

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES – June 22, 2020**

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

Chairman Perreault stated that this Open Meeting of the Board of Selectmen was being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker's Executive Order of March 12, 2020, due to the current State of Emergency in the Commonwealth due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 Virus.

Chairman Perreault added that in order to mitigate the transmission of the COVID-19 Virus, the Town has been advised and directed by the Commonwealth to suspend public gatherings, and as such, the Governor's Order suspended the requirement of the Open Meeting Law to have all meetings in a publicly accessible *physical* location. Further, all members of public bodies are allowed and encouraged to participate remotely.

Chairman Perreault 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 Perreault noted that this meeting will allow for Public Comment only under the Public Comment portion of the agenda. He indicated the various ways that the public may view or participate in this meeting as listed on the posted agenda.

Meeting Business Ground Rules

Chairman Perreault covered the ground rules for effective and clear conduct of the business. Each speaker on the agenda will be invited by name to provide comments, questions or motions. He asked that participants hold until their name is called.

Chairman Perreault asked members of the Board to mute their phone or computer when not speaking and to speak clearly and in a way that helps generate accurate meeting minutes. Those responding were asked to wait until the floor was yielded to them. Members were asked if they wish to respond to the comments of others, to do so through the Chair, taking care to identify themselves.

Chairman Perreault noted that the those who wish to speak under Public Comment will be admitted to the meeting as an Attendee and will be asked to provide their full name and address for the record.

Any votes taken this evening will be done by roll call to ensure that the records of the vote are clear and accurate to the members attending the meeting remotely.

Chairman Perreault confirmed that the following members and persons anticipated on the agenda were remotely present and could be heard.

Board of Selectmen

Jason Perreault, Chair
Dawn Rand, Vice Chair
Timothy Kaelin, Clerk
Leslie Rutan
Julianne Hirsh

Presenters

Fred George, Town Moderator

Town Staff

John Coderre, Town Administrator
David Parenti, Fire Chief
William Lyver, Police Chief
Scott Charpentier, DPW Director
Jason Little, Finance Director
Kathy Dalglish, Cable Access Director

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JUNE 4, 2020 JOINT MEETING

Selectman Rand moved the Board vote to approve the June 4, 2020 Joint Meeting Minutes, Selectman Rutan seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Hirsh	“aye”	Rand	“aye”
Rutan	“aye”	Perreault	“aye”
Kaelin	“aye”		

Note: The June 4, 2020 Joint Meeting Minutes were approved in error at the June 15, 2020 meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JUNE 15, 2020 REGULAR MEETING

Selectman Rand moved the Board vote to approve the June 15, 2020 Meeting Minutes, Selectman Rutan seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Hirsh	“aye”	Rand	“aye”
Rutan	“aye”	Perreault	“aye”
Kaelin	“aye”		

7:00 p.m. - FRED GEORGE, TOWN MODERATOR

Consultation with Board of Selectmen regarding date and venue options for Town Meeting.

At the meeting on June 15, 2020, the Board voted in consultation with the Town Moderator, to postpone the June 22, 2020 Annual Town Meeting to July 11, 2020 at 9:00am with a rain date of July 18th to be held on the Algonquin High School football field.

TOWN MEETING CONT. . .

Town Moderator Fred George assured residents that Town staff has gone to great lengths to ensure that Town Meeting will be a safe and accessible event. Mr. George reviewed the efforts being made by Town staff to condense presentations and combine certain articles in order to streamline the process and reduce the duration of the time it takes to conduct Town Meeting business. The logistics of Town Meeting were reviewed as follows:

Seating

- Main tables will be located up front and will be appropriately spaced.
- 200 chairs will be set up and additional chairs available if needed.
- There will be a minimum of 10 feet of spacing between chairs and 10 feet of spacing between rows.
- The aisles between sections of chairs will be one way and 10 feet wide.

BYO chairs/umbrellas

- Residents may bring their own “camp” chair.
- There is plenty of space if residents wish to sit on the grass or on a blanket.
- Residents may bring an umbrella, but will need to sit to the rear or on the side and not block anyone’s view, and must be socially distant from any non-family members.
- Field penetrations are not allowed so all umbrellas must be seat fastened or handheld.

