

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES – September 28, 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. 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 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
- Timothy Kaelin, Vice Chair
- Leslie Rutan, Clerk
- Julianne Hirsh
- T. Scott Rogers

Town Staff

- John Coderre, Town Administrator
- David Parenti, Fire Chief
- William Lyver, Police Chief
- Scott Charpentier, DPW Director
- Jason Little, Finance Director

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 14, 2020 REGULAR MEETING

Selectman Rutan moved the Board vote to approve the September 14, 2020 Meeting Minutes, Selectman Kaelin seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

7:00 p.m. - SCOTT CHARPENTIER – DPW DIRECTOR

Set Fees for Plowing/Sanding Private Ways for the upcoming 2020-2021 winter season.

DPW Director Scott Charpentier proposed to the Board that the base charge for plowing and treatment services of private ways and unaccepted streets which are 100% complete be increased by \$5 or 2.5% from last year to cover the increased costs of labor, fuel and materials.

Residents of the private ways that received plowing and treatment services during the last Winter Season were notified of tonight’s consideration to increase the fees. Mr. Charpentier indicated that he has not heard concerns from any of the residents.

Selectman Rogers moved the Board vote to set the fees for plowing and treatment of private ways less than 3,000 feet for the 2020/2021 winter season as follows: \$210.00 per storm per private way for plowing; \$210.00 per storm per private way for treatment; Selectman Rutan seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

7:05 p.m. - RICK LEIF – NORTHBOROUGH AFFORDABLE HOUSING CORPORATION (NAHC)

Request to transfer available funds for completion of the affordable housing project by the NAHC and Habitat for Humanity for property located at 24 Hitching Post Lane.

Due to technical difficulties, Chairman Perreault moved on to reports and will come back to this item.

REPORTS

T. Scott Rogers

- Thanked those residents who continue to engage in the community whether it be through celebrations, property developments, sidewalks, dog parks, etc. Encouraged residents to continue to watch public meetings, ask questions and offer constructive comments.
- Thanked Chief Lyver for his monthly report and extended his appreciation to his department for all that they do.
- Congratulated the elementary schools for beginning onsite classes last week and wished the best of luck to the staff and students at Melican Middle School who will begin onsite classes this week. Extended his appreciation to the educators, staff, students and their families.
- Asked that residents continue to be mindful of their health and the health of others and encouraged residents to get their flu shot.

Julianne Hirsh

- Noted that the Cultural Council is working hard on organizing their virtual Culture Fest that will be broadcast on Northborough Cable Access on November 6, 7 & 8. Those that wish to submit something for the event can find the application at nccculturefest.org.
- Pleased to announce that over 200 people responded to the Cultural Council's recent survey.
- Noted that the Cultural Council Grant Application Cycle will be begin soon.
- Noted that the Historic District Commission is beginning to set goals consistent with the newly adopted Master Plan.
- Noted that the Project Gale Team was given an award by Preservation Massachusetts for the Gale Store Habitat for Humanity Project. The Robert H. Kuehn Award recognizes extraordinary projects that meld collaborative partnerships with creative and cutting-edge ideas for the rehabilitation and active reuse of historic buildings.
- Noted that the White Cliffs Committee recently met with the architect where three uses were reviewed with cost estimates, which included hospitality/event space, municipal use and residential use. The outlay of money ranged between \$13M and \$32M. The architects have agreed to produce a modified repair schedule to the building in order to bring some of the cost down. The next meeting is scheduled for October 14th at 10:30am.
- Proposed that the Board add *a list of topics to be discussed at the next meeting* as a standing agenda item.

Leslie Rutan, Clerk

- Attended a recent MMA webinar where the Northborough schools discussed their plan to make use of three weeks of rolling data if and when the question arises about a need to go remote.
- Asked for a status update on the continued maintenance of sidewalks throughout town. Mr. Charpentier stated that line stripping and crosswalk arrows and symbols will be completed in the next day or two.
- Noted that the Northborough Ed Foundation ran a very successful pinwheel fundraiser that raised funds for teachers to meet some of their needs as schools reopen.
- Asked the Police Chief to share his thoughts on the line of cars parking on the shoulder of Route 20 waiting to pick up students from St. Bernadette's. Chief Lyver indicated that there is increased traffic enforcement in the area, especially in the mornings.
- Recognized the heroic efforts of Johnny Meschisen and Mike Cashel for administering an epi-pen to Gregory Stern in an emergency situation after he was stung by yellowjackets. Shortly after, Mr. Stern was taken to the hospital by ambulance where he was treated.
- Noted that the Community Affairs Committee will hold their 1st Annual Jack-O-Lantern Stroll through the Town Common October 30th through November 1st. Jack-o-lanterns provided by Northborough residents will be lit Friday, October 30th and stay lit throughout the weekend.

