

**SELECT BOARD
MEETING MINUTES –December 18, 2023**

6:00 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

Timothy McInerney, Town Administrator
Diane Wackell, Assistant Town Administrator

6:04 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 litigation – SA Farm and pursuant to M.G.L., Chapter 30A, Section 21 (a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining and negotiations with the Firefighter Union and pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21 (a) (7) for the review and consideration of the following Executive Session Meeting Minutes: October 16, 2023 and October 19, 2023, 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 and to return to Open Session to continue with the agenda; SB Member Ziton seconded the motion; the 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 approximately 7:00 pm.

7:10 p.m. – RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

SB Chair Cohen announced the Board’s return to Open Session. At this moment, SB Chair Cohen wanted to take a moment for the Board to recognize the recent loss of a very important member of the community, Craig Cox. He deferred to SB Member Hirsh who read a heartfelt message and the members took a moment of silence.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Cohen invited comments from the public.

Jean Cahill, 1 Thayer Street, sustainable Northborough citizen’s group, mentioned that the group recently submitted a request to the Select Board to form a town climate and clean energy focused advisory group. Ms. Cahill also noted an issue of concern the group has with the Conservation Commission regarding plans to log trees from town-owned woodlands. The group sent comments to the ConCom and the ConCom Agent and would like to request ConCom desist from signing a contract to move forward with these plans until other options are considered.

Chair Cohen responded by saying that the Select Board has had discussions regarding a sustainable committee. He added that, with the new Town Administrator in place, this would be a good time to further investigate this and see what it will take to get it started in the coming months. In regards to Ms. Cahill's concerns with the Conservation Commission, he suggested she reach out to the Town Administrator who could work with Town staff regarding the concerns expressed.

SB Member Hirsh asked Ms. Cahill if she could email what she just verbally conveyed to the Board and added that she agreed with Ms. Cahill regarding a sustainability committee.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – OCTOBER 19, 2023, NOVEMBER 15 2023, NOVEMBER 16, 2023, NOVEMBER 20, 2023, DECEMBER 4, 2023, DECEMBER 8, 2023, DECEMBER 11, 2023 MEETING

SB Member Hirsh moved the Board vote to approve the following meeting minutes:

October 19, 2023 as presented
 November 15, 2023 as presented
 November 16, 2023 as presented
 November 20, 2023 as amended
 December 4, 2023 as presented
 December 8, 2023 as presented
 December 11, 2023 as presented

SB Member Wixted seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

7:01 PM PUBLIC HEARING

To consider an application by Rancho Corona Inc. d/b/a Rancho Corona to alter the premises located at 290 West Main Street where an All Alcoholic Beverages Restaurant License is in effect.

SB Chair Cohen opened the public hearing at 7:20 pm and read the legal notice. Present for Rancho Corona were the owners, Miguel Valle and Jose Bracamontes. They indicated that renovations are 85% complete. It was explained that the business next door closed and they took over that space to expand the restaurant and bar area. All paperwork is in order.

There were no comments from the public. SB Member Hirsh moved that the Board vote to close the public hearing; SB Member Maselli seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

SB Member Ziton moved the Board vote to approve the application as submitted by Rancho Corona, Inc. d/b/a Rancho Corona to alter the premises of the All Alcoholic Beverages Restaurant License at 290 West Main Street with the condition that the licensee receive satisfactory inspections by the Building, Fire and Health Department; SB Member Hirsh 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

Review of 4 West Main Street operational expenses.

Mr. Charpentier provided a memo outlining the budget components. He explained that what he was looking for this evening was to see what the Board’s thoughts are for the best way to approach paying for these expenses in FY2024 and FY2025.

The projected expenditures for FY2024 are approximately \$90,547 and the estimate for expenses in FY2025 are approximately \$85,854.

Mr. Thompson reviewed the condition of the building, which was in better condition than he had expected. He noted that this building is included in the facilities assessment report, which is the next item on the agenda. He indicated that there are areas that should be addressed sooner rather than later, such as the elevator repair.

SB Chair Cohen indicated that he believes there are two options. One option is to use the reserve fund, which exists to help with unforeseen expenses, and the other is to request ARPA funds. He will leave the decision up to the Town Administrator to look into each of these options. The Town Administrator can then come back to the Board and let them know what the most appropriate funding source is and the Select Board will support his recommendation.

The Chair clarified that this discussion was for informational purposes to start the discussion on a funding source for 4 West Main Street, therefore, no vote will be taken by the Board.

DPW DIRECTOR SCOTT CHARPENTIER AND FACILITIES MANAGER SHAWN THOMPSON

Mr. Charpentier and Mr. Thompson provided an overview of the Facilities Condition Assessment (FCA) completed by Alpha Facilities Solutions, which included assessment of the following facilities: town hall, highway garage, fire station, police station, library, senior center and old town hall (4 West Main St).

Mr. Charpentier noted that this report provides some very valuable tools. For Mr. Charpentier, it tells him what the costs are, what the liabilities are, and what shape each building is in. For Mr. Thompson, it provides him with detailed information on every piece of equipment, such as where it is, what it is, the manufacturer, age, condition, life expectancy, replacement cost, etc.

