

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES –December 4, 2023

5:30 p.m. - Chair's Introduction to Remote Meeting

SB 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

Michael Gallagher, Interim Town Administrator

Diane Wackell, Interim Assistant Town Administrator

5:30 p.m. – EXECUTIVE SESSION

SB Member Wixted moved the Board vote to enter into Executive Session pursuant to M.G.L., Chapter 30A, Section 21 (a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining and negotiations with the Northborough Firefighters' Union Local 3057, IAFF; pursuant to M.G.L., Chapter 30A, Section 21 (a)(2), to conduct strategy sessions and/or contract negotiations with Town Administrator Timothy McInerney; and pursuant to M.G.L., Chapter 30A, Section 21 (a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to litigation – SA Farm, due to the Chair's determination that a discussion regarding these matters in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the Board; SB Member Maselli seconded the motion and a roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

SB Chair Cohen then announced that the Select Board was now entering into Executive Session for the purpose previously voted and that the Board will return to Open Session at 7:00 pm.

7:27 p.m. – RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

SB Chair Cohen announced the Board's return to Open Session.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – NOVEMBER 15, 2023 MEETING

Minutes were passed over.

INTERVIEW WITH LIEUTENANT BRIAN GRIFFIN AND POSSIBLE VOTE TO APPOINT LT. GRIFFIN AS POLICE CHIEF EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2024

SB Chair Cohen began by saying the Town conducted an internal search and Lt. Griffin was the only candidate. He asked Lt. Griffin to tell the Board a little about himself.

Lt. Griffin gave a brief history of his family life and reviewed his career in law enforcement, which began 23 years ago when he was hired as a full-time police officer in Northborough. In 2003 he was promoted to the position of detective. In 2008 he was promoted to the position of

sergeant and in 2021 he was promoted to the position of lieutenant/executive officer. He also discussed his education and certifications.

After some questions and comments from the Board, SB Member Hirsh moved the Board vote to appoint Lt. Brian Griffin to the position of Police Chief effective January 1, 2024 subject to successful negotiation of an employment agreement; SB Member Wixted seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

Chair Cohen added that this is the formal part of the process and after successful completion of a contract, there will be an official swearing in ceremony sometime in January.

APPOINT DETECTIVE CHRISTOPHER BUZZELL AS LICENSING AGENT EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2024

Mr. Gallagher noted that Lt. Griffin is the current Licensing Agent and the Board will need to appoint his replacement effective January 1, 2024.

SB Member Maselli moved the Board vote to appoint Detective Christopher Buzzell to act as Licensing Agent on behalf of the Select Board effective January 1, 2024; SB Member Hirsh seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

FIRE CHIEF DAVID PARENTI

Discussion regarding application for a SAFER Grant – presentation and possible vote of approval to apply for the grant.

Chief Parenti and Deputy Chief Aspesi provided the Board with information regarding a request to increase staffing levels through the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant. He reviewed the history of department staffing levels over the years and how several of the prior Fire Chiefs had made recommendations and requests for increased staffing due to the growing population of the town. Multiple requests were approved however, those new positions were never filled. Chief Parenti was unable to determine why those positions were not filled. The request that is being made today is to try to bring staffing levels within the department closer to where they should. Chief Parenti and Deputy Chief Neil Aspesi provided a presentation regarding the grant.

After discussion, SB Member Wixted moved the Board vote to approve the Fire Chief's application for a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Grant Program as presented by the Fire Chief, and the authorize the Town Administrator to submit a letter of support; SB Member Maselli seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

FIRE CHIEF DAVID PARENTI

Discussion and possible vote to approve a Memorandum of Agreement between the Town and the Firefighters’ Union Local 3057, IAFF

Chief Parenti informed the Board that the Firefighters’ Union ratified the Memorandum of Agreement to expand the residential radius for firefighters from the current 15 miles, border to border, to 40 miles. This will help the Town recruit and retain good firefighters.

SB Member Ziton moved the Board vote to approve the Memorandum of Agreement between the Town and the Firefighters’ Union Local 3057, IAFF; SB Member Hirsh seconded the vote; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE TO APPROVE A CONTRACT BETWEEN THE TOWN AND TOWN ADMINISTRATOR TIMOTHY MCINERNEY

SB Chair Cohen noted that this item was on the agenda in the hopes that the Town would have received information from the consultant. Since this was not received, this will be passed over. The Board is scheduled to meet this Friday, December 8th for this discussion and possible vote.

Mr. Gallagher indicated that he had a discussion with MRI and they confirmed that they will have the documents and will overnight them, so the Town should have the information by end of day tomorrow.

REPORTS

Laura Ziton

- Attended the tree lighting event where she was a speaker. Thanked all who helped make this event possible.
- Attended an event at the American Legion, the “Quilt of Valor Ceremony”, honoring Frank Brown, Jr., a World War II Veteran.
- Assisted with running the Turkey Trot, which had an amazing turnout with over 700 walkers and runners.

Julianne Hirsh

- Mentioned that the Garden Club’s “Holiday Enchantment” event is at Trinity Church on December 9th at 12:30 pm.

Lisa Maselli

- Had a tour of the Fire Station, where she had the opportunity to meet and talk with the Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief and was invited for a ride along. Added that there should be a liaison for the Fire Department.

- Would like an update on when Select Board goals and the municipal building report will be on the agenda.

Kristen Wixted

- Is scheduled for a ride along with the Fire Department this Thursday.
- The Town Hall Feasibility Study Committee selected ICON as the architect.

Mitch Cohen

- Toys for Tots deadline has been extended to December 11th.
- The Town Administrator Residency Requirement was signed into law on November 28th. The Select Board name change is still in process.
- Attended the Tree Lighting event and noted that the Minora lighting event will take place on December 13th.

Town Administrator Report

- No Report

EXECUTION OF CEMETERY DEED 1181

SB Member Maselli moved the Board vote to execute Cemetery Deed 1181; SB Member Wixted seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

OTHER BUSINESS

SB Member Hirsh mentioned that SB Member Maselli brought up some topics that need to be on a future agenda for discussion and wanted to add Sustainability, White Cliffs, and ARPA. She asked if there could be a new agenda item added at the end of the agenda which references future agenda topics.

SB Chair Cohen thought that made sense, adding that this could be something to work on with the new Town Administrator

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

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 9:07 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynda LePoer
Executive Assistant to the
Board of Selectmen

Documents used during meeting:

1. December 4, 2023 Meeting Agenda
2. Information from Lt. Brian Griffin regarding Police Chief position
3. Memo from Police Chief regarding appointment of new licensing agent
4. Memo from Fire Chief and PDF Presentation on SAFER Grant
5. Cemetery Deed