



TOWN OF NORTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MUNICIPAL CENTER,
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**Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes
May 28, 2020**

I. Call to Order by Chairman

The May 28, 2020 meeting of the Norton Board of Selectmen was held remotely (web: <https://zoom.us/j/6391519600>; dial in via +1 (646) 558-8656, Meeting ID 639-151-9600) and was called to order at 6:30 P.M., by Mr. Bradford K. Bramwell, Chairman. Member(s) present: Mr. John Conway, Ms. Mary Steele, and Ms. Renee Deley. Also in attendance: Mr. Michael D. Yunits, Town Manager.

II. Appointments/Resignations/Retirements

There were no appointments/resignations/retirements to discuss.

III. Licenses and Permits

1. Vote to Approve the Application by Cheryl Rose for a One-Day All Alcohol Liquor License for a Private Event at the Everett Leonard Park on August 29, 2020 from 12:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M.

During the discussion of the motion, Ms. Deley clarified that this license should be made conditional with the State guidance at that time. Mr. Bramwell agreed that it would be conditional upon opening of public places. Ms. Deley questioned how they are tracking this. Mr. Yunits mentioned that the Parks and Recreation Coordinator, Ms. Sharon Rice, would be giving protocol updates later in the meeting and would provide a list of the protocols if these events move forward. Ms. Rice advised that licensees/people renting the Everett Leonard Park are going to have to sign an agreement saying they will adhere to the guidelines.

MOTION was made by Mr. Conway to approve the application. Seconded by Ms. Deley. Vote: Ms. Deley – Yes; Ms. Steele – Yes; Mr. Conway – Yes; and Mr. Bramwell - Yes. MOTION CARRIES.

IV. Announcements

There were no announcements to discuss.

V. Business

A. New Business

1. Update on COVID-19.

The Board of Health Agent, Mr. Christian Zahner, advised that there was a total of 148 cases in Town, and 127 of which are on the road to recovery. Mr. Zahner sadly reported that there were now five deaths in town. He stated that since the last meeting, there have been only two more cases. Mr. Zahner reported that virus/germ shields were installed at Town Hall and the

Library and they are now working on Council on Aging and schools. The Board of Health Agent informed the Board that he has coordinated with the cleaning company to do a disinfecting fog treatment at the Town Hall and Council on Aging on a weekly basis beginning on June 5th, which is the Friday before they hope to open up again.

Mr. Zahner advised that they are still stocking up on PPE and sanitizers, but NEMA is backing off on providing these supplies. So, they are going to have to start using some of the funding they have received to purchase these items. He further stated that they have stocked up on face masks, sanitizer, coveralls, face shields, etc. Additionally, the Board of Health Agent mentioned that they have been working on pre-opening plans and even though the Library has not been cleared yet to open during this phase, they are being proactive with putting plans together. Mr. Zahner also mentioned that the schools will be opening their administrative offices on June 1st and pointed out that eventually the schools will need to allow kids to come in and get their belongings out of their lockers. Mr. Zahner reported that the Council on Aging is looking to assist people with their taxes, so they are also trying to help facilitate that. He stated that they have continued working with the essential businesses of Phase 1 with reopening plans as well. The Board of Health Agent said that they have also started reaching out to other organizations within town, including Norton Little League, which may be able to start practicing at the end of June or July and Phase 3 for games.

Mr. Zahner informed the Board that he has been working with the Town Manager on the reopening plan for Town Hall and they have a tentative reopening date of June 8th for employees only with the public restricted until further notice (might do appointment only setup). He explained that he has also been working with the Town Manager and Election Committee to put together a safe election and/or town meeting. The Board of Health Agent stated that they went to the High School to look at the field to analyze the pros and cons of holding town meeting on the field.

Ms. Deley asked why they weren't considering using the parking lot rather than the field. Mr. Zahner replied that it was because the field is setup for people to attend something unlike the parking lot. Police Chief, Mr. Brian Clark, added that they can make whatever venue [the Selectmen] want safe and that they just need a direction to work through the logistics.

Mr. Conway mentioned that his company uses a particular software that can calculate in with social distancing a room's maximum occupancy. Mr. Zahner said he would get him the measurements of the gymnasium the following day so Mr. Conway can come up with those calculations using his company's software.

