

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES – July 18, 2022**

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

Chairman 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.

Chairman 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. Chairman 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.

Chairman Cohen confirmed that the following members and persons 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
Rebecca Meekins, Assistant Town Administrator
David Parenti, Fire Chief
William Lyver, Police Chief
Scott Charpentier, DPW Director

Any votes taken this evening will be done by roll call.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Doug Stone of 33 Birch Hill Road reported low hanging telephone wires at the corner of Route 135 and Cedar Hill Road. Mr. Coderre responded that Town staff is looking into who owns the wires and will ask that they be cleaned up.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JUNE 27, 2022 MEETING

Selectman Hirsh moved the Board vote to approve the June 27, 2022 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"

7:00 p.m. - CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING

To consider an application from G&I IX FORBES WHITNEY LLC to amend the existing aboveground storage license for premises located at 30 Forbes Road by increasing the on-site storage of flammable and combustible liquids, flammable gases and flammable solids.

Chairman Cohen indicated that the applicant has requested continuance of this public hearing to the Board's August 15, 2022 meeting.

Selectman Rogers moved the Board vote to continue the public hearing for the application of G&I IX FORBES WHITNEY LLC to amend the existing aboveground flammables and combustible storage license for premises located at 30 Forbes Road to the August 15, 2022 meeting of the Board of Selectmen at 7:00pm; Selectman Perreault seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

AUDITOR PRESENTATION REGARDING THE FY2021 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Mr. Coderre introduced Tom Scanlon from Scanlon Associates. Finance Director Jason Little was also present to answer any questions. Mr. Scanlon made a presentation to the Board on the completed Final Audit Report for FY2021. In summary, the Town continues to be in a strong financial position with good controls over key/significant accounts.

Mr. Scanlon reviewed the financial statements and the Management Letter comments, which detailed a clean audit with no material weaknesses or deficiencies being found. He stressed the fact that the FY2021 audit results for Northborough are excellent compared to other communities, especially considering the challenges brought on by the pandemic.

Mr. Scanlon’s presentation included a positive review of the following, all of which have a positive impact on future bond ratings and investments:

- General Fund revenues and expenditures
- Use of Free Cash
- Status of Town Reserves
- Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB)
- Outstanding long-term debt
- Capital assets

It was discussed that the Town’s progressive contributions to the OPEB Trust Fund will not only help in the long run to lower the Town’s liability, but the actuarial assumptions are also more favorable as the Trust Fund continues to grow.

Following the presentation and questions from members of the Board, Mr. Coderre stressed how pleased he is with receiving another positive Audit Report. He publicly acknowledged the efforts of the Financial Team, especially Finance Director Jason Little for his preparation of statements and controls that resulted in an unqualified management letter. Mr. Little also acknowledged the hard work of the staff in the Offices of the Treasurer/Collector, Assessor’s and DPW.

Laura Ziton of 17 Franklin Circle urged the Board to consider digital solutions to saving data and asked that the Board look into police detail reporting.

VERIZON – CABLE LICENSE RENEWAL

Attorney William Hewig from KP Law and Cable Access Director Kathy Dalgliesh were remotely present. Mr. Coderre noted for the public that the Town has no power to regulate subscriber rates or programming, such as channel offerings. Attorney Hewig reviewed the highlights of the cable license renewal as follows:

- Verizon will pay to the Town an annual PEG operating grant of 4% of its annual gross revenue, including advertising and home shopping revenues, which equates to approximately \$200,000 per year, with an accelerator clause stating that if the Town gets a higher percentage from Charter/Spectrum, Verizon will match it.
- Verizon will pay to the Town a PEG capital grant totaling \$115,000 payable in three equal installments of \$38,333.34, due on Day 45, and on the 1st and 3rd anniversaries.
- Verizon will provide 3 SD PEG channels and 1 HD channel, for a total of 4 PEG channels.

