

Regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen convened at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, January 26, 2016 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 Paul Bishop, Selectmen William J. Plasko, Helen Abdallah Donohue, Michael J. Lyons and Allan D. Howard. Also present General Manager John J. Carroll, Clerk Frances L. Jessoe and Assistant Christina Mulvehill.

Appointments-Budget Hearings

5:00 P.M. – Thomas J. McQuaid, Town Clerk & Accountant

Mr. McQuaid gave a financial overview of the Town of Norwood. He spoke about the Town Wide Budget Balancing Committee, describing its role and make up. Mr. McQuaid also outlined his work, with Treasurer Robert Marsh, to develop a written departmental cash receipt policy with internal controls. He gives credit to Bob Thornton, Mark Redlich, and Bob McGuire, who developed the current system. He said he will submit that draft policy to the Board and if the Board approves, it would be adopted as the official policy. Mr. McQuaid spoke briefly about the six upcoming elections in calendar year 2016.

Selectman Plasko asked Mr. McQuaid if there were any big changes in his own budget. Mr. McQuaid said he is proposing an increase of \$20,000 in the Clerk and Accountant budget related to contractual increases, but proposing a decrease in incidentals. For elections and registration, he is proposing an increase to \$165,000 to cover anticipated election costs such as ballots and printing.

5:15 P.M. – General Manager John J. Carroll

The Manager spoke about the potential \$1.9 million budget deficit on the General Government side. He referred to a spreadsheet showing the cuts he has made to several budgets to meet that deficit. General Gov. has cut a little more than they needed to, so there is the potential to add \$87,000 back into the budget. He went on to explain that he took some of the cuts and put them into a chart showing capital expenditure requests by department. This list is comprised of both items he took out of the budget that were capital items and some items that were not in the budget at all. The Manager said that although he anticipates an increase in State Aid, the increase in insurance costs will be substantial.

Selectman Donohue referred to the Human Resources budget request. She said the incidentals number is high with an increase of \$18,000. Selectman Plasko said that incidentals could include things you would not expect.

5:30 P.M. – Mark Redlich, Computer Department

Mr. Redlich began by reminding the Board that the computer budget is for all the departments. He noted an increase of \$8,000 which will be used to support the new web page. He stated they will be deferring the document scanning project due to budget constraints. The leased equipment line will be increasing in order to pick up more departments with multi functions. He tries to lease for three years with a dollar buy out. The increase in the new equipment line is to replace the Uninterrupted Power Source (UPS) at the Police/Fire Station and batteries for upstairs. Mr. Redlich explained the proposed telephone system, Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP), which is being used by DPW and Light Department already. It is supported by Norwood Light Broadband. We are fortunate to have our own telephone company and they are highly technical and highly advanced. In all his years of relying on Norwood Light Broadband, Mr. Redlich as had very few problems.

Mr. Redlich spoke about the in house financial system, stating it has a solid database backbone, but the front end has to change. This will be done soon after the end of fiscal 2017 and all we really need for this is a programmer. He is confident that it is moving forward and will be able to do what the town departments need.

Selectman Donohue thanked Mr. Redlich for the fabulous job he does for the Town.

5:40 P.M. – Supt. Gerald Miller, Recreation Department

Mr. Miller introduced Program Director, Linda Berger. He spoke about the increases he is requesting; vehicle repair, maintenance of building, heat and air flow replacement, and update to the fire alarm system. He would also recommend sanding the floor, replacing the air conditioning and the lights at the basketball court and making improvements to the Coakley playground area.

The Manager has recommended deferring sanding the Civic floor, the air conditioning, the lights at the basketball court, the Coakley playground area and the pavilions.

Selectman Lyons asked for clarification on the cost estimates for the weight room, floor and lights. Catherine Carney explained that certain items are being deferred.

5:50 P.M. – Personnel Board

David Hajjar and Ann Haley were present to discuss the Personnel Board's request for Funding for Updating Classification Plan. Mr. Hajjar outlined the classification plan. He explained that in order to work on policy, position descriptions, and reclassifications, they have to interact with comparable towns, but for the past few years, it has been difficult to get data from other towns because he goes to them for so many things and the feedback he gets from those comparable towns is not sufficient. Therefore, the PB has to do reclassifications based on internal data. This year there have been six reclassification requests.

Chairman Bishop asked Mr. Hajjar if this individual they are proposing to hire would be going to those towns asking for the information, why they would give it to this person when they would not give it to him. The Chairman also asked if there is any state tracking being done, but Mr. Hajjar said there is not. Selectman Lyons asked if this information is available online. Ms. Haley said some information is online but not the details they need. Selectman Lyons asked what Mr. Hajjar is referring to in his report when he says doing nothing will increase town costs going forward. Mr. Hajjar said if the PB is left with only doing comparisons internally, then the pay grades will eventually all be raised. He said that when an appointing authority comes before PB and says they would like to upgrade an office specialist from a C5 to a C7 and they bring the duties and responsibilities that warrant that increase and they cannot compare it with outside comparable towns, then they are left with – if it's real and true – that person would be rated higher than what they already made because they have greater responsibility. It is hard for PB to challenge the word and proposal of the appointing authority in a case with no outside comparison.

