

Norfolk Select Board's Open Session Meeting Minutes March 24, 2020

This meeting was held as a Remote Access Zoom Virtual Meeting.

Members Present: Kevin Kalkut; Christopher Wider; CiCi Van Tine. Members Not Present: None.
Also Present: Blythe Robinson, Town Administrator; Judith Lizardi, Executive Assistant.

Mr. Kalkut called the Remote Access Zoom Virtual Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He announced this meeting is being both video and audio recorded.

Mr. Kalkut read a prepared statement regarding the Massachusetts State of Emergency and the associated state legislation allowing towns to hold remote access virtual meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. He reviewed his ground rules for conducting this Remote Access Zoom Virtual Meeting including that the public will be allowed to comment at the end of the Select Board's discussion of each agenda item.

Ms. Robinson reviewed the agenda.

Public Comment (submitted by email only)

Ms. Robinson stated that she did not receive any public comment emails for this meeting.

Norfolk Select Board Items

Please discuss changing the date of the 2020 Town Election from May 5, 2020 to a date in June, 2020 to be determined at a later time by the Select Board

Ms. Robinson stated that with so many questions about the COVID-19 pandemic and the preparation required to hold the Town's general election, this item is on the agenda to discuss changing the Town election date to sometime in June. She stated that since scripting the motion for this item found in the Select Board's meeting packet, the State has passed legislation to allow changing the date of the election. Although it is not critical that a rescheduled date be chosen at this time, she recommended changing the date to June 2, 2020. She read aloud the suggested motion provided by the Secretary of State's office.

Mr. Kalkut stated that changing the election date is going to be very common for many towns given this COVID-19 situation. Mr. Wider and Ms. Van Tine stated they have no questions or concerns.

A motion was made by Mr. Kalkut that pursuant to section 1 of chapter 45 of the Acts of 2020 and because of the state of emergency declared by the governor pursuant to executive order 591, Declaration of a State of Emergency to Respond to COVID-19, the municipal town election scheduled for May 5, 2020 is hereby postponed. It was seconded by Ms. Van Tine. A roll call vote was taken as follows: Mr. Wider – aye; Ms. Van Tine – aye; Mr. Kalkut – aye. All were in favor.

Please consider changing the date of the 2020 Annual Town Meeting from May 12, 2020 to a date to be determined in June 2020

Ms. Robinson stated that as discussed in the previous meeting topic, the current pandemic may make it impossible to complete all of the necessary work to have the Annual Town Meeting on May 12, 2020. The Moderator, Advisory Committee, Town Counsel, Town Clerk, and Finance Director have all been polled and all are available to move this meeting from its usual date to the

second Tuesday in June which is the 9th. It has been confirmed that the meeting can be held at the KP Middle School on June 9th, but a second date has not been confirmed. The Select Board has the authority under state law to make this change.

Mr. Kalkut stated changing the meeting date is common practice for towns during this time. Mr. Wider and Ms. Van Tine stated they have no questions or concerns.

A motion was made by Mr. Kalkut that the Board approve changing the date of the 2020 Annual Town Meeting from May 12, 2020 to June 9, 2020. It was seconded by Mr. Wider. A roll call vote was taken as follows: Mr. Wider – aye; Ms. Van Tine – aye; Mr. Kalkut – aye. All were in favor.

Please consider approval of an emergency declaration with regard to the COVID-19 virus pandemic
Ms. Robinson stated that with the uncertain times relative to this pandemic, many communities are passing emergency declarations in order to ensure that the community has access to any resources that may become available and has the ability to respond to the emergency through various means. While it has not been determined to be a required step, it appears to be a best practice. The version of the emergency declaration provided in the Select Board's meeting packet has been vetted by Town Counsel; she recommended approval.

Mr. Kalkut stated numerous communities have taken this measure. It does not mean any action will be taken, but it will ensure that if additional resources are needed, they will be available to the Town. Ms. Van Tine stated she has no questions or concerns. Mr. Wider asked if Mr. Ed Nolan was consulted. Ms. Robinson stated Mr. Nolan said he has no concerns.

