



TOWN OF NORTON
SELECT BOARD
MUNICIPAL CENTER
70 EAST MAIN STREET
NORTON, MA 02766

Telephone (508) 285-0210; Facsimile (508) 285-0297

Select Board
Meeting Minutes
February 1, 2024

I. **Call to Order by Chair**

The February 1, 2024 meeting of the Norton Select Board was held at the Norton Housing Authority, Woodland Meadows Community Room, 120 West Main Street, Norton, MA 02766 as well as remotely (Web: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83225589285>; Phone: 646-558 8656; Webinar ID: 832 2558 9285), and was called to order at 7:02 P.M., by Mr. Kevin Snyder, Chair. Members present: Mr. Steven Hornsby, Mr. Alec Rich, III, Ms. Megan Artz and Ms. Denise Luciano. Also in attendance: Mr. Michael D. Yunits, Town Manager.

II. **Appointments/Resignations/Retirements**

1. Appointment of Tyler J. Richardson as Full-Time Sewer Technician in the Sewer Department.

MOTION was made by Mr. Rich to appoint Tyler J. Richardson as Full-Time Sewer Technician. Seconded by Ms. Luciano. Vote: Ms. Luciano – Yes; Ms. Artz – Yes; Mr. Rich – Yes; Mr. Hornsby – Yes; and Mr. Snyder – Yes. MOTION CARRIES.

2. Appointment of Matthew Harkins to the Economic Development Commission.

MOTION was made by Mr. Rich to appoint Matthew Harkins to the Economic Development Commission. Seconded by Ms. Artz. Vote: Ms. Luciano – Yes; Ms. Artz – Yes; Mr. Rich – Yes; Mr. Hornsby – Yes; and Mr. Snyder – Yes. MOTION CARRIES.

3. Resignation of Kevin Snyder from the Economic Development Commission.

Mr. Snyder explained that he has a long commute to and from work and a lot coming up in the next few months and felt he couldn't contribute as much as someone else could to the EDC. He stated that if the Board wanted to continue to have him act as the liaison between the Board and Commission that he would be happy to do so.

4. Resignation of Corey Marsden as a Constable for the Town of Norton.

Mr. Yunits explained that the following agenda item is a request to appoint Mr. Marsden to the Board of Health, but in order to do so, you can't serve on anything else; so, Mr. Marsden has to resign as a constable in order to join the Board of Health. Mr. Yunits explained that due to an illness, there has been a vacant position on the Board of Health and expressed it would be good to have a solid waste water member on the Board of Health again.

MOTION was made by Mr. Hornsby to accept the resignation of Corey Marsden as a Constable for the Town of Norton. Seconded by Ms. Artz. Vote: Ms. Luciano – Yes; Ms. Artz – Yes; Mr. Rich – Abstained; Mr. Hornsby – Yes; and Mr. Snyder – Yes. MOTION CARRIES.

5. Appointment of Corey Marsden to the Board of Health.

MOTION was made by Mr. Hornsby to appoint Corey Marsden to the Board of Health. Seconded by Ms. Luciano. Vote: Ms. Luciano – Yes; Ms. Artz – Yes; Mr. Rich – Abstained; Mr. Hornsby – Yes; and Mr. Snyder – Yes. MOTION CARRIES.

III. Minutes

Approve Minutes, including but not limited to: January 4, 2024; January 4, 2024 (Executive Session); January 12, 2024; January 18, 2024; and January 18, 2024 (Executive Session).

MOTION was made by Mr. Rich to approve the minutes including by not limited to: January 4, 2024; January 4, 2024 (Executive Session); January 12, 2024; January 18, 2024; and January 18, 2024 (Executive Session). Seconded by Mr. Hornsby. Vote: Ms. Luciano – Yes; Ms. Artz – Yes; Mr. Rich – Yes; Mr. Hornsby – Yes; and Mr. Snyder – Yes. MOTION CARRIES.

IV. Licenses and Permits

1. 2024 License Renewals.

The 2024 License Renewals specified on the “2024 License Renewals” document presented to the Select Board at the February 1, 2024 Select Board meeting were all approved as written.

Mr. Rich read the list as follows:

CLASS I, II, AND III

N.E. Autos Inc.
350 Old Colony Road
*Subject to receipt of \$25,000 bond

Class II

MOTION was made by Mr. Rich to approve/renew the above 2024 licenses as specified on document, 2024 License Renewals, as presented to the Board on February 1, 2024. Seconded by Mr. Hornsby. Vote: Ms. Luciano – Yes; Ms. Artz – Yes; Mr. Rich – Yes; Mr. Hornsby – Yes; and Mr. Snyder – Yes. MOTION CARRIES.