Mr. Charpentier noted that his memo included a table that showed the FCA associated costs and the ADA compliance costs for each building. He added that there is an error with the FCA costs because the amount does not include the cost for 4 West Main Street, which is approximately \$2,000,000. Therefore the total under the FCA costs column is actually closer to \$6,800,000.

Mr. Thompson added that this assessment also provided the town with software which will allow department heads to put in work orders and will allow us to track every piece of equipment because it is tagged with a barcode and inventoried. This will allow us to make informed decisions in the future. Moving forward, as we bring new equipment online, we will have the complete history of that piece of equipment and will be able to maintain it longer.

After discussion, the Board thanked Mr. Charpentier and Mr. Thompson for this very useful report.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE TO APPROVE A CONTRACT BETWEEN THE TOWN AND POLICE CHIEF BRIAN GRIFFIN

Mr. McInerney asked the Board to ratify the contract between the Town and Police Chief Brian Griffin effective January 1, 2024.

SB Member Wixted moved the Board vote to approve the contract between the Town and Police Chief Brian Griffin; SB Member Ziton seconded the motion; The roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

RENEWAL OF SELECT BOARD’S LICENSES FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 2024 – AS CONTAINED ON ATTACHED LISTS

SB Member Maselli noted that there was one restaurant, Mikaku at 290 Wet Main Street, that closed and should be removed from the list.

Ms. Wackell agreed and noted that the Board can approve the renewals as amended. She added that all of the paperwork from the business owners has been received and is in order.

SB Member Maselli moved the Board vote to approve the renewal of the annual licenses for the calendar year 2024, as indicated on the 2024 License Renewals List, as amended, with the condition that each licensee receives a satisfactory inspection from the Building, Fire and Health Departments and is in full compliance with both Municipal and State codes and regulations; SB Member Wixted seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

REVIEW AND APPROVE SELECT BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE FOR JANUARY-APRIL 2024

SB Chair Cohen noted that the regular Select Board meetings for January thru April, 2024 occur on the Board's regular meeting schedule, which is every 2nd and 4th Monday of the month. The Board acknowledged the meeting dates as follows:

January 8 & 22
February 12 & 26
March 11 & 25
April 8 & 22 (Town Meeting)

REPORTS

Kristen Wixted

- Participated in a Fire Ride-Along
- Congratulated and thanked Chief Lyver on his retirement
- Met with a Select Board member from another town and recommended SB members to do same as she found it very interesting to see how they handle issues in their town

Lisa Maselli

- Will participate in a Fire Ride-Along on December 28th;
- Thanked Chief Lyver and wished him well;
- Attended the Design Review meeting on the Fire Station project and noted some issues of concern with the lot

Julianne Hirsh

- Attended the Design Review meeting and noted that MPIC expressed their wishes that the architect compliment the downtown revitalization project
- Wished Chief Lyver a happy retirement

Laura Zitton

- Thanked Chief Lyver and wished the best in his retirement
- Girl Scout cookie season is on. This is a big fundraiser for Girl Scouts
- attended the Menorah lighting and thanked all who attended and made possible
- Thanked police, dpw and fire for work during today's storm
- Boy Scout Troop 101 is holding their annual Christmas tree removal on Saturday, Jan 6th signup available online.

Mitch Cohen

- Attended a combined School Committee meeting where they are looking to install solar panels on school roofs and school parking lots
- Attended the Menorah lighting last Wednesday, which was successful and had a good turnout. Thanked Kaylee Olson with Northborough Cable for putting together a really nice video.
- Thanked Chief Lyver and wished him a happy retirement
- Reminded members that the MMA Conference is coming up and he would like other members to attend. This is a really good conference, good sessions, good vendors. If interested, contact the Administrator's Office to make reservations.

- Mentioned that the Peaslee School Project was endorsed by MSBA to get on planning for feasibility study for future large construction project.

Town Administrator Report

- Thanked everyone for the warm welcome and added that he has found that the staff here are committed to their service and committed to their work
- Has toured some of the Town buildings and will continue as time allows
- Had first department head meeting on Friday and discussed FY2025 Budget
- SA Farms – seeking input from Atty Lanza
- Working on the P&S for 13 Church Street
- Working on the lease at 4 West Main Street
- Strategic assessment of Health & FYS to see if improvements can be made. Asked CMRPC to do an assessment of FYS. Hope to be finalized by April.
- Did receive correspondence regarding the fair share apportionments for chapter 90
- Reposted add for Finance Director
- Announced resignations from the Health Director and the Childrens Librarian
- Has a board template that he would like to use to provide written reports to the Board in the future
- Regarding pending litigations, he would like to provide a litigation update for the Board sometime in January.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

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 8:59 pm.

A recording of this meeting is available at: <https://youtu.be/iunTx8kqb6U>

Respectfully submitted,

Lynda LePoer
Executive Assistant to the
Board of Selectmen

Documents used during meeting:

1. December 18, 2023 Meeting Agenda
2. Meeting Minutes: October 19, 2023, November 15 2023, November 16, 2023, November 20, 2023, December 4, 2023, December 8, 2023, December 11, 2023
3. Memo from Facilities Manager regarding 4 West Main Street Expenses
4. Information Packet – Facilities Condition Assessment Report
5. Renewal List of Select Board’s Licenses 2024
6. Meeting Schedule – January through April 2024