

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES – April 10, 2023**

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

Chair Cohen read the current remote meeting notice, and confirmed the following Select Board members who were present could hear and be heard.

- Mitch Cohen, Chair
- Julianne Hirsh, Vice Chair
- Kristen Wixted, Clerk
- Jason Perreault
- T. Scott Rogers

Any votes taken this evening will be by roll call.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MARCH 27, 2023 MEETING

Selectman Perreault moved the Board vote to approve the March 27, 2023 meeting minutes as presented; Selectman Hirsh seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – APRIL 3, 2023 MEETING

Selectman Rogers moved the Board vote to approve the April 3, 2023 meeting minutes as presented; Selectman Perreault seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

INTRODUCTION OF INTERIM TOWN ADMINISTRATOR ROBERT REED

Chair Cohen introduced and welcomed Robert “Bob” Reed as the Interim Town Administrator. Mr. Reed thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve Northborough.

TOWN CLERK ANDREW DOWD

Discussion and Vote on In-Person – Early Voting for the May 9, 2023 Town Election

Town Clerk Andrew Dowd informed the Board that the VOTES ACT enacted by the State Legislature in 2022 allows all voters to vote by mail, without excuse, in all state elections. For local elections, the law requires vote by mail, unless the Select Board votes to opt out. Mr. Dowd indicated that he does not recommend that the Board vote to opt out.

Mr. Dowd added that the law does not require in-person early voting for local elections, unless recommended by 50% of the Board of Registrars and then approved by the Select Board. He noted that the Board of Registrars met this afternoon and voted to recommend in-person early voting for the May 9, 2023 Town Election.

Selectman Hirsh moved the Board vote to approve in-person early voting for the May 9th Town Election as recommended by the Board of Registrars and that said early voting sessions will be held during regular business hours in the Town Clerks' Office May 1st through May 5th; Selectman Rogers seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

LIBRARY DIRECTOR JENNIFER BRUNEAU

Acceptance of a Cultural Sector Recovery for Organizations Grant Award from the Massachusetts Cultural Council for Building Related Improvements to the Library.

Ms. Bruneau informed the Board that the Library was awarded a Cultural Sector Recovery for Organizations grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council in the amount of \$66,210. The funds are unrestricted and the plan is to use it for building related improvements, including AV upgrades to the public meeting rooms, repurposing some of the underutilized spaces, and other building improvements. At their meeting on March 14, 2023, the Library Board of Trustees voted to accept the grant.

Selectman Wixted moved the Board vote, pursuant to Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 44, Section 53A, to accept funds from the Massachusetts Cultural Council for building related improvements to the Library and to authorize the Board of Library Trustees to expend such funds; Selectman Hirsh seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

VOTE ON EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT WITH ROBERT REED FOR INTERIM TOWN ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Ms. Meekins indicated that the Employment Agreement with Mr. Reed for Interim Town Administrative Services has been reviewed by both Mr. Reed and Town Counsel.

Selectman Perreault moved the Board vote to approve and execute the Employment Agreement with Robert Reed for Interim Town Administrator Services; Selectman Hirsh seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

DISCUSSION AND VOTE TO RELEASE ARPA FUNDS FOR INSURANCE COSTS FOLLOWING THE REACQUISITION OF 4 WEST MAIN STREET

Ms. Meekins indicated that the Town is currently in the process of negotiating the details of the Purchase and Sale Agreement for 4 West Main Street (Old Town Hall). Given the timing of the anticipated closing date of May 2, 2023, Ms. Meekins requested that the Board allocate available

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to cover the insurance costs for the building for one year. A current insurance proposal offers full coverage for 12 months at a rate of \$43,000.

Ms. Meekins confirmed that a cell tower company leases an antenna located on the top of the building. The cell tower company and a tenant located inside the building have both expressed an interest in pursuing lease extensions following the reacquisition. She noted that she anticipates that the Board will be asked to consider the lease extensions in the next month or so, adding that the fees collected from the extended leases can be used towards future maintenance and carry-on costs for the building.

Selectman Rogers moved the Board vote to release ARPA funds in the amount of \$43,000 for insurance costs following the reacquisition of 4 West Main Street; Selectman Hirsh seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

DISCUSSION AND VOTE ON TOWN ADMINISTRATOR SCREENING COMMITTEE

At their meeting on March 27th, the Board discussed the establishment of a Town Administrator (TA) Screening Committee and its suggested membership.

Following a brief discussion, it was agreed that the TA Screening Committee will be advertised and applications for the three at-large town residents will be accepted for 15 days. The Interview Committee will schedule a meeting to interview applicants with the expectation that the appointments will take place at the May 8th Select Board meeting.

Selectman Hirsh moved the Board vote to establish a Town Administrator Screening Committee to consist of the following membership:

- One member of the Board of Selectmen
- One member of the Planning Board
- One member of the K-8 or Regional School Committees
- One member of the Appropriations or Financial Planning Committees
- Three at-large town residents

Selectman Wixted seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

DISCUSSION AND VOTE ON THE APPOINTMENTS OF ASHLEY DAVIES, FRAN BAKSTRAN, AARON HUTCHINS AND LINDA BRENCKLE TO THE TOWN OFFICES FEASIBILITY STUDY COMMITTEE

At the March 27th Select Board meeting, Mr. Coderre sought the Board’s approval of the following appointments to the Town Offices Feasibility Study Committee (TOFSC):

At-large resident – Ashley Davies
 At-large resident – Fran Bakstran
 At-large resident – Aaron Hutchins
 At-large resident – Linda Brenckle

At that time, Board members expressed concern with not having the opportunity to view the applications prior to their approval of the Town Administrator’s recommendations for appointment. Applications to the TOFSC from the following residents were included in the April 10, 2023 meeting packet:

Ashley Davies	William Pierce
Fran Bakstran	Judy Boyle
Aaron Hutchins	Lisa Maselli
Linda Brenckle	Lisa Holovnia

Chair Cohen informed the Board that Fran Bakstran withdrew her application from consideration.

