

## **Norfolk Select Board's Open Session Meeting Minutes May 19, 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 7:00 p.m. He announced this meeting is being both video and audio recorded. He read a 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 that in accordance with the Governor's Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G. L. c. 30A, § 20, relating to the 2020 novel Coronavirus outbreak emergency, the May 19, 2020, 7:00 p.m. public meeting of the Norfolk Select Board shall be physically closed to the public to avoid group congregation. Alternative public access to this meeting shall be done via Zoom online video conferencing. This application will allow users to view the meeting and provide comments during allocated windows as outlined in the Board's Public Comment Policy. He noted the Zoom Meeting link and the Zoom Meeting call-in number are provided on the agenda. He stated that all supporting materials have been published to the website.

Ms. Robinson reviewed the agenda.

#### COVID-19 Updates

Ms. Robinson stated that during the past few weeks COVID-19 cases have remained steady at 22 with most having recovered. Town staff are working on details of the reopening plans for all municipal buildings making sure staff and public will be safe. Town Hall is tentatively planned for reopening the week of June 1<sup>st</sup>; the Library is planned for reopening next week for curbside pickup and expanded programming. She stated that she anticipates providing all phased reopening information on the Town's website. The Town can apply to FEMA for 75 percent of Norfolk's COVID-19 related costs. Norfolk's share of the allocated State monies from the CARES Act passed by Congress is just over \$1.056 million; this is based on population. On the Town's side, COVID-19 costs are approximately \$60,000 to \$100,000; she is in contact with the schools to determine their costs. Funding can be applied for between now and June 5<sup>th</sup>. The approval of the grant application will be on the June 2, 2020 Select Board agenda. This will capture all costs to date from both the Town and schools. This will significantly help the Town end the year on a positive balance. The Town will make a second CARES Act request application before the end of the year for any additional costs related to COVID-19.

#### Public Comment

Mr. David Rosenberg, 123 North Street, questioned if the Select Board's meeting packet posted on the Town's website is the same as the meeting packet provided to the Select Board members. Ms. Van Tine stated it is the same meeting packet.

Mr. Edward Haddad, 138 Red Maple Run, and Mr. Christopher Henry, 30 Boardman Street, questioned the amount of the CARES ACT funding Norfolk would get of the approximately \$1.056 million the Town is eligible for. Ms. Robinson stated that the Town has to demonstrate their costs related to the COVID-19 emergency up to \$1.056 million. She reiterated that the current costs for buying materials and PPE have been around \$60,000 to \$100,000; however, the schools' costs still need to be accounted for. She stated that it is not known what the COVID-19 requirements and protocols will be

in future phases, and it is not known if there will be extra precautions that must be implemented to reopen schools next year.

Ms. Jennifer Wynn, 3 Hemlock Lane, commended the Select Board on conducting remote meetings as virtual meetings are very difficult to monitor.

Ms. Donna Jones, 64 North Street, requested information about Memorial Day events. Ms. Robinson stated that Mr. Benjamin McCarty, Commander of the Norfolk American Legion Post #335, is coordinating a truncated event at the cemetery for less than 10 Town officials to participate; the ceremony will be taped by NCTV and aired on the same day, if possible. Other than the Field of Flags, all events have been cancelled.

Ms. Anne Marie Battistone, 59 Seekonk Street, stated that she saw a very nice Town-owned car in front of Town Hall. She asked who selects the Town vehicles and stated that money could be saved in purchasing a less costly vehicle. Ms. Robinson said no Town vehicles have been purchased since she became Town Administrator. She does not know the vehicle that Ms. Battistone is referencing; if Ms. Battistone provides more information, Ms. Robinson will look into it.