Tim Kaelin, Vice Chair

- Noted that early voting will be available October 17th – October 30th at the Senior Center and in-person voting will be at the Melican Middle School on Election Day – November 3rd.
- Noted that the Board established a Diversity and Inclusion Committee at their last meeting and is actively looking for volunteers to serve. The press release and application can be found on the Town website. Added that open seats on other Boards and Committees can also be found on the Town website.
- Congratulated everyone who planned and participated in this year's Applefest event.
- Asked residents to look out for the Hometown Heroes banners that will be hung by the BC4T organization in recognition of Northborough residents who have served our Country.
- Noted that the State issued guidelines for safety standards in regard to Halloween. The guidelines can be found through the State's website.
- Welcomed Becca Meekins as the new Assistant Town Administrator and Kristin Black as the new Health Agent.

Jason Perreault, Chair

- Noted his appreciation to those who planned and donated to the Northborough Ed Foundation's Pinwheel fundraiser.
- Thanked the Applefest Committee and all participants for a successful Applefest event. He enjoyed the American Legion Chicken BBQ and the Tougas Farm apple picking.
- Congratulated Geoff Kelley for being honored as this year's Applefest Grand Marshall and for all that he has done for our community with providing meals to those in need during the height of the pandemic.

Jason Perreault Report Cont. . .

- Looking forward to seeing the Hometown Heroes banners. Noted that each year on the last Sunday in September, Gold Star Mother's and Family Day honors the mothers, fathers and families of fallen military service members. Residents and businesses can visit BC4T.org if they wish to donate to this cause.
- Acknowledged the earlier efforts of former Selectman Aaron Hutchins who had suggested some time ago that the town support a Hometown Heroes programs as he had seen being done in other communities. Thanked him for offering to lead this effort months before BC4T did so.

John Coderre

- Noted that the State guidelines for Halloween will be linked to the Town website tomorrow.
- Pleased to announce that Kristin Black will start as the new Health Agent on October 13th. Kristin comes to Northborough after serving as the Health Director in Uxbridge.
- Noted that staff will return to full-time in-person hours at the Town Hall, Senior Center and Library the week of October 12th. Although Town buildings will continue to be closed to the public, appointments can be made. This information will be posted on the Town website and will be posted on entry doors at each of the buildings.

7:40 p.m. - RICK LEIF – NORTHBOROUGH AFFORDABLE HOUSING CORPORATION (NAHC)

Request to transfer available funds for completion of the affordable housing project by the NAHC and Habitat for Humanity for property located at 24 Hitching Post Lane.

Rick Leif from the Northborough Affordable Housing Corporation (NAHC) was present to request that the Board approve the transfer of available funds for completion of the affordable housing project by the NAHC and Habitat for Humanity for property located at 24 Hitching Post Lane. Also present was Debbie Maruca Hoak, Executive Director for Habitat for Humanity MetroWest/Greater Worcester.

Mr. Leif recognized Historic District Commission Chair Norm Corbin and the Project Gale Team who were recently given an award by Preservation Massachusetts for the Gale Store Habitat for Humanity Project. The Robert H. Kuehn Award recognizes extraordinary projects that meld collaborative partnerships with creative and cutting-edge ideas for the rehabilitation and active reuse of historic buildings.

Mr. Leif reviewed the events leading up to tonight's request to access the remaining \$50,000 in Community Preservation Committee (CPC) funds. The sum of \$50,000 remains with the Town from the 2015 Town Meeting CPC appropriation for the NAHC and is being held specifically for future NAHC affordable housing projects. The NAHC met with the Community Preservation Committee on September 17, 2020 to discuss 24 Hitching Post Lane and to request the use of the remaining \$50,000 for its rehabilitation. The CPC agreed to release the funds pending final approval by the Board of Selectmen.

NAHC REQUEST CONT. . .

Ms. Maruca Hoak reviewed the project details for renovation of this property and noted that as with most Habitat for Humanity projects, this particular one is not open to volunteer labor due to a number of restrictions placed on the development itself. With that being said, most of the work will be performed by Habitat for Humanity staff.

Upon approval by the Board of Selectmen, a Funding Agreement will be prepared and executed by the Town Administrator on the Board's behalf.

Selectman Kaelin moved the Board vote to approve the release of \$50,000 to the Northborough Affordable Housing Corporation to offset renovation expenses of property located at 24 Hitching Post Lane pursuant to Article 57 of the 2015 Annual Town Meeting and to authorize the Town Administrator to execute the funding agreement on the Board's behalf; Selectman Rutan seconded the motion, the roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Perreault noted 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.

