

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES – November 23, 2020**

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

Chairman Perreault stated that this Open Meeting of the Board of Selectmen was being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker's Executive Order of March 12, 2020, due to the current State of Emergency in the Commonwealth due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 Virus.

Chairman Perreault added that in order to mitigate the transmission of the COVID-19 Virus, the Town has been advised and directed by the Commonwealth to suspend public gatherings, and as such, the Governor's Order suspended the requirement of the Open Meeting Law to have all meetings in a publicly accessible *physical* location. Further, all members of public bodies are allowed and encouraged to participate remotely.

Chairman Perreault 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. Chairman Perreault noted that this meeting will allow for Public Comment only under the Public Comment portion of the agenda. He indicated the various ways that the public may view or participate in this meeting as listed on the posted agenda.

Meeting Business Ground Rules

Chairman Perreault covered the ground rules for effective and clear conduct of the business. He asked members of the Board to mute their phone or computer when not speaking and to speak clearly and in a way that helps generate accurate meeting minutes. He will go through the items on the agenda. Following presentations, Board members will be offered an opportunity to speak, followed by staff members answering any questions, if necessary. Those responding were asked to wait until the floor was yielded to them. Members were asked if they wish to respond to the comments of others, to do so through the Chair, taking care to identify themselves.

Chairman Perreault noted that the those who wish to speak under Public Comment will be admitted to the meeting as an attendee and will be asked to provide their full name and address for the record.

Any votes taken this evening will be done by roll call to ensure that the records of the vote are clear and accurate to the members attending the meeting remotely.

Chairman Perreault confirmed that the following members and persons anticipated on the agenda were remotely present and could be heard.

Board of Selectmen

Jason Perreault, Chair
Timothy Kaelin, Vice Chair
Leslie Rutan, Clerk
Julianne Hirsh
T. Scott Rogers

Town Staff

John Coderre, Town Administrator
Rebecca Meekins, Assistant Town Administrator
William Lyver, Police Chief
Scott Charpentier, DPW Director
Jason Little, Finance Director
Julie Brownlee, Principal Assessor

Others

James Dillon, Board of Assessors Member
Christopher Reidy, Board of Assessors Member
Karen Chapman, Corridor 9/495 Regional Chamber of Commerce

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – NOVEMBER 9, 2020 REGULAR MEETING

Selectman Rutan moved the Board vote to approve the November 9, 2020 Meeting Minutes as submitted, Selectman Kaelin seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Rogers	“aye”	Kaelin	“aye”
Hirsh	“aye”	Perreault	“aye”
Rutan	“aye”		

7:00 p.m. - PUBLIC HEARING WITH BOARD OF ASSESSORS

For the purpose of discussing the valuation of each class of property; the minimum residential factor and the allocation of the tax burden among the four classes of real property: residential, open space, commercial and industrial, and of personal property.

Principal Assessor Julie Brownlee, Finance Director Jason Little and Board of Assessors members James Dillon and Christopher Reidy were remotely present. Mr. Coderre made the presentation along-side a power point presentation, which included information and options for the Board of Selectmen to determine whether there shall be a single or split tax rate for the various classes of property for FY2021.

In summary, following an extensive review of the market activity for the FY2021 Revaluation Certification, the total taxable value for the Town has increased from \$3.07 billion to approximately \$3.17 billion, or 2.6%. This analysis was based on valid sales

PUBLIC HEARING CONT...

activity during calendar year 2019 for single family homes and condominiums. Market adjustments resulted in overall single-family home values staying essentially level at negative 0.07%, while condominiums increased approximately 2.7%. In addition, industrial properties increased by 8.5% and commercial properties increased by 0.3%.

Principal Assessor Julie Brownlee presented the various tax rate scenarios. Should the Board of Selectmen decide to continue with a single tax rate, the FY2021 rate would decrease from \$17.15 in FY2020 to \$17.12 for FY2021. The levy amount to be raised by taxation would be \$54,247,746, an increase of \$1,228,041, or 2.32%. This year \$65.4 million was certified in “new growth” value, which results in approximately \$1,127,966 in new tax dollars. The average single-family tax bill would decrease by \$65 from \$7,965 in FY2020 to \$7,900 for FY2021.

