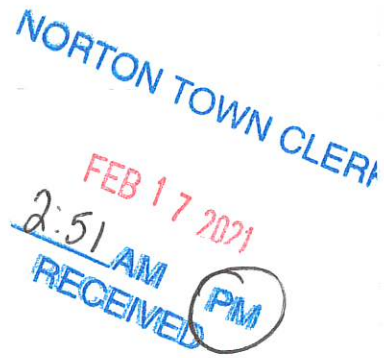




TOWN OF NORTON
SELECT BOARD
MUNICIPAL CENTER
70 EAST MAIN STREET
NORTON, MA 02766
Telephone (508) 285-0210; Facsimile (508) 285-0297



Select Board
Meeting Minutes
EXECUTIVE SESSION
September 22, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

The September 22, 2020 Executive Session of the Select Board was called to order by Mr. John Conway, Chair, at 8:14 P.M., held remotely (Web: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6389291060>; Phone: +1 646-558-8656; Meeting ID: 638 929 1060).

Declaration by Mr. Conway:

I declare, under General Laws Chapter 30A, §21A(a)(3) and §21A(a)(6), that the purpose of the executive session will be to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining and to consider the purchase of real property because a discussion of the strategy in open session could compromise the purpose of the executive session and with the Board to not return to open session at the conclusion of the executive session.

MOTION was made by Ms. Deley for the Board to go into executive session under G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(3) and §21A(a)(6) for the purposes and reasons declared by the Chair and with the Board to not return to open session thereafter. Seconded by Mr. Bramwell. Vote: Ms. Artz – Yes; Mr. Toole – Yes; Ms. Deley – Yes; Mr. Bramwell – Yes; and Mr. Conway – Yes; MOTION CARRIES.

ROLL CALL: Ms. Renee Deley, Mr. Michael Toole, Mr. Bradford K. Bramwell, and Ms. Megan Artz were present. Also in attendance: Mr. Michael D. Yunits, Town Manager.

Mr. Yunits stated that the first contract he sent was the Highway Department's contract (AFSCME Highway). He informed the Board that they agreed to the language the Select Board suggested at their previous meeting regarding the tuition reimbursement (Section No. 9: New ARTICLE 34 – TUITION REIMBURSEMENT). The Town Manager clarified that this is for only full-time employees. He moved on to discuss Sub-Section No. 6, which Mr. Yunits read as follows: "If any employee voluntarily ends their employment with the Town of Norton within one year of receiving reimbursement, they must repay the Town for the full amount of reimbursement." Mr. Toole asked how they would collect the money outlined in Section No. 6 and asked if it is pulled from the employee's last paycheck, which Mr. Yunits confirmed and added that employees accrue vacation so there is always way to redeem this money.

Ms. Deley asked if there was a course that might directly relate to the Highway Department that could be beneficial and Mr. Yunits answered stormwater management. Mr. Toole commented on construction management courses, which Mr. Yunits said could be another good one.

Mr. Yunits gave a brief overview of the contract for the Select Board. He pointed out that longevity went up \$100 for each category and that a new category was created for 30+ years. Mr. Yunits informed the Board that only one employee falls under this new category.

During the discussion of "Sick Leave Bank" (Paragraph 11, Article 30), Mr. Toole asked if this was taxable income that the Town was liable for covering (like a gift tax). Mr. Yunits said it was not and Ms. Artz confirmed that in other institutions she has worked for they had this. Mr. Bramwell said that the School Department has been doing this for years and added that if it was something taxable, the Town Accountant would have said something to them.

MOTION was made by Ms. Deley to approve the AFSCME Council 93, Local 1702 Agreement. Seconded by Mr. Toole. Vote: Ms. Artz- Yes; Mr. Toole – Yes; Ms. Deley – Yes; Mr. Bramwell – Yes; and Mr. Conway – Yes. MOTION CARRIES.

The Board moved on to discuss the SENA-A contract. Mr. Yunits explained that after the last executive session, he spoke with Ms. Jennifer Carlino, Conservation Agent and Ms. Denise Ellis, Director of Assessing, and reported to them that the Select Board understands where they are coming from, but the Town just doesn't have the capability to match those towns. Mr. Toole commented that the Mansfield and Foxboro just aren't comparable to Norton.

