

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES – February 27, 2023

7:00 p.m. - Chair's Introduction to Remote Meeting

Chair Cohen stated that this open meeting of the Board of Selectmen was being conducted remotely consistent with the July 16, 2022 Act Relative to Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency and that all members of the Board of Selectmen are allowed and encouraged to participate remotely.

Chair Cohen noted that the Order allows public bodies to meet entirely remotely so long as reasonable public access is afforded so that the public can follow along with the deliberations of the meeting. He added that ensuring public access does not ensure public participation unless such participation is required by law. Chair Cohen noted that this meeting will allow for Public Comment throughout the agenda. He indicated the various ways that the public may view or participate in this meeting as listed on the posted agenda.

Chair Cohen confirmed that the following members and people anticipated on the agenda were remotely present and could be heard.

Board of Selectmen

Mitch Cohen
Julianne Hirsh
Jason Perreault
T. Scott Rogers

Others

John Coderre, Town Administrator
Becca Meekins, Assistant Town Administrator
David Parenti, Fire Chief
William Lyver, Police Chief
Scott Charpentier, DPW Director

Any votes taken this evening will be by roll call.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Cohen invited comments from the public. There were none.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – FEBRUARY 13, 2023 MEETING

Selectman Hirsh moved the Board vote to approve the February 13, 2023 meeting minutes as presented; Selectman Rogers seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Perreault	“aye”	Hirsh	“aye”
Rogers	“aye”	Cohen	“aye”

REVIEW OF PRELIMINARY TOWN MEETING WARRANT SUMMARY

Mr. Coderre presented to the Board a draft summary of the 51 warrant articles for the Annual Town Meeting. He noted that at this stage the initial draft of the Warrant often contains incomplete information and placeholders. Following his review of the draft warrant articles, he indicated that the Board will vote to close the warrant at its March 13th meeting. It will then be reviewed and finalized by Town Counsel and posted prior to Town Meeting.

Selectman Hirsh requested that the Town Meeting be added to the calendar on the Town website. She also requested that signs advertising Town Meeting be located at the municipal buildings. Selectman Rogers noted that he would rather promote Town Meeting without a cost and without placing additional burden on Town staff. Selectman Perreault added that social media

is the best place to promote Town Meeting. Mr. Coderre stated that he will look into the cost of ordering the signs. Chair Cohen suggested that further discussion take place about ways to better promote Town Meeting, adding that the Town Moderator should be involved as well.

APPROVAL OF LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES LETTER

At the February 13, 2023 Board meeting, Mr. Coderre presented a draft of the Legislative Priorities letter for the Board's consideration. Mr. Coderre briefly reviewed the final Legislative Priorities letter that was included in the Board's meeting packet. In addition to the standard legislative priorities, also included is a supplemental addendum detailing a list of potential earmark requests for major infrastructure projects, including the Fire Station, the Northborough reservoir dam removal, sidewalk repair and Assabet Hill drainage repair. The letter will be forwarded to the Governor and the State Legislators in preparation for the legislative priorities discussion at the Board's March 13th meeting.

In response to a question, Mr. Coderre explained that the long standing request to increase the Chapter 90 Transportation funding to \$300 million was increased to \$330 million due to the cost of inflation. He added that the Mass Municipal Association is pushing for the \$330 million and it makes sense for Northborough to support that effort.

Selectman Hirsh indicated that at the Board's last meeting she asked that the need to co-exist better with e-commerce be included in the letter. Mr. Coderre responded that his recollection was that because she was not referring to a specific bill or initiative, this priority would be verbally discussed with the Legislators at the March 13th meeting. Selectman Hirsh noted that it is important that if a bill is introduced that the Legislators are mindful of the impact that e-commerce is having on the quality of life in many communities, including Northborough.

Selectman Perreault moved the Board vote to approve the Legislative Priorities Letter as presented; Selectman Rogers seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Perreault	"aye"	Hirsh	"aye"
Rogers	"aye"	Cohen	"aye"

APPROVAL OF MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT FOR AN EASEMENT AT 13 CHURCH STREET

Mr. Charpentier indicated that there is a municipal sanitary sewer pump station located adjacent to the old Fire Station at 13 Church Street. The proximity of the pump station to the rear property line had been in question. It has been determined that the rear property line is not as presented on Town plans and the pump station encroaches onto the adjacent property of 44 West Main Street (WCD Garage). He noted that the lot line issue goes back to a street widening project in 1910.

Mr. Charpentier indicated that a tentative verbal agreement has been reached between the Town and the abutter, which includes a request to the Water & Sewer Commission to waive the sewer privilege fee, and for the Town to provide a sanitary sewer service stub at the property line for use and connection to by the abutter. These would be provided at no cost to the abutter in exchange for the easement. On January 31, 2023, the Water & Sewer Commission unanimously approved a waiver of the \$9,100 sewer privilege fee.

The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) as presented this evening has been accepted by Town Counsel, abutter's counsel, and the mortgage lender. The detailed easement language, which was prepared by a Professional Land Surveyor in conjunction with Town Counsel, is the only remaining item under review by the abutter. It is expected that the MOA will be accepted and signed by the abutter within the next few business days.

Mr. Coderre noted that although the easement requires Town Meeting approval, this MOA will allow the parties to move forward in the interim. He added that through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process, the Town has potential for a private redevelopment of the property.

