



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

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Select Board
Meeting Minutes
February 18, 2021

I. Call to Order by Chair

The February 18, 2021 meeting of the Norton Select Board was held remotely (Web: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6391519600>; Phone: 646-558 8656; Meeting ID: 639 151 9600, and was called to order at 7:03 P.M., by Ms. Renee Deley, Vice-Chair. Member(s) present: Mr. Michael Toole and Mr. Bradford K. Bramwell. Ms. Megan Artz joined the meeting at 7:42 P.M. Also in attendance: Mr. Michael D. Yunits, Town Manager.

II. Appointments/Resignations/Retirements

1. Resignation of Michael Harrington from the Commission on Disability.

Mr. Toole noted that Mr. Harrington had different expectations of what the commission would be and chose to resign.

2. Appointment of Amy Logan as the Part-Time Administrative Secretary for the Veterans' Services Department.

Mr. Yunits noted that this is not a new position and that it has just been unfilled since the start of COVID-19. He advised that Ms. Flett wanted to wait until they were further along with COVID-19 before they filled the position.

MOTION was made by Mr. Toole to accept the appointment Amy Logan as the Part-Time Administrative Secretary for the Veterans' Services Department. Seconded by Mr. Bramwell. Vote: Mr. Toole – Yes; Mr. Bramwell – Yes; and Ms. Deley – Yes. MOTION CARRIES.

3. Appointment of Christopher E. DeMartino as the Water and Sewer Department Foreman.

MOTION was made by Mr. Bramwell to accept the appointment of Christopher E. DeMartino as the Water and Sewer Department Foreman. Seconded by Mr. Toole. Vote: Mr. Toole – Yes; Mr. Bramwell – Yes; and Ms. Deley – Yes. MOTION CARRIES.

4. Appointment of Janice Roberge as the Administrative Secretary for the Water and Sewer Department.

MOTION was made by Mr. Bramwell to accept the appointment of Janice Roberge as the Administrative Secretary for the Water and Sewer Department. Seconded by Mr. Toole. Vote: Mr. Toole – Yes; Mr. Bramwell – Yes; and Ms. Deley – Yes. MOTION CARRIES.

III. Licenses and Permits

There were no licenses or permits to approve.

IV. Announcements

Mr. Toole read the following announcements:

1. 1. Norton Parks and Recreation: Norton resident Mary Kollas is turning 100 years old on March 1st!! We are collecting birthday cards to give to her on her big day. If you would like to send Mary a card to mark this special occasion, please send them to: Norton Parks & Recreation, Attention Mary, 70 East Main Street, Norton, MA 02766.

2. On March 27, 2021, the Easter Bunny will be escorted by Norton First Responders through town for a parade. There will not be an Easter egg hunt due to COVID-19. Logistics to be approved.

3. Ms. Beth Rossi, Director of Human Services/Council on Aging wanted residents to know that the Senior Center does not have vaccines, but they are more than willing to help citizens sign-up for an appointment to get the vaccine.

4. COVID-19 Vaccine Update.

Ms. Deley asked the Board of Health Agent if that phone number (211) that was previously provided still worked, which Mr. Zahner said it does. Mr. Zahner said that over a million more people became eligible for the vaccine today and they can also register for the vaccine at mass.gov. Ms. Deley asked Ms. Rossi if there were any issues with residents getting a ride to get the vaccine and she said not really.

Mr. Zahner instructed anyone that knows of someone that is home-bound and needs to get the vaccine to contact either Ms. Rossi or himself for assistance. Mr. Zahner gave his contact information (healthagent@nortonmaus.com / (508) 285-0262) and Ms. Rossi did as well (coa@nortonmaus.com / (508) 285-0235).

V. Business

A. New Business

1. Update from the Water/Sewer Superintendent on the Water Treatment Facility and All Water Projects.

Ms. Deley commented that her water quality has been substantially better and explained that she was just looking for an update since the Select Board hadn't received one in a couple of months.

Mr. Francis Fournier, III, the Water/Sewer Superintendent, stated that their department has only received five phone calls reporting dirty water since October. Mr. Fournier explained that they have received some calls where residents automatically assume their water is appearing dirty because it is the Town water, but in fact turned out to be internal plumbing issues.

