

Pursuant to proper notice, a public meeting of the County Commissioners of the County of Norfolk was held at 614 High Street, Dedham, MA and via Zoom Videoconference on March 2, 2022, notice of said meeting having been posted as required by law. Commissioners present were:

Chairman Joseph P. Shea
Commissioner Peter H. Collins
Commissioner Richard R. Staiti

Chairman Shea called the meeting of the Norfolk County Commissioners to order at 1:01 pm. He stated the Commissioners will recess their meeting and convene a joint meeting with the Norfolk County Advisory Board Finance Committee.

Chairman Shea led the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

On Thursday, March 12, 2020, Governor Baker issued an "Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c.30A, Section 20." That Order was effective immediately until it is rescinded, or the State of Emergency is terminated. On February 12, 2022 by the action of the Legislature the order was extended until July 15, 2022.

Chairman Shea called the Commissioners roll and Commissioner Collins, Commissioner Staiti and Chairman Shea responded "present."

Chairman Shea proceeded with the Commissioners' Agenda.

A motion was made by Commissioner Staiti, seconded by Chairman Shea and

VOTED: To approve the Minutes of the Executive Session Meeting of February 23, 2022 as submitted and to withhold release

Under Public Comment Registry of Deeds staff, including Kathleen McNeely, Maureen Grant, and Lauren Dutton spoke about the employee handbook and vacation carryover. Ms. McNeely stated the Registry workers present have never received an employee handbook. She stated there was a \$25,000 appropriation to revise the employee handbook but no one has a copy. Ms. McNeely asked for a copy of the handbook.

John Cronin, County Director, stated handbook was drafted in 1987 and there have been many modifications over the years. He stated the vacation carryover rule has been amended over the years. Ms. McNeely stated employees are trying to work down their vacation time. Mr. Cronin stated the Advisor Board approved \$15,000 to revise the employee handbook after an attempt to revise the handbook several years ago. Mr. Cronin stated he hopes the handbook is completed over the summer. He stated the County will soon have a new website and he hopes to include an employee intranet. Mr. Cronin stated there will be a formal onboard process for employees. Ms. Dutton stated employees were never given a handbook.

Kevin Folan, President, Local 2417, discussed vacation carryover. He stated the union bargained a 10-day carryover. Mr. Folan stated he agrees with Commissioner Collins on the 10 days and with Commissioner Staiti regarding staffing concerns impacted by vacations. Mr.

Folan stated the allowed carryover was reduced from 25 to 10 days with the understanding that circumstances may impact the ability to use vacation time. He stated Facilities Maintenance is operating under the same COVID-19 cleaning protocols. Mr. Folan stated the pandemic is ongoing and some employees were not able to take time off. Mr. Cronin stated the discussion two weeks ago was relative to non-union employees. He stated the County will meet with unions on March 25.

A motion was made by Commissioner Staiti, seconded by Commissioner Collins and

VOTED: To execute personnel matters as follows:

Agricultural High School

Notice of Contingent Employment for Allicyn J. Cole of Douglas, MA 01516 as JV Girls Softball Coach JG: Flat \$3618.50/yr. effective 3/21/2022.

A motion was made by Commissioner Staiti, seconded by Commissioner Collins and

VOTED: To execute personnel matters as follows:

Wollaston Recreational Facility

Notice of Appointment for George J. Sullivan of Milton, MA 02186 as Assistant Superintendent JG: Flat \$64,747.17/yr. effective 2/28/22

Chairman Shea welcomed Mr. Sullivan back to Norfolk County.

A motion was made by Commissioner Staiti, seconded by Commissioner Collins and

VOTED: To execute payroll warrants as follows:

22-35	Payroll – County	141,544.56
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A motion was made by Commissioner Staiti, seconded by Commissioner Collins and

VOTED: To execute expense warrants as follows:

03-01-22	Expense – County	118,114.89
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Mr. Cronin stated there are no ARPA awards this week. He stated there may be two awards to the Town of Bellingham next week. Mr. Cronin reported on ARPA. He stated County officials attended a multi-county meeting to discuss ARPA. Mr. Cronin stated the meeting was productive. Commissioner Staiti thanked Sen. Markey's Office for their work on ARPA revenue replacement.

