

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MEETING MINUTES – September 13, 2021**

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 June 16, 2021, an Act Relative to Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency and that all members of the Board of Selectmen 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. He 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. He will go through the items on the agenda. Following presentations, Board members will be offered an opportunity to speak, followed by staff members answering any questions, if necessary. Those responding will be asked to wait until the floor is 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.

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  
Leslie Rutan  
T. Scott Rogers  
Julianne Hirsh

Others

John Coderre, Town Administrator  
Rebecca Meekins, Assistant Town Administrator  
Jason Little, Finance Director  
David Parenti, Fire Chief  
Scott Charpentier, DPW Director

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – AUGUST 23, 2021 MEETING**

Selectman Rogers moved the Board vote to approve the August 23, 2021 meeting minutes as submitted; Selectman Rutan seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Hirsh	“aye”	Rutan	“aye”
Rogers	“aye”	Perreault	“aye”

**7:00 p.m. - CHANGE OF MANAGER**

To consider an application from Margaritas Restaurant Group-Northborough, Inc. d/b/a Tia Juan's Margaritas Mexican Restaurant to change the manager of their All Alcoholic Beverages Restaurant License for premises located at 10006 Shops Way.

The Board considered an application as submitted by Margaritas Restaurant Group-Northborough, Inc. d/b/a Tia Juan's Margaritas Mexican Restaurant to change the manager of record for their All Alcoholic Beverages Restaurant License at 10006 Shops Way.

Mr. Jesus Camilo was remotely present and reviewed his extensive experience in the restaurant industry. He is TIPS certified. His personal information has been reviewed by Lieutenant Brian Griffin, who has indicated that he has no concerns to report.

Selectman Rogers moved the Board vote to approve the application to change the manager as submitted by Margaritas Restaurant Group-Northborough, Inc. d/b/a Tio Juan's Margaritas Mexican Restaurant for their All Alcoholic Beverages Restaurant License for premises located at 10006 Shops Way; Selectman Rutan seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Hirsh	"aye"	Rutan	"aye"
Rogers	"aye"	Perreault	"aye"

**7:10 p.m. - SKIP DOYLE - ROTARY CLUB**

Update on Applefest Street Fair and request to close Blake Street on September 18, 2021 from 7am to 5pm.

Skip and Pat Doyle were remotely present and provided details of the Street Fair that will be held on Blake Street on Saturday, September 18<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Doyle noted that there will be fewer vendors this year and appropriate social distancing will be in place.

Mr. Doyle requested the closing of Blake Street for the Street Fair on Saturday, September 18<sup>th</sup> from 7am to 5pm in order to allow vendors ample time to set up and break down their booths.

Selectman Hirsh moved the Board vote to close Blake Street on Saturday, September 18, 2021 between the hours of 7am to 5pm for the annual Applefest Street Fair; Selectman Rogers seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Hirsh	"aye"	Rutan	"aye"
Rogers	"aye"	Perreault	"aye"

Ms. Doyle thanked the first responders for their efforts during the traumatic events over the last week and reminded them that the Rotary Club is always available to help and offer support.

**7:15 p.m. - MICHELLE GILLESPIE - APPLEFEST COMMITTEE CHAIR****Presentation of 2021 Applefest Events.**

Applefest Committee Co-Chairs Michelle Gillespie and Karen Brewster were remotely present to provide details of the 2021 Applefest events that will begin on Friday, September 17<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, September 19<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Gillespie noted that 90% of the events will be held outside. She directed the public to visit the Applefest website at [www.northboroughapplefest.com](http://www.northboroughapplefest.com) for information on all of the scheduled events, including a Farmer's Market on the Town Common on Saturday and the Applefest BBQ and Fireworks at Algonquin High School on Saturday night.

Ms. Brewster reviewed the details of the Applefest Road Race sponsored by the Boroughs Cares 4 Troops (BC4T). The road race will begin at 8am on Saturday at the Melican Middle School and there are 192 runners who have already pre-registered. Runners are able to participate in-person or virtually. The proceeds from this event go right back to the community in helping its veterans.

Ms. Gillespie noted that Dawn Rand is this year's Applefest Grand Marshall in recognition of her 52 years of dedicated volunteer service to the Town. She added that Police Chief Ken Hutchins who recently passed away will be recognized as an Honoree Grand Marshall. She thanked the DPW, Police and Fire Departments, as well as the student volunteers who are helping out with all the activities.

Members of the Board thanked Ms. Gillespie and Ms. Brewster and the many volunteers for their tireless efforts in organizing this annual community event.