Mr. Fournier said that it has been about a year now that they have been up and running and are running right now at 50% capacity due to the limited amount of water they can withdraw from their aging wells 5, 6, and 4. He mentioned that wells 5 and 6 are currently in the process of drilling. He added that well 5 is already drilled, but they are waiting on the screen to be delivered and the driller has moved on to well 6, which is the second replacement well that they are going to install. Mr. Fournier advised that they did a little bit of preliminary drilling with a smaller hole for well 6 to get an idea of the water quality. He stated that they really weren't happy with what they saw at well 6 in regard to the level of manganese in the water. In result, the driller and engineers recommended going with a larger hole and longer pumping test to make sure they were actually in a spot where they really wanted to sink some money into. The Water/Sewer Superintendent advised that the Water Commissioners agreed and they ended up doing a larger well that is 8 inches in diameter and 24 feet deeper than the original depth, so that will improve the water quality and yield when it is done. Mr. Fournier stated that wells 5 and 6 are overdue to be replaced where they are yielding at 50% capacity.

Mr. Fournier advised that as part of the Capital Plan he has asked to have the authorization to spend additional retained earnings from a project that came in under budget and finished ahead of schedule, which was the Reservoir Street water main replacement. These funds would be used for a small project located on White Street sandwiched between Newland Street and East Main Street. He advised that there is less than 1,000 feet of 8-inch pipe that needs to be replaced there. Mr. Fournier explained that the authorization to spend these funds was approved at a previous town meeting, so they want to move forward with installing this the 920 feet of pipe. He added that they may install two fire hydrants down there for fire protection and flushing.

The Water/Sewer Superintendent moved on to discuss the Mass DOT project they are going to be part of. He informed the Board that they have already met with the contractor and over a dozen services have already been connected from the old main to the new main on East Main Street. Mr. Fournier mentioned that as they move on from Elm Street towards North Washington Street and down towards I-495, they will start running into some of the old water services.

Mr. Fournier moved on to comment that the temporary trench paving on Pine Street is holding up well. He advised that they have an agreement with the Town's Highway Department that they will take their contractor this spring or early summer to pave it and the Water Department is actually going to pay that contractor for their services to pave from Plain Street at Pine Street down to 167.

Mr. Luke Grant of the Water/Sewer Commission referred to the water quality issues and pointed out that some people can't understand that hot water having residue. He said that when the water heats up and there is any level of iron in there, it will create residue at the bottom of the water heater. Mr. Grant stated that this is probably something lingering from the old water issues. He suggested to residents to have their water heaters purged and cleaned.

Ms. Artz joined the call at this time (7:42 P.M.).

Ms. Deley asked how they are juggling the replacement work that needs to be done with any new work to improve the infrastructure within the distribution system. Mr. Fournier answered that they prioritize the problems that they have. He stated that before they would impact an

area based on how many breaks they had within that area. Mr. Fournier said he could provide the Select Board with the Water/Sewer Department's Master Plan for more information.

2. Discussion and/or Vote on Change in Membership Interest of Exit 10 LLC.

Mr. Alex DiPietro stated that as they got further along in the process and were able to submit to the Cannabis Control Commission (CCC), they decided to change to a woman-owned business. He explained that with doing so, they will also be given preferred viewership from the CCC and puts them ahead of the line for delivery. Mr. DiPietro advised that with this change this makes this a much faster window. Ms. Lindsey DiPietro emphasized that the only change being made is that she would be getting an additional 1% interest to make the company a woman-owned business to give them higher priority in the process with the CCC.

MOTION was made by Mr. Bramwell to accept the change of membership interest of Exit 10 LLC and change the signature page as needed. Seconded by Mr. Toole. Vote: Ms. Artz – Yes; Mr. Bramwell – Yes; Mr. Toole – Yes; and Ms. Deley – Yes. MOTION CARRIES.

3. Presentation by the Permanent Building Committee on the Town Hall, Senior/Community Center, and Athletic Complex.

Ms. Dinah O'Brien, Chair of the Permanent Building Committee (PBC), Mr. Michael Viveiros, Architect of DBVW, and Dr. Baeta, Superintendent of Schools, who was also present as the representative of the Athletic Complex project, came before the Select Board to give an update on the projects.

Mr. Viveiros began with the Senior/Community Center property on Mansfield Avenue. He stated that the parking lot has 62 parking spaces and would be able to accommodate tractor trailer trucks as well for deliveries. He gave an overview of the floor plan for the Senior/Community Center.

Mr. Viveiros moved on to discuss the proposal for the new Town Hall. Mr. Toole asked if there would be room for expansion for the Police Department if needed. Ms. O'Brien replied that to the west of the Police Department there is room to accommodate a future expansion. Ms. Deley pointed out the large size of the vault in the Town Clerk's Office. Mr. Yunits explained that there are certain records that they have to keep hard copies indefinitely.