Chairman Shea stated there are no bid openings at 1:30 pm as detailed in Exhibit A.

Chairman Shea stated there are contract awards as detailed in Exhibit B.

Commissioner Staiti asked if prior issues related to this matter have been resolved. Chairman Shea responded "yes."

Chairman Shea discussed the FY21 Schedule of Costs (SOC) to Service Court Facilities. He stated Philip Iantosca, Manager of Administration and Budgets, annually prepares the SOC to submit to the Commonwealth. Mr. Iantosca stated the FY21 SOC totals \$3,747,816.65 and the dollar cost per square foot is \$24.82. He stated the Commonwealth directed the County to submit debt service costs for the Superior Court Dome Project rather than direct invoices. Commissioner Staiti asked about the lease agreement with the Commonwealth. Mr. Iantosca stated the current lease agreement is from the mid-80s. Commissioner Staiti directed staff to research revising the lease.

A motion was made by Commissioner Staiti, seconded by Commissioner Collins and

VOTED: To approve the FY21 Schedule of Costs to Service Court Facilities in the amount of \$3,747,816.65.

Mr. Cronin reported on ARPA. He stated County staff appealed to the County Congressional Delegation to work on behalf of County cities and towns regarding revenue replacement. Mr. Cronin stated Sen. Markey's Office sent a letter to the Treasury. He stated the Treasury received the letter and marked it for review. Mr. Cronin stated the Town of Braintree is facing financial pressure and he hopes the Treasury considers the County's request. Commissioner Staiti asked if other counties support Sen. Markey's letter. Mr. Cronin stated Bristol County was supportive, Barnstable County was interested and Plymouth County had differing opinion. Mr. Cronin stated the next multi-county meeting will be the first week of April.

Mr. Cronin reported on COVID-19 response. He stated the CDC has relaxed guidance.

Mr. Cronin presented the Report of the County Director. He stated the latest Facilities Maintenance hire will start work on March 14. Mr. Cronin stated the individual is going through background checks. He stated Mr. Buckley joined him at Norwood's 150th Celebration.

Chairman Shea discussed old business. He stated the matter of vacation carryover is on the agenda. Mr. Cronin stated he is bringing forward a request to endorse non-union vacation carryover policy. He stated two weeks ago there were referrals to rule 3 in the 1987 handbook. Mr. Cronin stated researched found there were multiple changes to rule 3. He stated former Director Hegarty requested all employees work down to zero carryover and in April 2021 former Director Mullen forwarded a revision to rule 3, approved by the Commissioners, to allow employees to carryover 15 vacation days. Mr. Cronin stated there was clarification in May to provide employees with large balances relief into 2022 for employees to use 15 days by December 31 and 10 more by June 30, 2022. He stated non-union employees may carryover 15 vacation days. Chairman Shea stated this has been an issue for some time. He stated if the Commissioners do not stick to policy there could be large costs incurred.

Chairman Shea suspended discussion of old business at 1:54 pm.

Seeing a quorum of the Finance Committee present, Chairman Shea turned the meeting over to the Elizabeth Childs, Finance Committee Chair.

JOINT MEETING

At 1:55 pm Chair Elizabeth Childs called to order the Meeting of the Norfolk Finance Committee as part of the joint meeting. Chair Childs called the roll and Mr. Beckerman, Mr. Reardon, and Chair Childs responded "present." She declared a quorum.

Chairman Shea stated the Commissioners will switch to the joint meeting agenda appointment to review the Wollaston Recreational Facility (WRF), Engineering, Commissioners' Office, Miscellaneous, RSVP, Information Technology, and Agricultural High School (NCAHS) budgets.

