity. Ms. Allen concluded the discussion by requesting that the group send any additional questions to the board by April 19<sup>th</sup> to include on the agenda for 4/26/23.

### **Future Meetings – April 26<sup>th</sup>, May 8th**

#### **Adjournment**

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to adjourn at 8:23pm.  
Unanimously voted*

---

**Bruce W. Graham, Chair**