

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 October 6, 2021, 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 to order at 1:00 pm.

Chairman Shea stated 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 That Order was effective immediately until it is rescinded or the State of Emergency is terminated.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 Wednesday June 16, 2021 by action of the Legislature the order was extended until April 1, 2022.

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

Chairman Shea led the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

VOTED: To approve the Minutes of the Open Session Meetings of
September 8, 2021 and September 8, 2021

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

VOTED: To approve the Minutes of the Open Session Meeting of
September 15, 2021

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

VOTED: To approve the Minutes of the Open Session Meeting of
September 29, 2021

Commissioner Staiti asked about DCAMM and Quincy District Court. Mr. Cronin stated Norfolk County will maintain Quincy District Court until the County no longer owns the building. He stated if and once the Commonwealth purchases the building Norfolk County is not responsible for the building.

Chairman Shea asked for public comment.

Kevin Folan, a 35 year Facilities Maintenance Employee and president of the Norfolk County Employee Union, stated he read the Abrahams Report and would like to offer comments. He stated Facilities Maintenance is funded by the state and reimbursed by the state. Mr. Folan stated he understands the Norfolk County Agricultural High School (NCAHS) costs the County a lot of money because they over budget. He stated his position at NCAHS makes \$15,000 more

than him and the position below him makes \$5,000 less. Mr. Folan stated Facilities Maintenance and NCAHS Maintenance perform different tasks. He commended the Registry of Deeds for remaining open during COVID-19. Mr. Folan stated he needs to recruit Maintenance employees from other buildings to complete certain tasks. Mr. Folan stated he is confused as to why positions are unfilled because Maintenance is funded by the state.

Mr. Folan stated he will forward a letter to the County Commissioners with additional comments.

Commissioner Shea stated the Abrahams Report will inform the FY23 County Budget. Commissioner Staiti stated sometimes there is a lack of candidates for positions.

Mark Abrahams presented the Abrahams Group Phase III Deliverable Presentation Registry and Treasury Departments. He stated the Commissioners solicited proposals from qualified consulting firms to conduct a best practices review, financial management and operations analysis of the County and to assist the County in establishing financial policies, budget forecasting and a long-term capital improvement plan. He stated today's presentation is the final piece of the study.

Mr. Abrahams discussed the Registry of Deeds. He stated the Norfolk County's Register of Deeds' office has significantly more staff and a larger budget than Bristol and Plymouth counties. Mr. Abrahams stated Norfolk County spends more in personal services than Bristol and Plymouth Counties. He stated documents processed decreased from 160,700 in FY 2017 to 143,498 in FY 2018 to 136,673 in FY 2019, then increased back to FY 2017 levels in FY 2020 and increased by 29% from FY 2020 levels to over 200,000 documents in FY 2021. Mr. Abrahams stated Norfolk County ranked in the middle for transactions per staff for FY 2021, FY 2020, and FY 2019, ranking seventh of fourteen registries for all three years. He stated Norfolk County processed more documents than the average documents processed for FY 2021 and FY 2020, less for FY 2019.

Mr. Abrahams stated Norfolk County had the second largest number of staff in FY 2021, 45, compared to South Middlesex at 51. He stated as the number of documents processed in Norfolk County increased steadily from FY 2019 to FY 2021, the salaries per document decreased from \$23 per document in FY 2019 to \$15 per document in FY 2021.

He stated Norfolk County Registry of Deeds ranks first in the number of upper management positions at five, the next highest, Hampden and Essex South, at four. Mr. Abrahams stated Norfolk Registry of Deeds has more IT staff than any other county.

Mr. Abrahams discussed recommendations. He recommended that Norfolk County further benchmark itself to Middlesex South, Worcester South, Essex South and Suffolk counties to determine why these counties can process documents more efficiently.

He discussed Deeds Excise and Equipment and Technology Fund Balances. Mr. Abrahams stated Norfolk County's Deeds Excise fund balance has grown substantially since FY 2009. The percent of fund balance to its budget has also increased correspondingly. He stated the FY 2019 fund balance is excessive compared to the other counties and compared to GFOA's best practice for having a fund balance to operating budget ratio of 15%.