### **Action Items**

Please consider changing the date and location of the Annual Town Meeting from June 9<sup>th</sup> to June 24<sup>th</sup>

Ms. Robinson stated that in response to the pandemic the Select Board originally changed Town Meeting from May 12<sup>th</sup> to June 9<sup>th</sup>. However, as the limitations continue, it does not seem like the June 9<sup>th</sup> date will be viable. Those who are required to be at the meeting have been polled and identified June 24<sup>th</sup> and June 30<sup>th</sup> as options. While waiting as long as possible is something to consider, it could be problematic to wait until the 30<sup>th</sup> to start the meeting as it would have to be completed by midnight. The location of the meeting must be considered, especially anticipating that social distancing measures will remain in place. Norfolk's regional High School in Wrentham is available on both nights and has been reserved. There are several spaces available at the school including the auditorium, gymnasium, and cafeteria. As the date gets closer, it can be determined which space is most appropriate for set up, social distancing, and required technology. State legislation to enable the Town to have the meeting outside of Norfolk is still pending. If it is not executed, a court order would need to be obtained or the meeting would have to be held at the Middle School as usual. She recommended approval of the date change to June 24<sup>th</sup> and location change to the high school to accommodate more people safely.

Mr. Kalkut stated that Plainville and Wrentham are conducting their Town Meetings on June 22<sup>nd</sup> and June 23<sup>rd</sup> at the High School auditorium. Having Norfolk's Town Meeting on June 24<sup>th</sup> in the auditorium will allow for consolidation of sanitation and cleaning efforts to one area of the building. However, the Town Moderator stated his preference is to conduct Town Meeting at the High School field house in order to accommodate a larger group of people. Mr. Kalkut asked about the potential for remote participation. Ms. Van Tine stated she prefers the auditorium as it will be less work for people to set up and take down. She questioned the expense differential between having the meeting in the auditorium and the field house; if it costs no more money, they should have the meeting where the Moderator suggests. Ms. Robinson said the auditorium safely holds 150 people; she does not know how many people the field house could accommodate but believes it would be more. She would have to check on the potential for remote participation. Ms. Susan Klein, 11

Kenney Pond Road, suggested having the meeting outside at the High School football field as there is a public address system and bleacher seating.

A motion was made by Mr. Kalkut that the Board approve change to the date and location of the 2020 Annual Town Meeting from June 9<sup>th</sup> to June 24<sup>th</sup>, and the location from the KP Middle School to the KP Regional High School. 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 voting to restore funding to the FY21 budget if state and local revenue targets are met

Ms. Robinson stated that at the end of the last Select Board meeting a question was raised about whether or not the Board would be willing to support restoring budget cuts if state aid and local receipts come in at higher levels from what is being projected currently. Individually, Select Board members indicated their willingness to do so. The budget approved by the Board reflects a reduction of \$983,063 and an overall increase from FY20 to FY21 of 0.13 percent. Since the meeting, staff have met to discuss these reductions with both schools, and those reductions will be apportioned in the following manner: MECC Assessment \$380,564 (with ½ cut now and ½ cut at Special Town Meeting), Town of Norfolk \$204,849, Norfolk Schools \$284,822, and KP Schools \$112,828, for a total reduction of \$983,063. She stated that it has not been determined how monies would be reapportioned.

Mr. Kalkut stated that any restoration of budget allocations would need to go through Fall Town Meeting. Ms. Van Tine confirmed the Select Board viewed these cuts only as a precaution due to the pandemic. She is comfortable with assuring people that if the economic conditions are not as bad as foreseen, the monies can be restored to where they came. Superintendent of Schools Ingrid Allardi stated that the Norfolk Schools \$284,822 reduction is very difficult without looking at staffing and positions. However, if the shortfall is not that drastic, she would like to bring programs and positions back and have the funds restored to where they would have been in the budget. Mr. Haddad stated that Town Meeting has not approved a budget. If restoration of funds comes up at Fall Town Meeting, he asked how the money would be reapportioned. Ms. Robinson said the plan is to have Annual Town Meeting on June 24<sup>th</sup> and approve the budget. At the Fall Town Meeting, the Select Board could make adjustments to the line items by citing the revenue source from where the reapportioned funds would come.