A motion was made by Mr. Kalkut that the Board approve an emergency declaration regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. It was seconded by Mr. Wider. A roll call vote was taken as follows: Mr. Wider – aye; Ms. Van Tine – aye; Mr. Kalkut – aye. All were in favor.

Please consider approval of a transfer of ownership for the Class II License held by Norfolk Auto

Ms. Robinson stated Norfolk Auto contacted the Town Administrator's office to request a transfer of their license from one family member to another. This can be accomplished by a vote of the Select Board; no issues with the change are seen. She stated that the establishment would appreciate the Select Board's action on this so they can renew their dealer plates with the Registry of Motor Vehicles by the end of the month. Class II licenses are no longer issued in Norfolk, but this business is grandfathered in. She noted that Mr. Roche has been sent all the required application paperwork needing to be completed; however, her office has not yet heard back from Norfolk Auto. She recommended the Select Board approve the transfer conditionally upon receipt of the required documents.

Mr. Wider reviewed the ownership of the Norfolk Auto business. He and Ms. Van Tine stated they have no questions or concerns.

A motion was made by Mr. Kalkut that the Board approve a transfer of ownership for the Class II License held by Norfolk Auto conditioned upon receipt of the required application, insurance bond, and other documentation. It was seconded by Ms. Van Tine. A roll call vote was taken as follows: Mr. Wider – aye; Ms. Van Tine – aye; Mr. Kalkut – aye. All were in favor.

Please consider modifying all Common Victualler Licenses to allow businesses to offer home delivery of food in accordance with Massachusetts G.L. c.140

Ms. Robinson stated that she received an email from a person expressing concern that the Town does not allow for the delivery of food from restaurants. Taking a strict interpretation of the Town's Common Victualler licenses, this is true. As an example, included in the Select Board's meeting packet is the current license for Norfolk Town Pizza which states in part the license is hereby granted "in said location and at the place only..." She stated that staff has done some research and spoken to the former Executive Assistant (Ms. Harrington), and it is understood that this language has been in place for years; there is no history as to why it was written this way and has not changed. Certainly, in the age of various delivery options, it would be something to review. Given the existing pandemic and its impact on the Town's restaurants as well as residents who may prefer delivery of food, changing this at least for the duration of this situation is warranted. She suggests the Select Board approve a change for now which can be revisited during the next license renewal period.

Mr. Kalkut stated that at this time they are supposed to be removing roadblocks for services, so this would be a good start. He noted that all licenses should be aligned. Mr. Wider and Ms. Van Tine stated they have no questions or concerns.

Ms. Anne Marie Battistone, 59 Seekonk Street, stated that she remembers at one time a certain establishment wanted to provide food delivery but was not allowed to. She stated that it is time that they are allowed to provide delivery service.

A motion was made by Mr. Kalkut that the Board approve a modification to all Common Victualler licenses to allow businesses to offer home delivery of food in accordance with Massachusetts G.L. c.140 during the state of emergency as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was seconded by Mr. Wider. A roll call vote was taken as follows: Mr. Wider – aye; Ms. Van Tine – aye; Mr. Kalkut – aye. All were in favor.

Mr. Kalkut stated that at the conclusion of this meeting at 6:30 p.m., a joint meeting with the Select Boards of Norfolk, Wrentham, and Plainville will commence to discuss the King Philip School District FY21 Budget and Joint Services/Regionalization; this will also be a Remote Access Zoom Virtual Meeting.

At 6:29 p.m., a motion was made by Mr. Kalkut to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Ms. Van Tine. A roll call vote was taken as follows: Mr. Wider – aye; Ms. Van Tine – aye; Mr. Kalkut – aye. All were in favor.

Mr. Kalkut called the Remote Access Zoom Virtual Meeting for a joint meeting with the Select Boards of Norfolk, Wrentham, and Plainville to order at 6:43 p.m. Mr. Kalkut announced this meeting is being both video and audio recorded.