Carl Miner, Superintendent, and Dana Smith, Golf Professional, presented the FY23 WRF Budget Proposal. Mr. Miner stated proposed increases include \$10,000 to temporary salaries, \$356 to equipment rentals, and \$10,000 to miscellaneous charges. He stated the proposal includes \$80,000 for capital needs.

Chairman Shea asked about temporary salaries. Mr. Miner stated the FY22 budget is \$235,000 and will be stretched this year. Chairman Shea stated there is no COLA in the request.

Mr. Cronin stated the County is waiting for the possibility of state funds to match the County's commitment to a new playground at WRF. Chairman Shea stated the City of Quincy has an interest in playground improvements. He stated Mayor Koch discussed repaving the entry street at WRF upon completion of sewer work.

Mr. Cronin stated the Abrahams Report discussed WRF as an enterprise fund. Mr. Cronin stated he does not support that idea. He stated an enterprise account is limiting and would require WRF to fund all their capital projects.

Mr. Miner discussed proposed rates. He stated WRF has an obligation to provide golf to the public. Mr. Miner stated too many subscriptions limits public golf. Mr. Miner recommended capping subscriptions at 160 for 2022 golf season. He recommended raising the senior rate to \$35 and the senior Monday-Thursday rate by \$100 to \$1,000. Mr. Miner recommended raising the civic rate to \$40/weekday and \$50/weekend.

Commissioner Staiti asked how long a typical golf season lasts. Mr. Smith stated the typical season is around 35 weeks.

A motion was made by Commissioner Staiti, seconded by Commissioner Collins and

VOTED: To adopt new Presidents Golf Course rates as recommended by Mr. Miner

Chairman Shea announced the Commissioners will take the FY23 WRF Budget Proposal under advisement.

Patrick Higgins, PLS, presented the FY23 Engineering Budget Proposal. He discussed the proposal, which includes the addition of a Survey Crew Chief. Mr. Higgins stated the overall increase to Permanent Salaries is about \$14,000 and he prefers to leave the County Surveyor position vacant and unfunded. Mr. Higgins stated the Abrahams Report recommended the Engineering Department increase services. He stated the additional Survey Crew Chief will work towards that goal. He stated the proposal returns \$8,000 in Communications Services to the operating budget. Mr. Higgins stated the budget also includes increases to Associations

and Societies, Employee Uniforms and Education of Employees totaling \$3,300 for new employees and continued training and education. He stated the proposal includes a \$2,000 increase to Professional and Technical Services due to increase costs.

Commissioner Collins stated that an additional employee can make a significant difference in the amount of work a department can accomplish.

Commissioner Staiti asked about the salary reserve. Mr. Higgins stated the salary reserve was used to hire a survey crew chief.

Mr. Higgins stated he is pleased to collaborate with a great staff and he will work with Mr. Cronin on any budget issues.

Mr. Cronin presented the FY23 Commissioners' Office Budget Proposal. He stated the proposal maintains FY22 funding levels. Mr. Cronin stated the proposal includes a salary correction for the HR Director from \$83,000 to \$100,000. He stated the adjustment is in line with market costs and other public bodies. Mr. Cronin stated the proposal adds an HR Specialist at \$65,000. He stated this role was recommended by the Abrahams Group. He stated the FY23 Commissioners' Proposal drops salaries for the Veterans' Services Advocate (VSA) and the VSA Assistant. Mr. Cronin stated the proposal includes a \$225,000 Salary Reserve in advance of collective bargaining agreements. Commissioner Staiti stated the increase to HR is important to keep the position comparable to the market. He stated the increase is justified. Commissioner Staiti stated the Chair deserves more compensation. He recommended a \$2,500 increase in the Chairman's stipend.