Mr. Yunits asked if the Selectmen could have a meeting next Thursday (June 4th) to go over town meeting more, town meeting articles, and budgets only. After further discussion amongst the Selectmen, the Board agreed to meet again on Tuesday, June 2nd. Mr. Bramwell asked Mr. Zahner to speak with the schools about their sound system for outside. Mr. Zahner advised that he already spoke with the Director of Facilities for the Schools, Mr. Wade Lizotte, and he said the setup for the football games should work for a town meeting, which was part of the reason they planned to use the field. Mr. Zahner mentioned that they should probably have tents available in case it rains.

Mr. Conway referred back to a previous meeting where Dr. Joseph Baeta, Superintendent of Schools, mentioned that school properties were closed until the end of June and asked if they

have done their due diligence to see if the use of school properties is allowed for the town to use for the town election and town meeting. Mr. Zahner replied that he received full support for a town meeting and town election at the schools from Dr. Baeta and added that Dr. Baeta should know the rules for his buildings when giving such support. Mr. Zahner added that every other town he has spoken with was holding their town meeting and/or town election at their schools. He said he would check with Dr. Baeta to see if he has information on this.

Mr. Yunits stated that legislation to allow town meetings out of town was sent back to the Senate after the House of Representatives reviewed it. He said that he asked State Representative Jay Barrows when he thinks this will be passed and Mr. Barrows answered the middle of next week. The Town Manager explained that if that passes, this would open up the Xfinity Center as an option.

Ms. Deley asked if they have engaged with the Xfinity Center and mentioned that she heard it was costly to open the venue. Mr. Yunits replied that Chief Clark reached out to them a couple of weeks ago and he himself reached out earlier in the day to ask if that date was available, but he hasn't heard back yet. Mr. Zahner said as far as the cost, he questioned if it would be more or less than the football field at the High School.

a.) Discuss Support for Restaurants

Mr. Yunits explained that as restaurants are allowed to start opening up, they made need some adjustments. He advised that he is looking for support from the Board of Selectmen to expand outdoor seating and not enforce the minimum parking requirement. Ms. Steele said she is in full support of doing what they can to help get these businesses back on their feet.

Ms. Deley asked if any consultation would be needed with the Planning Board. Mr. Yunits replied that Mr. Paul DiGiuseppe, Director of Planning and Economic Development, is definitely supportive and in favor of this. Ms. Deley clarified that the Town Manager was looking for support from the Selectmen for outside seating, not as many parking spots, and additional outdoor signage, which Mr. Yunits confirmed.

MOTION was made by Mr. Conway to support local restaurants. Seconded by Ms. Steele. Vote: Ms. Deley – Yes; Ms. Steele – Yes; Mr. Conway – Yes; and Mr. Bramwell – Yes. MOTION CARRIES.

2. Update on the Parks/Playgrounds Regarding the Governor's Requirements.

Ms. Sharon Rice stated that the parks are open with restrictions, but playgrounds are not. She pointed out that this makes things more complicated because the Everett Leonard Complex is half park and half playground; so, the playground portion is sectioned off. Ms. Rice advised that one thing they have to take care of is signage, but she is waiting to hear back from Governor on some questions because there are inconsistencies on rules provided by the State.

She informed the Board that the pool at the Everett Leonard Complex will be opening on June 26th and they have four rentals booked for July and eight in August. Ms. Rice explained that payments are due from renters two weeks before the event and hopefully by then she will know the restrictions so renters can sign the agreement. She advised that she is also going to have to switch to daily cleanings of the Everett Leonard Complex and use special chemicals

for cleaning. Ms. Rice mentioned that another part of the guidelines issued by the State is that they must have lidless trash cans and their trash cans have lids, so they will need to address this. She lastly advised that the Norton Baseball and Softball at the Burchill Complex is part of Phase 2 for practices and drills, but Phase 3 was still to be determined.

Mr. Conway acknowledged and thanked Rice for the events she has been doing and the contributions she has made through her fundraisers/events and to the Cupboard of Kindness.

3. Discussion on Funding for Food Program.

Mr. Yunits provided the following data points regarding the costs have incurred in result of this program:

- Total cost of the food program thus far \$231,821;
- Estimated USDA reimbursement \$115,747;
- 75% reimbursement from FEMA for adult meals is \$87,056; and
- Local portion that would not be covered because FEMA only covers 75% would be \$29,019.