Kristen Wixted of 2 Stirrup Brook Lane requested that the Board schedule a discussion on a future agenda to consider the re-establishment of the Northborough Advisory Board. Chairman Perreault responded that he will consider placing this on a future agenda, but will first review the definition of the Northborough Advisory Board to see if it is a suitable Board for today's operation of Town government.

The following residents joined the meeting under Public Comments to express their concerns with the proposed developments at 1 Lyman Street and 0 Bartlett Street. The concerns centered around the negative impacts that these developments will have on their neighborhoods, the wetlands and wildlife, the current trail system and the increased commercial truck traffic and the impact that this will have on traffic to and from the schools in this general area.

Michael Bernzweig of 4 Jenkins Drive
 Ruth Reeve of 18 Juniper Brook Road
 John Wixted of 2 Stirrup Brook Lane
 Manuel Lopes of 96 Bartlett Street
 Janeen Callaghan of 6 Stirrup Brook Lane

PUBLIC COMMENTS CONT. . .

Chairman Perreault thanked those who offered public comments, but reiterated that the concerns expressed this evening are towards a project that is regulated by land use and zoning, which is under the jurisdiction of the Planning Board and possibly the Zoning Board of Appeals. The Board of Selectmen is not in a position to intervene in a matter such as this. Mr. Coderre added that both property owners and abutting neighbors have certain rights to protect their interests and it is up to the Planning Board to work through the public process.

APPOINTMENT OF BOARD MEMBER TO THE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

Chairman Perreault asked if any Board members are interested in volunteering to be the Board's representative on the Diversity and Inclusion Committee. Selectman Kaelin volunteered.

Selectman Hirsh moved the Board vote to appoint Selectman Kaelin as the Board's representative on the Diversity and Inclusion Committee; Selectman Rutan seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

DISCUSSION REGARDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

Town Planner Kathy Joubert, Master Plan Steering Committee Chair Fran Bakstran and Vice-Chair Rick Leif were present.

Ms. Joubert noted that the Northborough Master Plan was completed in the fall of 2019 and adopted by the Planning Board in January of 2020. Throughout the master planning process, the Master Plan Steering Committee often referred to the creation of a Master Plan Implementation Committee to prioritize and direct the enactment of the recommendations.

The Master Plan focuses on seven elements which include land use; housing; economic development; natural, cultural, and historic resources; open space and recreation; public facilities and services; and transportation. Each chapter contains key findings, baseline conditions analysis, goals, and recommendations. The implementation plan contained within the Master Plan summarizes the specific recommendations; suggests a timing framework of short-term, mid-term, and long-term for the community to use as a guide in carrying out the recommendations; implementation leaders and partners are identified; cost estimates are provided; and a priority ranking was assigned to many of the proposed recommendations.

Ms. Joubert added that the tasks of a Master Plan Implementation Committee include:

- Periodically evaluating the plan to see if conditions change or new information becomes available that could affect the implementation schedule;
- Collaborating with other boards, committees, and departments to stay on track with the implementation schedule;

Master Plan Implementation Committee Cont. . .

- Providing progress reports to the Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting, as appropriate;
- Helping to deliver support for proposed actions to implement by keeping citizens actively engaged in planning and committed to the success of the Master Plan;
- Working with the Planning Board on zoning articles which forward the goals and recommendations; and
- Continuing to work with boards, committees, departments, and residents on implementation tasks that require additional planning work.

In response to the recommendation of the Master Plan Steering Committee, Selectmen Kaelin and Rutan questioned the rationale of having 2 Planning Board representatives? They would rather the Planning Board have 1 representative in line with the other Boards and Committees, adding that this would allow a representative from another Board or Committee the opportunity to participate.

Selectman Hirsh supports having 2 Planning Board members serve on the Master Plan Implementation Committee as she believes they have the most knowledge of zoning bylaws and how it relates to the Master Plan. She suggested that the Committee membership be increased from 13 to 15 members. This would allow for 2 Planning Board members, an additional representative from another Board or Committee and an additional citizen-at-large resident that can perhaps represent the disabled community. Chairman Perreault advised that the Board not designate specific representation, but to rather find the specific representation through the interview process.

Selectman Rogers asked Ms. Joubert, Ms. Bakstran and Mr. Leif which additional Board or Committee would they like to see represented? Ms. Joubert responded that there was some discussion about a representative from the Zoning Board of Appeals, as they are also knowledgeable with land use decision making and the zoning bylaws. Ms. Bakstran suggested that the Committee be kept at 13 members with one Planning Board representative and an additional citizen-at-large member. Selectman Rogers agreed with Ms. Bakstran's suggestion.