Ms. Deley asked if there was a generator included in the plan, which Mr. Viveiros answered there was. Ms. Deley asked if it was enough to run the whole building. Mr. Viveiros stated that he was not sure about the whole building and the Board asked to have this looked into and Mr. Zahner supported the idea because of the need to keep the building operational.

Mr. Viveiros pointed out that a new exterior wall will need to be built on the Fire Station due to the demolition of the existing Town Hall once the new one is built and staff are moved in. He went over the costs of the Town Hall and Senior/Community Center. The cost of the new Town Hall is estimated to cost somewhere in the \$20.5 million range and the Senior/Community Center in the \$9.5-\$10 million range.

Dr. Baeta spoke on the Athletic Complex emphasizing the need and importance of fixing the problems throughout the Town for not only the students, but the senior population as well that is only continuing to grow. Dr. Baeta pointed out that this project was originally over \$10 million and is now just over \$6.3 million. He further expressed that the tennis courts are on a leeching field, so it doesn't make sense to repair those and also spoke on thinking for the long-term and having the schools connected to the sewer system. Dr. Baeta informed the Select Board that the sewer connection costs roughly \$560,000 and that the project itself costs \$5,793,778. Dr. Baeta advised that by doing this project, it would convert the 6-lane track to an 8-lane track, adding lights for some of the fields, which they are proposing be solar, and then the multi-purpose field. The School Superintendent explained that they could come up with an agreement where a certain percentage of the revenue generated from the fields could be used towards the bond, operational and maintenance costs, and other related expenses. Dr. Baeta pointed out that Norton is one of two towns in the Tri Valley League that does not have any turf fields.

Ms. O'Brien thanked Dr. Baeta for his support. She brought to the Board's attention the inadequacies and safety hazards of the current Town Hall. She further stated that the Council on Aging, which is functioning in a building that was once a school house built in 1880, has an inadequate amount of space and privacy for the activities and programs provided. Ms. O'Brien pointed out one issue of what happens if this does not pass is the cost of renovating the Town Hall. She said the estimate would be around \$9 million and does not include the removal of hazardous waste and is a cost that is unknown until the project has begun. Ms. O'Brien emphasized that this also doesn't include parking or accommodations for the Town Hall while it is being renovated. She lastly stated that renovating the Council on Aging is not an option for many reasons including the fact that the timbers have petrified in the attic.

Mr. Bramwell thanked the PBC for the time and work they have put in. Mr. Bramwell emphasized the need for the new Town Hall and Senior/Community Center and how evident it was. Mr. Bramwell said at some point they are going to have to tackle these issues and now is the time as a community to come together and address them. Mr. Toole and Ms. Artz agreed with Mr. Bramwell and thanked the PBC as well for their hard work.

The following timelines were provided for the projects:

- Athletic Fields, Senior/Community Support Center, and Town Hall are subject to town meeting approval on May 8, 2021 and a town vote on April 10th (town election); Design and Permitting; March 2022 – April 2022
- Procure/award March 2022-April 2022
- Construction: May 2022-August 2022 for the Athletic Fields; June 2022-May 2023 for the Senior & Community Support Center; and June 2022-September 2023 for the Town Hall.
- Athletic fields would be ready for use Sept. 2022; Senior/Community Support Center July 2023; and Town Hall December 2023.

Ms. Deley asked that a backup plan be prepared for the Senior Center even if it is a different building/location. Ms. Deley also asked when taxpayers should expect to see the impact in their taxes. Mr. Yunits said probably when they hire the architect, but that would be small, but

more so when the construction begins, which will be sometime in 2023 when they do the final borrowings.

Mr. James Slattery of the PBC asked why they are going to put good money into a bad project, such as renovating the current Town Hall and throwing \$9 million at it when a new Senior/Community Center would cost \$11 million. Mr. Slattery further stated that finding a new place for a Senior Center is impossible especially where the boards/committees can't even find a meeting space after the Select Board's meeting room closed.

Dr. Baeta said that when it came to the renovation of the High School, there wasn't a Plan B. He said that it is the workers responsibility to come up with the work and information to get it done. Whether that means that a project is eliminated, cutback, or pushed back. He said that when you present an option "A" you are giving the perception that you are overspending and there is another option [that is less expensive] to be presented. Dr. Baeta said that if you give an option "B" and it fails 70/30, then they aren't going to like option B either unless you are renting.

Ms. O'Brien agreed with Dr. Baeta that by asking for options you are planting a seed of confusion and expressed that she believes that this will pass. She reassured the Board that if this fails, they will work as fast as they can on a plan B and at that time work an alternative, but right now is not the time. Mr. Bramwell agreed that they didn't have a Plan "B" when they were doing the high school project and anything they do isn't going to be proactive, but reactive if this doesn't pass. Mr. Bramwell said if this town wants to be fiscally responsible, they need to bite the bullet and move forward with these projects.