Mr. Abrahams stated Norfolk County's Technology fund balance has fluctuated over the years. Its FY 2019 fund balance as a percent of budget is lower than the other two counties and falls within GFOA's standard. He recommended the Register of Deeds should spend down the

Deeds Excise fund balance to a more acceptable level. He stated the Registry reported to DOR in a timely manner.

Commissioners Collins asked about the Tech Fund Balance in the Abrahams Report. Mr. Abrahams stated the figures come from audited statements.

Dave King reported on Plan Room and Customer Service. He stated the Plan room Operation is very similar to the Scanning department's operation with the only difference being that the Plan Room handles plans and Scanning handles normal size documents. Mr. King stated The Plan Room's Director of Administrative Services has a secondary role, away from the Plan Room, monitoring press clippings for the Registry. He stated the Director of Administrative Services has experience in public relations in his previous position with the Norfolk Sheriff's Department.

Mr. King recommended that the Plan Room, as a department, be eliminated and merged into Scanning. He recommended the Plan Room's Director of Administrative Services be reassigned to the Customer Service department where his clipping's role and public relations expertise may better fit.

Mr. King stated Customer Services performs community outreach, to inform Norfolk County residents of the services provided by the Register of Deeds. He stated Customer Service spends about 80% of their time on community outreach and about 20% of their time servicing customers at the Registry. Mr. King stated Customer Service visits each County municipality at least once a year. He recommended the Director of Customer Services and the Assistant County Director discuss the coordination of the Register's community outreach initiatives with the County's regional services efforts. Mr. King stated there is a lack of printers in Scanning and recommended the Registry procure additional printers.

Mr. King stated Registry employees returned only 35% of JAQs, which is far below normal. He stated based on the JAQs we sense a degree of staff dissatisfaction, an atmosphere of micromanagement where there is little incentive to perform well. Mr. King stated different managers have different FY 2022 salaries, with different spans of control. He recommended an independent study be conducted to look at individual performance, and Registry staff morale and satisfaction to see if this is a systemic issue or expressions of a few employees.

Commissioner Staiti asked why Bristol and Plymouth Counties were not included in some of the comparisons of Registries of Deeds. Mr. Abrahams stated The Abrahams Group made several attempts to obtain certain information from Bristol and Plymouth County Registry of Deeds and he was unsuccessful.

Mr. Abrahams discussed the Treasurer's Office. He stated The Norfolk County Treasurer's office has one more staff than Plymouth County and the same number of positions as Bristol County. Mr. Abrahams stated Norfolk County Treasurer's Office spends more in personal services than the other two counties.

He discussed findings and recommendations dealing with technical accounting issues and some finance issues. Mr. Abrahams stated the County should prepare an Annual Comprehensive Annual Report, the best practice in financial reporting and should strive for the GFOA Excellence in Financial Reporting Certificate over the next three years. He stated the County should include a General Fixed Assets Account Group in its accounting records and should develop a process to certify the Prior Year Unappropriated General Fund Balance.

Mr. Abrahams stated the Treasurer's Office staffing is reasonable particularly for internal control purposes. He stated various accounting functions are properly segregated and controls over cash receipts are a work in progress. He stated the County has opportunities to strengthen its internal controls, maximize the use of the existing iV software to reduce its dependence on manual processing and increase automated processing, and create new and strengthen existing financial policies.

He discussed Management Letter comments. Mr. Abrahams stated There are 14 management letter comments, many of which have repeated year-after-year. He stated many of the management letter comments have been addressed with action tasks completed during FY 2021. Mr. Abrahams stated the County should see the resolution of many, if not all of the management letter comments addressed herein by FY 2021 and the balance by FY 2022.

Mr. Abrahams stated the Operational Analysis is a statement that the way the County has conducted business in the past will change and a statement of the financial commitment to move the County forward.