Masks

- Masks are required for entry, but can be removed once seated.
- Masks are required whenever residents are not seated.
- Masks will be provided to anyone who needs one.

Microphones

- There will be microphones in each aisle for the public to address the Hall.
- Microphones will be remotely adjusted to ensure the speaker’s voice can be heard. There will be a 3-foot demarcation at each microphone to ensure that no one touches it.
- If needed, the media vendor will be ready to sanitize microphones.

Comfort/hand sanitizers

- Free water bottles will be provided. If they choose residents can bring their own water or other non-alcoholic beverage.
- Restrooms are located between the football and lower fields. Port-a-johns will also be available and will periodically be cleaned by janitorial staff.
- Hand sanitizer will be offered to everyone as they check-in, and thereafter if needed. Residents are encouraged to bring their own as well.

Parking

- There is plenty of parking behind the school in the lots adjacent to the football field.
- There will be handicapped parking close to one of the field entrances with compliant access.

TOWN MEETING CONT. . .

Following some general questions and comments, members of the Board extended their appreciation to everyone involved in ensuring the safest way possible to conduct Town Meeting business.

Mr. Coderre indicated that Town Meeting logistics and safety information will be made available to residents through the Town website and the CodeRed notification system in the next couple of days.

Selectman Hirsh again requested a heat date in the event that it is extremely hot and health advisories are issued. Mr. George responded that it would be difficult to logistically determine at the start of Town Meeting whether or not the heat index is too high. Chairman Perreault reviewed the measures that are being considered in order to expedite the process of conducting Town Meeting business.

REPORTS**Julianne Hirsh**

- Urged residents to vote on June 30th. Requested that the date and time of the Town Election be posted on the DPW's electronic sign on the Town Common.

Leslie Rutan

- Asked the public to check out the Northborough Food Pantry's Facebook page to see specific items that are needed.
- Noted that the Louise Houle Annual Town Clean-up will take place the weekend of June 28th.
- Urged residents to vote in the upcoming Town Election, either by mail or in-person.

Tim Kaelin, Clerk

- Thanked everyone involved for their efforts in planning for a safe and accessible Town Meeting that meets all needs of the community.
- Urged residents to vote on June 30th.

Jason Perreault, Chair

- See below for a presentation to Selectman Rand as this is her last meeting after continuously serving the Town for over 49 years.

Dawn Rand, Vice Chair

- See report under the Presentation to Selectman Rand.

John Coderre

- No report.

PRESENTATION TO SELECTMAN RAND

On behalf of the Board, Selectman Rand's husband presented her with a gavel plaque in recognition of her 49 years of continuous service to the Town. The plaque included a gavel and the Town Seal. Chairman Perreault read aloud the inscription as follows:

Presented this day, June 22, 2020 by the Board of Selectmen on behalf of the
Town of Northborough with deepest appreciation and heartfelt thanks to

DAWN BRAMAN RAND

In recognition of sustained and extraordinary dedication,
leadership, counsel and service

Appropriations Committee 1971-1993
Board of Selectmen 1993-2020

Members of the Board thanked Selectman Rand for her 49 years of continuous service to the community and reminisced about how influential she has been to the Town. Sentiments and well wishes were also heard from Mr. Coderre, Chief Lyver, Chief Parenti, Mr. Charpentier, Mr. Little and Mr. George.

Selectman Rand thanked the Townspeople, the numerous fellow Selectmen that she has worked with over the years who have contributed so much to the community. She had the pleasure of working with really great Town Administrators, including Mr. Coderre. She thanked Mr. Coderre for his fiscal strength and leadership. She thanked Chief Lyver and Chief Parenti for their loyalty to the Board and for the stability that they have brought to their respective departments. She thanked Diane Wackell for her behind the scene efforts, and lastly, thanked her husband Dick and son Brett.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Perreault noted that the those who wish to speak under Public Comment will be admitted to the meeting as an Attendee and will be asked to provide their full name and address for the record. Public comment will be limited to 3 minutes per person.

Andy Zhao at 10 Brendon Drive thanked Selectman Rand for her service. Mr. Zhao asked what steps are being taken to ensure that due diligence is given to each article. Mr. Coderre responded that because it will be an outdoor event, PowerPoint presentations will not be an option. He indicated that short presentations will still take place and will refer to informational handouts that will be made available to residents prior to Town Meeting. He added that a number of Capital Improvement articles will be passed over due to the modified budget that has been unanimously approved by all of the required Boards and Committees.

