

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES – March 24, 2014**

7:00 p.m. - Selectmen's Meeting Room, 63 Main Street, Northborough, MA

MEMBERS PRESENT: Leslie Rutan, Chairman
Dawn Rand, Vice Chairman
Jeff Amberson, Clerk
Aaron Hutchins
William Pantazis

*Pledge of Allegiance

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MARCH 10, 2014 REGULAR MEETING

Selectman Rand moved the Board vote to approve the meeting minutes of the March 10, 2014 regular meeting as submitted; Selectman Pantazis seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

**7:00 p.m. - SENATOR HARRIETTE L. CHANDLER
STATE REPRESENTATIVE DANIELLE W. GREGOIRE
STATE REPRESENTATIVE HAROLD P. NAUGHTON**
Discussion of Legislative Priorities.

In preparation for tonight's legislative update, letters were sent in late February from the Board of Selectmen to the State Legislators advising them of Northborough's legislative priorities. At the request of the Board, Senator Chandler and Representatives Naughton and Gregoire were present. Senator Eldridge was not present due to a previous commitment. Also present in the audience were Assistant School Superintendent Christine Johnson and Northborough School Committee member Patricia Kress.

Senator Chandler and Representatives Naughton and Gregoire spoke of their own priorities that, if passed, would benefit the Town.

Mr. Coderre reviewed the top three legislative priorities and heard comments from Senator Chandler and Representatives Naughton and Gregoire on each of the following:

1. Provide a multi-year \$300 Million Chapter 90 Authorization.
2. Ensure sustainable OPEB costs for Cities and Towns through Legislative reform.
3. Restore Circuit-Breaker Funding to the State's Special Education Reimbursement Program.

Mr. Coderre thanked the Legislators for sponsoring three Home Rule Petitions on the Town's behalf and for discussing Northborough's priorities.

**7:55 p.m. - JOINT PUBLIC HEARING WITH APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE**
FY2015 Proposed Budget.

Present for the Appropriations Committee were Chair Elaine Kelly and members Janice Hight, Robert D'Amico, Anthony Poteete and Dan McInnis.

JOINT PUBLIC HEARING CONT. . .

Also present in the audience were Financial Planning Committee Chair Jason Perreault and members David DeVries, Roger Smith, Finance Director June Hubbard-Ward, Town Accountant Jason Little and Assistant Town Administrator Kim Foster.

At 7:55 p.m., Chairman Kelly called the meeting of the Appropriations Committee to order.

Mr. Coderre presented the FY2015 Proposed Budget, which included the latest information available regarding revenue projections and departmental expenditure requests. The FY2015 Operating Budget for all funds, including General Government, Northborough K-8, Regional High School, Assabet Valley Regional High School and Special Warrant Articles is \$58,508,400 or a 4.04% increase over FY2014.

The FY2015 Budget was developed within the confines of Proposition 2½ and includes reasonable tax increases necessary to maintain current service levels. The tax bill for the average single family home increased just \$233 in total from FY2010 to FY2014. The FY2015 estimated tax impact is \$218 (3.5%) on the average single family home valued at \$375,222.

Following several questions and comments from members of the Board of Selectmen and the Appropriations Committee, Mr. Coderre thanked the members of the Financial Team – Assistant Town Administrator Kim Foster, Finance Director June Hubbard-Ward and Town Accountant Jason Little. Members of the Board expressed their appreciation to Mr. Coderre and the Financial Team as well.

At 8:45 p.m., the Appropriations Committee adjourned from the Joint Public Hearing.

8:45 p.m. - PUBLIC HEARING

To consider the layout and acceptance of Cyrus Way, Weber Lane and a portion of Johnson Avenue as public ways.

Chairman Rutan opened the Public Hearing.

Mr. Litchfield informed the Board that Cyrus Way, Weber Lane and a portion of Johnson Avenue have all been constructed in accordance with the subdivision approvals granted by the Planning Board. He added that these streets will be presented for acceptance as public ways at this year's Annual Town Meeting.

There were no comments from members of the audience.

Selectman Rand moved the Board vote to approve the layout and acceptance of the following streets as public ways: Cyrus Way, Weber Lane and a portion of Johnson Avenue; Selectman Amberson seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

REPORTS

Aaron Hutchins

- Noted that he remains concerned about the traffic signal at the Route 20/Hudson Street intersection in terms of Hudson Street traffic controlling the traffic flow on Main Street. Town Engineer Fred Litchfield indicated that he will speak with the contractor about this at their meeting on Thursday.
- Acknowledged the large number of audience members who were present to speak about Article 58 – *Public Safety Bylaw*. He indicated that the proper venue to speak in favor or against the proposed bylaw would be at the April 28th Annual Town Meeting.

William Pantazis

- Noted that the Interview Committee met with an applicant for the Board of Library Trustees. See below for appointment.
- Encouraged residents to attend and participate in this year's Annual Town Meeting.

Jeff Amberson, Clerk

- Congratulated the Algonquin Robotics Team on receiving the Chairman's Award at the District competition. Wished them luck at the upcoming New England Championship competition.
- Extended his sympathy to the Bruce family on the recent passing of their son Matt.

Dawn Rand, Vice Chairman

- Noted that the 250th Town Anniversary Committee has begun to meet and is in the early stages of planning events. The Committee's next meeting is March 24th.

Leslie Rutan, Chair.

