

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MEETING MINUTES – October 17, 2022**

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

Chairman Cohen stated that this Open Meeting of the Board of Selectmen was being conducted remotely consistent with the July 16, 2022 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 Cohen 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 Cohen noted that this meeting will allow for Public Comment throughout the agenda. He indicated the various ways that the public may view or participate in this meeting as listed on the posted agenda.

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

Board of Selectmen

Mitch Cohen  
Julianne Hirsh  
Kristen Wixted  
Jason Perreault  
T. Scott Rogers

Others

John Coderre, Town Administrator  
Becca Meekins, Assistant Town Administrator  
David Parenti, Fire Chief  
Brian Griffin, Police Lieutenant  
Scott Charpentier, DPW Director  
Jason Little, Finance Director

Any votes taken this evening will be by roll call.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Kelly Guenette of 69 Northgate Road noted that the School Committee is discussing whether or not future elections should take place somewhere other than the Melican Middle School or other school settings. She asked that the Board schedule this as a future discussion item.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 26, 2022 MEETING**

Selectman Rogers moved the Board vote to approve the September 26, 2022 meeting minutes; Selectman Hirsh seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Perreault	“aye”	Hirsh	“aye”
Rogers	“aye”	Cohen	“aye”
Wixted	“aye”		

**COMPLETE STREETS PRESENTATION AND COMMUNITY INPUT SESSION**

Town Planner Laurie Connors, DPW Director Scott Charpentier and Megan McDevitt from Woodward & Curran provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Town’s participation in the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) “Complete Streets Funding Program.” The goal of this program is to support safe and accessible options for all modes of travel – walking, biking, transit, and motorized vehicles- for people of all ages and abilities. The update is summarized as follows:

The Board of Selectmen (BOS) adopted the Town of Northborough Complete Streets Policy at its January 10, 2022 meeting. The policy was approved by MassDOT on January 18, 2022 with a score of 91. The Town was awarded a \$35,200 technical assistance grant from MassDOT on February 17, 2022 to aid in development of the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan. The Town executed a contract with Woodard & Curran to perform this work.

In July, the Town Engineer, DPW Director and Planning Director met with staff from Woodard and Curran to review existing data, including maps, a Sidewalk Management Report and Road Safety Audit, for the purpose of identifying projects for inclusion in the Prioritization Plan. Ultimately, 24 projects were identified by staff. In August, staff and the consultant prepared and distributed an on-line survey from August 15th through August 29th. 808 responses were collected and analyzed by the consultant. On September 15th, Public Works and Planning staff presented the list of 24 projects to the Master Plan Implementation Committee (MPIC) and asked for their feedback. MPIC members identified their top projects and asked for one sidewalk project to be added to the list.

Following the October 17th Selectmen's meeting, Public Works and Planning staff will work with the consultant to rank identified projects using the agreed-upon evaluation criteria. Once the Prioritization Plan is complete, the team will present the results to the Board of Selectmen for endorsement, with subsequent submission to MassDOT for final review and approval.

Communities with a locally adopted Policy and MassDOT-approved Prioritization Plan are eligible to seek construction funding of up to \$500,000 within a 4-year timeframe to aid in plan implementation. Municipalities can submit one project or multiple projects for potential funding. Northborough's Prioritization Plan will be submitted for MassDOT approval by the end of this calendar year, allowing the Town to initiate project design in advance of the next round of construction grant submissions which are expected to be due May 1, 2023.

Projects may include new sidewalk construction to address gaps in the network, ADA upgrades to existing deteriorated sidewalks, ramps and pedestrian signals, roadway/intersection narrowing and installation of rapid flashing beacons to enhance safety, construction of bicycle lanes and shared-use lanes, and installation of wayfinding signage. Construction grants cannot be used for survey, land acquisition, or design services. These tasks must be funded through other means such as local appropriation (including ARPA) or Chapter 90 funding.

Following Ms. Connors' presentation and Mr. Charpentier's review of each of the proposed 25 projects, Board members shared their thoughts on their top priorities, which included the following:

- New sidewalks on Gale Street from South Street to existing sidewalk on Monroe Street to provide access to the Assabet Playground and the Town Common.
- Sidewalks in the vicinity of the schools for walking students.
- Provide street lighting and street trees along Blake Street from West Main Street to Pierce Street, curbing and grassed bump-out to reduce roadway width, curbing and grassed esplanades to reduce curb cuts and benches and bike racks near West Main Street.
- New sidewalks on Hudson Street from Trinity Church to existing sidewalk on Centre Drive.
- Provide shared-use arrows on South Street from Main Street to Ellsworth McAfee Park.
- Sidewalk replacement on South Street.

