



TOWN OF NORTON  
SELECT BOARD  
MUNICIPAL CENTER  
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Select Board  
Meeting Minutes  
March 11, 2021

**Call to Order by Chair**

The March 11, 2021 meeting of the Norton Select Board was held remotely (Web: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6391519600>; Phone: 646-558-8656; Meeting ID: 639 151 9600, and was called to order at 7:02 P.M., by Mr. John Conway, Chair. Member(s) present: Ms. Renee Deley and Mr. Bramwell. Mr. Michael Toole joined at 7:03 P.M. and Ms. Megan Artz joined at 7:10 P.M. Also in attendance: Mr. Michael D. Yunits, Town Manager.

**1. Discussion and/or Vote on Special Legislation for all Alcohol Package Store Licenses.**

*Mr. Toole recused himself from this portion of the meeting.*

Attorney Gregg Corbo of KP-Law was in attendance. Attorney Corbo informed the Board that licenses are available based on census data and since the 2020 census information still isn't available, they are working off of the 2010 census. He continued that municipalities can go to State legislature to ask to increase their quota by a certain amount. Attorney Corbo stated that the most common way is for the town to have a specific location or business in mind to have the license and it is then specified in the special act. He added that with this type of act, it is typical when the business is granted the license through special legislation that they will also be granted the right to be able to transfer the license to another similar business in that location, but not to a different location.

Attorney Corbo advised that one thing he looked into, but didn't see, was what the procedure for making the license(s) available is if the Town is granted the special legislation. Attorney Corbo explained that if the Town has some type of procedure in mind, they can work that into the act, but otherwise it should be first-come first-serve. He emphasized that a special act does not guarantee that a certain person will get a license or that anyone will get the license. The Board was informed by Attorney Corbo that the license will go through the typical application process and if someone applies and doesn't get it, it will go to the next person in line.

Ms. Deley clarified that if they did have an interested party come forward that they could go forward and file the special legislation specifically for that interested party, which Attorney Corbo confirmed. He clarified that that doesn't mean the applicant the special legislation is being filed for is guaranteed the license because the local licensing authority still needs to approve the license as does the Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission (ABCC). Ms. Deley asked if they could formulate a process, open it for a certain period of time for all interested parties, and then review all applications and decide from that. Attorney Corbo said that procedure would have to be filed in the special act and if someone misses out on an opportunity to do that during the screening process, they could file an appeal with the ABCC.

Attorney Corbo clarified that this is one of the things that he did not see in the special act and this procedure would be “trail-blazing” as far as coming up with that type of procedure.

Ms. Artz asked what the urgency is at this very moment to be petitioning the legislature for more liquor licenses. Attorney Corbo says it has to happen at town meeting to authorize the petition; so, if it does not go on the warrant for the Spring Town Meeting and the Town is having a Fall Town Meeting or Special Town Meeting, it can be done there as well. Attorney Corbo said as far as her question as to why they are doing this right now, that is a policy question that should be answered by the Board.

Mr. Conway stated that an attorney in Sharon contacted the Town Manager because he had a client that was interested in opening a high-end retail package store in the Blue Star Business Park. In result, the attorney asked if the Board would be interested in filing for special legislation. Ms. Deley added that initially this was brought to the Select Board and then was sent to the Economic Development Commission (EDC) to review and see if it should move forward for the Town. Ms. Deley reported that the EDC had a few discussions on this. Ms. Denise Luciano, Vice Chair of the EDC stated that they discussed what areas in town would be the best areas for liquor stores. Ms. Deley added that Condyne won’t start construction until someone enters into a contract to go in there.

Mr. Conway said after hearing this information, he would be more prone to including in the special act the specific location in the Blue Star Business Park. Ms. Deley asked Attorney Corbo his thoughts about obtaining one versus two licenses if the Board decides to move forward with filing for special legislation. Attorney Corbo clarified that just because they have a license doesn’t mean they have to grant a license. Mr. Bramwell said he wouldn’t have a problem with the idea of filing for a license at that location, but he isn’t going to reiterate the concerns he has previously discussed.