Selectman Wixted moved the Board vote to approve the Town Administrator’s appointment of Ashley Davies to the Town Offices Feasibility Study Committee; Selectman Perreault seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

Selectman Rogers moved the Board vote to approve the Town Administrator’s appointment of Aaron Hutchins to the Town Offices Feasibility Study Committee; Selectman Perreault seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

Selectman Perreault moved the Board vote to approve the Town Administrator’s appointment of Linda Brenckle to the Town Offices Feasibility Study Committee; Selectman Rogers seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

VOTE ON REAPPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS, COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS

Ms. Meekins indicated that the reappointment list included in the meeting packets included those individuals who asked to be reappointed to their respective Board or Committee. She confirmed that no additional applications were received during the reappointment process.

Selectman Hirsh moved the Board vote to reappoint those individuals who appear on the “2023 Reappointment List” to the corresponding Boards, Committees and Commissions; Selectman Wixted seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

ASSIGNMENT OF TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLES

Included in the meeting packet was a draft summary spreadsheet of the articles on the Town Meeting Warrant. Members of the Board agreed on the warrant articles each of them would read motions for at Town Meeting.

VOTES ON TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLE RECOMMENDATIONS

Chair Cohen indicated that historically, the Select Board members recommend approval of certain warrant articles at Town Meeting.

Selectman Hirsh moved the Board vote to recommend approval of the following Warrant Articles at Town Meeting:

- Article 4 (Town Budget)
- Article 5 (Water, Sewer and Solid Waste Enterprise Funds)
- Article 6 (Northborough K-8 Schools Budget)
- Article 7 (Northborough Southborough School District Budget)
- Article 8 (Assabet Valley Regional Vocational School District Budget)
- Article 14 (Senior Tax Relief)
- Article 26 (13 Church Street Easement)
- Article 27 (Change Name of Board of Selectmen to Select Board)
- Article 28 (Remove Residency Requirement for Town Administrator)

Selectman Rogers seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

PROCLAMATION – CHILDRENS MENTAL HEALTH WEEK MAY 7th - 13th, 2023

Selectman Wixted moved the Board vote to issue a proclamation proclaiming the week of May 7th through May 13th as Children’s Mental Health Week; Selectman Rogers seconded the motion.

Selectman Wixted read the proclamation in its entirety.

The roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

SET MEETING SCHEDULE FOR MAY – AUGUST

Selectman Hirsh moved the Board vote to set the meeting schedule for May – August as follows:

May 8 & 22
 June 12 & 26
 July 17
 August 14

Selectman Wixted seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

REPORTS**Julianne Hirsh**

- Noted that the annual Town Clean Up and the opening day for the Cultural Council’s public art project “Go Outdoors” are both scheduled for April 29th.
- Reminded residents that Town Meeting is two weeks away – April 24th at the High School.

T. Scott Rogers

- Thanked the team of Muslim neighbors that hosted the Community Iftar Dinner held at the home of Ceylon and Dan Rowe.

Kristen Wixted

- Noted that Town Meeting is on April 24th at the High School.
- Noted that she posts a poem per day on her Select Board Facebook page. Recited a poem she wrote about Town Meeting.

Mitch Cohen

- Attended the 100th Birthday Celebration of Dorothy Senecal on April 1st.
- Thanked Selectman Hirsh for the suggestion and Town Clerk Andy Dowd for purchasing the signs advertising Town Meeting.
- Noted that the annual Louise Houle Town Clean Up Day will be held on April 29th.
- Thanked Ms. Meekins for doing an outstanding job during her week as Interim Town Administrator and for her efforts during the transition period of hiring Mr. Reed.

Jason Perreault

- As his term on the Board is coming to end, he extended his appreciation to Select Board members, both present and past. He also thanked Town staff who have been exceptional to work with over the years. Thanked his sons, Mark, Brian and Scott, his wife Maggie and his mother Dolly. Recited a poem he wrote reminiscing about his many years of service to his community.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

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

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Diane M. Wackell
Executive Assistant to the
Board of Selectmen

Documents used during meeting:

1. April 10, 2023 Meeting Agenda
2. March 27, 2023 Meeting Minutes
3. April 3, 2023 Meeting Minutes
4. Memorandum – In Person Early Voting
5. Memorandum – Library Grant Award
6. Employment Agreement with Robert Reed
7. Memorandum – Town Administrator Screening Committee
8. Memorandum – Release of ARPA Funds
9. Information packet – Town Offices Feasibility Study Committee Appointments
10. Information packet – Reappointments to Boards, Committees and Commissions
11. Summary Spreadsheet of Town Meeting Warrant Articles
12. Memorandum – May through August Meeting Schedule
13. Proclamation – Children’s Mental Health Week