Mr. Yunits explained that they are looking to received funds for the local portion using the COVID-19 Cares Funding. Mr. Conway asked how much longer the meals program is going for. Mr. Yunits answered that he believes this week ends the adult portion of it and added that Mr. Matthew Wells, the School Business Manager, called FEMA asking if they were going to extend this for a longer period, which they answered they were not. Mr. Yunits informed the Board that on June 15th the schools close.

Ms. Deley referred to the \$1.7 million the Town received from the CARES Act and asked what money they had available to further fund the program. Mr. Yunits advised that Town staff were asked to provide their [COVID-19 related] expenses next week so they can figure this out. Ms. Deley asked when the Town Manager anticipated having these figures back, which Mr. Yunits replied probably by Wednesday, June 3rd. Ms. Deley asked if they are going to continue to support the adults until Wednesday when they get the figures back. Mr. Yunits answered that as far as he was aware, they were not. Mr. Bramwell pointed out that they also have to keep in mind that a lot of these funds are already accounted for, especially in regards to the School Department, where they are already looking for a big chunk of these funds to be able to educate the children from home. With that being said, Mr. Bramwell advised that they need to figure out what the Town has already spent before they can decide on where/what they are going to spend. Ms. Deley asked to discuss this further at the June 11th meeting.

Mr. Bramwell stated that in the meantime, residents should contact the Veterans' Agent and the Director of the Council on Aging for assistance. Ms. Deley asked what is in the donation account currently and Mr. Yunits answered approximately \$3,000. Mr. Michael Toole, resident, asked if it was being tracked how many adults were still using the program, and Mr. Yunits said that the School is keeping track of those numbers.

4. Vote to Grant the Extension to the Tolling Agreement Regarding the Shpack Landfill.

Mr. Yunits advised that the Board of Selectmen signed a Tolling Agreement in July of 2018 that is due to expire in June. He stated that the request from the Town's attorney is that the Board signs an extension to the Tolling Agreement that goes to March 20, 2021 to allow for

DEP, EPA, etc. to iron out any responsibilities remaining on the site. The Town Manager explained that the Tolling Agreement makes it so that parties of the suit agree to not sue everybody else while trying to work out everything before the final closeout. Mr. Yunits lastly stated that the Town's attorney advised that the Board vote to have the Chairman sign the agreement.

MOTION was made by Mr. Conway to have the Board support the Chairman signing an extension to the Tolling Agreement regarding the Shpack Landfill property. Seconded by Ms. Steele. Vote: Ms. Deley – Yes; Ms. Steele – Yes; Mr. Conway – Yes; and Mr. Bramwell - Yes. MOTION CARRIES.

5. Review and/or Vote FY2021 Budget.

Mr. Yunits stated that he provided the budget recommendations from all departments. He said at the next meeting he is hoping to have a discussion on town meeting, any articles that can be taken out, and go over the budgets. Mr. Yunits said that the Finance Committee recommendations are not on the sheets provided at this meeting, but he will have them next week.

Ms. Deley asked Mr. Yunits to give a brief overview of what the Board was looking at on the excel sheets provided. The Town Manager advised that new growth is \$745,000, which is \$154,268 reduction from the FY20 estimate. Mr. Yunits stated that he assumed the Town's local aid estimate will be \$16,158,585 and that is also assuming a 10% cut (or \$220,702) in unrestricted government aid. The Town Manager said that the big unknown is the Chapter 70 aid and that he is hoping the Federal Government will give the State money to keep the Town level-funded. He informed the Board that if there is a cut of 10%, then there will be a \$1.2 million cut in budgets.

Regarding the local receipts, Mr. Yunits explained that they are projecting at 23% below what the Town actually collected in FY19 and that they are still looking to use \$600,000 of Free Cash. He advised that they are also looking to use money from the Stabilization Fund to help offset some of the cuts of local aid and local receipts in the amount of \$439,500 as well as increasing the ambulance receipts to \$700,000. The Town Manager pointed out that the budget presented before the Board reflected a 2.2% increase on the Town side/general government and the Schools a 2.5% increase. He stated that the School Department is working on there budget this evening and will be presenting it to the Finance Committee on Monday. Mr. Yunits lastly stated that as the School Superintendent and himself have said in the past, they will start the fiscal year off with this budget and then will see what happens in October where often times adjustments are made.