Ms. Artz said that “need” and “want” are distinctively different, and she hasn’t had anyone approach her saying that the Town needs this, especially where there is so much going on in town already. Ms. Artz agreed with Mr. Bramwell stating that this could wait until the Fall Town Meeting.

Mr. Yunits stated that from conversations with the Town Clerk, Ms. Lucia Longhurst, he doesn’t think that they are going to get another license due to a population increase because if anything the population has decreased. Ms. Luciano stated that this Town needs more revenue and this could get more people to spend their money in town rather than going to other towns. Ms. Longhurst stated that the Town’s population has decreased by a couple of thousand based on the Town’s census they received last year; however, with the Presidential election, more registered voters came out and the numbers increased from that. She emphasized that the federal census numbers would be more accurate.

Ms. Deley asked for clarification how many retail package store licenses the Town has. Mr. Yunits asked for the Select Board’s Office Administrator, Ms. Jennifer Reid, to answer this question. Ms. Reid advised the Select Board that the Town currently has four retail package (all alcohol) licenses and five retail package (wines and malts) licenses. Mr. Conway asked Attorney Corbo if in the special legislation when listing the specific location if it is a specific address or area/zone. Attorney Corbo answered that he has seen both.

Mr. Conway asked to get the Board's take on the special legislation after the conversations they had amongst each other and town counsel. Mr. Bramwell said he would probably support the single license because it seems like they have a need for it at the Blue Star Business Park, but other than that he is not apt to support anything. Ms. Artz said she wasn't even comfortable entertaining it right now. Ms. Deley said she is still in favor of obtaining two. Mr. Conway asked for Mr. Yunits to provide an alternative special legislation for one additional license to specifically be used at the Blue Star Business Park. Mr. Conway asked when they need to do this by. Mr. Yunits explained that the warrant doesn't have to be posted until seven days before town meeting. Ms. Deley reminded the Board that the Finance Committee has to look at this too.

## **2. Review and/or Discuss FY22 Budget.**

- Animal Control

Mr. Yunits gave an overview of the Dog Officer budget. Mr. Toole asked if this was a full-time position. Mr. Yunits stated that the Dog Officer is full-time and he has a part-time person as well. Mr. Toole asked if he has a wish-list item. Mr. Yunits answered that the Dog Officer is very satisfied and is content.

- Selectmen

Mr. Yunits gave an overview of the budget. Mr. Toole recognized the great work Ms. Reid does and obviously they know more about what this position does because they work closely with her. Mr. Yunits stated that Ms. Reid has done a great job modernizing the Select Board's Office including the application documents and mentioned that her paralegal experience has been very useful; for example, she was working on a P&S Agreement earlier today.

- Town Manager

The Town Manager stated that there are two employees in this department, himself and the Assistant to the Town Manager, and gave an overview of the expenses. Mr. Yunits pointed out that the major expenses is for Contracted Services (\$50,000), which is to have money there to contract out a consultant if Department Heads are working on a grant that they need assistance with, and to hire a Human Resources professional to work for the Town. Mr. Toole asked to have the two positions broken out of Contracted Services. Mr. Conway agreed that this position was essential. The Select Board expressed a need for a Human Resources (HR) position. Ms. Deley expressed a concern that the budget for this position as well as the grant writer seems low.

Mr. Toole asked Mr. Yunits his wish-list item and he agreed with the need for an HR person. Mr. Toole asked Mr. Yunits what he expected the cost of an HR person to be and Mr. Yunits said he anticipated it would be anywhere between \$80,000 and \$100,000. Mr. Yunits stated that the HR person should create an employee policy manual. Mr. Toole expressed that he thinks it is important right now to at least outsource and hire an HR agency for a fiscal year, but right now the Select Board needs to explain to the Finance Committee that the idea is to hire someone full-time for an HR position. Mr. Toole added that he is surprised that the Town

hasn't gotten in any trouble yet by not having this position and Mr. Yunits agreed that this was a good point he brought up to emphasize the need for this position in the near future.