In response to a question by Lisa Maselli of 13 Maple Street, Mr. Charpentier explained how the sewer connection will be made and confirmed that there will be no work beyond the easement property line and the easement area would allow for paved parking, but not for a permanent structure.

Selectman Hirsh moved the Board vote to approve the sewer pump station access and sewer service installation Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Town and WCD Garage, Inc. for the Town property at 13 Church Street and to authorize the Town Administrator to execute the MOA on behalf of the Town, together with the Water & Sewer Commissioners, and with the final form of the MOA subject to approval by Town Counsel; Selectman Rogers seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Perreault	"aye"	Hirsh	"aye"
Rogers	"aye"	Cohen	"aye"

DISCUSSION REGARDING TOWN ADMINISTRATOR TRANSITION PROCESS

Mr. Coderre reviewed the details of the draft Request for Proposals (RFP) to hire a consulting firm to help guide the Board through the process of hiring a new Town Administrator. He noted that the Board would create a Screening Committee that would work with the consultant on creating marketing materials describing the community, the job description and the process. The Board would hold public input sessions detailing the characteristics, traits and qualities they are looking for in a Town Administrator. The Screening Committee would screen the applicants and choose no more than 4 finalists to interview with the Board of Selectmen. The consultant would then conduct background reference checks.

Mr. Coderre noted that the RFP will be published in the Worcester Telegram & Gazette and in Commbuys on March 2, 2023. The proposals will be due on March 15, 2023 at 2pm. He recommended that the Board schedule a meeting on either March 15th or 16th to interview consultants and make a selection.

Following a brief discussion, Chair Cohen suggested an amendment to the second bullet item listed under the scope of work on page 4 that refers to the formation of a Screening Committee as follows:

- Consultant shall assist with formation of a Screening Committee, ~~to include members (s) of the Select Board, School Committee representative (s); senior staff, advisory boards and committees, and residents.~~

Chair Cohen asked that Selectman Hirsh and himself be kept in the loop on any comments or questions received from potential consultants. Board members thanked Mr. Coderre for drafting the RFP. The Board will meet on Thursday, March 16th at 7pm to interview consultants and make a selection.

Kerri Martinek of 16 Hemlock Drive requested that the Board consider including a member of the Planning Board to serve on the Screening Committee.

Selectman Rogers moved the Board vote to approve the Town Administrator Recruitment RFP as amended with a submission deadline of March 15, 2023 at 2pm; Selectman Perreault seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Perreault	“aye”	Hirsh	“aye”
Rogers	“aye”	Cohen	“aye”

REPORTS

Jason Perreault

- No report.

Julianne Hirsh

- Announced that the Town of Westborough is hosting another Environmental Action Fair on May 13th at the Westborough High School.
- Noted that Westborough has a Sustainable Committee and requested that a discussion be added to a future agenda about the advantages of having a similar committee in Northborough.
- Noted that the Cultural Council will be hosting one of their events at the Town Common in June. Requested that public parking signs be installed in that area to show people where they can park for Town Common events.

T. Scott Rogers

- Noted that the Planning Board has continued the public hearing where the proposed bylaw change to dissolve the Groundwater Advisory Committee (GAC) will be discussed to March 7th. He added that the current language in the proposed bylaw amendment to dissolve the GAC implies that rather than a peer review by the GAC, applications will be forwarded to each of the Boards, Committees and Commissions (BCC) that represent the GAC separately to maintain their ability to make comments and recommendations. He believes that this amendment would only complicate the process for the applicant and the BCCs. He noted that on the Board's behalf he plans to share his concerns during the March 7th public hearing.
- Noted that the Financial Planning Committee has completed its FY2024 budget cycle. Added that they finalized their report to Town Meeting and read in its entirety their statement regarding the recommended use of ARPA funds.

Mitch Cohen

- No report.

EXECUTION OF CEMETERY DEED 1165

Selectman Perreault moved the Board vote to execute Cemetery Deed 1165; Selectman Rogers seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Perreault	“aye”	Hirsh	“aye”
Rogers	“aye”	Cohen	“aye”

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Lisa Maselli of 13 Maple Street noted that some communities mail their Town Meeting Warrant out to residents in advance so that they have time to understand what is being voted on.

8:10 pm - EXECUTIVE SESSION

Selectman Rogers moved the Board vote to enter into Executive Session pursuant to M.G.L., Chapter 30A, Section 21, Subsection 3 (Collective Bargaining – update on negotiations with Firefighter and Police Officer Unions) due to the Chair's determination that a discussion regarding these matters in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the position of the Board; Selectman Perreault seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

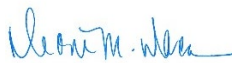
Perreault	“aye”	Hirsh	“aye”
Rogers	“aye”	Cohen	“aye”

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Cohen announced that the Board will enter into Executive Session and will not return to the open meeting.

The open meeting ended at 8:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Diane M. Wackell
Executive Assistant to the
Board of Selectmen

Documents used during meeting:

1. February 27, 2023 Meeting Agenda
2. February 13, 2022 Meeting Minutes
3. Information packet – Legislative Priorities
4. MMA Article on State Aid
5. Information packet – ARPA Grant Spending
6. Memorandum – Town Administrator Transition Process
7. Memorandum – Residential Electric Aggregation Program
8. Memorandum – Cultural Council Reappointment