Mr. Yunits explained that the Water Foreman was removed from this union and has been moved to SENA-B. He advised that Article 6 adjusted the hours for the Council on Aging Director because she is not an employee within the Town Hall (her hours being Monday through Friday from 8:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.). The Town Manager stated that there also needs to be language clarified in reference to compensation time. Mr. Yunits explained that if people are done working at 4:30 P.M. and have a meeting at 7:00 P.M., unless they are prepping for that meeting, the Town is not giving compensation time from the hours of 4:30 P.M. to 7:00 P.M.

Mr. Yunits moved on to explain Article 8, where the union is currently required to post a job opening for 5 days and now, they are asking to make it 10 days for them to respond if interested.

He stated that Article 11 – Bereavement would increase from 3 days to 5 days and for all family (not dependent upon exact relation) will have an additional 2 days at the discretion of the Town Manager. Mr. Toole said he would prefer to leave it to the way it is and said he doesn't think it should be left open. Ms. Artz disagreed giving the example of if her uncle in D.C. passed away, she would need more than 3 days because of travel time. Mr. Yunits suggested the compromise of leaving it at the 3 days, but adding the line in there about "with 2 extra days approved by the Town Manager for extraordinary circumstances." Ms. Deley suggested expanding who is covered under immediate family to parents, spouse, domestic partner, siblings, children, and in-laws. Mr. Bramwell and Mr. Toole disagreed to expanding who would be covered under immediate family. Mr. Conway and Ms. Artz shared similar thoughts as Ms. Deley.

MOTION was made by Ms. Deley to approve an amendment to the bereavement section to have as newly covered under immediate family for bereavement: parents, step-parents, domestic partners and in-laws to increase their bereavement to 5 days (still at the discretion of the employees) with two additional days to be approved by the Town Manager for extraordinary circumstances. Seconded by Mr. Bramwell.

The above motion was amended as follows:

MOTION was made by Ms. Deley to approve an amendment to Article 11 on bereavement to increase bereavement time to 5 days for parents, step-parents, spouse, domestic partner, siblings, children, and direct in-laws at the discretion of the employee with two extra days to be approved by the Town Manager for extraordinary circumstances as well as two extra days beyond what is currently in the contract as approved by the Town Manager for extraordinary circumstances. Seconded by Ms. Artz. Vote: Ms. Artz – Yes; Ms. Deley – Yes; Mr. Toole – No; Mr. Bramwell – Yes; and Mr. Conway – Yes. MOTION CARRIES.

The Board agreed that they were fine with the changes to the longevity schedule outlined in Article 20.

Mr. Yunits explained that in Article 21, they crossed out section (d), but wanted in section (a) of this article to increase the cost of living in each year of contract 3%, 3%, 3%. Mr. Yunits told the union representatives that if they did that then the 3% merit/review increase would be reduced to 2%. Ms. Deley suggested having the language in there that these increases would be dependent on the financial climate of the Town and the Board agreed. Mr. Conway suggested Ms. Carlino go back and redo the exercise she previously presented using the School Department's transparency page (Clear View) to get a more accurate depiction of the comparable salary ranges. The communities he suggested comparing with were Norwood, Abington, Rockland, Foxboro, Seekonk, Swansea, Bellingham, Middleboro.

Ms. Deley questioned the fairness of the Director of the Council on Aging, Ms. Beth Rossi's, salary after seeing the salary range for surrounding towns and what she is making. Mr. Yunits suggested adding back in section (d) as presented under Article 21: Wages, which states "Market rate salary adjustment for Director of Human Services/Council on Aging Coordinator of \$2,000 per year in FY22 and FY23." Mr. Conway and Ms. Artz agreed. Mr. Toole emphasized that they need to be ready to justify this increase for those who will be analyzing the budget. Ms. Artz said that it is all about the narrative and how they communicate their decision. Mr. Bramwell expressed a concern with putting this in writing and suggested having a plan agreed upon by the Board to implement the \$2,000 increase in FY22 and FY23 because they don't know what is going to happen in the future.

