

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 July 21, 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 1:01 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 That Order was effective immediately until it is rescinded or the State of Emergency is terminated.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.

Chairman Shea stated the Commissioners will consider personnel matters at the end of the meeting.

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

VOTED: To enter into Executive Session pursuant to Purpose 1 (M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(1)) to consider an Open Meeting Law complaint against public officers, namely the members of the Norfolk County Commissioners, filed with the Commissioners by Marguerite Lee, First Assistant Register, on behalf of the Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, on July 1, 2021

On the roll call vote,

Commissioner Staiti voted "yes"

Commissioner Collins voted "yes"

Chairman Shea voted "yes"

The Commissioners entered into Executive Session at 1:04 pm.

The Commissioners returned to Open Session at 1:16 pm.

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

VOTED: To allow the Chair to forward a letter to Marguerite Lee of the Registry of Deeds regarding her Open Meeting Law complaint of July 1, 2021 and to send a copy of said letter to the Attorney General's Division of Open Government.

On the roll call vote,

Commissioner Staiti voted "yes"

Commissioner Collins voted "yes"

Chairman Shea voted "yes"

Chairman Shea stated this matter is concluded for today.

Commissioner Staiti stated noted an error in the meeting date of the Tri County Group as submitted in the Minutes of the Open Session Meeting of July 14, 2021.

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

VOTED: To approve the Minutes of the Open Session Meeting of July 14, 2021 as amended

Commissioner Collins abstained.

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

VOTED: To approve the Minutes of the Open Executive Session Meeting of July 14, 2021 as submitted and not to release until the matter is settled

Commissioner Collins abstained.

Under Public Comment, Chairman Shea read and discussed a letter from Carla Foley regarding Dedham Square Parking. Commissioner Staiti asked about the Commissioners' meeting to discuss Dedham Square parking with Town of Dedham staff. John Cronin, County Director, stated the meeting was 2 or 3 weeks ago and the Commissioners made no decisions regarding Dedham Square parking. Bill Buckley, Assistant County Director, stated the Commissioners received communication from the Norfolk & Dedham Group requesting use of the Registry of Deeds for a company event. He stated the Commissioners accommodated the request.

Commissioner Staiti requested a site walk of the Registry of Deeds Parking Lot. He stated traffic is always a concern and recommended traffic calming measures to reduce cars cutting through the Registry of Deeds Parking Lot to avoid traffic. Commissioner Staiti directed Mr. Cronin to begin discussions on traffic calming measures for the Registry lot with Facilities Maintenance and the Engineering Department.

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

VOTED: To take Ms. Foley's letter under advisement and to direct the County Director to begin preliminary investigation into traffic calming measures at the Registry of Deeds Parking Lot.

Chairman Shea announced there are no appointments.

Chairman Shea announced there is no old business to discuss.

Chairman Shea announced personnel matters will be considered at the end of the meeting.

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

VOTED: To execute payroll warrants as follows:

22-03	Payroll – County	138,966.02
-------	------------------	------------

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

VOTED: To execute expense warrants as follows:

07-03-22	Expense – County	1,444,722.20
----------	------------------	--------------

Chairman Shea stated there are bid openings as detailed in Exhibit A.

Chairman Shea asked about the on call plumber bid. Ms. Rockwell stated the bidder is the same on call plumber currently under contract with the County.

Commissioner Staiti asked about the Registry of Deeds Legislative Consultant bid. Register O'Donnell stated the bidder has been a long-time consultant to the Registry. He stated the consultant works on legislative matters on behalf of the Registry of Deeds. Chairman Shea stated the Massachusetts Association of County Commissioners has retained Rasky Partners as a consultant.

Chairman Shea stated there are no contract awards as detailed in Exhibit B.

Chairman Shea discussed a request for charitable rate for the Marc A. Susi Scholarship Fund Golf Tournament on July 24, 2021 at Presidents Golf Course.

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

VOTED: To grant the charitable rate for the Marc A. Susi Scholarship Fund Golf Tournament on July 24, 2021

Mr. Cronin stated he will forward the request for charitable rate, including the address of the requester, to Commissioner Staiti for his information.

Chairman Shea discussed a letter from the View Restaurant and Tavern regarding rate relief. Mr. Cronin stated the Commissioners received a request from Boston Butler regarding rate relief. Mr. Cronin stated he would like to discuss the matter with Mr. Miner at Wollaston Recreational Facility.

