

Regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen convened at 7 p.m. on Thursday, January 29, 2015 in Room 34, the Harry B. Butters Chambers, Norwood Memorial Municipal Building, with the Pledge of Allegiance, and a silent moment of prayer and reflection. Meeting is Recorded.

Present: Chairman Michael J. Lyons, Selectmen William J. Plasko, Helen Abdallah Donohue, Paul A. Bishop. Also present General Manager John J. Carroll, Asst. General Manager Bernard Cooper, Purchasing Agent Catherine Carney, Clerk Frances L. Jessoe and Assistant Christina Mulvehill.

Absent: Selectman Allan D. Howard

Appointments
Budget Meeting

Robert Thornton, Town Clerk & Accountant:

Mr. Thornton presented an abbreviated version of his FY 16 budget analysis first pass. He briefly explained the budget process. Since Proposition two and a half in 1982, the whole focus on budget has to be revenue driven. Revenues are determined first and those dictate what the budget can be. He showed a revenue detail showing the last six years of revenue history, going forward to a projected revenue amount for next year. Mr. Thornton showed a Power Point presentation showing the current year's receipts and an increase of \$7.2 million for the next year's estimates. He explained that the Town by laws does not address budgeting concepts but the one he employs is a generally accepted budget concept. The budget cannot be higher than the revenue so he bases numbers on what has been collected in the past six years. It is called extrapolation analysis. He went on to report that departmental receipts are up \$1.03 million and utilities are up \$4.6 million but budgets are up more than that. State aid figures were prepared before the new governor took office and could be debated going forward by budget balancing. Right now the number is \$251,000. Real estate taxes are up \$2.7 million. Receipts and offsets are down \$900,000 representing mostly the amount taken out of the bank last year from the stabilization fund. The increase in revenue is good but the budget increases requested in this first pass have come in higher than that. Although we are out of balance by \$3.1 million, that is not an extremely high number and it will eventually be balanced. Mr. Thornton went on to review the last layer of detail which includes mostly things that are constant except for things like excise tax which comes from the Registry of Motor Vehicles. State hotel and motel taxes have gone up slightly over six years and this has helped considerably. Building permits have gone up slightly. Bottom-line NSTAR receipts were reallocated for DPW. Local aid will be discussed by the Budget Balancing Committee and he recommends keeping an eye on it. Taxation revenues increase by \$1.5 million. Town Assessor Paul Wanecek advised going with \$800,000 in new growth. He explained that he tries to be conservative with using reserves to balance the annual budget so as not to wipe out the bank in case of any unforeseen financial calamity. He proposes \$1.3 million with no change from last year. The recurring surplus is the same at \$2.9 million and the non-recurring at \$2.89 million. Out of that \$4.9 million, \$1.8 million is free cash and sixty percent of this number is the stabilization fund. Mr. Thornton said they did take money out temporarily for Public Works and had an MOU signed by the Selectmen and the Finance Commission to repay that money. There is \$500,000 for suggested stabilization but it could be reduced and still stay in line with the MOU. The budget balancing committee will go back to the beginning to identify revenues. Right now revenues are \$170,000,000 so that is the highest the budgets can be. From there he will back out the fixed and shared costs such as debt service, health insurance, pension, etc., utility budgets, state cherry sheet and overlay of \$750,000 for abatements add up to \$99,000,000 out of the \$170,000,000 and what is left over is split between General Government and the School Department. The split is now 55% Schools, 45% General Government; Schools have \$39 million and General Government has \$31 million.

Mark Redlich, Computer Dept.