Selectman Lyons said when you have a person doing a job who then takes on more responsibility, in theory that person should be paid at a higher grade. The Manager asked if this proposed study would include people covered by collective bargaining. Mr. Hajjar said those covered by collective bargaining would be included. Mr. Carroll reminded him that this would have a huge impact on collective bargaining.

Chairman Bishop stated his understanding was that the proposed study was only for non-unit personnel. Selectman Plasko pointed out that there are about fifty employees not covered by unions that this could apply to, but every union contract is negotiated and wage classifications and steps are attached to that agreement. The PB would have to get the union to buy into this; otherwise, it can only be done for those fifty employees. He asked if the PB compared with the private marketplace. Mr. Hajjar said they do or the higher-level positions. Selectman Plasko added that this money is not included in the Manager's second pass. Selectman Lyons said during the course of budget sub-committee work the question of whether something can wait is always asked. Mr. Carroll stated he would have no problem with the study if it were limited to non-unit employees. Selectman Plasko reiterated that the Selectmen would have to reach out to the unions before going any farther, and if they do not sign on, we cannot do the study.

6:00 P.M. – Supt. Mark Ryan, DPW, Town Engineer

Mr. Ryan introduced Sara Winthrop, the new DPW Administrative Manager. Selectman Donohue spoke about all the years of wonderful work Ms. Winthrop did all these years in engineering, before computers.

6:00 P.M. – Supt. Mark Ryan, DPW, Town Engineer-(cont'd)

Mr. Ryan spoke about the increases in his budget requests. One area he hopes to increase is sewer maintenance to maintain three sewer pumping stations. Selectman Lyons asked if the recent issue in Quincy affects Norwood. Mr. Carroll said as far as he knows, Norwood's sewage is still going to Nut Island and Deer Island for treatment, although he was not sure of any details.

Another proposed increase is in Refuse Removal in anticipation of the contractual increase of 2.5%. Selectman Donohue asked Mr. Ryan to outline the procedure involved in a new contract for Waste Management. Mr. Ryan said the fourth year of the six-year contract starts July 1, 2016, so there is still two and a half years to go. Catherine Carney added the process is exempt from 30 b and does not require going out to bid. Mr. Ryan stated that there is an increase in salaries for step increases and the reclassification of the Administration Manager in addition to significant increases in incidentals.

Selectman Donohue addressed the proposed increase in new equipment, asking if that could be put off. Mr. Carroll said if we adopt that as a principal our equipment will start to fall apart. He said they have a really nice plan in place and want to stick with it.

Selectman Lyons asked with the new building and some new equipment coming in, if the new facility would extend the life of the vehicles. Mr. Ryan said that would be the case. There was discussion about borrowing to spread the impact over a longer period of time. Mr. Ryan has requested funds of \$1.4 million to restore the Chapel of St. Gabriel and that request is currently in front of the Finance Commission.

Selectman Plasko reminded Mr. Ryan that last year the Board asked for a plan for continuing to maintain and upgrade the cemetery. Mr. Ryan said there are two items that need investment at the cemetery; the roads and turf management. He said Mr. Ranalli does have a turf maintenance program.

Selectman Donohue spoke about sidewalks. She said she is all for fixing up sidewalks but not for adding on \$250,000 regardless of where it is in the budget. She suggested money should have been spent on repairing the sidewalks around Town instead of paving the center of Town. Mr. Carroll stated we should be extending the pavement on Washington Street all the way through South Norwood; the ward and South Norwood are in bad shape.

6:30 P.M. – Supt. James Collins, Light Department & Broadband

Mr. Collins has submitted his Monthly Report of Department Activities for review of the Board. Supt. Collins addressed his department budget, stating it is mostly level funded. There is a slight increase in miscellaneous general expenses as they have joined New England Public Power Association which required initial spending, but they will be saving money in the safety and training budget by becoming members of this organization. The Light Department is being faced with additional requirements for testing due to the 115 kV line. Selectman Plasko asked the Superintendent if he was still understaffed. Supt. Collins said the department is understaffed by two linemen and a meter reader.