V. Announcements

Bridge Transport & Logistics, Inc. Community Outreach Public Notice For Adult-Use/Medical Use Marijuana Transportation Establishment on Wednesday, February 7, 2024 at 7:00 P.M.

Mr. Yunits explained that this is the community outreach for Bridge Transport & Logistics, Inc. and there will be two Host Community Agreements (HCAs) associated with this. Mr. Snyder commented that this is the one they granted the extension for the HCA for not that long ago, which Mr. Yunits confirmed.

VI. Business

A. New Business

1. Discussion and/or Vote to Approve the License Agreement between the Town of Norton, Verizon New England Inc., and Massachusetts Electric Company d/b/a National Grid Regarding the Property Located at 116-120 Mansfield Avenue, Norton, MA 02766.

The Board asked if the petition for the pole hearing was situated for the Senior Center and Mr. Yunits advised that they were in receipt of it, but the petition and documentation sent to follow did not match up, so those documents have to be revised.

Mr. Slattery advised that the Senior Center does have the transformer now, but does not have the electrical hook-up from the pole for it and noted that the pole has been there for about five months now. Mr. Snyder questioned with approving this License Agreement if it is helping move things along and Mr. Yunits replied that it would.

MOTION was made by Mr. Rich to approve the License Agreement between the Town of Norton, Verizon New England Inc., and Massachusetts Electric Company d/b/a National Grid regarding the property located at 116-120 Mansfield Avenue, Norton, MA 02766. Seconded Ms. Luciano. Vote: Ms. Luciano – Yes; Ms. Artz – Yes; Mr. Rich – Yes; Mr. Hornsby – Yes; and Mr. Snyder – Yes. MOTION CARRIES.

2. Discussion and/or Vote to Approve the Host Community Agreement and Memorandum of Agreement between the Town of Norton and PM Norton, LLC.

Mr. Snyder stated that he was informed today that they are still settling negotiations pertaining to these agreements and hopefully will hear it at a soon future meeting.

3. Discussion on Request for Sound Barrier Along I-495.

Mr. Yunits explained that residents along North Washington Street wanted to see if the Board would be supportive of him sending a letter to the State Representatives to install a sound barrier along I-495. The Board was agreeable to doing so.

4. Discussion and/or Vote on Conservation Restriction Regarding the Reservoir Estates.

Mr. Yunits explained to the Board that this is part of the Reservoir Estates construction and the Planning Board made the contingency that there was to be a Conservation Restriction controlled by the Conservation Commission. Mr. Yunits asked Mr. John Thomas, the Conservation Agent, to provide an address and he said right now it is referred to as “0 Reservoir Street,” but it is right near the Reservoir.

Attorney Ned Corcoran was present on behalf of the owner of the property. He explained that the owners of this specific parcel also own the property adjacent to it. He advised the Board that the zoning of this specific property is R-60 and it fronts the Reservoir to the North and there is wetland to the westerly corner. He continued explaining that there are two other components to this. Attorney Corcoran stated that the Lot 4 is a parcel of public interest for public access, which they would be providing 4 parking spaces and a walking path that would be provided and oversight by the HOA, the Conservation Commission, and the Conservation Agent. Additionally, Attorney Corcoran noted that there is separate access to the property northwest of the wetland to enjoy the overlook [of the Reservoir]. He stated that there will be an easement to maintain the overlook and the foot path. He discussed with the Board the processes that remain, including still owing a more detailed metes and bounds description of each of the three Conservation Restriction areas, buttoning up the plan, and more signage for the clause of the Conservation Restriction being recognized as such. Attorney Corcoran stated that currently, they are before the Conservation

Commission for a looped roadway in and are also working with Water and Sewer Commission to extend the sewer from this location down Reservoir Street. He noted that there is no requirement to do so, but they can if they want to tie-in to sewer. Attorney Corcoran brought to the Board's attention that the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs also needs to approve the Conservation Restriction. He added that they also still need to go back to Planning Board for affordability because there is a provision with the Town's bylaw that says that if there are more than 5 building lots or units, there must be affordable units and you round up; so, with 14 lots that would require 2 units of affordability, or in the alternative, a payment into the Town's Affordable Housing Trust.

Mr. Rich referred to all of the rain and flooding issues residents have been facing and wanted to make sure that the Conservation Commission is taking that into consideration when reviewing/approving this. Mr. Thomas responded that they still have the stormwater permit being reviewed and are making sure everything is evaluated and considered. Ms. Luciano questioned if the open space minimum was being met. Mr. Thomas said he isn't on the Planning Board, so he can't really speak to that, but typically they require that 33% is open space. Attorney Corcoran stated that the project is 28 acres and 15 acres are Conservation land, so it is actually just over 50%.