Mr. Redlich reviewed his budget. His total budget request is up \$100,000. The increases are due to COLA and longevity, \$25,000 for consulting help to get projects done, such as firewall issues and switch configuration. He would like to start funding a way to scan paper to keep electronic files. There is a new item to upgrade wiring on ground, first and second floors. The third floor, Manager's Office and

Mark Redlich, Computer Dept.-(cont'd)

Treasurer's offices are new so they are all set. Selectman Plasko asked how long it would take to do this. Mr. Redlich estimated it would take a couple of weeks. He explained that during the project everyone would still be live and would just switch over to the new wiring when it is completed. Selectman Donohue asked Mr. Redlich if he had talked to Mr. Carroll about re-doing town hall office spaces. Mr. Redlich said he wants to segregate the floors and he will have to look at the changes in spaces and the ground floor. As for new equipment, this year he is working on switches and in order to do VOIP he needs to work on switches. Chairman Lyons asked what his priority is and Mr. Redlich said it is the wiring of the building.

Gerald Miller, Recreation Dept.

Mr. Miller reviewed his budget. He announced that Program Director Linda Berger is the President Elect of the Massachusetts Parks and Recreation Association. Building repairs have been taken out of his budget. There is a wage increase for part time employees. Playground maintenance utilities have been increased. The maintenance for those irrigations systems will now be handled by the Recreation Department. Selectman Plasko asked Mr. Miller if he would be hiring more lifeguards to prevent having to close Father Mac's early.

The Manager talked about a light pole that fell down at the Balch school Elliot field. He presented a report and a proposal from Gale Associates including photos. Mr. Miller, Mr. Carroll and Mr. Riccardi met at the field with a representative from Gale. They are looking at high mass steel light poles also the possibility of putting in temporary lighting with a generator. They could get a portable fixture for a reasonable price. Mr. Carroll said they are also going to study the softball field. Selectman Donohue inquired as to why the town light department did not check the poles. Mr. Carroll said this is analysis of the structural integrity of the light poles and is way beyond the expertise of the electrical engineers. Selectman Donohue referred to a letter from Gale Associates to Gerry Miller. Mr. Carroll said the study would cost \$4,500. Selectman Donohue asked if the light poles were to be replaced would it go through this Board. In addition, the Manager should let the people in South Norwood know because when those lights are lit up it is like daytime. The Manager assured the Board that if it were at that stage he would meet with and talk to South Norwood residents. He also assured the Board they would have input on the matter. He said if they find out 2 or 3 are rusted he would recommend replacing them all; the cost would be \$350,000 to \$400,000. The analysis will be done before April.

Mark Ryan, Supt. DPW/Town Engineer:

Chairman Lyons offered thanks from this Board and the Town of Norwood for the work the DPW did during the storms. Mr. Ryan said he has a great crew with Gary Schorer and on down to all employees. He gave a brief update on the storm cleanup. Many areas have to be cleaned up- widening intersections and such. Tonight at 7pm, they will start removal of snow from Norwood center all the way to Coakley Middle School. Mr. Ryan started his budget update by saying the Public Works budget is mostly level funded. He explained the increases are \$42,000 increase in Sewer, which is an emergency back-up generator for the Vanderbilt pumping station. That station works great but unlike the other two pumping stations, it has no back-up generator. There is also a \$15,750 increase to account for the requirement by EPA for testing of underdrains which in past have contaminated the brooks and streams. He has to try to clean up the waters and test every pipe that discharges into a brook or stream. Mr. Ryan gave an overview of the problems with sewers and the pollution of sewers and drains. They have employed a system of lining the sewer pipes. They are currently working in the Nichols Street area. Part of that EPA consent order requires the town actively work on the underdrain system and in 2020 the will deal with South Norwood. The EPA wants the Town to work on the areas that are the worst first. Selectman Donohue asked how this fits in with the work done on Guild Square. Mr. Ryan said Guild square was after the EPA got actively involved. Selectman Donohue suggested showing the EPA what the Town has already done. Mr. Ryan assured her they already know what the Town has done and he showed a chart of what the Town's agreement with the EPA consists of. Selectman Donohue asked why South Norwood was being put off given that it is an older section of town. Mr. Ryan explained it was because testing showed it is not as contaminated in brooks and streams as other areas. Selectman Plasko added he was