- Bike lane from downtown to Ellsworth MacAfee Park.
- Multi-use Aqueduct Trail.

Public comments were heard from the following residents:

Amy Poretsky – 47 Indian Meadow Drive: In support of improvements to the Downtown streets, including Gale Street, Blake Street, Pierce Street and Hudson Street, a new sidewalk on Maple Street and the multi-use Aqueduct Trail. Not in support of the shared-use arrows on South Street.

Christopher Deacetis – 15 Allen Street: Questioned if improvements were considered for the Allen Street intersection at the Aqueduct Bridge? Mr. Charpentier responded that if both the proposed Allen Street sidewalk and the Aqueduct Trail projects were to move forward it would circumvent this concern by diverting people away from the Allen Street intersection as many would use the more scenic route of the Aqueduct Trail.

Kelly Guenette – 69 Northgate Road: In support of sidewalks in the areas of the schools as creating an opportunity for more student walkers would lessen the amount of bus stops having to be made. In support of a new sidewalk on Davis Street and asked that it be extended the whole way.

William Pierce – 367 Whitney Street: Asked why sidewalks were not considered on Whitney Street?

Ashley Davies – 168 South Street: In support of the shared-use arrows on South Street, improvements to the Downtown streets and the Multi-Use Aqueduct Trail.

George Brenckle – 3 Little Pond Road: In support of a new sidewalk on Allen Street as a priority to connect East Main Street with Hudson Street.

Lisa Maselli – 13 Maple Street: Asked what the timeline would be for the completion of these 25 projects and can ARPA funds be used towards some of these projects? Ms. Connors responded that the number of projects to be completed each year will depend on available funding. In response to her questions about sidewalks, Ms. Connors explained the appropriate use of bituminous in suburban designed sidewalks versus concrete in Downtown areas where there may be shopping areas with more foot traffic and that cost is certainly a consideration with concrete being far more expensive.

Evan Worona – 10 Rogers Avenue: In support of new sidewalks on Maple Street and Allen Street and improvements to the streets in the Downtown area. In response to his question, Ms. Connors explained how the priorities are articulated by the Complete Streets program.

Mr. Coderre noted that although the Complete Streets program is a great planning tool that helps to identify priority projects and to determine those projects that qualify for grant funding, he reminded the Board that for years the top legislative priority has been for an increase in Chapter 90 funding to be able to address the backlog of roadway and sidewalk improvements that already

exist in addition to the 25 projects detailed this evening. He added that the need for roadway and sidewalk repairs throughout Town have been looked at in depth and have been included in the Capital Plan for years. He stressed the importance of managing expectations with the understanding that there are other projects that will need to be prioritized as well.

In response to a question by Selectman Hirsh, Ms. Connors indicated that once the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan is complete, it will contain a list of projects, in order of local priority, which identifies sidewalk, bicycle and accessible transportation connectivity, safety improvements, cost estimates, grant funding opportunities and a schedule for implementation of those projects.

In response to a question by Chairman Cohen, Ms. Connors explained that the Complete Streets grant program only funds shovel ready projects. The design engineering for some of the projects discussed this evening will have to be funded through other grant programs or through municipal resources.

In response to a question by Selectman Perreault, Ms. Connors confirmed that the Town will be eligible to seek construction funding of up to \$500,000 within a 4-year timeframe. It is unclear at this point if the Complete Streets program will remain beyond the 4-year timeframe given the pending change in Governor.

Mr. Coderre indicated that tonight's power point presentation will be on the Town website for public review.

### **REVIEW AND DISCUSS ARPA REQUESTS**

Chairman Cohen noted that the ARPA requests that were included in the meeting packets were compiled by Selectman Hirsh. Selectman Hirsh explained that the list was compiled from sources, including prior meetings, the public input forum and emails over several months' time.