Mr. Zhao asked for clarification on what it means to condense articles? Mr. George responded that to condense articles is to take articles that are similar in nature and bundle them together. For example, all articles under Revolving Accounts, Budgets, Capital Improvement and Community Preservation Act could be bundled into separate categories. Each article would be presented separately, but the motion that the residents would vote on would have the articles bundled for each category. Mr. George added that at the start of Town Meeting he will review all of the articles that have been included in a consent agenda. At that time, voters will have the option to separate out a specific article if they so choose.

PUBLIC COMMENTS CONT. . .

Apple Lin of 59 School Street thanked Selectman Rand for her years of service. Ms. Lin asked if information regarding the bundled articles will be available on-line prior to Town Meeting? Mr. George responded that the revised warrant will be available on the Town website and will be reviewed at the start of Town Meeting. Ms. Lin again asked when the revised warrant would be available to residents. Mr. Coderre responded that he and the Finance Director are in the process of creating a handout that will explain the changes that were made to the original Town Meeting Warrant and the process for a consent agenda. His goal is to have this available to residents one week prior to Town Meeting.

Ms. Lin asked Chief Lyver to explain the process of replacing police cruisers and asked about the status of the existing cruisers? Chief Lyver responded that the warrant includes an article requesting the replacement of two patrol vehicles according to a replacement schedule that is based on best practices, of which also received positive mention in the 2016 Staffing Study. He added that patrol vehicles are typically used for four years/100,000 miles, at which time they typically hold the best trade-in value. One patrol vehicle replacement under this article will be eliminated under the revised budget.

Mariam Ibrahim of 902 Bay Drive thanked Selectman Rand for her service and noted that she is in inspiration for youth in Town to participate in local government. Ms. Ibrahim asked for an explanation regarding Article 13, which requests funding of \$100,000 for a Town Offices feasibility study. Mr. Coderre responded that the feasibility study will evaluate the programmatic space needs of the Town Offices operation and assess the pros and cons of the various options, including renovation of the existing building, possible relocation to 4 West Main Street or building a new facility. In answer to her question about how much it would cost to move Town Offices back to 4 West Main Street, Mr. Coderre responded that the cost is unknown, which is why a feasibility study is needed in order to make an informed decision. He added that from the time at Town Meeting when the feasibility funding is sought to the next Town Meeting one year later when a possible project is proposed, is when the feasibility study will provide options that can be communicated to the various Boards, Committees and the community-at-large. It is at that time that an informed, consensus-built decision can be made. The Town has a very successful track record with its building projects, as they have been overwhelmingly supported at Town Meetings and come in at or under budget.

Laura Ziton of 17 Franklin Circle thanked Selectman Rand for her years of service. Ms. Ziton requested that the Board offer remote accessibility to public meetings through Zoom indefinitely. Ms. Ziton asked who will be making the decisions on which articles will be bundled and will this be done in a public format? Mr. George responded that he will be working with the Town Administrator to determine which articles are appropriate to be bundled together. Once that is determined, the information will be made available to residents. Ms. Ziton stated that each article is important and any discussions about bundling them should be discussed in a public meeting. Chairman Perreault stated that the bundling of articles is being considered in order to expedite the process and to shorten the duration of Town Meeting. He added that a final warrant will be available prior to Town Meeting and discussed at the start of Town Meeting allowing voters the opportunity to extract a specific article if that is the will of Town Meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS CONT...

Ms. Ziton asked if the Town Moderator and Town Administrator will consider zoning articles in the bundling process? Chairman Perreault responded that there are no plans to bundle any zoning articles, adding that the Planning Board has decided to keep all of the zoning articles on the Town Meeting Warrant for consideration at Town Meeting. Ms. Ziton expressed concern with not having enough time to prepare if the revised Town Meeting Warrant is made available to the public just one week prior to the Town Meeting. Chairman Perreault reiterated that the warrant articles have not changed from the original warrant. The only amendments will be the reduced amounts in the revised budget and the added bundle structure .