Discussion Items

General introductions

Mr. Kalkut requested confirmation of attendance at this Remote Access Zoom Virtual Meeting by each Select Board.

Mr. Kalkut confirmed the following Norfolk Select Board members, Town Administrator, and staff were in attendance at the Remote Access Zoom Virtual Meeting: Mr. Wider – present; Ms. Van Tine – present; Mr. Kalkut – present; Ms. Robinson – present; Ms. Lizardi – present.

Mr. Jeff Johnson, Chairman, confirmed the following Plainville Board of Selectmen members and Town Administrator were in attendance at the Remote Access Zoom Virtual Meeting: Mr. Brian Kelly, Vice Chairman – present; Mr. Stanley Widak, Jr., Clerk – present; Ms. Jennifer Thompson, Town Administrator – present.

Mr. Joseph Botaish, Chairman, confirmed the following Wrentham Board of Selectmen members, Town Administrator, and staff were in attendance at the Remote Access Zoom Virtual Meeting: Mr. Stephen Langley, Vice Chairman – present; Mr. Jerome McGovern, Clerk – present; Mr. Gerard Nolan, member – present; Mr. James Anderson, member – present; Mr. Kevin Sweet, Town Administrator – present; Ms. Amanda Vasapollo, Administrative Assistant – present.

Mr. Kalkut, Mr. Johnson, and Mr. Botaish each read their introductory statements regarding the Massachusetts State of Emergency and the associated state legislation allowing towns to hold remote access virtual meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Each Chair explained that this meeting is being held as a Remote Access Zoom Virtual Meeting and noted that this meeting is being both audio and video recorded. All meeting materials are available on each Town's website. Mr. Kalkut reviewed the ground rules for conducting this Remote Access Zoom Virtual Meeting including that the public will be allowed to comment at the end of the Select Boards' discussions of each agenda item.

Discussion of the King Philip School District FY 21 Budget

Ms. Robinson stated that the original reason for holding this joint meeting with Norfolk's sister communities in the KP District was to talk about the budget and each Town's plans to fund its share of the cost. The overall budget increase certified by the KP School Committee for next year is 3.49 percent. Norfolk's assessment increase is 1.46 percent. The other two town's assessments are higher, mostly due to enrollment breakdown, with Wrentham's being the highest at 7.82 percent. She noted that healthcare costs are a part of this discussion. She stated that Norfolk is working on the last details of their proposed budget for next year. Ms. Thompson stated that Plainville has just finished compiling their budgets. Their financial task group has been meeting since last fall. She noted that Plainridge Park has closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic; this has made their budget even more challenging. Mr. Sweet provided an overview of Wrentham's budget process and noted they are finalizing their numbers. He stated that they have a number of budget challenges and noted the COVID-19 crisis is changing things. He encouraged the Select Boards to discuss healthcare costs.

Mr. Paul Zinni, Superintendent of King Philip Regional School District, and Mr. Larry Azer, Director of Finance and Operations, addressed the Select Boards. Mr. Zinni stated that at their first budget presentation in January, which was prepared with preliminary information, they were at over 4 percent. As some factors changed, at their presentation to the School Committee on March 2, 2020, they were at 3.49 percent for a level-service budget. They are trying to be cognizant of the towns' budget issues and deliver the highest level of services possible.

Mr. Wider asked at what point in the future can these budget increases no longer be sustained. How can excellent education be provided and rein in budget costs that continue to rise every year? He asked why the Facilities budget increased 8 percent. Mr. Azer explained that the increase was due to

utility costs for electricity and heating. He stated that the buildings and components in the buildings are getting old. He stated they are in the process of finalizing a long-term capital plan. Ms. Van Tine commented that all three towns will experience budget tightening due to the virus pandemic. She asked what areas could be modified while protecting students' education if there is a downturn in the economy. Mr. Zinni stated that they always put the students and quality education first. He cannot make predictions as they do not know what the future will look like. He noted that there is very little room for movement within the budget as most costs are fixed costs. He discussed savings they have achieved in special education costs by building programs internally and reallocating the funds to do this enabling more students to stay in the schools, lowering costs.