Board members discussed at length their thoughts about the process moving forward and what steps need to be taken to make the process of tabulating the details and prioritizing the requests more productive. In summary, Board members agreed to schedule and publicly post an in-person meeting as a working session to categorize and tabulate the details of each request in order to provide more content for discussion purposes. Details for each category might include the name of the requestor, summary of what is being requested, is the request time sensitive, are there other grant funding sources available, is it a one-time expenditure or will it have a financial impact long-term. The Board also agreed that input from Town staff should be part of the process.

Amy Poretsky – 47 Indian Meadow Drive: Explained her reasoning for requesting ARPA funds for a multi-use trail feasibility study in addition to applying for funding through the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) and through Mass Grant.

### **REPORTS**

#### **T. Scott Rogers**

- Thanked the Police Chief and Fire Chief for their monthly reports. Invited Chief Parenti to speak about fire prevention when it comes to mulch beds.

- Congratulated Officer Mellissa Lonergan for recently graduating from the Police Academy and for beginning her 10-week field training period.
- Reported on the recent efforts of the ZBA.

#### Kristen Wixted

- Attended the Women Elected Municipal Officials Conference. Suggested that the Board consider changing the name from Board of Selectmen to Select Board.
- Reported on the efforts of the Youth Commission.
- Noted that the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) Committee will begin to meet soon.

#### Julianne Hirsh

- Walked around the downtown area with members of the Master Plan Implementation Committee and Weston and Samson, the consultants hired to work on the Downtown Revitalization Plan.
- Reported on the recent efforts of the Community Preservation Committee.
- Recently attended a meeting of a local Girl Scout Troop as a guest speaker.

#### Jason Perreault

- Noted his appreciation to the Fire Department for posting profiles of each of the Fire Department members on its Facebook page.

#### Mitch Cohen

- Congratulated Zach Newbold on his amazing performance on the national TV show The Voice.
- Thanked Town Planner Laurie Connors and DPW Director Scott Charpentier for their presentation on suggested dog park sites. Encouraged residents to watch the YouTube video of this meeting or review the presentation on the Town website.
- Asked if ARPA funds are being considered for the exterior paint project at the Police Station? Mr. Coderre responded that this project is included in the Capital Improvement Plan.
- Thanked the DPW Department for doing a great job in cleaning up the White Cliffs site. A tour of the property grounds and building is scheduled for November 1<sup>st</sup> for those who are interested in submitting proposals. He has been asked if members of the Board of Selectmen and the White Cliffs Committee are able to tour the building in or around that same time, adding that the tour would be limited to these two Boards and will not be offered to members of the public due to liability insurance purposes.
- Attended a recent MMA webinar regarding a new recycling law regarding recycling of used mattresses. As of November 1<sup>st</sup>, mattresses can no longer be accepted through recycling programs throughout the Commonwealth. Town staff is working on alternatives for residents to dispose of their mattresses.

#### John Coderre

- Noted that he will provide the Board with an update on the status of some of the State programs prior to the Board's in-person meeting to discuss ARPA funds.

**EXECUTION OF NOVEMBER 8, 2022 STATE ELECTION WARRANT**

Selectman Hirsh moved the Board vote to execute the November 8, 2022 State Election Warrant; Selectman Rogers seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Perreault	“aye”	Hirsh	“aye”
Rogers	“aye”	Cohen	“aye”
Wixted	“aye”		

**OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

**9:30 p.m. - EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Selectman Perreault moved the Board vote to enter into Executive Session pursuant to M.G.L., Chapter 30A, Section 21, Subsection 3 (Collective Bargaining – update on negotiations with Dispatchers, Patrol Officers, Police Sergeants and Fire Unions) and (Litigation – update on SA Farms) 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 Rogers seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

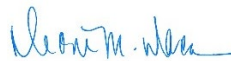
Perreault	“aye”	Hirsh	“aye”
Rogers	“aye”	Cohen	“aye”
Wixted	“aye”		

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Cohen announced that the Board will enter into Executive Session and will not return to the open meeting.

The open meeting ended at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Diane M. Wackell  
Executive Assistant to the  
Board of Selectmen

**Documents used during meeting:**

1. October 17, 2022 Meeting Agenda
2. September 26, 2022 Meeting Minutes
3. Information Packet – Complete Streets Presentation
4. Information Packet – ARPA Requests
5. November 8, 2022 State Election Warrant