

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES – June 12, 2023

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

Chair Cohen read the current remote meeting notice and confirmed the following Select Board members and others could hear and be heard.

Select Board (SB)

Mitch Cohen, Chair
Julianne Hirsh, Vice Chair
Kristen Wixted, Clerk
Lisa Maselli
Laura Ziton

Others

Robert Reed, Interim Town Administrator
Rebecca Meekins, Assistant Town Administrator

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MAY 22, 2023 MEETING

SB Member Ziton moved the Board vote to approve the May 22, 2023 meeting minutes as amended; SB Member Hirsh seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Hirsh	“aye”	Maselli	“aye”
Wixted	“aye”	Cohen	“aye”
Ziton	“aye”		

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR LIZ NOLAN

Acknowledgement of the 2023 Scholarship Recipients

Scholarship Committee Chair Liz Nolan was present to acknowledge the following Northborough graduating students who received 2023 scholarship awards.

Algonquin Regional High School

- Julia Galas
- Gabriel Gomes
- Marianna LoRusso (present)
- Isabelle McNulty (present)
- Allison Silva (present)

Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School

- Muhammed Sal

Saint John's High School

- James Benestad

Ms. Nolan noted that out of the thirty applications received, seven scholarships were awarded to the above-mentioned students. She provided a brief update on the application process, as well as the ongoing efforts of the Scholarship Committee. Select Board members congratulated the scholarship recipients and wished them the best in their future endeavors.

JEANNINE MOORE AND KERRIE WARD – TOUGAS FAMILY FARM

To consider a One-Day Special Liquor License for multiple dates

Kerrie Ward and Jeannine Moore were present to request a One-Day Special Liquor License for the following 2023 events to be held at the Farm at 234 Ball Street.

Father's Day

June 17, 18 & 19

National Ice Cream Day

July 14, 15 & 16

Donut Days of Summer

August 12 & 13

Pick or Treat

October 28 & 29

The serving hours for each day will be 11am-5pm. There will be no rain dates. Ms. Ward indicated that the application packet includes the details about the safety precautions and the systems in place for each event. She added that similar events have been held in the past with a One-Day Special Liquor License issued by the Select Board with no issues.

The Police, Fire, Building and Health Departments have reviewed the application and have no concerns to report.

SB Member Wixted moved the Board vote to approve the application for a One-Day Special License as submitted by Tougas Family Farm LLC for events to be held at 234 Ball Street per the approved floor plan as submitted with the application. The event dates are June 17, 18 & 19; July 14, 15 & 16; August 12 & 13; and October 28 & 29 from 11am – 5pm with no rain dates. The license is approved with the condition that the precautions and systems are in place for each event as stated in the June 1, 2023 letter from Tougas Family Farm; SB Member Hirsh seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Hirsh	“aye”	Maselli	“aye”
Wixted	“aye”	Cohen	“aye”
Ziton	“aye”		

POLICE CHIEF WILLIAM LYVER

Reappointment of James Bruce, Erica Abro and Bruce Tait as Special Officers

Chief Lyver was present to request that the Board re-appoint James Bruce, Erica Abro and Bruce Tait as special police officers. Special Police Officer appointments are made on an annual basis effective July 1st through June 30th.

SB Member Hirsh moved the Board vote to reappoint James Bruce, Erica Abro and Bruce Tait as a Special Police Officers for a one-year period July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024; SB Member Wixted seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Hirsh	“aye”	Maselli	“aye”
Wixted	“aye”	Cohen	“aye”
Ziton	“aye”		

DPW DIRECTOR SCOTT CHARPENTIER AND FACILITIES MANAGER SHAWN THOMPSON**Report on Assessment on Municipal Buildings**

DPW Director Scott Charpentier and Facilities Manager Shawn Thompson were present to propose a formal Facilities Condition Assessment (FCA) on all municipal buildings. The buildings to be included in the assessment would be the Town Hall, Senior Center, DPW garage, Public Library, Police Station and 4 West Main Street. Mr. Thompson indicated that the FCA service will help with asset management, financial planning, preventive maintenance, risk management, regulatory compliance and strategic decision making, adding that this approach will help transition the Town from a reactive to a proactive approach to asset management.

The FCA Service Provider will interview Town staff to understand what improvements have been made in the last three years, what improvements are planned for the next three years and any known problems that may exist. All major building equipment will be inventoried. The FCA will also develop a detailed equipment inventory and a condition assessment of all major building systems, including HVAC, electrical, plumbing, roofing, site paving, vertical transportation, structural and building envelopes.

Mr. Charpentier noted that this project will provide a necessary assessment of the current conditions of municipal buildings that will guide Town staff in making informed decisions on needed repairs and replacements to develop detailed capital improvement plans. The cost of the Facility Condition Assessment that will include 3-year software support is \$47,000.00.

In response to several questions by members of the Board, Mr. Charpentier and Mr. Thompson provided further details in regard to security concerns with the software, the option to include additional buildings as needed in the future and the flexibility to switch vendors at any point through a 30-day opt out notice.