Mr. Cronin presented the FY23 Miscellaneous Budget Proposal. He stated Group Insurance includes a 3% increase per Mayflower Municipal Health Group. Mr. Cronin stated the proposal includes \$200,000 for OPEB, which is a decrease of \$100,000 from FY22. He stated Worker's Compensation increased due to suppressed costs in FY22 and FY23 reflects actual costs. Mr. Cronin stated the proposal includes the RSVP Grant which funds a portion of RSVP operations. He stated the proposal includes \$16,500 for the VSA Services Contract and expenses.

Mr. Cronin presented the FY23 Information Technology Budget Proposal. He stated the proposal includes \$80,000 for asset management software. Mr. Cronin the rest of the IT proposal is level funded. He stated the County expects the final report of the technology consultant in late April. Mr. Beckerman stated the asset management software should be a capital expense. Mr. Cronin stated the item was approved as a capital expense.

John Wallace, Business Manager, and John Martin, Superintendent, presented the FY23 NCAHS Budget Proposal. Mr. Wallace stated the proposal is an attempt to stabilize school finances. He stated there is room in the proposal for COLA. Mr. Wallace stated the proposal is not aggressive and defers many items. He reviewed revenues and noted increases to tuition, state aid, and school lunch revenue. Mr. Wallace reviewed expenses. He stated there are limited personnel changes and includes all known and aspirational column changes.

Mr. Wallace discussed the Abrahams Report. He stated the report noted high maintenance and farm costs and needed improvements to food services. Mr. Wallace stated there was some farm staff turnover that will result in savings. He stated Maintenance will use 1 less custodian.

Commissioner Collins stated the Commissioners tried to keep the cost of tuition down but realized it was not sustainable. He stated the capital costs should be reflected in tuition rates.

Commissioner Collins asked if there are plans to use any end of year surplus for COLA. Mr. Wallace stated the proposal does not include COLA. Commissioner Collins stated he sees the proposal as meeting expenses.

Mr. Cronin stated he will meet with Mr. Wallace and Mr. Martin to discuss ARPA. Mr. Martin stated Mr. Wallace did well assembling the NCAHS proposal. He stated the budget bodes well for the future. Commissioner Collins stated he appreciates the savings solar will bring to the budget.

Commissioner Staiti asked if revenues reflected solar. Mr. Wallace stated the amount is reflected in reduction in utilities and he will meet with Kearsarge to determine actual savings.

Mr. Beckerman stated the NCAHS plan is a good plan. Commissioner Collins stated the corrections do not create a surplus; they allow the school to function in the black.

Chairman Shea stated budget reviews are completed for the day.

A motion of the Finance Committee was made, duly seconded and

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting

Mr. Reardon announced the roll call vote was unanimous.

Finance Committee Meeting adjourned at 3:42 pm.

COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

Chairman Shea returned to discussion of vacation carryover policy.

Mr. Cronin proposed that the County embrace the directive of April 2021 that nonunion employees have no more than 15 days carryover into FY23. Commissioner Staiti stated he wants to make sure an excessive amount of vacation carryover does not put the County in a bad position. He asked if there would be harm in granting more time or additional days. Commissioner Collins stated employees have 85 days to draw down their vacation. He recommended staying with the 15 days policy. Mr. Cronin stated his memorandum offers the opportunity for an exception.

Commissioner Staiti asked if the Commissioners could deny a vacation request if 2 key employees ask for the same time off. Mr. Cronin stated the Commissioners technically could deny a request, but such action is not in the County's culture. Commissioner Staiti stated Mr. Folan discussed some good points. Mr. Cronin stated an exception would require strong justification. Commissioner Collins stated it is important that employees use their time and coordinate with their fellow employees.

A motion was made by Commissioner Staiti, seconded by Commissioner Collins and

VOTED: To approve the memorandum from the County Director dated March 2, 2021 regarding nonunion vacation carryover that highlights employees may not carry over more than 15 days and exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis

Chairman Shea announced the vote was unanimous.

There being no further business to come before the Board, a motion was made by Commissioner Staiti, seconded by Commissioner Collins and unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn the meeting

Meeting adjourned at 4:06 pm.

ATTEST:

Recording Secretary

Clerk