Apple Lin of 59 School Street asked the Town Administrator to review the process of the feasibility study for the Town Offices. Mr. Coderre again reviewed the process of a feasibility study as previously mentioned above. In her last question, he confirmed that the feasibility study will consider renovations to the existing Town Hall, relocation to 4 West Main Street or to build new.

DISCUSSION REGARDING STATEMENT ON BLACK LIVES MATTER

Selectman Kaelin read the Board's official statement on the Black Lives Matter movement in its entirety. He thanked Fred and Virginia George, as well as Reverend Schmidt for their input and feedback in helping to develop this statement. It was important that this statement be collaborated with people in the community. In addition to condemning racism and discrimination, the Board, through the adoption of this statement, is proposing the following actions:

1. Establishment of a Diversity and Inclusion Committee. This committee will be composed of town department leaders, community leaders, and residents. The committee will be tasked with improving the diversity and inclusion in all town departments, creating and delivering diversity and inclusion programs for residents and business owners, and collaborating with school boards on diversity and inclusion curriculum. Over the next 2 months the mission of this committee will be established, the membership defined and have the first meeting no later than October 1, 2020.
2. Require that diversity and inclusion training and courses be part of all staff professional development. The purpose of this training is to build a more diverse culture in our town government and services and learn that, as a community, we need to be anti-racist.

Selectman Rutan thanked Selectman Kaelin, Fred and Virginia George and Reverend Schmidt for preparing this statement. She likes the spirit of this statement and appreciates that it includes action items.

Selectman Hirsh thanked Selectman Kaelin, Fred and Virginia George and Reverend Schmidt for preparing this statement and agreed that it is wonderful to see that it includes action items.

DISCUSSION REGARDING STATEMENT ON BLACK LIVES MATTER

Chairman Perreault spoke about the importance of this being more than just a statement. The action items associated with this are important to bring about real change. He suggested that the establishment of a Diversity and Inclusion Committee take place in the next couple of months following Town Meeting.

Selectman Rutan discussed further the statement of an African American woman who lives in Northborough asking “Why, when she goes to Town Hall, does nobody look like her? Why, when she goes to the police station does nobody look like her? And why are there no female police officers?” She asked if this is included in the statement because of a specific incident with a particular department? She asked if the Board should look at specific departments or all departments as a whole? Selectman Kaelin responded that the statement was included to convey the story as a whole rather than to single out any specific department. Mr. George agreed, adding that it was his understanding that the Town Hall and Police Department were examples of a matter that crosses all departments.

Chairman Perreault shared Selectman Rutan’s concern that it is important that the community not misread the statement to suggest that there is any issue of racism or inclusion within the Northborough Police Department. He suggested that the specific reference to the Police Department be removed. Selectman Kaelin responded that to remove this reference would remove the focus of the matter. Mr. George suggested that the statement referring to the police department be amended to refer to any department or office in town.

The Board agreed to adopt the Statement in spirit and that Selectman Kaelin and Mr. George will revise the paragraph to reflect the Board’s discussion this evening without trying to weaken the impact of the Statement, but to make the point with less focus on a particular department.

Selectman Kaelin moved the Board vote to adopt the Official Statement on Black Lives Matter in spirit, with the condition that minor changes be made to paragraph four and to present it at a later date; Selectman Rutan seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Hirsh	“aye”	Rand	“not present”
Rutan	“aye”	Perreault	“aye”
Kaelin	“aye”		

DISCUSSION AND VOTE RE: FY2020 SENIOR TAX WORK OFF PROGRAM

Mr. Coderre indicated that the Senior Property Tax Work Off Program is coordinated by the Senior Center/Council on Aging pursuant to Chapter 59, Section 5K of the Massachusetts General Laws. Under this program, local property owners over the age of 60 sign up to provide services to the Town of Northborough in exchange for a reduction on the amount paid on their property tax. The senior participants are assigned to various town departments to assist with a variety of work, such as administrative work, phone

DISCUSSION AND VOTE RE: FY2020 SENIOR TAX WORK OFF PROGRAM

assistance, and program coordination. The senior participants are compensated at the Massachusetts Minimum Wage hourly rate up to \$1,000 off of their tax bill. To be eligible for this program, certain guidelines must be met through an application process at the beginning of each Fiscal Year.