It was noted that the Board of Assessors unanimously recommended that the Board of Selectmen continue with the single tax rate, which promotes a fair and equitable system of taxation and would continue to help Northborough attract new business into the community while retaining those already located in Town. Corridor 9/495 Regional Chamber of Commerce President Karen Chapman was remotely present and indicated that the Chamber strongly supports the continuation of a single tax classification.

Members of the Board expressed their support of the continuation of a single tax classification and thanked Mr. Coderre and the Finance Team for their efforts.

Chairman Perreault stated that this is a public hearing and noted that those who wish to speak will be admitted to the meeting as an attendee and will be asked to provide their full name and address for the record. Public comment will be limited to 3 minutes per person. There was no public comment.

Selectman Rogers moved the Board vote to close the Public Hearing with the Board of Assessors for the purpose of discussing the valuation of each class of property; the minimum residential factor and the allocation of the tax burden among the four classes of real property: residential, open space, commercial and industrial, and of personal property; Selectman Kaelin seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Rogers	“aye”	Kaelin	“aye”
Hirsh	“aye”	Perreault	“aye”
Rutan	“aye”		

Selectman Kaelin moved the Board vote to maintain a uniform tax rate for all classes of property at a factor of one; to oppose the implementation of a residential exemption; and to oppose the implementation of a small commercial exemption; Selectman Rutan seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Rogers	“aye”	Kaelin	“aye”
Hirsh	“aye”	Perreault	“aye”
Rutan	“aye”		

8:12 p.m. - ROB THEVE, FIRE DEPARTMENT CAPTAIN

Presentation on Fire Department Collection for "Toys for Tots" Program.

Fire Captain Rob Theve announced that the Northborough Fire Department is again an official drop off site for the USMC Reserve Toys for Tots collection program. Due to COVID-19 concerns and to ensure the safe delivery of toys, the Northborough Fire Department will only be collecting toys on November 28th and December 5th from 9:00am – 6:00pm. Only new toys will be accepted and must be in the original packaging. Bins will be located outside the front entrance of the Fire Station at 11 Pierce Street.

Captain Theve announced that in lieu of purchasing a new toy, donations can be made at <https://wochester-ma.toysfortots.org>. Captain Theve was thanked for his efforts in coordinating this program each year.

REPORTS**T. Scott Rogers**

- Remotely attended a recent meeting of the Community Affairs Committee. The Light Up the Town Community Decorating Contest will be held the weekends of December 4-6 and December 11-13.
- Remotely attended a recent meeting of the Board of Library Trustees. The new Library Director starts on December 7th.

Julianne Hirsh

- Recognized Michelle Gillespie, Leslie Arsenault, Karen Brewster and Beth Davison and thanked them for their efforts as the core members of the Boros Cares 4 Troops (BC4T) organization.
- Expressed her appreciation to all volunteers who serve on the many Boards and Committees in Town. They are the people who make this town a community.
- As the Board's liaison to the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), she followed up on the Planning Board's memo to the Board of Selectmen regarding traffic concerns. In that memo, the Planning Board offered use of their local planning assistance hours from the CMRPC, as a resource to see what other communities are doing to address similar traffic concerns. She noted that it has been suggested that both Boards meet jointly at some point in the future to brainstorm some solutions on how best to address traffic concerns.
- Wished everyone a happy and safe Thanksgiving.

Leslie Rutan

- Attended a recent meeting with the School Superintendent. Noted that the School District is working towards moving to in-person learning starting with the elementary schools in January, followed by the Middle School and the High School, with no changes to the learning models through the end of the year. The School District dashboard is updated weekly. Thanked School Superintendent Greg Martineau and his department for their logistical efforts in creating a safe learning environment and for keeping everyone happy and accommodated.

Leslie Rutan Report Cont. . .