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

VOTED: To table the request for rate relief from the View Restaurant and Tavern

Mr. Cronin discussed the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA). He stated Commissioners' staff continues to meet weekly with Bristol and Plymouth Counties. Mr. Cronin stated he met with the Bristol County Director to discuss the pros of moving forward and the path ahead following the Plymouth County model. Mr. Cronin stated he has a meeting with Plymouth County Treasurer O'Brien tomorrow.

Mr. Cronin discussed CPA firms. He stated interviews should be scheduled the first week of August in order to arrange a contract in anticipation of a large group meeting. Mr. Cronin stated he hopes to have a meeting in August to give cities and towns a chance to ask questions. He stated ARPA is a reimbursement program and the County's task is to distribute funds based on the 2019 Census. Mr. Cronin stated Norfolk County has accepted ARPA Funds into the Treasurer's Office and will work on behalf of Norfolk County Communities. He stated the towns will work with the County to develop proper programs and there is a need to stress patience.

Commissioner Collins asked if each County will have their own CPA firm. Mr. Cronin stated the County may select a separate CPA firm from the other Counties. He stated if Norfolk County chooses to follow the Plymouth County model, Plymouth County will pay but Norfolk County must use Plymouth County's CPA firm. Commissioner Collins asked if Plymouth County's CPA firm is one of the firms Norfolk County would consider. Mr. Cronin responded "yes." He stated the County may also consider a smaller CPA firm to add an additional layer of compliance. Mr. Cronin stated there would be 3 levels of compliance; the first CPA firm, the second CPA firm, and Mr. Cronin's internal review.

Commissioner Staiti asked about an ARPA timeline. Mr. Cronin stated the goal is to have a large group meeting by the end of August. Commissioners Staiti stated many towns are asking about the application process and he stressed the importance of outlining the process for towns. Mr. Cronin stated the County will need some time to build a program once the County selects a CPA firm. He stated the County will need to develop a robust program over a 3 year period. Mr. Cronin stated the goal is not to rush the program. He stated the Commonwealth has not yet received or distributed funds to communities in defunct Counties. Commissioner Staiti asked if Treasurer Bellotti has received ARPA Funds. Mr. Cronin stated the Treasurer's Office has successfully applied for funds but has not received funds.

Mr. Cronin stated he met with Norfolk County Agricultural High School (NCAHS) administrators yesterday. He stated discussion topics included the need for immediate HVAC improvements in 3 NCAHS buildings. Mr. Cronin stated he believes the HVAC improvements are CARES Act eligible.

Mr. Cronin stated a Patriot Ledger reporter interviewed several County Officials regarding ARPA.

Mr. Cronin presented the Report of the County Director. He reported on Superior Court. Mr. Cronin stated contractors have begun staging and the rear of the building is fenced. He stated the contractor has scheduled a drone flight to assess the work site. Mr. Cronin discussed Stoughton District Court. He stated there is a substantial change order. Mr. Cronin scheduled a

meeting tomorrow to discuss the change order. He stated the scope of the project has changed and he cannot offer more details without additional information. Mr. Cronin stated the Abrahams Group is winding down their report and will speak to department heads about their feedback. He stated the Abrahams Group had discussions with Register O'Donnell and Treasurer Bellotti and their feedback will be incorporated into the report. Mr. Cronin expects a draft report on August 11.

Mr. Buckley stated the House version of the County's Registry of Deeds Fee legislation will have a hearing tomorrow at 3 pm. He stated the hearing will receive only written testimony. Mr. Buckley stated he will monitor the hearing and submit written testimony.

Chairman Shea announced the Commissioners will now consider personnel matters.

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

VOTED: To execute personnel matters as follows:

Agricultural High School

Notice of termination for Trinka Snyder of Wellfleet, MA 02667 as Part-Time School Psychologist JG: Flat Rate \$68.75/hr. effective 6/18/21.

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

VOTED: To execute personnel matters as follows:

Wollaston Recreational Facility

Notice of Contingent Employment for Andrew J. Viola of Milton, MA 02186 as Seasonal Grounds Crew Employee JG: Flat \$14.00/hr., effective July 1, 2021.