**REPORTS****Julianne Hirsh**

- Noted that the Cultural Council is accepting grant applications through October 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Attended a Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) meeting where they discussed the "Imagine 2050" program.
- Noted that the Community Preservation Committee is accepting applications through November 4<sup>th</sup>.
- Noted that the Master Plan Implementation Committee held their first meeting on September 8<sup>th</sup> and will plan to meet on a monthly basis moving forward.

**T. Scott Rogers**

- Thanked the Police Chief for his monthly report and noted that Eloi Ruegg is nearing his completion in his basic academy training.
- Thanked the Fire Chief for his monthly report and congratulated Pat McManus on his recent promotion to Fire Captain and Firefighter Paramedic Raposa on his recent swearing in ceremony.
- At Selectman Roger's request, Fire Chief Parenti announced that the Fire Department was awarded a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program in the amount of \$230,451 for the replacement of 26 portable radios.
- Attended a recent meeting of the Parks & Recreation Commission. Congratulated Recreation Director Allie Lane for a successful summer camp program despite a staffing shortage and the challenges presented by the Covid-19 virus.

- Noted that bicycles are not allowed on the walking path at Ellsworth MacAfee Park where there has been several incidents with bicyclists colliding with walkers.
- Attended a recent webinar where state and local officials provided some good information on vaccines and variants from a national perspective.

#### Leslie Rutan

- Thanked the Police and Fire Chiefs for their monthly reports.
- Attended a local production of “Our Town” on the Town Common. The live performance was conducted by Josh Telepman, an Algonquin graduate and the founder and director of the theater group Yorick Ensemble. Thanked him for showing the residents how the Town Common can be used in this way.
- Attended the Northborough K-8 School Committee meeting on September 1<sup>st</sup>. Everyone had a great experience with the in-person first day of school.
- Attended the Purple Heart Town Designation ceremony at the Ellsworth MacAfee Park. Thanked Veterans Agent Justin Sousa for organizing the event and thanked former Representative Harold Naughton for his moving speech. Thanked everyone who attended this event.
- Attended the 9/11 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary ceremony at the Fire Department. Thanked Chief Parenti and Fire Chaplain Dick Martino for their heartfelt sentiments. Also thanked those who attended.
- Thanked the first responders for their efforts with the recent incidents in Town and extended her condolences to the families and friends of each of the victims.

#### Jason Perreault

- Attended the Purple Heart Town Designation ceremony at the Ellsworth MacAfee Park. Thanked Veterans Agent Justin Sousa for organizing the event.
- Attended the 9/11 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary ceremony at the Fire Department. Thanked Chief Parenti and Fire Chaplain Dick Martino for sharing their personal stories. Also thanked Captain Fred Hurst for putting together a symbolic set of turnout gear at the base of the flagpole to symbolize those who lost their lives on 9/11.
- Attended the Swearing-In ceremony at the Fire Department for newly hired Firefighter Paramedic Eric Raposa and congratulated Pat McManus on his recent promotion to Fire Captain.
- Noted that September 4<sup>th</sup> marked the 7<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the loss of Army Specialist Brian Arsenault. Extended his regards to the Arsenault family.
- Thanked the first responders for their efforts with the recent incidents in Town and extended his condolences to the families and friends of each of the victims.

#### John Coderre

- No report.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chairman Perreault noted that at the Board’s last meeting, he announced that he would take public comments first from those that wish to speak to something other than traffic and safety and that following those comments, he would then take public comments relating to traffic and safety. He apologized for not circling back around to those that wished to provide a public comment on traffic and safety.

Chairman Perreault stated that the Public Comment portion of the agenda allows for the public to provide input, comments, questions, or concerns. The Board will not engage or deliberate in any detailed discussion, nor will it take action or make any commitments in real time in response to any public comment. If they are able, present Town staff may respond to any questions that can easily be answered. 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.

Laura Ziton of 17 Franklin Circle asked if the Board would consider conducting a survey about how the residents wish to see the funds spent from the CARES Act and ARPA Funds.

Lisa Maselli of 13 Maple Street expressed her concern with the preservation efforts of the White Cliffs property at 167 Main Street. She asked the Board members to tour the White Cliffs property, as well as the Old Town Hall at 4 West Main Street. She asked if an RFP has been prepared for the Old Fire Station property at 13 Church Street and asked Board members to take a tour of this property as well. Mr. Coderre responded that a number of RFP's are in the works, including one for 13 Church Street.

#### **CARES ACT AND AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT UPDATE**

Mr. Coderre informed the Board that Town staff has been very busy closing out the books for FY2021 and the FY2022 Budget cycle began on July 1<sup>st</sup>. In the coming months, Town staff will be busy preparing for the FY2023 Budget. He added that the workload continues to be overwhelming given the challenges of the continued pandemic and the new Delta Variant.