5. Discussion on Capital Expenditure Requests.

Mr. Yunits stated that this was an agenda item requested by Mr. James Slattery. Mr. Slattery stated that there are four things that have come through his e-mail in the past few months. He explained that as the Chair of the Permanent Building Committee (PBC), he has had at least 6 inquiries about capital improvements within town and when the person approached him with the first one, he started looking into it. He advised that there was talk of renovating the current Town Hall and Fire Department. Secondly, Mr. Slattery mentioned that there was a discussion on adding a fire department to the east side of town due to the increased population in that area. Mr. Slattery mentioned that another project that was brought up was replacing the highway garage. Mr. Slattery informed the Board that he spoke to the new Highway Superintendent, who wasn't aware of what he was talking about. Mr. Slattery explained that while Mr. Jared Ferrara, Highway Superintendent, was a long-time employee, he hasn't served in the Highway Superintendent capacity that long, so he wanted to give him an opportunity to let him get his feet wet. Another project proposal that was brought to his attention was that the Norton Housing Authority is thinking of adding more units. Mr. Slattery also mentioned adding paving the Norton Public Library's parking lot. Mr. Slattery lastly stated that there is also talk of adding solar carports in the parking lots of some of the projects.

Mr. Snyder questioned what happens to the old Senior Center and Mr. Slattery answered that his understanding was that it would go back as property surplus to the Town. Mr. Snyder asked the Town Manager for his input on this. Mr. Yunits stated that he spoke with the Highway Superintendent on this and instructed him to submit whatever improvements he thought were necessary and they could try to work it into the Capital Improvements Plan. The Town Manager mentioned that there was talk of needing a new roof for the Highway Department. Mr. Yunits advised that they cannot sell the property because there are multiple municipal properties on that lot, but they could lease it to someone or put up a garage for the School Department to use. Mr. Yunits stated that right now, they have to look at getting the roof done at the existing Town Hall and do minimal renovations so the Fire Department can move over to the brick portion of the Town Hall because they definitely need more living space, especially with the increasing number of female fire fighters joining the department. Mr. Rich asked if they could use the ARPA funds for the Fire Department's improvements and Mr. Yunits answered that he doesn't believe they have enough funds for that. Mr. Yunits advised that he has been speaking with the cost estimator

and the cost of the roof would be approximately \$300,000. Mr. Rich asked why the cost was so high. Mr. Yunits stated that because of the equipment that is on top of the roof, it would have to be removed and replaced, but they did consult with a company.

B. Old Business

1. Discussion on Town Meeting Articles.

The Board reported that they had no town meeting articles to add or discuss.

2. Review and/or Vote on Town of Norton Code of Conduct Policy for Appointed and Elected Board/Committee Members.

Mr. Snyder stated that Ms. Luciano is still working on this and it will be discussed at a future meeting.

C. Town Manager's Report

1. FY25 Budget Update.

Mr. Yunits advised that the Charter Commission tuition dropped from \$1,291,159 to \$1,055,151. He noted that the School Choice receiving tuition increased by approximately \$215,000 or \$216,000 and that goes right to the School Department and the same goes for the Library (it is pass-through funding that goes directly to them). Mr. Yunits advised that with the decrease in charges and slight increase in revenue, there is \$226,500 difference from last year from Governor's local aid. Mr. Yunits stated that the Chapter 70 funding increased by about \$65,190 and Unrestricted Government Aid went up by \$74,539. Mr. Snyder asked if they typically see a major difference in the preliminary cherry sheet estimates and the final figures and Mr. Yunits answered that they typically don't and stated that it is usually pretty close. Ms. Luciano pointed out in regard to the Charter Tuition Reimbursement dropped by approximately \$100,000 and didn't recall this being brought up at the joint meeting last week. Mr. Yunits confirmed that it did drop by \$102,800. Ms. Luciano clarified that this is because the State reimbursed the Town at a lower level because of the number of kids, which Mr. Yunits confirmed that the number of kids probably dropped.

2. Municipal Empowerment Act.

Mr. Yunits advised that he doesn't know what will be approved on this, but one item within this act to make permanent from COVID-19 is the flexibility on meetings to continue forever, such as holding hybrid meetings. He advised that the threshold for Chapter 30B is \$50,000, but it was recently raised to \$100,000 for schools, but now they are looking to do that for everyone before having to do a full procurement process. Mr. Yunits stated that if this goes through, it would eliminate the requirement to publish in COMMBUYS. Mr. Yunits explained that in regard to the water charges, the Town entered into an intermunicipal agreement with Mansfield. He explained that prior to the agreement, Norton couldn't apply demands to Mansfield properties that Norton was supplying water to, but now with this agreement it will allow for a town to issue demands and liens for properties in other towns they are supplying water to. The Town Manager mentioned that another COVID-19 measure that will be continuing is outdoor dining with the serving of alcohol. He mentioned that one proposal is to allow local communities to put 5% surcharge on excise tax and another proposal would allow for the hotel/motel tax to increase 6% to 7%. Mr. Yunits mentioned that there is the possibility of increasing the meals tax by 0.75% to 1%. He advised that double-pole enforcement is in there as well and noted that the number of double poles in

Massachusetts is astronomical and now, they will be able to charge fines to utility companies with double poles. Mr. Yunits reported that he also saw that the Governor did was eliminating the requirement with most municipal jobs within the State to require a college degree. He stated that lots of jobs can be learned by experience and don't need a college degree, so this is the new focus to open up these jobs to more people.

