

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES – July 31, 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

Kristen Wixted, Vice Chair

Laura Ziton, Clerk

Julianne Hirsh

Lisa Maselli

Others

Robert Reed, Interim Town Administrator

Rebecca Meekins, Assistant Town Administrator

REPORT ON THE PLACEMENT OF HAITIAN REFUGEES IN NORTHBOROUGH

Chair Cohen reported that approximately 30 families with a total of 40 children have recently arrived from South America and the Caribbean through the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities and are being housed in a new temporary shelter location in Town. The Town has been coordinating efforts to support and provide resources to these families on an ongoing basis, partnering with State agencies and representatives, volunteers, and non-profit and faith-based organizations throughout the area. At this time, there is no certainty regarding their length of stay.

Chair Cohen added that the Town is in the process of establishing a system for the collection of clothing and possibly financial donations to support these families. He noted his appreciation for the outpouring of support and offerings from the community, which speaks volumes about how welcoming and generous Northborough is. In order to ensure that the resources offered address the most critical needs, he requested that residents not show up at the shelter location with donations or seeking to provide assistance. He asked that all residents seeking to provide assistance do so by contacting him, as the Select Board Chair and Volunteer Coordinator. He noted that the Town will continue to provide relevant updates to the community.

Questions and comments were heard from Board members and members of the public expressing support for these families. Chair Cohen extended his appreciation to Health Director Kristin Black for her efforts in making sure that the needs of these families are met.

SB Member Wixted moved the Board vote to approve the acceptance of gift funds, grant funds and tangible property related to new arrivals being placed in the Town of Northborough by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts pursuant to Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 44, Section 53A and Section 53A½, and to authorize expenditure by the Northborough Health Department of such funds and utilization and disposition of any such tangible property; SB Member Hirsh seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

INTERIM TOWN ADMINISTRATOR – DURATION

Chair Cohen noted that Mr. Reed's services as Interim Town Administrator are needed a bit longer than first forecasted. Mr. Reed has agreed to continue serving as Interim Town Administrator and has requested that he reduce his in-office days from three to two. Both Mr. Reed and the Board are confident that he will continue to provide the same level of leadership.

SB Member Hirsh moved the Board vote to authorize the Interim Town Administrator to reduce his in-office days of work from three days per week to two days per week effective August 14, 2023; SB Member Wixted seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR SEARCH UPDATE

Chair Cohen noted that the Select Board had made a conditional offer of employment to Courtney Friedland for the Town Administrator position after a thorough search and interview process. The Select Board has since received a statement of withdrawal from Ms. Friedland.

The Board will continue working with Municipal Resources, Inc. (MRI), who will lead the search for a second recruitment process for both an interim and permanent Town Administrator. The Board discussed the timeline and process and agreed that MRI should begin recruitment for an interim as soon as possible and to advertise for the permanent position in early September. In the meantime, Chair Cohen will reach out to members of the Screening Committee to see if they would like to continue on with the second recruitment process.

In regard to MRI's recruitment efforts, Board members requested information on where the Town Administrator advertisements were first published and asked if any additional publications will be considered for the second recruitment.

OTHER BUSINESS**Goal Setting**

SB Member Hirsh suggested that the Board schedule a meeting soon to develop a potential list of goals prior to the Board's Goal Setting Workshop with Mr. Nutting. The consensus of the Board was to schedule the initial in-person meeting in the near future in advance of meeting with Mr. Nutting. Chair Cohen will work on coordinating a date and reminded the public that this would be a publicly posted open meeting.

8:05 pm - EXECUTIVE SESSION

SB Member Ziton moved the Board vote to enter into Executive Session pursuant to M.G.L., Chapter 30A, Section 21, Subsection 6 (to discuss the land and building at 13 Church Street) due to the Chair's determination that a discussion regarding this matter in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the Board; SB Member Hirsh seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Hirsh	"aye"	Maselli	"aye"
Wixted	"aye"	Cohen	"aye"
Ziton	"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 8:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Diane M. Wackell
Executive Assistant to the
Board of Selectmen

Documents used during meeting:

1. July 31, 2023 Meeting Agenda