- Thanked the Northboro Junior Woman's Club for the Pinwheel Garden in front of Town Hall in recognition of April being National Prevent Child Abuse month.
- Attended a recent public forum where a presentation was made on the proposed Lincoln Street Elementary School renovation project. Noted that residents can access a dedicated website to the project through the School website.

John Coderre, Town Administrator

- Will be attending an MSBA Board Meeting on March 26th where they are expected to vote on the Lincoln Street Elementary School renovation project.

APPOINTMENT TO THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

Selectman Pantazis moved the Board vote to appoint John Sharp to the Board of Library Trustees for a three year term; Selectman Rand seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

STAFFING COMMITTEE INTERIM REPORT

Mr. Coderre informed the Board that beginning in October 2013, the Board of Selectmen's Ad Hoc Staffing Committee held public meetings at which the following departmental staffing requests were reviewed: Fire/EMS, Police, Library, Senior Center, Public Works, Planning, Building, Board of Health, Family & Youth Services and Facilities Manager.

Following the Committee's review of the information provided, it was determined that most of the departmental requests could be managed within the normal budget process and in a manner that would be sustainable for the Town's financial outlook, but that the requests of the Police and Fire Departments cannot be met within the confines of Proposition 2½. This conclusion was further validated as part of a Financial Trend Monitoring meeting held jointly on December 10, 2013 with the Board of Selectmen, Appropriations Committee, Financial Planning Committee and the School Committee.

Mr. Coderre added that given the high costs and long-term financial implications of adding just the initial requests for twelve public safety positions, the Committee felt additional study is warranted by an outside consultant specializing in public safety staffing reviews. At its meeting on March 19, 2014, the Staffing Committee voted to request the release of up to \$90,000 of remaining mitigation funds to finance a professional review of the Police and Fire Departments. The Committee requested that the requisite funds be released as soon as practical so that the Request for Proposals (RFP) for consultant services can be advertised.

Selectman Rand moved the Board vote to approve expenditure from the Mitigation account in the amount of \$90,000 for the purpose of engaging the services of a consultant in accordance with the Staffing Committee Interim Report; Selectman Pantazis seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF MITIGATION FUNDS FOR POLICE CRUISERS

Mr. Coderre requested the release of \$127,500 in mitigation funds for the purchase of three police cruisers. Mr. Coderre informed the Board that police cruisers were previously purchased through the Police Revolving Fund with revenues generated from fines and penalties. On the advice of the Department of Revenue, this practice has been discontinued in FY2015. The purchase of cruisers will now be handled through the Town's Capital Plan. This one-time release of mitigation funds will bridge the gap between the closure of the Revolving Fund in FY2015 and the cruisers being absorbed into the Capital Plan beginning in FY2016.

Mr. Coderre noted that it is the intention of the Financial Team to close to Free Cash any remaining mitigation funds at the conclusion of FY2014 with the exception of the dedicated funds specifically earmarked in the MOA for the Senior Center (\$50,000) and Recreation Department (\$25,000).

Selectman Amberson moved the Board vote to approve expenditure from the Mitigation account in the amount of \$127,500 for the purpose of purchasing three police cruisers and related equipment; Selectman Pantazis seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

APPROVE/EXECUTE WARRANT FOR ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Mr. Coderre informed the Board that two changes have been made to the Town Meeting Warrant. Article 60 will be eliminated and Article 36 will remain on the Warrant, but will be passed over at Town Meeting.

Selectman Amberson acknowledged members of the audience who were present to speak about Article 58 – *Public Safety Bylaw*.

Police Chief Leahy stated that many residents are being misinformed about the intent of the article. He read the proposed warrant article in its entirety and clarified the intent of the bylaw, stating that Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 269, Section 12E, currently establishes a minimum distance of five hundred feet from a dwelling or other building in use for the lawful discharge of a firearm. The proposed bylaw would extend that distance to firing ranges, an area in which there is currently no minimum stated safe distance.

After hearing from several members of the audience, the Board indicated that it would be appropriate for any Town resident who is either in favor or opposed to Article 58 to attend the April 28th Annual Town Meeting where residents will have the opportunity to state their opinions and vote on the matter.

Selectman Hutchins moved the Board vote to approve and execute the Warrant for the April 28, 2014 Annual Town Meeting; Selectman Amberson seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

APPROVE/EXECUTE WARRANT FOR ANNUAL TOWN ELECTION

Selectman Pantazis moved the Board vote to approve and execute the Warrant for the May 12, 2014 Annual Town Election; Selectman Rand seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

EXECUTION OF CEMETERY DEEDS A935 & A936

Selectman Pantazis moved the Board vote to execute Cemetery Deeds A935 & A936; Selectman Rand seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Selectman Hutchins moved the Board vote to adjourn; Selectman Rand seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 9: 30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Wackell
Executive Assistant to the
Board of Selectmen

Documents used during meeting:

1. March 24, 2014 Meeting Agenda.
2. March 10, 2014 Meeting Minutes.
3. Information packet – Legislative Priorities.
4. Information packet – Joint Public Hearing on FY2015 Proposed Budget.
5. Information packet – Public Hearing on Street Acceptances.
6. Staffing Committee Interim Report.
7. Information packet – Release of Mitigation Funds for Police Cruisers.
8. Annual Town Meeting Warrant.
9. Annual Town Election Warrant.
10. Cemetery Deeds.