3. Reed & Barton Update.

Mr. Yunits advised that the Water and Sewer Department and their engineer met with the State last week to go over the progress of that project within the design. He stated that they are still in the design phase of installing water and sewer down elm street, but the other aspect is heavily dependent on the Elm Street side of the site. The Town Manager explained that the possible buyer had a meeting with the State and she is going to let him know how that went, but he hasn't heard back from her even after asking how it went. Mr. Yunits informed the Board that if he doesn't hear from her, he is going to have to reach out to the State to find someone else to get the project moving forward if the current developer doesn't. Mr. Snyder asked if there were any advantages to having the developer coming to the Board and providing an update herself. Mr. Yunits replied that he would ask her and let the Board know what she says.

4. Water and Sewer Commission Appointments Bylaw.

The Town Manager reminded the Board that the Town recently approved the Select Board being responsible for making the appointments to this commission. He advised the Board that in April, James Jardin's position will be up for appointment and he has submitted a letter that he would like to be appointed, so this will be put on a future agenda. Mr. Yunits advised that anyone that wants to serve on the Water and Sewer Commission can submit a letter of interest.

VII. Select Board's Report and Mail

1. Letter From North Cottage Program, Inc. Recognizing the Norton Police Department.

Mr. Rich stated that a letter was sent to Police Chief Brian Clark from the North Cottage Program recognizing the Norton Police Department, which he read into the record as follows:

Dear Chief Brian Clark,

On behalf of the North Cottage Program, I would like to thank you, your officers and your social workers for helping with the situation we had last week with our former Graduate House resident.

The resident was extremely difficult to deal with and your team were very understanding. They were willing to listen to us and showed empathy towards us, but most importantly, they offered us support and guidance on how to handle the situation. It was the information that was given to us that ultimately helped us to have the resident leave our property and not return.

Your team was also kind to our resident and tried to help him to make the right decision. They treated him with respect, even though they were not being treated with respect. We were all very impressed by this.

We look forward to our continued partnership with the Norton Police Department in helping people struggling with addiction and keeping our community safe.

The Board recognized the great work of the Norton Police Department.

2. Recognition of Sergeant Jacob Dennett Being Honored as a Community All-Star by the Bruins and Massachusetts State Lottery.

Mr. Rich stated that Sergeant Dennett was recognized by the Bruins and MA State Lottery as a Community All-Star for being an 18-year veteran at the Norton Police Department and a School Resource Officer at the Norton High School.

3. NEMA Deputy Director Ray Cord Recipient of 1st Annual Humanitarian Award.

Mr. Rich announced that Mr. Raymond Cord received the 1st Annual Humanitarian Award from the Norton Media Center. He emphasized that this couldn't go to a more deserving person and thanked him for all he does for the community. Mr. Rich stated that Mr. Cord runs the whole show and it is very impressive how he does everything.

IX. **Warrants**

Mr. Hornsby reported that the following Payroll and Invoice Warrants were approved:

- a. Invoice Warrant AP24-30 dated January 25, 2024.
- b. Payroll Warrant PR24-15 for the week ended January 20, 2024, Warrant dated January 24, 2024.
- c. Invoice Warrant AP24-31 dated February 1, 2024.

X. **Other Business**

Other Business: Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance.

There was no other business to discuss.

XI. **Next Meeting's Agenda** – February 15, 2024.

XII. **Executive Session.**

There was no executive session scheduled for this evening.

XIII. **Adjournment.**

**MOTION was made by Mr. Hornsby to adjourn the Select Board meeting at 8:48 P.M.
Seconded by Mr. Rich. Vote: Unanimous. MOTION CARRIES.**

URL Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=23lRsgbliUk>

Respectfully Submitted by:



Jennifer Reid, Office Administrator


**SELECT BOARD
MINUTES OF MEETING
FEBRUARY 1, 2024**



Kevin Snyder, Chair



Steven Hornsby, Vice-Chair



Alec Rich, III, Clerk

Megan Artz



Denise Luciano

Minutes Approved by Board on: February 15, 2024