A motion was made by Mr. Kalkut that the Board vote to reinstate budget reductions should state aid and local revenue targets be met for the FY21 budget. 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 authorizing the Chair to award Bids for SERSG Water & Sewer Chemicals, DPW Supplies and Paper to various bidders for Fiscal Year 2021

Ms. Robinson stated that as it does annually, SERSG has bid out a number of commodities and items that the DPW uses throughout the year, water and sewer treatment chemicals, and office paper. Some or all of these may be used throughout the year as needed. The value of these bids to the Town is that because 23 communities participate, competitive pricing is obtained, and the need to bid them on our own is foregone which is an efficiency. She recommended approval of these bids for FY21. She noted that this approval does not require the Town to buy the items; it enables the Town to acquire the items as needed.

Mr. Wider asked if these numbers are consistent with DPW's needs for what is planned for FY21. Ms. Robinson said these are estimates. The bidder must be given an idea of what may be purchased

based on historical amounts; the provided numbers are consistent with the paving expectations. She stated the Town has not gotten approval for Chapter 90 funds yet. If those funds are not received, the Town will not be spending based on these estimates.

A motion was made by Mr. Kalkut that the Board authorize the Chair to award Bids for SERSG Water & Sewer Chemicals, DPW Supplies and Paper to various bidders for Fiscal Year 2021. 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 hours of the annual town election scheduled for June 23, 2020

Ms. Robinson stated that this item has been added at the request of Town Clerk Carol Greene and needs to be acted on at this meeting in order to have time to properly post the election warrant with changed hours. The legislation regarding changes to elections allows for reduced hours, and with mail-in ballots many Towns are taking this step. Included in the Select Board's meeting packet is an email from Ms. Greene requesting that the hours be changed from 7AM – 8 PM to 10 AM – 5 PM. The mail-in ballot option has already been advertised and is being utilized by voters, and plans are underway to ensure that voting in person will meet requirements for social distancing and other protocols to make sure voters and poll workers are safe.

Ms. Greene discussed that a 13-hour voting day is a long period to exposure people to group interaction. She noted that Wrentham and Plainville have shortened their voting times. She recommended a change in hours to 10 AM to 5 PM which provides seven hours for residents to vote in person. She is encouraging early voting by mail and will provide a reverse phone call to alert people of the changed voting hours if this action is approved. Mr. Kalkut encouraged mail-in voting and supported the change in hours; Ms. Van Tine approved of the reduced hours due to the pandemic situation.

A motion was made by Mr. Kalkut that the Board amend the hours of the annual Town election on June 23, 2020 to 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM. 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.

## **Discussion Items**

Please discuss postponing the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary parade to 2021

Mr. Paul Terrio, Chair of the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Parade Committee, said that it would be remiss to think the Committee could coordinate a parade this year due to the uncertainty of social distancing restrictions. He recommended postponing the event until next year; he suggested possibly combining the parade with Community Day and having the fireworks display the same weekend. He stated that he will offer to return the donations for the parade that have been received. Mr. Kalkut stated that although it is disappointing, having the parade in 2021 is something to look forward to. Mr. Wider thanked the Committee members for their efforts and hoped they can make it work for next year.

Please discuss changes to restaurant alcohol licenses to enable them to change their licensed premises in response to Coronavirus pandemic operating requirements

Ms. Robinson stated that hopefully the pandemic metrics in Massachusetts will continue to improve and the economy will be able to slowly reopen. One of Norfolk's restaurant owners contacted the Town to inquire about obtaining local approvals to change their licensed premises to serve alcohol in order to meet the regulations that they anticipate will be forthcoming. Part of the alcohol licensing

process is that the Select Board must approve an establishments licensed premise. In order to meet social distancing requirements, it is anticipated that restaurants will need to adjust to maintain safe distances, and in order to do so may need or want to expand or change their licensed premise. As those details are not yet available, or specifics from restaurants of what they would change, this is on the agenda as a discussion item, mostly to alert the Select Board that this will need to be addressed quickly when more is known in order to support Norfolk's restaurants being able to open as quickly as possible when it is allowed.

