



TOWN OF NORTON
SELECT BOARD
MUNICIPAL CENTER
70 EAST MAIN STREET
NORTON, MA 02766

Telephone (508) 285-0210; Facsimile (508) 285-0297

RECEIVED
NORTON TOWN CLERK
2020 OCT 13 P 2:06

Select Board
Meeting Minutes
August 27, 2020

I. **Call to Order by Chairman**

The August 27, 2020 meeting of the Norton Select Board was held remotely (web: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86190956023?pwd=aStBWTBMOWt3WVJ3MXdmWTdodHdyQT09>); Passcode: 949518; dial in via +1 (646) 558-8656, Webinar ID 861 9095 6023, and was called to order at 6:41 P.M., by Mr. John Conway, Chair. Member(s) present: Ms. Renee Deley, Mr. Michael Toole, and Mr. Bradford K. Bramwell.

II. **Appointments/Resignations/Retirements**

1. Appointment of Jason Robins to the Permanent Full-Time Deputy Chief Position of the Norton Fire Department.

Ms. Deley referred to this position previously being temporary along with another position, which Chief Simmons confirmed and added that Mr. Brian Hurd's Lieutenant position was also temporary. Ms. Deley advised that when the Board initially reviewed these positions in April, they were to be temporary positions at the time based on concerns of the COVID-19 environment and potential loss of revenue for the Town. Ms. Deley commented that the Town is still in this environment and asked the Chief to explain how these positions are to going to be funded.

Chief Simmons explained that the Fire Department increased the contribution from the ambulance account by \$100,000 to fund the Deputy Chief position; he pointed out that the other two positions are existing positions, so there are no extra funds needed to fill those positions. He further advised that historically when they have made additions to their department, the money has come from the ambulance account, which he stated is doing well and continues to increase. Chief Simmons informed the Board that they are also looking at other ways to increase revenue, such as seeking continuing professional educations (CPE) reimbursements and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grants to increase their staffing levels. Ms. Deley asked what a SAFER grant is. Chief Simmons explained that this is a federal grant designed to increase staffing for fire departments. Ms. Deley mentioned that the Fire Department currently has open positions, which Chief Simmons confirmed stating that there were currently four openings. He expressed frustrations with the civil service list that hasn't changed in almost 3 years because they have been trying to fill these open positions, but a majority of the people on the civil service list have already been hired to other departments. Chief Simmons informed the Board that there was supposed to be a new civil service exam in March, but because of COVID-19 it was postponed to July/August, which has been postponed again.

Mr. Toole asked how the grant Chief Simmons mentioned played into this year. Chief Simmons explained that they could use it in different ways; for example, if they were having budget struggles in result of COVID-19, the money could be used to fill the four open positions that they have or to add the four additional members to the Fire Department, which would essentially be at no cost to them for three years. Chief Simmons advised that there is typically a 30% contribution the municipality has to make for the first two years and 70% for the third year. He added that what he is hearing right now is that they are supposed to be waiving the municipal contribution, but he wasn't 100% sure of this at this time. Mr. Toole then asked to explain about how these bottom-up fulfillments work. Chief Simmons explained that by adding another Deputy Chief position, the Captain would get promoted to Deputy Chief, the Lieutenant would get promoted to Captain, and a firefighter would get promoted to Lieutenant, leaving a vacant firefighter position in their FY20 budget. Ms. Deley referred to Chief Simmons' comment about how the positions are primarily funded through the ambulance account and asked what the balance for that account was currently, which Chief Simmons answered was \$2.6 million. Ms. Deley clarified that this account is typically used to reinvest in the Fire Department whether it is salaries or equipment and Chief Simmons stated that was correct. He added that the contribution of ambulance receipts increased from \$600,000 to \$700,000 this year.

Ms. Deley referred to previous discussions about the need for the second Deputy Chief position more specifically in relation to how they are behind the times in comparison to other fire departments. Chief Simmons stated that their fire alarm system and fees haven't been updated in a long time. He stated that as far as the second Deputy position that they are one of the only departments comparable in size in this whole area that only has two command staff personnel. Chief Simmons explained that the regional departments that are going to the dispatch center, respectively one of the departments has three daytime command staff, another has four command staff and two administrative positions, and another department has five command staff and an administrative assistant. He stated that a lot of regulatory work needs to be done and he is just trying to get their department caught up. Mr. Toole asked how he would split up the responsibilities of the deputy chief positions. Chief Simmons explained that one deputy chief would be focused primarily on fire prevention and code enforcement while the other will focus more on the operational aspects of the Fire Department, such as regulatory requirements, policies and procedures, program implementation and oversight, grant procurement, regional dispatch liaison, etc. Chief Simmons pointed out that both Deputy Chiefs would be cross-trained so if one person was out the other person will be able to cover for them.