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

VOTED: To execute personnel matters as follows:

Registry of Deeds

Notice of Promotion for Yudenia A. Sanchez of Norwood, MA 02062 from Principal Clerk JG: 11-3 @\$43,516.53 to Head Clerk JG: 13-3 @ \$48,097.08 replacing Paul Bonda effective 7/26/21.

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

VOTED: To execute personnel matters as follows:

Registry of Deeds

Notice of Promotion for Christian J. Dauphinee of Norwood, MA 02062 from Head Clerk JG: 13-9 @ \$56,258.55 to Head Administrative Clerk JG: 15-5 @ \$57,140.73 replacing Lauren F. Dutton effective 7/26/21.

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

VOTED: That the Commissioners Approve the appointment of Richard Hatch as Chief Information Officer : Flat Rate \$129,067.40/yr be approved with the following changes: permeant status group change to temporary status group, the change to be enforced on the day Mr. Hatch comes to work July 26<sup>th</sup> 2021 on or before June 30<sup>th</sup> 2022.

Commissioner Staiti stated he hopes the County can move forward in a positive way. He stated it is important to have a CIO. Commissioner Staiti stated as a new Commissioner it is good to know the Commissioners have discretion as appointing authority. He stated this decision is a reasonable compromise in light of the Abrahams Report. Commissioner Staiti stated there should be a policy that the appointing authority should be notified of employee retirements months in advance for planning purposes.

Commissioner Collins stated it is important to understand that personnel decisions are not personal. He stated the concern is waiting for the Abrahams Group Report for which the County paid \$75,000. Commissioner Collins stated the Commissioners want to avoid excess where appropriate.

Chairman Shea stated the CIO issue is a month old and it was precipitated by a letter citing the Abrahams Group Report from Joseph Reardon, Advisory Board Member from Milton, and an email from Mark Abrahams. He stated the County does not have backup funds in many positions. Chairman Shea stated the Commissioners needed to fill the CIO position but also needed to review the position. He stated the motion gives the Commissioners 10-12 months to review the position. Chairman Shea stated everything in the Abrahams Group Report is subject to review. He stated in the June 30, 2021 Meeting Minutes the Commissioners asked about other employees moving into the CIO position, what happens if the CIO is on vacation, and asked about the assistant position. Chairman Shea stated Register O'Donnell said he (the Register) did not think the assistant could perform the duties of the CIO. Chairman Shea stated he does not know the contents of the Abrahams Group Report.

Register O'Donnell stated he does not know where the CIO position became linked with the Abrahams Group Report. He stated the Registry CIO position is important and cited a Registry IT Staffing Assessment from Intrasystems. Register O'Donnell stated he preferred a full-time CIO who is treated like a full-time employee. Register O'Donnell stated Mark Abrahams spoke with IT staff throughout the County and there was no indication that the CIO position should not be filled. He stated Mark Abrahams indicated IT consolidation may occur. Register O'Donnell cited a letter endorsing the hiring of a full-time Registry of Deeds CIO from the Real Estate Bar Association.

Chairman Shea stated the Abrahams Group started their analysis 15 months ago. He stated the Commissioners hire department heads and the County has elected department heads. Chairman Shea stated department heads have discretion in hiring. He stated the Registry of Deeds is very important to County business and the County will try to work with the Abrahams Group Report.

Commissioner Staiti stated the proposed motion on the CIO is a reasonable compromise. Commissioner Staiti stated he hopes Register O'Donnell will review and consider. He stated the motion gives the Registry an important position and gives the employee benefits. Commissioner Staiti asked about James Limbey as a consultant. Mr. Cronin stated that decision was made on July 1, but no paperwork has come forward.

Chairman Shea asked for a vote on the motion that the Norfolk County Commissioners approve the Personnel Status Form for Richard Hatch with permanent status, Code 5100, changed to temporary status, Code 5110, with the reason being that the Commissioners are awaiting the Abrahams Group Report on County Operations with temporary status to conclude on or before June 30, 2022.

On the roll call vote,

Commissioner Staiti voted "yes"

Commissioner Collins voted "yes"

Chairman Shea voted "yes"

Mr. Cronin asked if the Commissioners are inclined to fill Facilities Maintenance positions in a similar manner via Code 110 salaries. The Commissioners stated they are in favor of moving forward with Facilities Maintenance positions in a similar manner via Code 110 salaries

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 2:36 pm.

ATTEST:

---

Recording Secretary

---

Clerk