Mr. Conway pointed out that with many of these things it comes down to money and everything involves additional money whether it is additional staff, increased hours, program support, etc. and there just isn't enough of it to do so. Mr. Conway agreed with the need for an HR position and the estimated salary figure Mr. Yunits provided. The Chair stated that with reviewing these budgets, it is increase after increase and pointed out that difficulty of making cuts in order to fund the needed HR position. Ms. Deley pointed out that this is where the need for revenue comes in and the role of the EDC.

Mr. Toole asked if the School Department has an HR person and Mr. Yunits said he was unsure. Ms. Deley pointed out that they will find out at their joint meeting with the Finance Committee on Monday, March 15<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Toole added that they will also be able to figure out if this position is being utilized to the fullest and if there is any room for the Town to partner with the School Department in regard to this position. Mr. Yunits pointed out that there is potential for some of the legal bills to be reduced with having an HR position. Ms. Deley reiterated what she has said in the past about possibly giving lower increases and telling employees that while they are getting a lower increase this year, it means that the Town will also be able to avoid layoffs and Ms. Artz agreed.

Mr. Toole asked for clarification as to who Mr. Yunits' Administrator is. Mr. Yunits answered that he works very closely with both of them. Mr. Yunits explained that Ms. Michelle Brown does a ton of work and gave a couple of examples including the budget and human resources. The Town Manager explained that Ms. Jennifer Reid does all of the work with the licenses and processing bills. Mr. Conway clarified that Ms. Brown is the Assistant to the Town Manager and Ms. Reid is the Office Administrator, which Mr. Yunits confirmed. Mr. Toole looked for clarification as to the title of Ms. Brown being the "Assistant to the Town Manager" versus the "Assistant Town Manager." Mr. Toole asked if Ms. Brown is doing typical work of an Assistant Town Manager. Mr. Yunits stated that Ms. Brown is acting more or less as an Assistant Town Manager with all of the functions that she does. Mr. Yunits added that a lot of towns have Finance Directors in addition to a Town Accountant and Treasurer.

Mr. Toole suggested creating a spreadsheet showing each municipal employee's salary and fringe benefits to give a clearer picture of what each position/employee is overall making. He stated that this would be an important living document that could be carried and emphasized the importance of doing so because of all of the changes going on within the Town, including if the Charter change happens.

### **3. Review and/or Vote on Capital Plan.**

Mr. Yunits explained that what is shown on the spreadsheet is the department requests, the Town Manager's recommendations, and then the Capital Improvements Committee recommendations. He stated that as they do lots of times, they receive a lot of requests that they can't fund, so items are left off in hopes that in the fall they can do it once free cash is certified. The Town Manager summarized the requests for the Capital Improvements Program as follows:

### Data Processing – IT

- Replace Aerohive Hivemanager Wireless Access Points (installed in 2011): \$18,250

Ms. Deley asked where these are installed and Mr. Yunits answered Town Hall, the Police Department, and the Fire Department. Ms. Deley asked why they would replace this at the Town Hall if they are looking to move and replace the Town Hall. Mr. Yunits stated that if the articles pass, they will look at that.

### Conservation

Mr. Yunits explained that the Conservation Agent, Ms. Jennifer Carlino, hopes to receive grant money towards the Camp Edith Read Hazard Lodge renovations for things such as replacing rotting wood. He added that there is also hazard tree and forestry for \$14,400 where this is a potential partnership/grant. Mr. Yunits advised that this is to clear pathways and conservation areas. Ms. Deley asked how much of a reduction they are looking at if they receive the grant(s). Mr. Yunits recalled being told that for the hazardous tree the grant was for \$9,000.

### Police Department

- Police line cruise replacements (3) \$165,000. The Capital Improvements Committee funded two.
- Police Station remodel \$10,000
- HVAC units replacement for \$45,000.