Darryl Hansen spoke about Broadband, explaining the cost is going up because programmers are increasing their pricing, but connectivity cost went down. Selectman Donohue inquired about programming costs and asked if Broadband belongs to any of the trade organizations. Mr. Hansen said they do belong to the National Cable Television Cooperative, which has been holding prices down. There was a brief discussion about borrowing. Mr. Hansen pointed out that they are looking to borrow \$979,600, but they have not been borrowing over the last several years. Selectman Plasko stated that Broadband is a business and to stay in business we have to take on this kind of cost to stay competitive, and borrowing now instead of later is better because interest rates are going to go up.

6:30 P.M. – Supt. James Collins, Light Department & Broadband-(cont'd)

Mr. Collins gave a brief presentation about transmission charges. We pay transmission charges and we are fortunate that our 115 is part of pool transmission facility and our transmission cost right now is about \$5 million per year and half of that gets credited. The Federal Regulatory Commission is looking at the formula they use to credit the systems for their transmission plants. There are eight municipal light departments that are in the same boat as Norwood and receive PTF credit. These eight customers are going to pool together and become an intervener in this particular case. It should not cost very much because rather than a legal case, it will be more of an administrative case on how they do the formula. One of the people all eight of the groups use is Frank Radigan who we have been using since 2000 to help us. He is an expert in economics who helped us with our NSTAR negotiations. John Coyle has helped Mr. Radigan all along with any legal parts that he is filing for us on a yearly basis, it is a complicated process we file to recover the money. One thing Frank wants to do is make sure FERC does not over complicate the method. We would be able to use our DPU filings to gather our information. FERC and some of the large utility companies have staffs of accountants to do this who can fill out forms all day, who could fill out this more detailed form, which is called Form 1, which FERC uses but would be much more cumbersome and expensive for us to file. Mr. Collins said the Light Department wants to have a seat at the table to have some input into how they redo this formula, if they redo it at all. He is requesting approval of the Board as Light Commissioners to join with John Coyle and Frank Radian to be with the other eight municipalities. When the transmission line construction is completed, the credit to Norwood will go from \$2.5 million to about \$ 4.1 million. Selectman Lyons stated Mr. Collins did a good job of simplifying this for us, and asked if he was looking for approval of this Board as Light Commissioners to enter into this consortium to lobby on behalf of Norwood Light. Mr. Collins agreed this is the approval he is seeking and the cost to Norwood is estimated to be between \$20,000 and \$30,000, which they have budgeted. On motion of Selectman Lyons, seconded by Selectman Donohue, voted unanimously in their capacity as Electric Light Commissioners, to support the Superintendent's recommendation.

Supt. Collins spoke briefly about traffic signals and street lights. Selectman Donohue asked about the lights at Everett Street and Route 1. Supt. Collins said the State Department of Transportation manages those lights. Mr. Carroll said they have hired a consultant to analyze all the changes that were made in that intersection. Supt. Collins mentioned that the Light Department plans to do a trial of LED lights on Upland Road to see how the public likes it.

6:45 P.M. – Chief William G. Brooks, III, Norwood Police Department

Chief Brooks reviewed his budget mentioning that salaries and longevity accounts have only increased slightly because higher paid employees are being replaced at lower rates of pay. He is struggling with overtime and training, as a number of officers have gone out on medicals this year; three are out right now, and they are filing shifts at time and a half.

Mr. Carroll spoke about the organization of the department, which currently consists of a chief and five lieutenants, and proposed reorganizing to a chief, deputy chief, and four lieutenants. There will be no change in the number of command staff. Chief Brooks said he has spoken with Human Resources and will talk to the Superior Officers Association. Selectman Donohue expressed concern over whether there are enough officers on the street. Chief Brooks said there are sufficient officers on the street, and right now there is a sergeant and a lieutenant working the midnight shift and that is not the best use of personnel. He clarified that this conversion would not take an officer off the street; rather it would take a command officer working the midnight shift and use him more efficiently. Chief Brooks said there would be no decrease to officers on the street.

7: 00 P.M. – Chief Anthony J. Greeley, Norwood Fire Department

Chief Greeley reviewed his budget, stating he has rearranged some items from the budget and moved them to capital, such as a car and lift system for ambulance. Salaries are level funded except for COLA. He is proposing an additional Arson Investigator, which would be transferred from incidentals and would

7: 00 P.M. – Chief Anthony J. Greeley, Norwood Fire Department-(cont'd)

require no new money. This person would perform regular firefighter duties and aid in arson investigations in the event of a fire.

Selectman Lyons inquired about night differential doubling. Chief Greeley said that differential increase from 2.5% to 5 % was contractually negotiated. Catherine Carney said the pink sheet coincides with wage and salary base pay, but differentials, etc., are not included.

Selectman Donohue wished Selectman Plasko a happy 65<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Adjournment

No other business being presented for consideration, on motion of Selectman Plasko, seconded by Selectman Lyons, voted to adjourn and the meeting was adjourned accordingly at 8:06 p.m.

A True Record.

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Assistant