SB Member Hirsh moved the Board vote to release ARPA funds in the amount of \$47,000 for a comprehensive Municipal Building Assessment as presented by DPW Director Scott Charpentier; SB Member Wixted seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Hirsh	“aye”	Maselli	“aye”
Wixted	“aye”	Cohen	“aye”
Ziton	“aye”		

TEMPORARY TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**Recommendation to create a permanent Traffic Safety Committee**

The Select Board created a Temporary Traffic Safety Committee (TTSC) at their September 26, 2022 meeting with a charge to return with recommendations on whether or not to form a permanent Traffic Safety Committee.

SB Member Ziton served on the TTSC and informed the Board that based on the Committee’s research and resulting deliberation, the TTSC voted unanimously to recommend to the Select Board that a permanent Traffic Safety Committee be created.

SB Member Ziton responded to questions from Board members regarding the TTSC's research on similar committees in other communities and whether or not the Police Department was involved. Police Chief Lyver was present and stated that the Police Department should be included anytime traffic safety is being discussed in order to establish enforcement expectations based on experience and statutory authority. SB Member Ziton responded that the TTSC discussed the involvement of the Police Department in great detail and the goal was to avoid placing any additional pressure on Town staff. SB Chair Cohen added that based on other communities, the TTSC decided that the formal voting membership would include members of the public appointed by the Select Board and the Planning Board with the appropriate Town staff, including the DPW Department being involved as needed. Mr. Reed shared that in his experience, traffic safety was handled during regular business hours by Town staff.

The TTSC's recommended charge was included in the meeting packet and is summarized below with the underlined amendment regarding the involvement of the Police Department based on the discussion above.

Membership: The Traffic Safety Committee (TSC) will consist of four (4) voting members appointed by the Select Board and one (1) voting member appointed by the Planning Board for staggered three-year terms. The TSC should include geographical and user diversity.

Staff: Department of Public Works, Police Chief or designee, and other staff as needed

The charge of the TSC shall be to promote and enhance the physical, social and economic environment in which all forms of pedestrian and vehicle transportation can work together for a safe, clean, healthy and vital community. The TSC shall be responsible for promoting enhanced traffic safety in Town by creating a forum where residents can voice concerns, suggestions and requests. The TSC shall work with Town staff to examine potential improvements to existing traffic situations and identify long and short-term solutions to traffic issues in Northborough. The TSC will also be a conduit for community input to the Town Administrator, Select Board, Planning Board and other Town officials, Boards and Committees to address resident requests for improving livability, drivability, bike ability, walkability and accessibility of neighborhood streets in Northborough.

SB Member Ziton moved the Board vote to create a permanent Traffic Safety Committee as amended recommended by the Temporary Traffic Safety Committee; SB Member Wixted seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Hirsh	"aye"	Maselli	"aye"
Wixted	"aye"	Cohen	"aye"
Ziton	"aye"		

WHITE CLIFFS – REUSE DETERMINATION NEXT STEPS

On the advice of Town Counsel and to avoid any appearance of a conflict of interest, SB Member Maselli recused herself from any discussion regarding White Cliffs due to her close proximity to the White Cliffs property. Ms. Maselli turned off her camera and microphone and will rejoin the meeting for the next agenda item.

SB Cohen noted that tonight's discussion is a follow up to the Board's action at its May 22, 2023 meeting to not support the White Cliffs reuse proposal by Metro West Collaborative Development.

Facilities Manager Shawn Thompson informed the Board that whatever the determination is for the reuse of White Cliffs, issues with mold, lead and asbestos will have to be remediated in order to proceed forward. He reviewed the Town's efforts to date to prevent the situation from worsening. Mr. Thompson responded to several questions from members of the Board regarding the cost and efforts to remediate the mold, lead and asbestos inside the building, which was speculated to be between \$1M to \$2M. Following some further discussion, Mr. Reed indicated that regardless of what the reuse is, it's important for the Board and the public to understand that the cost to preserve the building is close to what the Town originally paid to purchase the building.

SB Chair Cohen thanked Mr. Thompson and Mr. Charpentier for the update on the remediation needs and redirected the conversation to determine the next steps. He mentioned that Planning Director Laurie Connors has reached out to specialists who are well versed in the historic preservation of buildings and can help with facilitating a process to establish common goals with as much input from the community as possible. He added that once the Board has established common goals, a new White Cliffs Committee should be created. By consensus, the Board will continue to discuss the next steps and Mr. Reed will work with Ms. Connors to obtain quotes for a facilitator to help with the process.

Following the conclusion of any further discussion, SB Member Maselli rejoined the meeting.

NORTHBOROUGH EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM (NEDP)

Approval of Annual Memorandum of Understanding for use of Facilities Space

Mr. Reed noted that the annual Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Town and Northborough Extended Day Program, Inc. is for the continued use of office space and facilities at the Town Hall.