Selectmen Kaelin and Rutan agreed that the Committee should have 13 members with equal representation of 1 member from each of the suggested Boards and Committees. Selectman Hirsh reiterated that she does not see a problem with having 2 Planning Board members serve on the Committee since they deal most with the land use regulations.

In response to a question from Selectman Hirsh about staggering the terms, Chairman Perreault responded that the specific Boards and Committees will decide their representation and that the citizen-at-large members would serve staggered terms.

Master Plan Implementation Committee Cont. . .

Chairman Perreault, Selectmen Rutan, Rogers and Kaelin agreed to proceed with establishing the Master Plan Implementation Committee with 1 representative from the Planning Board and 1 additional citizen-at-large.

Selectman Rutan moved the Board vote to establish a Master Plan Implementation Committee as recommended by the Master Plan Steering Committee to include representation from the following boards, committees and commissions in addition to 6 citizens-at-large each for a three-year term:

- Board of Selectmen (1)
- Financial Planning Committee (1)
- Planning Board (1)
- Historic District Commission (1)
- Parks & Recreation Commission (1)
- Open Space Committee (1)
- Council on Aging (1)
- Citizens-at-Large (6) – with expertise in planning, architecture, economic development, landscape architecture, real estate, or other relevant fields; Selectman Kaelin seconded the motion.

Discussion: Chairman Perreault asked Board members if they would rather propose 1 representative from the Zoning Board of Appeals instead of an additional citizen-at-large? Selectman Kaelin recommended moving forward with the additional citizen-at-large with the understanding that a member of the Zoning Board of Appeals could apply as a citizen-at-large rather than a designated member of the Zoning of Appeals.

Following the discussion above, the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Rogers	“aye”	Kaelin	“aye”
Hirsh	“oppose”	Perreault	“aye”
Rutan	“aye”		

Selectman Hirsh opposed as she would prefer to see the Master Plan Implementation Committee be established as a 15-member Committee.

BUDGET UPDATE

Mr. Coderre noted that looking forward, it’s important to consider the budgets for the next three fiscal years: the current FY2020 budget that just ended and is mostly closed out; the FY2021 budget that just began on July 1st with the tax rate scheduled to be set in November; and we are just entering the planning stage for the FY2022 budget that will begin on July 1, 2021. He added that FY2020 and FY2021 are going to be okay, but it’s important that the Federal government provide relief to States and Municipalities for FY2022.

BUDGET UPDATE CONT. . .

Finance Director Jason Little provided a summary of the FY2020 results as progress is made toward closing the fiscal year. He noted that although most information is known, the final numbers are subject to change, but not substantially. Free cash is estimated to be approximately \$1.9M. He noted that approximately \$890,000 of the surplus was unexpended Free Cash from the prior fiscal year, so almost all of the free cash was generated by unexpended FY2020 appropriations.

Mr. Coderre spoke about having to postpone, restructure or consider financing future capital improvement projects and equipment, as these are traditionally funded from Free Cash. He warned that the FY2022 budget has a real possibility for some very significant implications for our level of service delivery, as it will be an extremely difficult year. Unfortunately, we are beginning to plan the FY2022 budget with no information about what the Town can expect for relief from the Federal government or the State. With that being said, he is going to plan very conservatively moving forward with the FY2022 budget and has asked Department Directors to bring forward budgets containing the minimum increases necessary to support a level-service budget.

Mr. Coderre indicated that he will continue to provide budget updates at future meetings.

EXECUTION OF CEMETERY DEED 1102

Selectman Rogers moved the Board vote to execute Cemetery Deed 1102; Selectman Rutan seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

9:35 p.m. - EXECUTIVE SESSION

Selectman Kaelin moved the Board vote to enter into Executive Session pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30A, Section 21, Subsection 3 (Collective Bargaining: Re: Patrol Officers Union – Contract Execution and Level III Grievance) due to the Chair's determination that a discussion regarding these matters in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the position of the Board; Selectman Rutan seconded the motion; the roll call was taken as follows:

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

Chairman Perreault announced that the Board will enter into Executive Session and the webinar hosting the open meeting will be ended.

The open meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Wackell
Executive Assistant to the
Board of Selectmen

Documents used during meeting:

1. September 28, 2020 Meeting Agenda
2. September 14, 2020 Meeting Minutes
3. Information packet – Fees for Plowing/Sanding Private Ways
4. Information packet – Northborough Affordable Housing Corporation
5. Diversity and Inclusion Committee Press Release
6. Information packet – Master Plan Implementation Committee
7. Information packet – Budget Update
8. Cemetery Deed