

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES – January 28, 2019**

7:00 p.m. - Selectmen's Meeting Room, 63 Main Street, Northborough, MA

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dawn Rand, Chairman
Jason Perreault, Vice Chairman
Leslie Rutan, Clerk
Timothy Kaelin
Julianne Hirsh

*Pledge of Allegiance

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JANUARY 14, 2019 REGULAR MEETING

Selectman Rutan moved the Board vote to approve the meeting minutes of the January 14, 2019 regular meeting; Selectman Perreault seconded the motion. Selectman Hirsh requested that additional language referencing a site address be included under the Public Comment portion of the meeting. By consensus, the Board left the amendments to be made by the Executive Assistant. All members voted in favor.

7:00 p.m. - BILL FRAHER, TOWN AUDITOR
Presentation on FY2018 Audit Report.

Bill Fraher, CPA made a presentation to the Board on the completed Final Audit Report for FY2018. In summary, the Town continues to be in a strong financial position. Mr. Fraher credited the Town's adoption and adherence to comprehensive financial policies, especially the Free Cash and Debt Policies.

Mr. Fraher reviewed his Management Letter comments, which detailed a clean audit with no material weaknesses or deficiencies being found. Now that GASB 75 has been implemented for Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB), the Town was praised for its efforts in its continued annual contributions to the OPEB Trust Fund. The continuance of this funding will reduce the growth of the unfunded liability in the next actuarial study, will have a positive impact on future bond ratings and is showing positive returns on the investment.

Following the presentation, some questions and comments were heard from members of the Board. The Board also extended their appreciation to Mr. Coderre and the Financial Team.

Mr. Coderre stressed how pleased he is with receiving another positive Audit Report. He publicly acknowledged the efforts of the Financial Team, especially Town Accountant Jason Little for his preparation of statements and controls that resulted in an unqualified management letter. He also thanked members of the Board, the Appropriations Committee, Financial Planning Committee and the School Committees for their continued support of the Town's comprehensive fiscal policies and long-run financial planning efforts.

7:15 p.m. - AMMAR ALZAHER - KARAM AUTO SALES, INC.

To consider an application as submitted by Ammar Alzaher – Karam Auto Sales, Inc. for a Class II License for premises located at 281B West Main Street.

Mr. Ammar Alzaher of Karam Auto Sales, Inc. was present to request a Class II License for premises located at 281B West Main Street in accordance with the parking plan dated October 12, 2010 to display 8 vehicles for sale with an additional 3 spaces to be used for employee/customer parking for a total of 11 vehicles to be parked on the property at any one time. Mr. Alzaher acknowledged that he has been advised of the conditions that will be placed on the license and is agreeable to them.

The application has been reviewed by the Police, Fire and Building Departments. All recommend approval.

Selectman Perreault moved the Board vote to approve the application by Karam Auto Sales, Inc. for a Class II License for premises located at 281B West Main Street with the following conditions:

- No more than eleven (11) vehicles are to be stored on the property at any one time per the parking plan dated October 12, 2010.
- Snow removal must be done with equipment on the site and not on Route 20.
- No vehicle at any time may be parked on the sidewalk or in a way that might interfere with traffic safety.
- No storage of flammable liquids or gases shall be allowed without a permit and the approval of the Groundwater Advisory Board, if required.

Selectman Rutan seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

REPORTSJulianne Hirsch

- Attended a recent meeting of the White Cliffs Committee. Noted that an Architectural firm for the architectural and engineering services has been selected.
- Congratulated Town staff for being awarded a First Place Award Certificate for the 2017 Annual Town Report.

Timothy Kaelin

- No report.

Leslie Rutan, Clerk

- Reminded residents to clear snow from the sidewalks in front of their property.
- Thanked the DPW Department for securing property that has been taken through tax title.
- Thanked the Northborough Food Pantry for offering assistance to Federal furloughed employees.
- Go Patriots.

Jason Perreault, Vice Chair

- Attended a recent meeting of the Master Plan Steering Committee. Announced that the next public forum information meeting will held on February 13th at 7:00pm at the Zeh School Cafeteria.
- Go Patriots.
- Noted the passing of longtime resident Larry Beatty.

Dawn Rand, Chair

- Extended her condolences to the family and friends of Larry Beatty.
- Attended a recent meeting of the Fire Station Building Committee. Noted that the Committee voted to pursue the 61-65 Main Street site (old Pierce gas station, including the 10 Monroe property). An article for design and site acquisition funding will be included on this year's Annual Town Meeting Warrant.

John Coderre

- Provided an update on the Town's efforts regarding SA Farms at 432 Whitney Street. Information will be forthcoming to the residents. Stressed the continued need for changes to the State's composting laws for farms.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Joan Frank at 420 Whitney Street thanked Mr. Coderre and the Board of Selectmen for their continued efforts with SA Farms at 432 Whitney Street.

UPDATE ON FY2018 STATE AID

Mr. Coderre provided an update on the preliminary estimates for State Aid. Governor Baker released his House 1 Budget, which is the Town's first look at potential FY2020 State Aid increases. As forecasted, the impact to Northborough will be minimal, as the FY2020 budget model assumes just a 1% increase in State Aid. The Governor's budget as presented would increase Northborough's aid by 0.77%.

Mr. Coderre indicated that the Governor's budget as proposed would be an increase of approximately \$41,048. He added that additional information will be forthcoming as the House and Senate take up the budget in the coming months. Members of the Board thanked Mr. Coderre for the update.