Mark Ryan-(cont'd)

involved in the EPA consent order and Mr. Ryan, Mr. Polcari, and Attorney Flynn did a great job negotiating to the Town's advantage. Mr. Ryan referred back to the budget and talked about refuse removal. There is an increase of 2.5 % increase each year in that budget. Mr. Ryan talked about fueling and stated he has always strongly felt the department should provide its own fueling. \$210,000 in new equipment will be going to capital outlay for five new pieces of equipment. During discussion, Mr. Ryan promised to provide Selectman Plasko with a plan for replacement. The Cemetery will double chip seal the roads at the cemetery to extend the life expectancy. Selectman Donohue inquired about whether faucets work year round at the cemetery. Mr. Ryan explained the faucets are turned off during the winter. The Permanent Sidewalks was increased to \$50,000. He would like to get more sidewalks done each year. Mr. Ryan explained he is asking for \$200,000 for chapel renovations plans and specs and he expects \$100,000 to be reimbursed. The construction will cost about \$1,000,000 and will be done in the fall of 2016 and spring of 2017. The chapel was originally constructed in 1903. Cleaning and lining of the remainder of Vernon Street, Florence Avenue, etc. will be done with a \$500,000 no interest loan from MWRA. Selectman Plasko pointed out a \$40,000 decrease in the parks and maintenance budget. Mr. Ryan reviewed the Engineering budget. It is mostly level funded. There will be a \$3,000 increase in salaries and there are some reductions on monitoring programs. Selectman Plasko inquired about GIS. Mr. Ryan said he would try to do more with GIS. Right now, he is working on tax maps with a vendor and next year they will work on the sewer layer. Andy Murphy and Sara Winthrop are knowledgeable about GIS but can only touch the surface of what can be done. They are working with a specialized GIS person. Selectman Donohue commented on how much time is saved with the new methods.

James Collins, Supt., Norwood Light/Broadband:

Chairman Lyons congratulated Mr. Collins on his appointment to Superintendent. Mr. Collins reviewed his budget. Most items are level funded. There is an increase of \$3.1 million in purchase of power and an increase in salary and wage cost. The total budget is up \$3.3 million. Selectman Plasko asked if the rate increases are being monitored closely. Mr. Collins said yes, this is speculation at this point. There is \$4.6 million in rate stabilization, of which they plan to use \$800,000. Mr. Collins talked about double poles. Originally there were 156, of those fifty have been removed, thirty are due to be removed, and he is getting good cooperation with Comcast and Verizon. Verizon has changed over fifty eight of their poles. The department is in the process of repairing the transformer that went down at Ellis Station. There is an increase in the fire alarm budget this year. The digitizer system has to be replaced. Selectman Donohue asked about the fireboxes around town. Mr. Collins said they are all active and master boxes on private buildings go right into the fire station. Traffic signals account is level funded. They are continuing efforts to replace controllers and wires at several intersections in town. Mr. Collins said the department would do a sample LED project from the Westwood line to Prospect Street. The \$30,000 increase in street lighting has to do with the average cost of power increasing. Selectman Donohue inquired about progress on the transmission line. Mr. Collins said it is going well. They are passing ownership on the Walker Property, have filed permits and are over many of the hurdles. They are all set with the Army Corps of Engineers and have done everything they asked. Mr. Hansen handed out Broadband budget information. The net income is just shy of \$500,000. New channels were added at the end of 2014 and because more is available on the internet they have had to put together a package that is cheaper. Selectman Plasko expressed concerns about service. Phone service and support is lacking and he asked if they would be doing something different. Mr. Hansen said the money is in the budget for a third party support desk that is more functional than the current one. They will be able to remote into people's systems. Selectman Bishop asked if the problem couldn't be fixed remotely, could a person be dispatched to the home to fix it. Mr. Hansen said they would never refuse to come out. He showed a graph of video and TV customers and said he thinks they will be ahead of competitors again this year in their number of customers. Internet customer content has increased and telephone has been growing steadily, but will probably flatten out for a while then slowly go down due to people relying on cell phones. Programming costs have gone up quite a bit. Advertising is where franchise fees go up.