Mr. Kelly discussed that some line items are uncontrollable due to previous negotiations such as salaries and benefits. He expressed concern about the 8 percent increase in facilities; he asked if there has been an efficiency audit done to try to reduce these costs. He suggested that purchasing versus leasing equipment may be a potential area for cost reduction. He asked about the increase in insurance costs. Mr. Azer said an extensive facilities audit has not been done. They are working to get better pricing on the energy contracts, and they are looking at solar opportunities. He advocated purchasing versus leasing of computers. Mr. Zinni said he was pleased the final insurance increase was five percent; he thinks Mr. Azer did a great job with the negotiations. Mr. Zinni stated there are 262 KP employees and approximately 210 are on the KP insurance. Discussion commenced regarding insurance costs. Mr. Widak expressed concern about capital improvements in the next few years if the economy downturns. Mr. Azer said that the high school roof will be need to be replaced or repaired within the next five years; HVAC and heating systems are also having trouble. He stated he is planning to have the capital improvements plan finished and published by later this spring.

Mr. Botaish said he thinks KP is doing a great job. He would like the towns to work together. He thinks health insurance is dictating the budget. Mr. Anderson stated he has no questions. Mr. Nolan stated he has no questions other than about insurance. Mr. McGovern stated he has no questions and disclosed that his wife is a teacher at KP. Mr. Langley disclosed that his daughter is an employee at KP. He requested the current E & D (excess and deficiency) balance. Mr. Botaish stated the Boards of the three towns have had meetings in the past about collaborative initiatives. Health insurance is something they need to talk about. Mr. Johnson suggested it may be better if the four groups join together for insurance purposes.

Public Comment

Mr. Ed Haddad, Norfolk resident at 138 Red Maple Run, stated he heard good conversation and ideas about KP and the three towns working together on the health insurance plans, but he would like more specific ideas.

Mr. Botaish said that unlike the private sector, collective bargaining with the unions has to occur in a municipality. Mr. Kalkut agreed that any change will trigger a collective bargaining discussion. Mr. Johnson suggested discussions begin with the towns, and discussions with the unions will need to be done afterward.

Ms. Donna Jones, Norfolk resident at 64 North Street, asked if any tracking is done for facilities maintenance. Mr. Azer said most systems are on preventive maintenance schedules. A more robust facilities work order program is planned for implementation in the summer.

Mr. Kalkut said this was a good discussion; it seemed like the three Boards will be focused on budgets. When things return to normal, the Boards can explore these paths in more detail. Mr. Zinni and Mr. Azer were thanked for their work; they exited the Remote Access Zoom Virtual meeting.