Mr. David Wrenn voiced a concern about new positions being added to the budget and questioned where they all came from. He further expressed frustrations regarding the budget process and transparency.

MOTION was made by Ms. Deley to appoint Jason Robins to the Permanent Full-Time Deputy Chief Position of the Norton Fire Department. Seconded by Mr. Toole. Vote: Ms. Deley – Yes; Mr. Toole – Yes; Mr. Bramwell – Yes; and Mr. Conway - Yes. MOTION CARRIES.

2. Appointment of Robert Wood to the Permanent Full-Time Captain Position of the Norton Fire Department.

MOTION was made by Mr. Toole to appoint Robert Wood to the Permanent Full-Time Captain Position of the Norton Fire Department. Seconded by Mr. Bramwell. Vote: Mr. Toole – Yes; Mr. Bramwell – Yes; Ms. Deley – Yes; and Mr. Conway – Yes. MOTION CARRIES.

3. Appointment of Brian Hurd to the Permanent Full-Time Lieutenant Position of the Norton Fire Department.

MOTION was made by Mr. Bramwell to appoint Brian Hurd to the Permanent Full-Time Lieutenant Position of the Norton Fire Department. Seconded by Ms. Deley. Vote: Mr. Toole – Yes; Mr. Bramwell – Yes; Ms. Deley – Yes; and Mr. Conway – Yes. MOTION CARRIES.

4. Appointment of Sam Arena to the Historic District Commission.

MOTION was made by Ms. Deley to appoint Sam Arena to the Historic District Commission. Seconded by Mr. Bramwell. Vote: Mr. Toole – Yes; Ms. Deley – Yes; Mr. Bramwell – Yes; and Mr. Conway – Yes. MOTION CARRIES.

III. Licenses and Permits

1. Vote to Approve the Renewal of the Common Victualler License and/or Mobile Food Truck Permit for Fork & Bibb.

Mr. Conway asked how often they would be seeking to be at the Town Common. Mr. Toole said he could not definitively answer that, but he thought it was a couple times a month over the next couple of months. Ms. Deley asked what provisions the Fork & Bibb would have to adhere to in relation to COVID-19. Mr. Toole stated that there is hand sanitizer outside of the food truck and has a handwashing station inside the truck for the employees to use. Mr. Conway reported that the Fork & Bibb was looking to have lunch a few days from 11:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. and some nights from possibly 6:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M.

Mr. Bramwell expressed a concern with the limited parking at the Town Common and was looking for some assurance that the Town Common would remain clean and Mr. Toole, Mr. Conway, and Ms. Deley agreed.

MOTION was made by Mr. Toole to approve the renewal of the common victualler license and/or mobile food truck permit for Fork & Bibb at the Norton Town Common as described in their application for occasional lunch and evening service with provisions that when they leave they make sure that all trash they generated and their customers have is removed from the Common before they depart the site. Seconded by Ms. Deley. Vote: Mr. Toole – Yes; Mr. Bramwell – Yes; Ms. Deley – Yes; and Mr. Conway – Yes. MOTION CARRIES.

IV. Announcements

1. Special Town Meeting on Saturday, August 29, 2020 at 9:00 A.M. at the Norton High School Football Field.

Mr. Conway announced that the Special Town Meeting will be held on Saturday, August 29, 2020 at 9:00 A.M. at the Norton High School football field. Ms. Deley expressed that she hopes people show up and explained that these were the articles postponed from the Spring Town Meeting relating to zoning and economic development. Mr. Toole advised that attendees are to maintain social distancing and are asked to wear a face mask. Ms. Deley clarified that those who do not wear a mask will be designated to separate area to exercise their right to vote. Mr. Conway stated that residents are also asked to bring their own chairs, but advised that some will be provided. Mr. Toole instructed residents that wish to participate and speak at town meeting to raise their hand and the microphone will be brought to them; once a participant asks their question, they are to surrender their microphone and then their question will be answered. Ms. Deley gave an overview of preparations taken by the Board of Health.

V. **Business**

A. **New Business**

1. Review List of Fall Town Meeting Articles.

The Board agreed to postpone discussing this topic until the Town Manager was in attendance.

B. **Old Business**

1. Norton Meals Program.

The School Business Manager, Matthew Wells, informed the Board that the USDA program that helps them feed children has been extended through September 30th, which carries them through when they will switch over to the normal National School Lunch Program when school resumes on September 16th. He added that FEMA did approve the extension through September 24th, which allows them to continue to feed the adult population as well. Mr. Wells advised that there was a slight increase in the amount of meals distributed in August and that the unemployment rate is still around 16.5% to 17% showing that a need for this program still remains in Town. Mr. Wells stated that they were going to continue this program as long as they have the Select Board's support.