Finance Director Jason Little provided information relative to the major COVID-19 grants that the Town has received and expended to date. Prior to tonight's presentation, the Board was in receipt of a memo, as outlined below:

**CvRF-MP** which stands for "Corona Virus Relief Fund Municipal Program" was created from the Federal CARES Act. These are Federal funds allocated to the Town through the State and the program is administered by the State's Executive Office of Finance and Administration (A&F). The Town's allocation is \$1,331,421, though the Town has only drawn down \$700,790 to date. This program requires that any other existing eligible Federal grant program must be used before applying expenses to this fund. The CARES Act provides this funding through December 31, 2021. However, A&F has limited expenditures to October 29, 2021, so that the State may reallocate any unused funds.

**FEMA-PA** stands for "Federal Emergency Management Agency Public Assistance." This specific program has been used in the past to address emergencies such as blizzards and ice-storms and usually reimburses at a rate of 75% of eligible costs. In this case, the program is being used for response to the pandemic. Over the course of the pandemic, different sets of guidance have been released covering the eligibility of certain expenses like testing and vaccination programs, etc. This program is uncapped, meaning there is no dollar limit for the claims. On February 2, 2021 President Biden issued a directive that allowed FEMA to increase its support to state and local governments through additional Federal funding. Specifically, the President's directive allows FEMA to pay 100% Federal funding for the costs of activities that had previously been determined eligible, from the beginning of the pandemic in January 2020 to Sept. 30, 2021.

**ARPA** stands for “American Rescue Plan Act,” and is the most recent program developed by the Federal Government in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. The Town will receive \$4,516,183 through next year, with the Town currently holding 50% of this amount as of August 17, 2021. The Town will have through December 31, 2024 to obligate or return these funds. While the funds were passed through the State’s Office of Administration and Finance, the Town is the direct recipient of the Federal funds, therefore eligibility determinations must be made locally based on U.S. Treasury documents without much State guidance.

Each of these grant programs have separate and unique reporting requirements since all are administered differently. For example, the CvRF-MP requires quarterly reports be submitted to A&F. Due to the changing eligibility guidance from FEMA, expenses that originally were planned to be applied to the CvRF are now required to be claimed from FEMA, such as staff and student testing. As a result of the most recent report that was due at the beginning of the month, the Town has reported expenses of \$484,812 through June 30, 2021 to A&F. These expenses include the following categories:

Accelerated Telework	\$	251,243
Testing	\$	113,758
Other – Medical Equipment	\$	37,749
Social Distancing Measures	\$	32,976
Cleaning/Disinfection of public buildings	\$	26,479
Compliance Costs	\$	10,773
Board of Health Staffing Needs	\$	9,604
Unemployment	\$	1,458
Signage & Communication	\$	627
Personal Protection Equipment	\$	145
	<b>\$</b>	<b>484,812</b>

Looking at more recent figures from the Town’s financial system, the Town has expended another \$18,895 from the CvRF-MP from July 1, 2021 through September 10, 2021. In addition to this amount and the \$485,000 which has been reported using the State’s templates, there are added expenses totaling \$59,041 that are assumed to be FEMA eligible, but may or may not be covered by FEMA. The additional expenses would be moved back to the CvRF-MP and reported during the run-out/reconciliation process, following the October 29, 2021 deadline set by the State. This specific grant program allowed the Town to draw down an estimated amount near the beginning of the program, while the program shifted to a reimbursement process. As a result, the Town received \$700,790 of its \$1.3M allocation in advance of expending funds. The Town will be able to access more funding up to the remaining \$630,631 if actual expenses exceed what has been advanced, while it will have to reimburse the State if funds from the advance remain during the run-out/reconciliation process.

With regard to FEMA claims, the Town will structure its claims to segregate different categories and different time periods for which different eligibility guidance is in place. These are the intended subsets of expenses for pending claims and expenses that have been paid to date:

Response Expenses through 9/15/2020	\$	70,836
Response Expenses 9/15/2020 - 1/20/2021 & 1/21/2021-9/30/2021	\$	59,041
Testing Expenses from 1/21/2021 through 9/30/2021	\$	42,992
Local Vaccination Clinic Expenses	\$	29,686
Regional Vaccination Clinic Expenses	\$	93,065
	<b>\$</b>	<b>295,621</b>

The table above represents what has been paid to date, while there will be further expenses to come, and adjudication of denials to follow through with, noting that FEMA is generally the most likely to deny reimbursement based on its assessments. This is partly due to the nature of FEMA being a reimbursement program, whereby the Town has not received any funds to date and is still working with our FEMA/MEMA representative to parse out the first claim filed. Some examples of some pending items that are intended to be claimed from FEMA are further school testing expenses which are unpaid, and also clinic insurance reimbursements coming into the Town that will reduce the FEMA vaccination clinic reimbursements due to the clinics having billed insurance companies.