Discussion of Joint Services/Regionalization

Ms. Robinson reviewed that this item is on the agenda so the three Select Boards can discuss opportunities for joint services/regionalization. Wrentham specifically would like to talk about Veterans Services. This would be a good discussion point for Norfolk as well, because both Norfolk and Wrentham anticipate that the results of the 2020 census will be that both towns will have a reported population of more than 12,000. When that threshold is reached, state law requires that a Town have a full time Veterans' Agent. Currently, neither Norfolk or Wrentham do, so such a change would have a large fiscal impact. In light of the current pandemic, she suggested talking about regionalized health services or at least sharing of public health nurses. Wrentham has two full-time nurses at present, while Norfolk utilizes the VNA for minimal services, paying \$2,500 per year. There may be an opportunity to share this service and enhance capabilities. Mr. Sweet provided an overview of forming a regional Veterans District. He stated that the Town of Franklin's Veterans' Agent is retiring in 18 to 24 months, and Mr. Hellen, Town Administrator of Franklin, discussed with him possibilities of working with other towns. Mr. Sweet has been waiting to hear back from Mr. Hellen. He noted that Wrentham's Veterans' Agent left the position; North Attleboro agreed to take over in Wrentham as they do for Plainville. Ms. Thompson said they have a regional district with North Attleboro; it has been a great benefit to them. Mr. Johnson asked if there were regional requirements for the FTEs. Ms. Robinson discussed that in Wellesley one Veterans' Agent was used for four towns; it must be approved by the state. Mr. Botaish discussed the number of veterans in each town. He suggested that putting the Veterans Services programs together would be beneficial for the veterans. Mr. Johnson said he would not be averse to a three or four-town district. Mr. Sweet stated he would like to meet with North Attleboro about this possibly. Mr. McGovern stated regionalization would be a good way to move forward. Mr. Nolan stated that regionalization of Veterans Services would be beneficial. Select Board members and Town Administrators agreed that they should continue to work on this. Mr. Sweet discussed their Town's nursing services; they are providing services to Plainville, as well.

Ms. Van Tine stated she has no comments. Mr. Wider said he thinks regionalization is the way to go; possibly some of the administrative functions within the schools could be regionalized, as well. Mr. Kelly stated he has no questions. He stated that costs have to be cut; if unifying and sharing can help, it should be looked into. Mr. Widak stated that regionalization between the three towns is the way to go. Mr. Botaish stated that if each town had to have their own high school, it would be much more difficult. Mr. Langley concurred that regionalization is good, but they need to be careful, as well. Sharing equipment could be good also; further discussions should continue. Mr. McGovern said there have been discussions about this in the past; any opportunities for regionalization should be considered. Mr. Nolan said he agrees with regionalization; it is an alternative to raising taxes. Mr. Kalkut stated there is support and alignment with the Select Boards; it is now with the Town Administrators to pursue. Mr. Sweet discussed possible next meeting dates. Ms. Robinson said she will work on scheduling a meeting. Ms. Thompson discussed Plainville's success story with regionalization and shared services for the public nurse. Mr. Botaish said he would like to keep working on this to move it along. Mr. Kalkut agreed the discussion should continue. He thanked everyone for attending the Remote Access Zoom Virtual meeting.

Public Comment

Mr. David Rosenberg, Norfolk Resident of 123 North Street, said that Plainville is in a consortium with other towns to buy electricity. He asked if it would be good to join Plainville. Ms. Thompson said it was a success in Plainville with decreases in rates; she encouraged other towns to look into it.

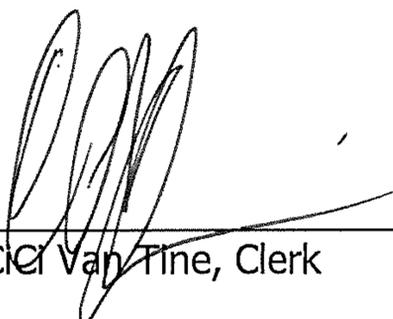
At 8:58 p.m., a motion was made by Mr. Kalkut to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Ms. Van Tine. A roll call vote was taken as follows: Mr. Wider – aye; Ms. Van Tine – aye; Mr. Kalkut – aye. All were in favor.

At 8:58 p.m., a motion was made by Mr. Johnson to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Mr. Kelly. A roll call vote was taken as follows: Mr. Kelly – aye; Mr. Widak, Jr. – aye; Mr. Johnson – aye. All were in favor.

At 8:59 p.m., a motion was made by Mr. Botaish to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Mr. Langley. A roll call vote was taken as follows: Mr. Langley – aye; Mr. McGovern – aye; Mr. Nolan – aye; Mr. Anderson – aye; Mr. Botaish – aye. All were in favor.

The next meeting of the Norfolk Select Board is scheduled to be remotely on Tuesday, April 7, 2020, at 7:00 p.m.

This is a true and accurate report of the Select Board's meeting of March 24, 2020.



Cici Van Tine, Clerk