Chief William Brooks III, NPD:

Chief Brooks began by stating the travel ban really helped during the storm. He then reviewed his budget. What appears to be a significant jump in salary increase is based on the fact that education

Chief Brooks ((cont'd)

incentive is now being paid weekly as opposed to annually, therefore that pay has been moved into the salary account. Another reason for the jump is COLA. The increase in overtime lines reflects a raise in overtime rates, which is a product of education incentives being paid on a weekly basis. The Chief proposed the restoration of three positions as five positions have been cut from the force. Norwood Police Department has not been this small in decades and will always lose a couple of officers per year to retirement. There are three officers going to the academy and one officer graduating the academy and going into field training. He has assigned Officer Mahoney to the Middle School and promoted David Eysie to detective. Detective Eysie's focus is drug enforcement. The Chief further explained his is a department that deploys two officers to walking beats on two out of three shifts and occasionally dispatchers have to stack calls. He has already cut the number of officers being put out on patrol on various shifts and spends a higher percentage on replacement. When the weather gets nice, he wants to put bikes out. Crime is down but he cannot deploy anti-crime like he is used to. There are certain calls, such as mental health and domestic violence, etc. that require two cars to respond. In addition, a lot of work needs to be done on the heroin problem. District Attorney Michael Morrissey does a magnificent job. There was a fifty percent increase county wide of fatal overdoses. A couple of weeks ago the department deployed Narcan twice in a fourteen hour period. This department has become too small for what they need to do and he would like to add three more positions for uniformed patrol. Selectman Plasko mentioned budget cuts and manpower cuts in Fire and DPW and this issue will have to be discussed at a later date. He is not sure it can be addressed with just three Selectmen. Selectman Donohue stated this would be a start and there are lots of things in this budget that are not as important. She would rather have more people keeping everyone safe than a new truck. The Manager said he has talked to the Fire and Public Works departments and they have no intention of asking for more personnel this year because they recognize the Police Department has issues. Selectman Bishop agreed with Selectman Donohue. The drug issue in the town is a main concern for the citizens. The Police Department does a great job with the drug issue and he would like to sit down and hear more about the Chief's ideas. Chairman Lyons stated the schools are always trying to get more teachers, etc., and the Fire Department more personnel, too. As Mr. Thornton said, there is only so much money to work with and it must be distributed as evenly and fairly and logically as possible. This will be discussed further.

Chief Anthony Greeley, NFD:

Chief Greeley passed out the adjustment moving forward. The contract was ratified by the union on January 21, 2015. He and Mrs. Bane worked on this together. Incidentals are level funded. Chairman Lyons inquired about the budget book vs. the hand out. The COLA is reflected. Cathy Carney explained the process. Chief Greeley explained an increase of \$313,000 due to the MOA. He needs \$150,000 for new equipment. The gear that the sixty-one people wear is six years old and has to be replaced after seven years. Replacement takes one year. The equipment; pants, jackets, and boots break down with wear and tear. Selectman Plasko pointed out that this is important and the Chief is not requesting any vehicles this year. Chief Greeley said his incidentals are up by \$5,000 but everything else is level-funded. Training is up slightly, as is holiday pay and overtime recall. Substitution account increased because due to the pay increases it costs more to substitute. The building budget is level-funded.

