

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES – February 27, 2017**

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: William Pantazis, Chairman
Dawn Rand, Vice Chairman
Jeff Amberson, Clerk
Leslie Rutan
Jason Perreault

*Pledge of Allegiance

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – FEBRUARY 13, 2017 REGULAR MEETING

Selectman Rand moved the Board vote to approve the meeting minutes of the February 13, 2017 regular meeting as submitted; Selectman Amberson seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

7:00 p.m. - DAVID PARENTI, FIRE CHIEF

Introduction of Firefighter/Paramedic Dylan Kessler.

Chief Parenti introduced Dylan Kessler as the Fire Department's newest full-time Firefighter/Paramedic. Chief Parenti reviewed the selection and hiring process for this position. Mr. Kessler has satisfactorily completed all phases of the selection process, including the physical fitness test; two interview panels; the background investigation conducted by our police department, a medical exam and drug screening.

Mr. Kessler is a resident of Berlin. He began his career as a junior volunteer firefighter at the age of 16. He graduated from Bolton High School in Bolton, CT in 2006 and advanced his education by earning his Bachelor's Degree in EMS Management along with his paramedic license in 2013 from Springfield College. He is a Nationally Registered Paramedic, as well as ACLS, PALS, PEPP, PHTLS and a certified BLS Instructor. Dylan will be attending the Massachusetts Fire Academy starting June 2, 2017 for his ten week training program.

Members of the Board welcomed Mr. Kessler to the community.

REPORTS

Jason Perreault

- On behalf of a resident who suffered a massive heart attack last summer, thanked the members of the Fire Department for their extraordinary professionalism and skill in not only this incident, but all other life-saving circumstances.
- Noted that the roadway at the Church Street bridge is now open to 3 lanes.
- Informed the DPW Director of a damaged sign at the intersection of Church Street and Route 20 near the Mobil gas station.

Jason Perreault Report Cont. . .

- Requested an update on the R&T Furniture building. Mr. Coderre reviewed the history of this property. The Building Inspector has deemed the building to be an unsafe structure. In response to this determination, the property owner hired an independent structural engineer who has determined that the building is redeemable. The Town is currently working with Town Counsel to bring this to Land Court in order to enforce compliance against the property owner since no plan has been received by the owner regarding the requisite repairs.
- Noted the recent demolition of the two structures at 39 West Main Street, which gives the public a better sense of what the Town Common site will look like.

Leslie Rutan

- Agreed that it's easier to envision the Town Common site now that the buildings have been demolished. Indicated that those residents who began this project are very excited to see it moving forward.
- Congratulated 8 residents who will be running in this year's Boston marathon.
- Asked residents to remember that donations are always needed at the Food Pantry.
- Noted a recent string of complaints on Facebook about the quality of trash bags. Requested that the Town Engineer be invited to attend the Board's next meeting to discuss this concern.

Jeff Amberson, Clerk

- Thanked the DPW Director for his efforts with the Church Street bridge repair project, in what he considers a great improvement.
- Excited to see that the Town Common is beginning to come to fruition. Congratulated those who brought this project forward.

Dawn Rand, Vice Chairman

- Noted that the Interview Committee met with an applicant who is interested in being appointed as a Constable. See below for appointment.

William Pantazis, Chairman

- No report.

John Coderre, Town Administrator

- No report.

CONSTABLE APPOINTMENT

Selectman Rand moved the Board vote to appoint Ronald Bowness to the position of Constable for a three-year term; Selectman Amberson seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

ADOPTION OF HEALTH INSURANCE OPT-OUT PROGRAM POLICY

Mr. Coderre reminded the Board that at their February 13th meeting he presented the details of the proposed Health Insurance Opt-Out program. The program incentivizes employees to leave the Town's health insurance and go to another source (typically a spouse's coverage). He added that the Financial Team recommends approval, as there is no downside to the implementation of this incentive program.

Mr. Coderre indicated that if the Board decides to adopt the Health Insurance Opt-Out Program this evening, the program will become effective July 1, 2017 (FY2018).

Selectman Rand moved the Board vote to adopt the Health Insurance Opt-Out Program as presented by the Town Administrator effective July 1, 2017; Selectman Rutan seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

DISCUSSION OF DRAFT FY2018 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Mr. Coderre presented the Board with the draft legislative priorities letter for its review. The goal of preparing this letter is to provide the Town's State Legislative Delegation with clear direction regarding the Town's priorities. Mr. Coderre stated that the letter includes the Town's position on key legislative issues that, if changed, could save the Town money and allow for greater efficiency in the management of Town affairs.

Mr. Coderre reviewed the top three legislative priorities:

1. Approval of a multi-year \$300 million Chapter 90 roadway repair funding program.
2. Increased funding of the State's special education reimbursement program known as the "Circuit Breaker Program".
3. Reform that ensures the sustainability of Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB).