PRESENTATION OF 1ST PLACE AWARD CERTIFICATE FOR THE 2017 ANNUAL TOWN REPORT

Mr. Coderre indicated that on January 19, 2019, the MMA presented the Town of Northborough with a First Place Award Certificate in Category 1 (population 12,500 and up) for the 2017 Annual Town Report.

Mr. Coderre reviewed the judging criteria that includes cover design and layout; logical arrangement of material; presentation of statistics and data; summaries of the town's achievements and evidence of local planning for the future; and practical utility of the report, which enhances the citizen's understanding of town government.

Mr. Coderre recognized Executive Assistant Diane Wackell for her efforts in coordinating the report.

DISCUSSION REGARDING LETTER RECEIVED AT THE DECEMBER 17, 2018 SELECTMEN'S MEETING

Mr. Coderre responded as follows to a letter that was submitted to the Board for their consideration at their December 17, 2018 meeting:

Meeting Agendas and Minutes

Mr. Coderre indicated that it was determined by the Town Clerk that although all meeting agendas were posted in compliance with the Open Meeting Law (OML), it was discovered that some boards and committees have not been as good about getting their minutes into the Town Clerk's Office for posting on the website, which is a best practice, but not required under the OML. Moving forward, the Town Clerk will follow up on the minutes for any posted meeting to ensure they are kept up to date online. He cautioned that this can be challenging as many of the small volunteer boards and committees do not have assigned staff or professional clerical services.

Board and Committee Appointments

Mr. Coderre reported that the Board of Selectmen has followed the same policy and practice since 1996 when it comes to making their appointments and reappointments to the various boards and committees. He suggested that based upon the comments and suggestions received in the letter, the Board of Selectmen review their policy for potential updates.

Mr. Coderre added that the Town has plans to update its website in the coming year to add new features that will enhance communication with residents. The website upgrades will be done in conjunction with a \$40,000 State Community Compact Grant the Town received to create a comprehensive Information Technology/Management Information Systems Strategic Plan.

Public/Education/Government (PEG) Access Service Expansion

Mr. Coderre addressed the topic of expanding the current PEG access services that was also touched upon in the letter received by the Selectmen. He indicated that to expand any service, it must be balanced with the financial impacts on those who are paying. The immediate priority with regard to PEG Access is to negotiate the contracts with Verizon and Charter, taking into consideration the declining cable revenues, so the Town can get a clear handle on potential future revenue streams. The uncertainty of the revenue source from cable services warrants a cautious approach to any service expansion.

Mr. Coderre noted that the Town currently records and broadcasts all elected boards and committees and those meetings are generally viewed a few dozen times. The programming content that statistically receives the most viewership tends to be school and community events with PEG access staff covering as many of these activities as current resources allow.

Open Meeting Law Training

Mr. Coderre assured the public that the Town has conducted Open Meeting Law (OML) Training sessions for staff and board, committee and commission members. Upon appointment, all employees and volunteers of boards, committees and commissions are provided with a summary of the Conflict of Interest Law (COI) and OML, and are required to take online Ethics training. Biennially, employees are required to re-take the online Ethics training and submit a certificate of completion to the Town Clerk. He added that the Town is obligated to provide this information but the burden of compliance rests with the employee and volunteer.

General Comments about Transparency and Communication

Mr. Coderre thanked the residents for their recent input and suggestions and assured the public that the Town will strive to continuously improve upon its documents, communications and processes. He agreed that there will always be room for improvement when it comes to communication, adding that the Town of Northborough prides itself on a long and successful history of following best practices.

Mr. Coderre proudly spoke about the Town receiving its eighth consecutive national budget award from the Government Finance Officers Association, adding that since FY2010, budgets have been passed at Annual Town Meetings with the unanimous support of the Board of Selectmen, Appropriations Committee, Financial Planning Committee and the School Committee. And, as presented earlier in the meeting, the Town was presented with a First Place Award Certificate in Category 1 (population of 12,500 and up) for the 2017 Annual Town Report.

Members of the Board thanked the residents for reaching out and thanked Mr. Coderre for his efforts in providing a response. The Board agreed to review the policy on the appointment and reappointment process for boards, committees and commissions at their next meeting.

In terms of redesigning the website, Selectman Hirsh asked if a focused group of residents could work with Town staff to offer suggestions for improvements. Mr. Coderre responded that he would be open to a process that allows for appropriate public input into the website, but expressed his sincere concern with the number of large specific projects that are currently in motion affecting the day-to-day duties of Town staff. He reiterated that the goal is always to improve the organization and asked the community for their patience and understanding given the current workload and limited resources. Selectmen Rutan and Perreault concurred.

Chairman Rand thanked Mr. Coderre and asked that he respond in writing to each of the residents who took the time to sign the petition/letter.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Selectman Perreault moved the Board vote to adjourn; Selectman Rutan seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Wackell
Executive Assistant to the
Board of Selectmen

Documents used during meeting:

1. January 28, 2019 Meeting Agenda
2. January 14, 2019 Meeting Minutes
3. Information packet – FY2018 Audit Report.
4. Information packet – Class II License Application.
5. Email – Update on FY2018 State Aid.
6. Information packet – 1st Place Award for 2017 Annual Town Report.
7. Letter received by residents at the December 17, 2018 Meeting.
8. Town Administrator’s draft response to December 17, 2018 resident letter, which was distributed at the meeting.