SB Member Wixted moved the Board vote to approve the FY2024 annual Memorandum of Understanding between the Town and Northborough Extended Day Program, Inc. for the use of office space and facilities at the Town Hall and to authorize the Interim Town Administrator to execute same; SB Member Zitton seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Hirsh	"aye"	Maselli	"aye"
Wixted	"aye"	Cohen	"aye"
Zitton	"aye"		

EXECUTION OF CEMETERY DEED 1168

SB Member Maselli moved the Board vote to execute Cemetery Deed 1168; SB Member Hirsh seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Hirsh	"aye"	Maselli	"aye"
Wixted	"aye"	Cohen	"aye"
Zitton	"aye"		

REPORTS

Julianne Hirsh

- Noted that the Culture Fest was a great success and thanked the Cultural Council and the volunteers who organized this annual event and thanked those that participated.
- Reported on a recent meeting of the Master Plan Implementation Committee. Noted that the 3rd and last community meeting will be held in-person at the High School Library on June 20th at 6:30pm.
- Noted that groups have reached out asking if the Senior Center can be used on occasion on Saturdays or during the evenings to hold various public events.

Kristen Wixted

- Recently toured 4 West Main Street along with other Board members.
- Attended the Algonquin Regional High School graduation ceremony. Congratulated her son Peter and all of the graduating students. Thanked the School Committee, School Superintendent and Principal Bevan for their efforts.
- Noted that the crosswalk button at Route 20 and Bartlett Street is not working. Mr. Charpentier responded that he will contact MassDOT to ask that it be repaired.

Lisa Maselli

- Attended the recent MMA Select Board workshop where goal setting was one of the items discussed. Suggested that the Select Board set its annual goals soon.
- Noted that parking on sidewalks has become more frequent and creates problems for those that need to use them. Chief Lyver responded that parking on sidewalks or any other parking violation that creates a safety hazard should be reported to the Police Department immediately. He added that the department has plans to update its webpage to be more user friendly and to provide educational information to the public on traffic safety. It will also include a section on what is allowed and what is not allowed in terms of public parking. SB Member Maselli asked that the Town website also include a public awareness notice about public parking on sidewalks.
- Noted her concern and the concern of others with the number of trees being removed as part of the Brigham Street Burial Grounds Beautification project. Mr. Charpentier responded that a licensed arborist determined that a number of hemlock trees were diseased and it was recommended that they be removed. He added that once the project is complete the property will be properly landscaped and memorialized.

Laura Ziton

- Attended the Memorial Day parade and ceremony and thanked all the volunteers that made it possible and thanked those who attended.
- Noted her disappointment with the heavy equipment that was used to remove trees at the Brigham Street cemetery. Although she appreciates the work for the beautification project, she would have liked to see the tree removal done in a more respectful way. Mr. Charpentier responded that the equipment used to remove the trees was required in order to not disturb soil any greater than 8 inches in depth.

Mitch Cohen

- Attended the Northborough Art Guilds Art Show at the Historical Society building.
- Noted that the Town Administrator Screening Committee has scheduled two meetings where applicants will be interviewed. It is anticipated that the Select Board will interview three final applicants sometime during the month of July.

Bob Reed

- Noted that he is in the process of pursuing training opportunities for the Select Board members.

OTHER BUSINESS

SB Member Hirsh noted that there is a Town Bylaw that indicates that the Select Board is responsible for a tree program to replace shade trees as needed. Mr. Charpentier responded that the bylaw that SB Member Hirsh is referring to specifically relates to public shade trees within the Town right-of-way. SB Member Maselli agreed with the importance of replacing shade trees. Mr. Charpentier noted that at this time there is not an operating budget for the replacement of shade trees. SB Member Maselli suggested that the Board consider the use of ARPA funds for this purpose. She also requested that the Board make a policy decision on the replacement of shade trees at a future meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Rick Leif of 30 Wiles Farm Road noted that Pat Bigelow owns Bigelow Nurseries in Town and is also a member of the Board of Trustees at Tower Hill Botanic Garden. He noted that she would be a good resource to help with the replanting of trees where necessary.

Mr. Leif also suggested that the Select Board determine the remediation costs for White Cliffs in advance of scheduling the first public meeting so that the public has some understanding of the financial impact associated with any kind of end use for the property.

ADJOURNMENT

SB Member Hirsh moved the Board vote to adjourn; SB Member Wixted seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Hirsh	"aye"	Maselli	"aye"
Wixted	"aye"	Cohen	"aye"
Ziton	"aye"		

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Diane M. Wackell
Executive Assistant to the
Board of Selectmen

Documents used during meeting:

1. June 12, 2023 Meeting Agenda
2. May 22, 2023 Meeting Minutes
3. Memorandum – Scholarship Recipients
4. Information packet – Tougas Family Farm Special One-Day License
5. Memorandum – Reappointment of Special Police Officers
6. Memorandum – Assessment of Municipal Buildings
7. Information packet – Traffic Safety Committee
8. Memorandum – NEDP Memorandum of Understanding
9. Cemetery Deed