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Town of Norton

AdHoc Committee Norton Media Center

June 25, 2019

7:00 PM

MINUTES

I. 7:00 PM Call to Order

The June 25, 2019 meeting of the AdHoc Committee was held at Norton Media Center, and was called to order at 7:00 PM by Ms. Sheri Cohen. In attendance: Mr. Brad Bramwell, and Ms. Mary Steele (representing the Board of Selectmen), Ms. Sheri Cohen, and Ms. Carolyn Gallagher (representing the School Committee) and Mr. Bill Rotondi, Mr. Aaron Smith, Ms. Aimee Sawyer, Mr. Mike Fiore (representing the Finance Committee)

Absent: None

II. New Business

1. Purpose of Committee:

- a. Improved open dialog so all boards are aware of what is happening among the others.
- b. Coordinate joint meetings of full boards on an ongoing basis -perhaps quarterly, while the AdHoc committee could meet more frequently.
- c. Sometimes the FinCom gets information at the last minute, and it makes it difficult to make informed decisions.
- d. Sometimes there is a lack of communication in the negotiation of contracts, when school committee is doing one thing and municipal is doing something different. Could we discuss parameters for both sides to stay within during the next negotiation process.
 - i. Establish Guidelines for each board as a starting point in negotiation, and then discuss any variances needed.
 - ii. The budget has to balance, and when the town manager provides his recommendations and at the end of the process the bottom line has to balance, and while schools are a really big number, and we want to fund them as they need, but at the end of the day the budget has to balance.
- e. Eliminate the divide that exists between municipal and town 'sides'.
- f. Overall goal is to move forward together with improved communication
- g. We have a lot of different initiatives that are ongoing – Town Hall, Community Center, Athletic Complex, etc. Do we have a strategic vision and/or plan so we are all focused on moving all of them forward so that we are ready to move before they become an emergency?
- h. There are needs for things that can be beneficial to multiple departments – for example, the COA has asked for the garage behind their building that belongs to the school department, and they would like it moved to make space for more parking – the cost to move is appx. \$80K, and nobody has that money, so nothing happens.

- i. We would like to see each department provide a budget for what they need to look like Easton or Foxboro – what does the Police dept need to run dept for a town of 19,000 people, regardless of what the cost associated with those resources is. We should also look at it for Capital and really get a full picture of the needs.
 - i. This comes at a good time, because it can be used for the next budget cycle anyhow, and we can ask for the info and have it sent to us when finished.
 - ii. When can we expect to have this info? Is October 1 reasonable? Will ask to have info for 10.1.19.

2. Defining Roles

- a. Nomination of Chair – Ms. Gallagher nominates Ms. Cohen. Mr. Rotondi Second. Mr. Bramwell moves to close nominations.

Vote to elect Ms. Sheri Cohen as Chairperson of the AdHoc Committee – 8-0 Unanimous.

- b. Nomination of Vice Chair – Ms. Sawyer nominates Mr. Smith. Mr. Fiore Second. Mr. Bramwell moves to close nominations

Vote to elect Mr. Aaron Smith as Vice - Chairperson of the AdHoc Committee – 8-0 Unanimous.

- c. Nomination of Secretary – Mr. Smith nominates Ms. Sawyer. Ms. Gallagher Second. Mr. Bramwell moves to close nominations.

Vote to elect Ms. Aimee Sawyer as Secretary of the AdHoc Committee – 8-0 Unanimous.

3. Budget Discussion – How to plan for Norton's Future

- a. Schools have a 5 year plan, and we know the number is a big % of the budget, but our mandates are what they are, and if you peel them out, we asked for roughly 2.6% increase in the 2020 budget.
- b. Separate the mandates from discretionary spending so that the public can really see where the money is going, and how little of our funds go to discretionary spending.
- c. Free Cash is a challenging term because it makes it seem like we don't know how the money is coming in, when in reality it's mainly coming from non-recurring revenue sources and unspent budgeted funds from the prior year.
- d. Most dept. heads probably already know what they will need, and any wish list items.
- e. We really need financial projections to go together with this information, so that we know how much of an override we actually may need, and to be able to show the town what the finances may look like as time passes. Fincom has asked for this information repeatedly and not been provided it.
- f. In a similar vein, we have asked what and when the impact of Blue Star industrial park may be, and it wasn't able to be estimated – we may need to estimate very conservatively, and possibly plan for worst case scenario, because it's much better to underestimate than over estimate.
- g. Previous criticisms from prior overrides were that we didn't think about it long enough, so being able to start on 10/1 to look at what is needed and what we can do, and how we can grow to benefit everybody
- h. If an override is on the table for next spring, FinCom will have to review both budgets at the same time, because there isn't enough time between town election and town meeting to review them.
- i. Do we want to create a format to request this information, so the data comes through in a standardized format? What type of resources do you need to run your department at an optimal level for a town of 20,000? We want people to understand that this isn't the same request as during budget season.

- j. We definitely need an excel copy of the 2020 budget.
 - k. Aaron will come up with the exact wording of the request to send to the department heads, Town Manager and Superintendent by 7/1/19.
 - l. Brad will work with Mike Yunits on a 5 year revenue projection, as well as the assumptions being included.
 - m. Would it be a good idea to have another group – a selectman, Mike Yunits, James Puello and a FinCom member to work on the budget process, projection, etc. We definitely would like to show that we are engaged in the process, and understand the output and what's involved.
 - n. A meeting has been scheduled between Dr. Baeta, Matt Wells, Mike Yunits and James Puello to discuss similar items, perhaps we can have a few representatives join that meeting.
4. Recap of Joint Meeting on 5.30.19
- a. The meeting of all 3 boards was great for transparency and to be able to see how the different boards function and what they are working on.
 - b. Minutes once approved can be forwarded to the other board members and stakeholders to review. We will also post them on the Invest in Norton's Future Facebook Page?

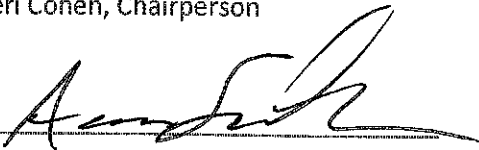
III. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 8:14pm by Ms. Gallagher, second by Ms. Sawyer.

Unanimous. 8-0

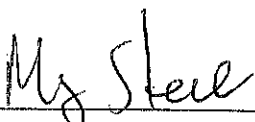


Sheri Cohen, Chairperson

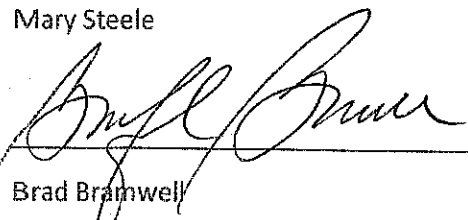


Aaron Smith, Vice Chairman

Aimee Sawyer, Secretary

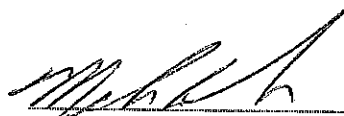


Mary Steele



Brad Bramwell

Carolyn Gallagher



Mike Fiore

Bill Rotondi