In addition to the top three priorities, a number of secondary priorities were noted in the letter including the opposition of unfunded mandates, modernization of the procurement of public construction laws, support of Senate Bill No. 572, which addresses ambulance billing and support of Senate Bill No. 407 regarding agricultural composting.

Selectman Rutan moved the Board vote to authorize the Chair and the Town Administrator to finalize and sign the Legislative Priorities letter for discussion with our State Legislative Delegation at the March 13th Board Meeting; Selectman Amberson seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

UPDATE ON PRELIMINARY FY2018 BUDGET

Mr. Coderre made a presentation to the Board on the preliminary FY2018 Budget. He reviewed the goals and objectives of the Financial Trend Monitoring System, the budget assumptions and key budget increases. One major factor that remains outstanding in the FY2018 Budget is Health Insurance, which may present significant increases as premiums are anticipated to increase between 10-15% for two of the three plans.

UPDATE ON PRELIMINARY FY2018 BUDGET CONT. . .

Mr. Coderre informed the Board that the Town has received the final Assabet Valley assessment and the ARHS assessment.

The proposed budgets for the key departments are estimated to increase as follows:

- Northborough K-8 Schools increases \$725,174 to \$23,445,017 (3.19%)
- General Government (Town) increases \$765,216 to \$20,902,493 (3.8%)
- Assabet Valley Vocational High School assessment increases \$53,348 or 7.75% to \$741,661 as enrollment increases from 46 to 49 students.
 - Debt service associated with the recently completed renovation project will decrease from \$192,135 to \$151,232 (21%)
 - Net effect of the combined Operating Assessment and new debt service is an overall increase of \$12,445 (1.14%)
- The overall Algonquin Regional High School (ARHS) budget increases at 3.8%.
 - The ARHS Operating Assessment increases \$343,218 (3.41%) to \$10,414,869 due to increased Northborough enrollment and changes to the State's minimum contribution formula.
 - The debt for ARHS decreases by \$631(0.10%) to \$660,574.
 - Net effect of the combined Operating Assessment and new debt service is an overall increase of \$342,587 (3.19%).

Members of the Board offered their appreciation to Mr. Coderre for his efforts in preparing the FY2018 Budget.

REQUEST TO DEFICIT SPEND SNOW & ICE ACCOUNT

DPW Director Scott Charpentier informed the Board that the FY2017 Snow & Ice Account has exceeded the original budget of \$346,000 by approximately \$70,119. This season, the Town has encountered 15 recordable snow events, as well as numerous overnight ice events. He informed the Board that he is here this evening to request the Board's approval to deficit spend the FY2017 Snow & Ice Account as needed.

Mr. Coderre reminded the Board that the Snow & Ice Budget is determined on a six-year rolling average. In accordance with MGL, Chapter 44, Section 31D, the Board of Selectmen must be notified and approve any required deficit spending. He assured the Board that all attempts will be made to cover the projected fiscal year's shortfall within the overall year-end FY2017 budget.

Selectman Amberson moved the Board vote to allow expenditures in excess of available appropriations for snow and ice removal and any other related expenses pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 44, Section 31D; Selectman Rand seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

REVIEW OF SUMMARY TOWN MEETING WARRANT

Mr. Coderre presented to the Board a draft summary of the warrant articles for the Annual Town Meeting. Following his review of the draft warrant articles, Mr. Coderre added that the Community Preservation Committee will be invited to attend the Board’s March 13th meeting to discuss each of their warrant articles in more detail. The Board will vote to close the warrant at its March 13th meeting.

Mr. Coderre noted that all of the CIP Articles represent \$2.1M of which \$1.49M will be paid on a pay-as-you-go cash basis. Only Article 31 will be bonded with the debt service being paid for by sewer user fees and not tax dollars.

EXECUTION OF CEMETERY DEED 1017

Selectman Perreault moved the Board vote to execute Cemetery Deed 1017; Selectman Rutan seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

8:30 p.m. - EXECUTIVE SESSION

Selectman Perreault moved the Board vote to enter into Executive Session pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30A, Section 21, Subsection 3 (collective bargaining) 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 Rand seconded the motion, the roll call vote was taken as follows.

Perreault	“aye”	Rand	“aye”
Rutan	“aye”	Pantazis	“aye”
Amberson	“aye”		

Chairman Pantazis announced that the Board would return from Executive Session only to adjourn.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Wackell
Executive Assistant to the
Board of Selectmen

Documents used during meeting:

1. February 27, 2017 Meeting Agenda.
2. February 13, 2107 Meeting Minutes.
3. Memo – New Firefighter/Paramedic.
4. Information packet – Health Insurance Opt-Out Program.
5. Draft FY2018 Legislative Priorities Letter.
6. Memo – Preliminary FY2018 Budget.
7. Memo – Snow & Ice Account.
8. Preliminary Town Meeting Warrant Summary.
9. Cemetery Deed.