Mr. Yunits advised that TRANE attended the last Capital Improvements Committee meeting presenting and they had not done the audit of the Town buildings yet, but have done the School's. Ms. Deley asked if TRANE has already done all of the School buildings why they haven't done the Town buildings. Mr. Yunits stated he did not know, but they did say they were getting ready to schedule the Town buildings.

### Fire Department

- Structural firefighting hose \$18,110;
- (4) Thermal Imaging Cameras \$54,000;
- Pumper Replacement (Year 4 of 5) \$140,250;
- Mobile & Portable Radios \$18,911.

### School Department

- Minibuses Lease to Own, Replacement Cycle \$65,727;
- Asbestos Remediation Plan \$15,000

Ms. Deley questioned why the School Department didn't move forward with their request for auto flushes on toilets and urinals after everything people have gone through this past year with COVID-19. Mr. Conway agreed and asked if they could use CARES Act funds to do this since they have been extended to the end of the year. Mr. Yunits replied that they may be doing that with their CARES Act funds. Ms. Deley asked to have this looked into for the other town buildings as well. Mr. Yunits replied that they can and added that under the new stimulus

bill they don't know what strings are attached, but the money allotted to the Town was \$1.97 million. Mr. Conway asked how much money is left from the original CARES Act funds and Mr. Yunits answered between \$300,000 and \$390,000. The Town Manager advised that he is still waiting to hear back about the two applications for FEMA funds.

#### Highway Department

- Peterbilt 348-473118 with Tank \$36,000;
- Peterbilt Dump Truck \$28,150
- John Deere 5090M Utility Tractor Diamond Boom Mower \$34,300;
- Holder Utility Tractor \$33,000

#### Library

- Parking Lot Repaving and Parking Lines \$45,000

Mr. Yunits explained that if the debt-exclusion passes, this will be part of the project.

#### Everett Leonard Park

- ADA Compliant Chair Lift for the Everett Leonard Pool and Repairs to the Everett Leonard Pool House \$11,024.

#### Sewer

Mr. Yunits explained that the Sewer Department is going to work on Cobb Street using retained earnings in the amount of \$300,000. They are also looking for a generator for the Knollwood sewer pump using retained earnings in the amount of \$100,000.

#### Water Department

- Dodge Ram 1500 pick up 4x4 (retained earnings) \$33,000;
- Wells 5 & 6 Phase 5 Completion \$725,000
- White Street at East Main Street Main (Reservoir Street Funds) \$350,000.

Total Capital Request: \$656,818

Total Ambulance Reserve Fund: \$69,129

Total Borrowing: \$725,000

Total Sewer "Surplus" (Retained Earnings) \$400,000

Total Water "Surplus" (Retained Earnings) \$33,000

Total Other Transfer \$350,000

Total (INC. from all Funding Sources) \$2,233,947.

Mr. Conway expressed a concern about the line item for wells 5 & 6 and asked why it wouldn't come out of their account since that has a sizeable amount. Mr. Conway suggested voting on this after speaking with Mr. Frank Fournier, Water/Sewer Superintendent, at their meeting on March 18<sup>th</sup>.



Mr. Bramwell brought up that he is the Select Board representative for GATRA and with him not serving on the Board much longer, the remaining Select Board members will need to appoint a new representative. Ms. Deley clarified that he serves as the representative for Capital and GATRA, which Mr. Bramwell confirmed.

#### **4. Adjournment.**

**MOTION was made by Ms. Deley to adjourn at 9:03 P.M. Seconded by Ms. Artz. Vote: Ms. Artz – Yes; Mr. Bramwell – Yes; Mr. Toole – Yes; Ms. Deley – Yes; and Mr. Conway – Yes. MOTION CARRIES.**

URL Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHtqbxiX5N4>

Respectfully Submitted by:

  
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Jennifer Reid, Office Administrator


#### **SELECT BOARD MINUTES OF MEETING MARCH 11, 2021**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John Conway, Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael Toole, Vice-Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Christine Deveau, Clerk

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Renee Deley, Member

  
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Megan Artz, Member

Minutes Approved by Board on: April 29, 2021

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**05 / 03 / 2021**  
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