Attorney Hewig added that Verizon has created a template for all their licensing over the past couple of years. He noted that despite this, the Town was able to negotiate some real benefits in return for some of the concessions.

Cable Access Director Kathy Dalgliesh noted that she is happy with the license renewal and enjoys working with Verizon. Their contract compliance, tech support, equipment replacement and response times are all excellent. She added that Verizon is very cooperative when responding to her department and subscriber customer service complaints, which are minimal.

In response to questions by members of the Board, Ms. Dalgliesh explained that the capital grant funds are typically used for large equipment expenditures. Attorney Hewig explained that the State obligates cable operators to provide a free basic service connection to all school and municipal public buildings. Since this has been challenged in Court, it is possible that cable operators will no longer be obligated to do so.

Mr. Coderre added that the Town has always been able to strike a good balance in making sure that the Town receives sufficient revenues from the cable operator to support its local access, while being cognizant of the fact that it is actually a pass-through fee that is paid by the subscribers. He is hoping that State and Federal legislation will change how PEG access gets funded since an increasing number of cable subscribers are “cutting the cord” and going to streaming services instead of cable.

Chairman Cohen thanked Attorney Hewig, Mr. Coderre and Ms. Dalgliesh for their efforts in bringing this license renewal forward for the Board’s consideration.

Selectman Hirsh moved the Board vote, in its statutory capacity as the Cable Television License Issuing Authority, to approve and execute the proposed Verizon New England, Inc. Cable Television Renewal License, as negotiated by representatives of the Town and Verizon, to be effective for 5 years beginning July 18, 2022; Selectman Rogers seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

REPORTS

T. Scott Rogers

- Thanked Chief Parenti and Chief Lyver for their monthly reports.
- Watched the ZBA interviews held on June 28th and reported on the ZBA meeting that same evening.
- Reported that the Appropriations Committee met to review and approve year-end transfers.
- Welcomed the following Town staff to Northborough: Police Dispatcher Allie Gardell, Senior Center Director Kendra Faldetta, Conservation Agent Vinny Vignaly and Health Agent Michael Seager.

Julianne Hirsh

- Noted that the White Cliffs Committee will be meeting on July 20th and the Master Plan Implementation Committee will meet on July 21st.
- Encouraged people to continue to share ideas for ARPA funding.

Jason Perreault

- Welcomed the newly hired Town staff to Northborough and thanked the Town staff for their efforts to fill in the gap when positions are open.
- Thanked Chief Lyver and Chief Parenti for their monthly reports.

Mitch Cohen

- Noted that the Community Affairs Committee hosted a great concert this past Thursday night. Their next concert is planned for Sunday, July 24th at 5pm at the Ellsworth McAfee Park. Thanked the Recreation Department for sharing their cornhole boards for use at these concerts.
- Thanked Ms. Meekins for keeping the Board abreast of new staff hires and for sharing a little bit about each of them.

John Coderre

- Noted that he is expecting news on the final State Budget by the end of July and will provide an update at the Board's next meeting.

EXECUTION OF CEMETERY DEED 1151

Selectman Hirsh moved the Board vote to execute Cemetery Deed 1151; Selectman Perreault seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

8:45 p.m. - EXECUTIVE SESSION

Selectman Perreault moved the Board vote to enter into Executive Session pursuant to M.G.L., Chapter 30A, Section 21, Subsection 3 (Collective Bargaining Strategy Planning) due to the Chair's determination that a discussion regarding this matter in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the position of the Board; Selectman Rogers seconded the motion; the roll call was taken as follows:

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

ADJOURNMENT

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

The open meeting ended at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Diane M. Wackell
Executive Assistant to the
Board of Selectmen

Documents used during meeting:

1. July 18, 2022 Meeting Agenda
2. June 27, 2022 Meeting Minutes
3. Aboveground Storage Public Hearing continued to August 15, 2022 Meeting
4. Information Packet- Auditor Presentation
5. Information Packet – Verizon Cable License Renewal
6. Cemetery Deed