Ms. Deley referred to the column "FY20 Budget Appropriated/Transferred" and asked if this was the total amount given versus used and Mr. Yunits clarified that this column is referring to what was appropriated for the year. Mr. Conway asked if this value was a combination of the spring and the fall town meetings, and Mr. Yunits confirmed this. Ms. Deley asked for the Town Manager to send the Board what has been expended from each of those thus far, which he agreed to.

Mr. Conway asked how the preparation of 1/12 Budgets have been going. Mr. Yunits replied that it has been going well and that the Town Accountant has been working with the

departments helping prepare them. He added that there are still a few that the Town Accountant is waiting on, but most of them have come in.

The Board of Selectmen agreed to meet on Tuesday, June 2nd at 7:00 P.M.

B. Old Business

1. Discussion on Town Quiet Hours.

Ms. Steele said she would be happy to work with Mr. Yunits and Chief Clark on this topic and then report back to the Board for their support.

2. Discussion on Signage at the Norton Reservoir/Waterbodies.

Mr. Yunits stated that the Highway Superintendent, Mr. Keith Silver, said that he will put up signs at the Reservoir and any other locations they think would be beneficial for laying out the rules/regulations. Mr. Yunits added that the Police Chief contacted Environmental Resources, so hopefully someone will be out next week to try and do a patrol out there, which Chief Clark confirmed.

Ms. Deley asked where else the signs would go besides Jasmine Garden and Mr. Yunits stated that one would also go on Juniper Beach. Mr. Yunits said he is working with the Fire Department to mark out an area for emergency access/vehicles at Juniper Beach because there were so many cars parked there, they couldn't get access. Ms. Deley asked if the Town could get patrol out there at Juniper Beach because she was contacted again by Paula Stearns about continuing issues there.

Chief Clark said he would like to see a gate there to better enforce the rules and regulations because right now they have no enforcement capabilities and there is not a lot they can do. He stated that he would also like to have a sign at Juniper Beach outlining the hours the beach is open and informing visitors that if a vehicle is still there after the beach is closed that it will be towed.

Ms. Deley referred back to the question of who is going to lock and unlock the gate. Chief Clark said they could get try and someone from Police Department to do it, but there were no guarantees. Chief Clark added that there is usually a beach committee that is in control of things such as this. Ms. Deley asked how they go about starting this. Mr. Bramwell posed the idea of having the Highway Department construct a gate. Ms. Deley asked if there were any fines they could charge to try to recuperate costs for enforcing these rules and regulations. Chief Clark said they could issue a parking ticket for \$15, but that is about it. Mr. Bramwell said if they were to enforce a fine for anything larger than this that they would have to go to town meeting for a bylaw. Mr. Conway suggested an electronic gate that was on a timer that would open at a certain hour and close at a certain hour. The Board expressed a concern for a cost to install something such as this at this time.

C. Town Manager's Report

1. Mr. Yunits informed the Board that the 95 Mansfield Avenue project's eligibility has been approved. He advised that getting the State to support the conceptual plan and location is the

first step for a developer. He stated that they are now going to go through the town boards to get permitting.

Ms. Deley clarified that this is the 95 Mansfield Avenue project, which Mr. Yunits and Mr. Bramwell confirmed. Mr. Conway pointed out that the project location is in fact actually located at 195 Mansfield Avenue not 95 Mansfield Avenue.

2. Cares Act Funding Report.

Mr. Yunits explained that [the CARES Act] expenses are from things that needed to be purchased as a result of the pandemic, such as being able to work from home, plexiglass protective shields, etc. and things of that nature. He advised that all departments are working to collect these expenses and sending them in.

3. Blue Star Business Park

The Town Manager informed the Board that they are working to find a pharmaceutical company to put in the first building at the Blue Star Business Park. Mr. Yunits stated that a letter of support for Condyne was prepared by the Industrial Development Commission and himself for this. Ms. Deley clarified that the first building he is referring to is the first warehouse not retail building, which Mr. Yunits confirmed.

4. Digital Signs

Mr. Yunits gave an update on the extension the Board signed for Carroll Advertising a couple of months ago. He stated that Carroll Advertising has moved on to the next step by applying with the State and they are scheduled to have a hearing on June 11th with the Office of Outdoor Advertising.