John J. Carroll, General Manager:

Mr. Carroll referred to information showing increases and decreases in the General Government accounts. He informed the Board the available funding for General Government account is \$31,983,273. The totals requests are \$32,571,444. The deficit is \$ 588,171 but that does not include several capital requests, which he has separated out. The Manager reviewed the capital requests. The first is relocation of offices when engineering and public works administration go to the new DPW administration building he wants to reconfigure present office space at an estimated cost of between \$250,000 and \$400,000 depending on which option he ends up with; he is talking about carpeting and lighting and a few other things. He is trying to resolve this to the Board's satisfaction and is hoping to get it done in the next couple of weeks. Chairman Lyons inquired if that was FY '16 – if the expenditure of this money would be happening in FY '16. The Manager said yes. Selectman Donohue referred to that amount and said the Board has no determination of what the extent of the renovations would be. The Manager said he knows that. He is going to finalize that over the next couple of weeks. It has been a very long process. It has been very

John J. Carroll, General Manager-(cont'd):

difficult to do and he has tons of options he has to look at. Selectman Donohue pointed out that none of them has been yet presented to this Board. The Manager said no – and told Selectman Donohue she asked him months ago to do this. He is having a meeting with department heads next week and believes she has been invited and will be looking at twenty or thirty options at that time. Selectman Donohue said it could be a very small amount of money. Mr. Carroll said he doubts it. Selectman Donohue pointed out that the premises are being used now for office purposes. Mr. Carroll said some of them are going to require drastic changes. The Manager continued through the list of Capital Requests. The next item, the Police Department, has been talked about already. Sewer Rehabilitation is not in the budget. DPW request for new equipment, which Mr. Ryan went over, costs \$210,000. He is applying again for cleaning and lining. Mr. Ryan already mentioned the \$200,000 for the cemetery chapel. As for highway maintenance, the Manager said he is looking at the condition of Washington Street from the Westwood line to the Walpole line and he is making the request to re-pave from one end to the other. The Manager said about ten years ago he brought to the Board, FinCom and Town Meeting a request that we stop spending small amounts of money for sidewalks but go out and borrow a lot of money. We borrowed \$500,000, which is all now paid off, and were able to do about eighteen miles of sidewalk in one year at a low price. The Manager said he is concerned about the conditions of Washington Street in various sections and he would like to make it look very nice by adding decorative crosswalks like the ones on Route 109 in Westwood. As for the other project, it has been pointed out for years that the windows at the Civic Center need repair. Unfortunately, the \$72,000 received in Fiscal 2015 was not enough money and they need another \$80,000. On Playground maintenance there is a number, which has to be discussed with the Board and with the Fin Com of \$2,750,000. The first is the rectangular field at the Coakley. The Manager said he is thinking about getting it paid for with private funds and the estimate is about one and a half million dollars. The Hawes Pool bathhouse should be replaced but the number of bathrooms required by code would make the cost \$800,000. Selectman Plasko recommended applying for a waiver. Elliot baseball field behind the Balch has already been discussed. The library is looking for \$90,000 and the school department has six requests totaling \$310,000. Selectman Donohue asked the Manager for clarification on the amount of money the light poles at the Balch would cost. The Manager said the price would be \$450,000 to do the softball and the baseball field. Regarding the smaller budgets, Chairman Lyons asked the Manager to talk about anything that stands out to him. The Manager has been hearing there will be a substantial increase in health insurance. The health insurance budget before the Board is up 3.5%, but could go up more.

Chairman Lyons has one item he feels the Board should go into Executive Session for, having to do with contract negotiations. On motion of Selectman Plasko, seconded by Selectman Bishop, and on roll call vote of Chairman Lyons and Selectmen Howard and Donohue, voted unanimously to enter into executive session and returning to open session for adjournment.

Selectman Donohue announced that William O'Donnell sent out a letter indicating the amount of money generated back to the Town through recording fees was \$79,800. She also congratulated the Gridiron Club and the 2014 Norwood High Mustang Football Team.

Adjournment

No other business being presented for consideration, on motion of Selectman Donohue, seconded by Selectman Bishop, voted to adjourn and the meeting was adjourned accordingly at 8:30 p.m.

A True Record.

ATTEST: _____

Assistant