Mr. Yunits said the Town will be doing a temporary borrowing in FY22, so in FY23, taxpayers will see a slight impact (see attached chart).

Mr. Slattery brought up a rumor that has been going around that the Select Board has an additional article on the warrant to renovate the current Town Hall. Ms. Deley asked Mr. Yunits to provide an answer and Mr. Yunits said that was false. Mr. Bob Briscoe said that there should not be a Plan "B" and to let the residents vote. Mr. Briscoe emphasized a need for the new buildings and a Plan "B" is not the solution.

Dr. Baeta said that his committee has not asked him for a Plan B at this time because they truly believe this is what the Town wants and wants to move forward. Dr. Baeta added that the PBC has never been asked for a Plan "A" or a Plan "B", but a plan to move forward and present them to the boards/committees. He lastly stated that this is what is being put before the voters via the Select Board.

4. Budget Presentations.

Police Department:

Chief Brian Clark gave an overview of his budget and advised he hasn't sat down with Mr. Yunits yet nor has he gone before the Finance Committee. He stated that the only increases he has is just over \$24,000 compared to last year. Chief Clark advised that any increases were from contractual increases and some areas decreased. He reported that no new positions have been added and that his department is actually down one position right now. Chief Clark

informed the Board that police reform is a big thing right now and his department has timelines it has to meet and policies that need to be updated as well as public records issues. He reported that training and in-service budgets have actually gone down and part of this is because court has basically been cancelled since the pandemic started.

Mr. Toole asked if there were any grants being looked into. Chief Clark said unlike the Fire Department with the SAFER grant, the Police Department doesn't have anything like that to apply for. Mr. Toole asked what his wish list item would be to add to his budget. Chief Clark answered that public records would be something he would want to look at.

Board of Health:

Mr. Yunits stated that there are no new positions and any increases are contractual. Ms. Deley asked how the Board of Health hasn't overspent during a pandemic. Mr. Zahner answered that they have received a lot of funding through the State and Federal level. He added that Mr. Yunits issued a spending freeze awhile back and they have tried to respect that. Mr. Toole asked if the Board of Health was going to be able to handle all of the calls as more people become eligible for the vaccine and if they will need additional staff. Mr. Zahner advised that the Council on Aging has been huge with providing assistance, but pointed out that as more of the population becomes eligible, they are going to have more tech-savvy people who will be able to sign themselves up and drive themselves.

Mr. Yunits and Mr. Zahner recognized the Public Health Nurse, Ms. Donna Palmer, for the amazing work she has done and continues to do. Mr. Toole asked what a wish list item would be that he would like to see in his budget. Mr. Zahner answered that the busier his office gets he might need the Assistant Board of Health Nurse's hours increased to 25-30 hours.

Mr. Zahner informed the Board that the Town is under orders from the DEP to maintain gas testing at the landfill that has been capped. He stated that last year they had budgeted for \$13,000, but that was because that particular year they had a requirement to have groundwater testing as well. Mr. Zahner stated that he believes that this is something that has to be done every two or three years. Mr. Zahner advised that this year all they have to worry about is the gas testing, so they have requested in the FY22 budget \$8,000 to cover that. He informed the Board that the quote came in at \$7,600 with Civil & Environmental Consulting (CEC), so he added in a little more to cover any incidentals.

Planning:

Mr. Yunits stated that the expenditures are the same and the increases in salaries are contractual. The Town Manager informed the Board that there are two employees in the department and there are no additional staff have been added to this budget.

Mr. Paul DiGiuseppe, Director of Planning and Economic Development, pointed out that their non-personnel costs have been the same amount for at least five years. He added that since his department has gone digital, they haven't spent nearly as much on office supplies. Mr. DiGiuseppe pointed out that his department works for three boards including the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and now they have been working more closely with the Economic Development Commission. Mr. DiGiuseppe in reference to Mr. Toole's question to department heads on wish-list items said that he would love to have a Planner Assistant. He

stated that especially with COVID-19 and the impact it had on the community he has shifted his focus away from planning and more on economic development.

Mr. Toole asked what was the reasoning behind the big jump in salaries. He pointed out that while FY21 to FY22 looks like contractual increases, he couldn't understand how this department went from FY19 to FY22 because that is a 25% difference. Mr. DiGiuseppe said that part of it could have been due to vacancies. He explained that for several months there was not an Administrative Secretary and before he came on there was a vacancy for a month or so of his position. Mr. DiGiuseppe lastly stated that the Administrative Secretary position for a long time was part-time, so hours were added where this individual works 37.5 hours per week.