Commissioner Staiti asked about the employee portal. Mr. Abrahams stated the employee portal would allow employees to view their accrued time and request use of vacation and personal days. Commissioner Collins asked if the work of the Abrahams Group is complete. Mr. Abrahams stated he would like to think the work is finished. Commissioner Collins asked if Mr. Abrahams could obtain data from Bristol and Plymouth County Registries of Deeds and incorporate the data into the operational analysis. Mr. Cronin stated many attempts were made to obtain the data but they were not successful. Chairman Shea thanked Mr. Abrahams for his work and stated the Commissioners will review the report. Commissioner Staiti recommended that the Commissioners meet with departments to discuss the report.

Chairman Shea recessed the Open Session Meeting at 2:23 pm.

Chairman Shea reconvened the Open Session Meeting at 2:31 pm.

Chairman Shea stated there was no old business to discuss.

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

VOTED: To execute personnel matters as follows:

Agricultural High School

Notice of Resignation for Marissa M. James of Sharon, MA, as Substitute Instructor, JG: Flat @ \$100.00/day effective 9/30/21.

Notice of Resignation for Paul Z. Ferraro of Walpole, MA, as Substitute Instructor, JG: Flat @ \$100.00/day effective 9/30/21.

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 Cait E. Lanza of Wrentham, MA, as Substitute Instructor, JG: Flat @ 100.00/day effective 10/7/21

Wollaston Recreational Facility

Notice of Contingent Employment for Lily B. Chansyna of Randolph, MA, as Seasonal Pro Shop Employee, JG: Flat @ \$13.50/hr. effective 10/7/21

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

VOTED: To execute payroll warrants as follows:

22-14	Payroll – County	140,495.44
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A motion was made by Commissioner Staiti, seconded by Commissioner Collins and

VOTED: To execute payroll warrants as follows:

22-14(7)	Payroll – School	330,450.38
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A motion was made by Commissioner Staiti, seconded by Commissioner Collins and

VOTED: To execute expense warrants as follows:

10-4-21	WRF Sales Tax	36,610.00
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A motion was made by Commissioner Staiti, seconded by Commissioner Collins and

VOTED: To execute expense warrants as follows:

10-01-22	Expense – County	207,968.88
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Chairman Shea stated there are no bid openings as detailed in Exhibit A.

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

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

VOTED: To approve the August, 2021 Trial Balance as submitted

Michelle Labadini, Manager of Personal Services, discussed the revised Personnel Form. Ms. Labadini stated the new form is more user friendly. She stated personnel forms are required 1 week prior to Commissioners' consideration. Ms. Labadini stated she will distribute the new form to departments if Commissioners approve the form.

Mr. Cronin discussed the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). He stated Norfolk County's ARPA portal is next in line for activation from Clifton Lawson Allen (CLA). Mr. Cronin stated Plymouth County went live last week. He stated the Norfolk County Portal could be open next week and there is a meeting with CLA tomorrow to discuss the portal. Mr. Cronin stated there may be another town hall to discuss the portal.

Mr. Cronin stated new signage regarding facial covering requirements were posted on County Buildings.

Mr. Cronin presented the Report of the County Director. He stated non-union employee evaluations are ongoing. Mr. Cronin stated each employee will have 3 goals to help elevate the County. He stated the Commonwealth assigned and approved a site assessor for Quincy District Court. Mr. Cronin stated the first PEC meeting will be as early as October 15.

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 2:45 pm.

ATTEST:

Recording Secretary

Clerk

EXHIBIT A

BID OPENINGS

OCTOBER 6, 20221

Bids were publicly received by 1:30 PM at the Norfolk County Commissioners Meeting, pursuant to Chapter 30B of the MGL's.

No bids were opened.

EXHIBIT B

AWARDING OF CONTRACTS

OCTOBER 6, 2021

It was moved by Commissioner Shea, seconded by Commissioner Collins and unanimously:

VOTED: to award the following contract(s)

1. PINE SAWDUST FOR THE NORFOLK COUNTY AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL FOR A PERIOD OF (3) YEARS

A.W. Greymont Jr. Trucking LLC

as per bid submitted

1. Contract# 9-10-11-905

in the amount of

\$1,600.00/100 load

delivered and unloaded

no charge years 2 and 3

for a period of (3) years

BID OPENING (S) OF OCTOBER 13, 2021

No bids to be opened.