Mr. Wells advised that there will be a change of hours once school restarts and mentioned a concern for a lack of storage space for food. Mr. Toole suggested using the Council on Aging and Mr. Wells stated that he doesn't believe they have the space.

Ms. Beth Rossi, Director of the Council on Aging, informed the Board and residents that they are doing grab-and-go for seniors, which is currently being utilized by 22 people. She stated that she received two emergency calls this week for those who needed food and were able to meet their needs. Mr. Bramwell asked if people would like to contribute gift cards where they would send them. Ms. Rossi replied that they should be sent to the Town Hall and to her attention.

C. **Town Manager's Report**

There was no Town Manager's report to discuss.

V. Select Board's Report and Mail

Mr. Toole mentioned that he asked Mr. Yunits to contact the Town of Mansfield to see if there was some way the Town of Norton could tie into their electrical grid. He informed the Board that the answer they received was Mansfield wasn't interested in doing so because then they would have to offer other electrical options to their residents. Mr. Toole advised that he did ask Mr. Yunits to reach out to the City of Taunton as well since the Town is currently relying solely on National Grid, which is on the higher-end for electrical costs.

Mr. Toole mentioned that he also reached out to Simpson Springs to see if they would consider opening a retail facility in Town, which they expressed they are open to the idea.

Mr. Bramwell said that he noticed that on his way to the Town Hall there were political signs posted on the Town Common. He wanted to remind people that the Town's bylaws prohibit the posting of political signs on public property.

Ms. Deley asked the Town Clerk, Ms. Lucia Longhurst, to speak on early voting. Ms. Longhurst advised that the ballots for the primary and voting applications were due the previous day. She stated that everything has been mailed out that they received for the primary. Ms. Longhurst explained in respect to the special town election, all ballots her office has received have been mailed out; she stated that she believed the deadline for those was for next Monday. The Town Clerk clarified that the ballot cards were due yesterday and those who have a ballot have until 8:00 P.M. on the election day to return their ballots. Mr. Toole acknowledged the Highway Superintendent, Keith Silver, and his team for the great work they did to get the ballot boxes outside of Town Hall. Mr. Conway asked if he can drop off his ballot in the ballot box for the primary, which Ms. Longhurst confirmed he could.

Ms. Deley announced that on the National Opioid Awareness Day, which is Monday, August 31st at 7:00 P.M., the virtual vigil for Opioid Awareness will be held to raise awareness. She informed residents that the meeting ID for the zoom vigil is 639 151 9600. Ms. Deley mentioned for those who had lost a loved one or friend due from this can forward their name(s) to the Norton Board of Health to be remembered during the vigil.

VI. Meeting Minutes

There were no minutes approved at this meeting. Mr. Bramwell commented that he had reviewed all the minutes pending approval and would be willing to vote on them this evening. The Board agreed to each take a few sets of minutes each to review for approval at their next meeting, which were divided as follows:

Ms. Deley: May 14, 2020; June 11, 2020; and June 11, 2020 (Executive Session)

Mr. Conway: June 16, 2020; June 16, 2020 (Executive Session); and June 25, 2020

Mr. Toole: July 9, 2020; July 9, 2020 (Executive Session); and July 23, 2020

VIII. Warrants

Report of, Chair, John Conway, on the following Payroll and Invoice Warrants:

A. Payroll Warrant PR21-05 for the week ended August 22, 2020, Warrant dated August 27, 2020, in the amount of \$757,587.09.

B. Invoice Warrant AP21-09 dated August 27, 2020, in the amount of \$1,421,923.19.

IX. **Other Business**

There was no other business to discuss.

X. **Next Meeting's Agenda** – To be determined.

XI. **Executive Session**

There was no need for an executive session.

XII. **Adjournment**

MOTION was made by Mr. Bramwell to adjourn the Select Board meeting at 8:20 P.M. Seconded by Mr. Toole. Vote: Mr. Toole – Yes; Mr. Bramwell – Yes; Ms. Deley – Yes; and Mr. Conway - Yes. MOTION CARRIES.


URL Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VvIaxm2Kdpc>

Respectfully Submitted by:



Jennifer Reid, Office Administrator

**SELECT BOARD
MINUTES OF MEETING
AUGUST 27, 2020**



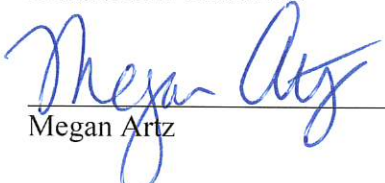
John Conway, Chair



Renee Deley, Vice-Chair

Michael Toole, Clerk

Bradford K. Bramwell



Megan Artz

Minutes Approved by Board on: October 1, 2020