- Thanked all who organized and participated in the annual Scout for Food Drive on November 14th. Over 9,000 items were collected and will help restock the Northborough Food Pantry.
- Asked Town staff to extend her appreciation to the Town's trash and recycling haulers for doing such a great job with pick-ups and for showing such integrity in the service they provide.

Tim Kaelin, Clerk

- Noted that he has had some long telephone conversations with residents and their concern about the truck traffic on Bartlett Street. He reached out to the Town Planner who was able to provide some helpful information about the conditions that the developers agreed to when they were building these facilities. One condition is that trucks should turn out of their facilities and travel towards Bartlett Street for local deliveries only. He asked Ms. Joubert to reach out to the owners and tenants of these facilities to remind them of these conditions. This is the first step in reducing the amount of truck traffic on Bartlett Street. He advised residents who have traffic concerns on Bartlett Street to call him directly at 508-709-5556.
- He also had a conversation with a residents who expressed concern with what they perceive as a lack of communication from the Board of Selectmen to help address these traffic concerns. He announced that he will begin holding virtual office hours every Monday from 11am-1pm for residents to share concerns, ideas, etc. If this day and time is not convenient for someone, he can schedule another time to meet. He added that email addresses for each Board member are listed on the Town website.
- Noted that the Diversity and Inclusion Committee will hold its first meeting remotely on December 4th at 7pm. Thanked everyone who helped get this committee up and running and thanked the residents who encouraged him to spear this effort.
- Wished Christian Campero a happy 13th birthday and wished his mother Tricia a happy 5th anniversary. Due to the restrictions of COVID-19, his mother worked hard to organize a special birthday parade. At least 30 vehicles participated in the drive by, which included a number of mascots from Worcester professional sports teams. The parade was escorted by the Police and Fire Departments. Thanked Chief Lyver and Chief Parenti for providing the staff and resources for this special event.
- Urged residents to shop locally and support the small businesses during this Holiday season.
- Announced that the Senior Center has a new Facebook page and asked that residents check it out and see what they can do help out.
- Wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Jason Perreault, Chair

- As a follow up to the discussion at the last Board meeting regarding traffic safety, he asked Mr. Coderre and Town staff to prepare and provide information for discussion purposes at the Board's December meeting. This will be the first step in helping the Board gain some understanding of the various factors surrounding the concerns and options for a solution.

Jason Perreault Report Cont. . .

- Noted that the Senior Center, in collaboration with the Food Pantry and Northborough Helping Hands delivered goods and services to residents in the community. Thanked the volunteers for their efforts in helping to mitigate some of the impact that residents are feeling during this time. Also thanked the donors who provided the resources.
- Wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving and encouraged all to approach the holidays in the safest way possible.

John Coderre

- Noted that on November 6th the Health Agent, Corridor 9/495 Regional Chamber of Commerce President, Police Chief, Fire Chief and himself conducted an informational workshop for local businesses with regard to COVID-19. Everything that was covered during the workshop is on the Town website, including links to the many available resources. He encouraged people who may have missed the workshop to watch the recording, also located on the Town website.
- Requested that the annual Financial Trend Monitoring System update that is typically held in December be delayed until sometime in January. This request is largely being made due to the delayed Annual Town Meeting, the State's delay in completing their FY2021 budget and the delay in receiving meaningful data on local receipts. He added that the Town is in the process of submitting expenses under the CARES Act and he has been meeting extensively with the School Superintendent and his staff in regard to financial issues they are experiencing for FY2021 and the impact this will have for FY2022.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Perreault noted that the Public Comment portion of the agenda allows for the public to provide input, comments, questions or concerns. The Board will not engage or deliberate in any detailed discussion, nor will it take action or make any commitments in real time in response to any public comment. If they are able, present Town staff may respond to any questions that can easily be answered. Those who wish to speak under Public Comment will be admitted to the meeting as an attendee and will be asked to provide their full name and address for the record. Public comment will be limited to 3 minutes per person.