Mr. Yunits advised that under Article 22: Paid Holidays, they are asking for a half day on Christmas Eve and adding the new State holiday of Juneteenth. He then explained, Article 28: Performance Evaluation, which would have the incentive increase retroactive to July 1 of the current fiscal year. The Board said they were not in favor of this. Mr. Conway asked what the

performance review is now. Mr. Yunits says he does them in the fall and they are effective January 1st. Ms. Deley suggested that this October, as part of town meeting, having their merit increase with them getting it January 1st and the cost of living increase retroactive to July 1st and for the next fiscal year, the merit increase and cost of living would both be July 1st. Mr. Yunits explained that there is already money in the budget from the June town meeting for a 4% increase. He added that they should make sure in the contract that they are reviewed between December and February, so it will be effective the following July 1st.

Mr. Yunits gave an overview of the stipends outlined under Article 30. Mr. Conway expressed that he was having a hard time giving an increase to the building maintenance stipend after the OSHA report that outlined 27 issues that were a lot of day-to-day maintenance and Ms. Deley agreed. Mr. Toole said he would be okay with it if there was a clear directive of what he is responsible for. He said he wants to be understanding and doesn't want to penalize someone when the building is falling apart. Mr. Conway asked why the Building Commissioner isn't the "Building Maintenance Coordinator" and Mr. Yunits said typically it is, but Mr. Chris Carmichael wasn't interested, so they asked the Board of Health Agent, Mr. Christian Zahner. Ms. Deley thought the money was too much for a facilities "dispatcher." Mr. Toole said that he would be okay with \$2,800 because it seems to be a lot of work and a job no one wants. Mr. Bramwell said if Mr. Zahner is just the middle man taking complaints and coordinating repairs, he would do it for nothing. Mr. Conway emphasized that they also don't realize how much Mr. Zahner is doing and pointed out that it is a thankless job with on-call hours. Mr. Conway used the example of a repair at the Council on Aging that he was coordinating at 7:30 P.M. Ms. Deley suggested \$2,400 and the Board supported that. The Board asked Mr. Yunits to go back to the union suggesting taking out the IT Coordinator stipend since the position doesn't exist.

Mr. Yunits moved on to discuss the Stormwater Bylaw Administration, which increased from \$3,000 to \$4,200. The Board thought that this increase was very high. Mr. Bramwell suggested cutting the increase in half making it \$3,600 and Mr. Conway and Ms. Deley agreed. Mr. Conway went around asking members what they thought the stipend should be, which resulted as follows: Mr. Bramwell - \$3,400; Ms. Artz - \$3,400; Mr. Toole - \$3,300; Ms. Deley - \$3,450; and Mr. Conway - \$3,000. The average amongst the Board was \$3,310, so the Board agreed to \$3,400.

The Board agreed to get rid of the FEMA Community Rating System Coordinator stipend along with the Household Hazardous Waste Day Coordinator stipend. The Select Board was fine with Articles 31, 32, 33 and 35. Along with the "housekeeping" items.

Ms. Deley asked to have it clarified as to why Ms. Rossi wanted her title changed and Mr. Toole asked to have KP-Law provide the proper gender neutral pronouns.

The Board agreed to continue reviewing contracts in executive session at their meeting on October 1st. Mr. Conway wanted to have the Town Manager's review done at their next meeting as well. Mr. Conway brought up a need for an executive session to address a Police Department issue. Ms. Deley reminded the Board and Mr. Yunits of the need to schedule a Hicks Fund meeting.

Adjournment

MOTION was made by Mr. Bramwell to adjourn at 10:47 P.M. Seconded by Ms. Deley. Vote: Ms. Artz – Yes; Mr. Toole – Yes; Mr. Bramwell – Yes; Ms. Deley – Yes; and Mr. Conway – Yes; **MOTION CARRIES.**

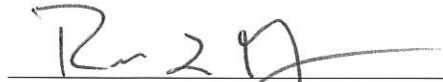
Respectfully Submitted by:



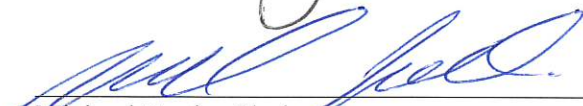
Jennifer Reid, Office Administrator

SELECT BOARD EXECUTIVE MINUTES OF MEETING SEPTEMBER 22, 2020

John Conway, Chair

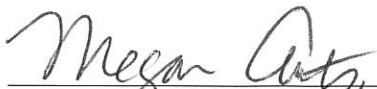


Renee Deley, Vice-Chair



Michael Toole, Clerk

Bradford K. Bramwell



Megan Artz

Minutes Approved by Board on: November 12, 2020