Mr. Kalkut said this is a very difficult time for restaurants with the current state of uncertainty regarding when and how they can reopen; he will support their efforts. Mr. Wider and Ms. Van Tine agreed that anything the Select Board can do to help restaurants is warranted at this time.

#### Town Administrator Update

Ms. Robinson stated that this agenda item is on a trial basis to provide the Select Board and the public with some updates and insights to Town operations. She stated grading has started at Lake Street, to be followed by paving and drainage work with final paving scheduled for the fall. She noted that Finance Director Todd Lindmark, Treasurer Anne Marie Duggan, and she met with both Moody's Investors Service and S&P regarding a new bond issue as a result of a bond sale to be held on June 1<sup>st</sup>. The sale of those bonds will be on the June 2, 2020 Select Board meeting agenda for approval. The calls with the rating agencies went well, and Norfolk is expecting to maintain their rating going forward. The sale includes a refunding of the 2012 bond issue and sale of bonds for projects approved at last fall's special town meeting. The agreement to add two new towns to the MECC is moving forward with the agreement expecting to be signed on June 3, 2020; she stated the State 911 Commissioner was confident this would be approved. The Transfer Station is implementing the new cost structure and the FY21 decals are being sold at the higher rate. Information will be forthcoming about how residents can switch stickers for bags. There is a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (Climate Change) Public Listening Session on May 21, 2020; she will repost the information on the Town's website "What's New" section so it will be more visible for the public to obtain the Zoom meeting information. The Lincoln Road property is going through the permitting process to change it into a solar facility; recently, the Town realized over \$87,000 in back taxes on that parcel. The Field of Flags is on Town Hill; there will be a small Memorial Day Ceremony held on Monday. Her office is in the process of reaching out to boards and committees to determine if members with terms expiring on June 30, 2020 would like to be considered for reappointment; any board/committee vacancies will be posted on the Town website for residents to submit applications.

#### **Report of Warrants**

The following warrants have been signed:

A motion was made by Mr. Wider to approve the following warrant:

- 5/05/2020 45V20 \$109,537.98

It was seconded by Mr. Kalkut. A roll call vote was taken as follows: Mr. Wider – aye; Ms. Van Tine – aye; Mr. Kalkut – aye. All were in favor.

A motion was made by Mr. Kalkut to approve the following warrants:

- 5/12/2020 46VS20 \$69,090.88
- 5/12/2020 46V20 \$234,053.01
- 8/20/2019 08CS20 \$700.00

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.

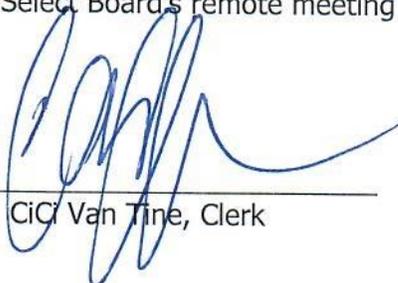
### **Approve Minutes**

A motion was made by Ms. Van Tine that the Board approve the minutes of the May 5, 2020 regular meeting. It was seconded by Mr. Kalkut. A roll call vote was taken as follows: Mr. Wider – aye; Ms. Van Tine – aye; Mr. Kalkut – aye. All were in favor.

At 8:34 p.m., a motion was made by Mr. Kalkut to adjourn the meeting. 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.

The next meeting of the Norfolk Select Board is scheduled to be held remotely on Tuesday, June 2, 2020, at 7:00 p.m.

This is a true and accurate report of the Select Board's remote meeting of May 19, 2020.



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CiCi Van Tine, Clerk