Suzanne Cieslica of 8 Emerson Road thanked Selectman Hirsh for requesting that the Board of Selectmen discuss traffic concerns at their December meeting. She agrees that the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board should plan a centralized discussion. Thanked Mr. Coderre and his finance team for their efforts with the budget. Wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving and announced that following the Light Up the Town Community Decorating Contest, the Community Affairs Committee will be hosting the Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony on Blake Street in honor of Neil Ellsworth virtually on December 5th at 5pm. Visit their Facebook page for additional information.

INTERVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE – RECOMMENDATION FOR APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Selectman Rutan moved the Board vote to appoint Cynthia Moore to the Elderly & Disabled Taxation Fund Committee for a partial one-year term to expire on April 30, 2021, as recommended by the Interview Subcommittee; Selectman Kaelin seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Rogers	“aye”	Kaelin	“aye”
Hirsh	“aye”	Perreault	“aye”
Rutan	“aye”		

Selectman Rutan moved the Board vote to appoint Sherry Clark to the Youth Commission for a partial three-year term to expire on April 30, 2023, as recommended by the Interview Subcommittee; Selectman Kaelin seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Rogers	“aye”	Kaelin	“aye”
Hirsh	“aye”	Perreault	“aye”
Rutan	“aye”		

Selectman Rutan moved the Board vote to appoint Robert Licht as an alternate member to the Historic District Commission for a partial three-year term to expire on April 30, 2023, as recommended by the Interview Subcommittee; Selectman Kaelin seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Rogers	“aye”	Kaelin	“aye”
Hirsh	“aye”	Perreault	“aye”
Rutan	“aye”		

CONSIDER CLOSING TOWN OFFICES, DPW AND SENIOR CENTER AT 12 NOON ON CHRISTMAS EVE

Mr. Coderre asked that the Board consider the closing of Town Offices, DPW and the Senior Center at 12 Noon on Christmas Eve, December 24th to allow non-essential employees to spend Christmas Eve with their families.

Selectman Hirsh moved the Board vote to close the Town Offices, DPW and Senior Center on Tuesday, December 24, 2019 at 12 Noon to provide staff additional time with their families this holiday season with the following conditions: 1) staff who are normally scheduled to work this day shall receive their regular rate of pay; 2) in the event that essential staff are called in to work, they shall receive their regular rate of pay; and 3) staff not scheduled to work this day, including staff on scheduled vacation leave or sick leave, shall have such scheduled leave calculated on a full-day basis; Selectman Rogers seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Rogers	“aye”	Kaelin	“aye”
Hirsh	“aye”	Perreault	“aye”
Rutan	“aye”		

SET MEETING SCHEDULE FOR JANUARY – APRIL 2021

Selectman Rogers moved the Board vote to set the meeting schedule for January through April 2021 as follows: January 11 & 25; February 8 & 22; March 8 & 22; April 12 & 26 (Town Meeting); Selectman Kaelin seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Rogers	“aye”	Kaelin	“aye”
Hirsh	“aye”	Perreault	“aye”
Rutan	“aye”		

EXECUTION OF CEMETERY DEED 1107

Selectman Rogers moved the Board vote to execute Cemetery Deed 1107 as presented; Selectman Rutan seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Rogers	“aye”	Kaelin	“aye”
Hirsh	“aye”	Perreault	“aye”
Rutan	“aye”		

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Selectman Hirsh moved the Board vote to adjourn; Selectman seconded Rogers the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Rogers	“aye”	Kaelin	“aye”
Hirsh	“aye”	Perreault	“aye”
Rutan	“aye”		

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Wackell
Executive Assistant to the
Board of Selectmen

Documents used during meeting:

1. November 23, 2020 Meeting Agenda
2. November 9, 2020 Meeting Minutes
3. Information Packet – Tax Classification Hearing
4. Flyer – Toys for Tots
5. Interview Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
6. Memorandum – Early closing of Town Offices, DPW and Senior Center
7. Memorandum – Meeting Schedule
8. Cemetery Deed