5. Mr. Yunits informed the Board that he saw on the news that three [town] employees have received letters for fraudulent claims of unemployment. Chief Clark provided a link to check for legitimacy through the Department of Unemployment Assistance, which will be posted on the Town website. Mr. Yunits said that this is a scam people recently started doing. Mr. Yunits provided the following contact information to verify legitimacy:

Website: www.mass.gov/infodetails/reports/unemploymentbenefits-fraud

Phone Number: (877) 626-6800

V. Selectmen's Report and Mail

Mr. Conway informed the Board that he was approached by a resident asking for signage for their autistic child that has a habit of darting into the road. He mentioned that he asked Mr. Silver for a sign and he had it up within a week and thanked him. Mr. Conway expressed that the resident was very appreciative.

Mr. Conway clarified that when they were acknowledging people for the Tweave Fire they referenced SEMRECC for dispatch, but it was local dispatch that was helping coordinate that

including Bristol County Mutual Aid. He emphasized that he wanted to acknowledge them for the work they did, especially Scott and Emily Brownship.

Ms. Deley said that the link for COVID-19 on the Town website goes to a couple of documents with outdated information. She asked that this either be updated or direct residents to the State site. Ms. Deley said she would send this information to Mr. Yunits.

Ms. Deley asked for an update on the inspection of the Council on Aging. Mr. Yunits advised that this time the inspection has not been done.

Ms. Deley said on social media there has been talk about the water dispenser and asked if Mr. Zahner has anything or the Water/Sewer Department about reopening to residents. Mr. Yunits said they got a letter from the DEP, so it was the State that closed it not the Town, but he can talk to them to get an update on that. Ms. Deley referred to guidelines that have to be followed for water sources in order to provide safe and clean water since buildings have been vacant for so long due to COVID-19. Mr. Yunits replied that the Water/Sewer Department actually sent a letter to Wheaton College stating just that to make sure they took the proper steps before reopening the campus to students and staff. Ms. Deley asked if it would affect the [Norton Public] Schools. Mr. Yunits replied that Mr. Lizotte probably has something in place already, but it has been closed longer than usual compared to summer vacation, so it is something to be concerned about. The Town Manager mentioned he would be speaking with Dr. Baeta the following day and Ms. Deley requested that he ask Dr. Baeta about this, which Mr. Yunits agreed to.

VI. Meeting Minutes

There were no Minutes to vote upon/approved at this meeting.

VIII. Warrants

Report of Chairman, Bradford K. Bramwell, that he approved the following Payroll and Invoice Warrants:

A. Payroll Warrant PR20-24 for the week ended May 16, 2020, Warrant dated May 21, 2020, in the amount of \$1,367,121.98.

B. Invoice Warrant AP 20-47 dated May 21, 2020, in the amount of \$1,042,894.52.

C. Invoice Warrant AP20-48 dated May 28, 2020, in the amount of \$313,253.01.

IX. Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

X. **Next Meeting's Agenda** – Tuesday, June 2nd at 7:00 P.M. to discuss town meeting, town meeting articles, and the budget.

XI. Executive Session


There was no need for an executive session.

XII. **Adjournment**

MOTION was made by Mr. Conway to adjourn the Board of Selectmen meeting at 8:14 P.M. Seconded by Ms. Deley. Vote: Ms. Deley – Yes; Ms. Steele – Yes; Mr. Conway – Yes; and Mr. Bramwell – Yes. MOTION CARRIES.

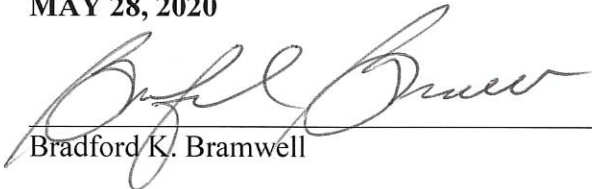
URL Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7LQGcRK_Nss

Respectfully Submitted by:



Jennifer Reid, Office Administrator

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES OF MEETING
MAY 28, 2020**



Bradford K. Bramwell


Michael Flaherty



John Conway



Renee Deley



Michael Toole

Minutes Approved by Board on: July 9, 2020