Mr. Coderre reported that the FY2020 Senior Tax Work Off Program has 12 participants enrolled as Senior Workers. These workers are considered Town Employees. Eight are assigned to the Senior Center, two to the Assessor's Office, one to the Building Department, and one to the Town Clerk's Office. A majority of these participants were unable to complete their FY2020 hours due to the COVID-19 pandemic which closed the offices. He requested that the 12 participants all receive their full \$1,000 abatements for FY2021 due to circumstances beyond their control.

Selectman Rutan moved the Board vote to allow the full FY2021 tax abatement credit of \$1,000 to all senior workers employed through the Town's Senior Tax Work Off program pursuant to MGL Chapter 59, Section 5k due to the COVID-19 state of emergency; Selectman Kalin seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Hirsh	"aye"	Rand	"not present"
Rutan	"aye"	Perreault	"aye"
Kaelin	"aye"		

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Chairman Perreault announced that the Board of Selectmen has completed the evaluation of the performance of Town Administrator John W. Coderre for the past year.

The Town Administrator received an overall rating of 5 out of a possible 5, with 4 being "Exceeds Job Standards" and a 5 rating being "Outstanding." One Board member did not provide an overall rating.

The Board evaluated the Town Administrator in five main categories, including Financial Management, Personnel Management, Board Support/Relations, Personal Characteristics and Communication.

In the evaluation category of Financial Management, which includes development and implementation of the capital and operating budgets, as well as long-range financial planning, the Town Administrator received an overall rating of 4.8.

Under Personnel Management, the Town Administrator received an overall rating of 4.5 with regard to leadership, effective collective bargaining, teambuilding, employee motivation, and the ability to guide individuals or groups toward effective task accomplishment.

The overall ratings for Board Support, Personal Characteristics and Communication were 4.7, 4.9 and 4.7 respectively.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Chairman Perreault stated that Mr. Coderre's accomplishments, given the lean staffing and enormous workload, has again surpassed expectations. He delivers excellent value for the taxpayer dollar. John's application of sound, conservative, and defensive financial management practices over the last decade is a model for the Commonwealth and has put the Town in a strong and flexible position to cope with the adversity of the current crisis.

Members of the Board praised John's accomplishments and extended their appreciation for his continued commitment to Northborough.

Selectman Hirsh asked if the Board can revisit the evaluation tool to see if it still serves as the best and most effective way to conduct the evaluation. She also asked if options can be discussed on ways to access information when completing the evaluation. She suggested that the Board also discuss its own goals and objectives as a governing body.

Mr. Coderre thanked the Board for their confidence and looks forward to continuing serving the Town of Northborough.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Mr. Coderre indicated that there is not a need to meet again prior to the July 11th Town Meeting, but if a need arises, a meeting can be scheduled.

Selectman Hirsh suggested that the Board meet on June 29th in order to review the revised warrant articles and rationale behind them. Selectman Rutan reminded the Board that Mr. Coderre reported earlier in the meeting that the revised warrant would not be completed until the week prior to Town Meeting. Chairman Perreault added that there is still a lot of work to be done and that Town staff needs more time beyond June 29th to complete the revised warrant.

Selectman Hirsh suggested that the Board continue with their regularly scheduled meetings rather than a reduced summer schedule. Chairman Perreault responded that the Board will likely meet once in late July due to Town Meeting on July 11th. The Board can discuss the meeting schedule at that time.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Selectman Hirsh moved the Board vote to adjourn; Selectman Rutan seconded the motion. The roll call vote was taken as follows:

Hirsh	"aye"	Rand	"aye"
Rutan	"aye"	Perreault	"aye"
Kaelin	"aye"		

Following some additional praise for Selectman Rand and her years of service, the meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Wackell
Executive Assistant to the
Board of Selectmen

Documents used during meeting:

1. June 22, 2020 Meeting Agenda
2. June 4, 2020 Joint Meeting Minutes
3. June 15, 2020 Meeting Minutes
4. Information packet – Date and Venue of Town Meeting
5. Statement on Black Lives Matter
6. Memorandum – Senior Tax Work Off Program
7. Press Release – Town Administrator's Performance Evaluation