Additional expenses to respond directly to the pandemic which follow both the end of the FEMA disaster period (September 30) and A&F's deadline for CvRF-MP (October 29) can be paid from ARPA. This would include FEMA denials determined after the run-out/reconciliation period for the CvRF-MP. Currently the Town has received \$2,258,092 (50%) of the \$4,516,183 allotted to date, with the remaining 50% set to be paid to the Town within the next year. The Town, as the direct recipient of the federal ARPA funds, will be responsible for filing expenditure reports to the U.S. Treasury, though no expenses have yet been charged to this program. The Town will have through December 31, 2024 to obligate these funds.

Of the three programs discussed, ARPA is the most recent and most broad, though with the least amount of guidance and clarity at this point. The reporting templates and "user guides" are just now being released. As has been publicized, the purposes for ARPA as taken from Treasury's fact sheet are as follows:

1. Support urgent COVID-19 response efforts to continue to decrease spread of the virus and bring the pandemic under control.
2. Replace lost public sector revenue to strengthen support for vital public services and help retain jobs.
3. Support immediate economic stabilization for households and businesses; and,
4. Address systemic public health and economic challenges that have contributed to the inequal impact of the pandemic on certain populations.

The FEMA denials and CvRF-MP type expenses that miss the window for those programs would fall under the first bulleted category listed. In terms of eligible municipal uses, the broadest category seems to be through replacing lost public sector revenue, which could provide for almost any municipal expense with some minor restrictions. The formula for revenue replacement involves a complex calculation and a very nuanced definition of revenue which does not match

the basis that's commonly used by local governments. Details of this calculation are still being reviewed between the State and the Mass Society of CPAs, and are expected to be communicated in real-time to local finance officials later this month.

Following Mr. Little's presentation, Mr. Coderre reminded the Board that the CARES Act funding explicitly prohibits use for revenue replacement. Because the pandemic caused significantly reduced revenue, the Town made the decision to postpone capital investments, OPEB Trust Fund investments and to decrease funding from various budgets for FY2021. ARPA funding can be used over multiple years and can be used to replace lost revenue. The best approach to spend these funds would be through the use of existing plans and procedures within the normal budget process. He added that there also needs to be a contingency plan for future clinics as the pandemic continues and the door closes on FEMA and CARES Act funding.

Mr. Coderre stressed that this is a complicated topic that is unfolding in real time. More information will be forthcoming as the Town navigates the maze of requirements and guidance being developed. Until then, it is important to remain conservative and move forward in a measured approach until more information and financial context is available. He anticipates having this information in preparation of the normal budgeting process for FY2023 and leading up to the Financial Trend Monitoring Report presentation in December. He added that one of the most significant unknowns is that the Town's health insurance carrier is dropping all public business; and as a result the RFP process for a new health insurance carrier is top financial priority.

Several questions and comments were heard from members of the Board regarding Health Insurance, resources for small businesses and what qualifies under the ARPA funds.

Mr. Coderre noted that he has had conversations with State Legislators and the Massachusetts Municipal Association's Fiscal Policy Committee suggesting that these funds go towards existing programs such as the Chapter 90 funding program rather than implementing new programs.

Chairman Perreault thanked Mr. Little and Mr. Coderre for tonight's update.

#### **EXECUTION OF CEMETERY DEEDS**

Selectman Hirsh moved the Board vote to execute Cemetery Deeds 1127 & 1128; Selectman Rogers seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Hirsh	"aye"	Rutan	"aye"
Rogers	"aye"	Perreault	"aye"

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

In response to a question, Mr. Coderre responded that the Zoning Bylaws passed at this year's Annual Town Meeting have been approved by the Attorney General. A formal memo will be sent to the Board soon.



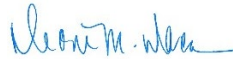
**ADJOURNMENT**

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

Hirsh	“aye”	Rutan	“aye”
Rogers	“aye”	Perreault	“aye”

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Diane M. Wackell  
Executive Assistant to the  
Board of Selectmen

Documents used during meeting:

1. September 13, 2021 Meeting Agenda
2. August 23, 2021 Meeting Minutes
3. Information packet – Change of Manager
4. Memorandum – Street Fair and Applefest & Applefest Brochure
5. Memorandum – CARES ACT and American Rescue Plan
6. Cemetery Deeds