6. Discussion and/or Vote on Spring Town Meeting Articles

Mr. Yunits advised that Mr. Toole asked to have the Water/Sewer Commission article be had removed.

MOTION was made by Mr. Bramwell to delete the warrant article for the restructure of the Water/Sewer Commission being appointed versus elected. Seconded by Mr. Toole. Vote: Ms. Artz – Yes; Mr. Toole – Yes; Mr. Bramwell – Yes; and Ms. Deley – Yes. MOTION CARRIES.

B. Old Business

1. Update on Marijuana Establishments.

Ms. Deley provided the following updates:

- They have submitted a draft of the bylaw language to Marijuana and MTC bylaws to account for the operator delivery license adding definitions that didn't exist before from the CCC and the changes in the M.G.L. as well.
- Had to make changes due to oversight in the marijuana bylaw where they weren't allowing for an establishment to get a building permit with just a provisional license and were requiring a final license. Applicants cannot get the final license without an inspection from the CCC. So, they have modified that language so applicants can get the building permit with a provisional license. This allows applicants to continue with the process.
- Ms. Deley and Mr. DiGiuseppe had a meeting earlier this week with another interested party in respect to cultivation and manufacturing facility, who seem very interested.
- Have a Host Community Agreement (HCA) in hand for a delivery operator license from Lucky Green Ladies.

C. Town Manager's Report

There was no Town Manager's report to discuss.

VI. Select Board's Report and Mail

There was no Select Board's report or mail to discuss.

VII. **Meeting Minutes**

MOTION was made by Mr. Toole to approve the January 7th (Open and Executive Session) Minutes and the January 14th (Joint Session) Minutes. Seconded by Mr. Bramwell. Vote: Ms. Artz – Yes; Mr. Bramwell – Yes; Mr. Toole – Yes; and Ms. Deley – Yes. MOTION CARRIES.

VIII. **Warrants**

Ms. Deley deferred reviewing the below warrants until the Chair who approved them was present.

A. Payroll Warrant PR21-17 for the week ended February 6, 2021, Warrant dated February 11, 2021, in the amount of \$1,522,184.48.

B. Invoice Warrant AP21-33 dated February 11, 2021, in the amount of \$692,376.48.

C. Invoice Warrant AP21-34 dated February 18, 2021, in the amount of \$107,622.49.

IX. **Other Business**

There was no other business to discuss.

X. **Next Meeting's Agenda** – February 25, 2021 – Budget Presentations.

XI. **Executive Session**

1. To consider the purchase of real property.
2. To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining

XII. **Adjournment**

Declaration by the Vice-Chairperson, Renee Deley, was made as follows:

I declare, under General Laws Chapter 30A, §21(a)(3) and §21(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 at 10:47 P.M. by Mr. Toole to have the Board go into executive session under G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(3) §21(a)(6) for the purposes and reasons declared by the Vice-Chairperson and with the Board to not return to open session thereafter. Seconded by Mr. Bramwell. Vote: Ms. Artz – Yes; Mr. Bramwell – Yes; Mr. Toole – Yes; and Ms. Deley – Yes. MOTION CARRIES.

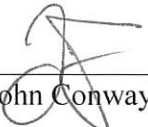
URL Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tYHmRng_T8s

Respectfully Submitted by:



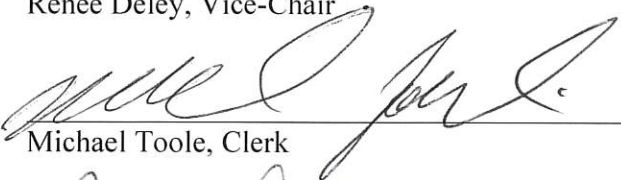
Jennifer Reid, Office Administrator

**SELECT BOARD
MINUTES OF MEETING
FEBRUARY 18, 2021**

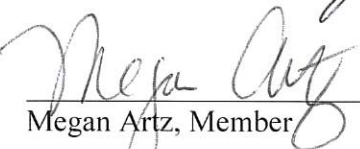


John Conway, Chair

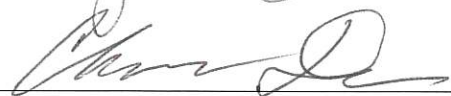
Renee Deley, Vice-Chair



Michael Toole, Clerk



Megan Artz, Member



Christine Deveau, Member

Minutes Approved by Board on: April 15, 2021