

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING
January 11, 2021

A virtual meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman Alicia Cannon at 7:00 PM, using Zoom Video Communication (Video Conferencing App) at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85160140746?pwd=Wjdkb0EvTTFYN1NzZko3Y3Y0UWh3UT09>
Meeting ID: 851 6014 0746; Passcode: 998891; Dial by phone: 1-646-558-8656. Board Members Present: Cannon, Athanas, Melia, Ampagoomian, and Collins. Also Present: Adam D. Gaudette, Town Manager.

Chairman Cannon asked all attendees to mute their microphones unless they are speaking or wish to speak. Inappropriate comments and/or disruptive behavior will result in immediate dismissal.

Chairman Cannon read the following notice aloud: Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order concerning imposition on strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, meetings of the Northbridge Board of Selectmen will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: **1) August 17, 2020.** A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to approve the August 17, 2020 minutes as presented with the readings omitted. Vote yes/Unanimous. **2) September 14, 2020.** A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to approve the September 14, 2020 minutes as presented with the readings omitted. Vote yes/Unanimous. **3) September 28, 2020.** A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to approve the September 28, 2020 minutes as presented with the readings omitted. Vote yes/Unanimous. **4) October 5, 2020.** A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to approve the October 5, 2020 minutes as presented with the readings omitted. Vote yes/Unanimous.

PUBLIC HEARING/None

APPOINTMENTS/By the Board of Selectmen: Cultural Council (2 vacancies) - Present: Yurima Guilarte-Walker, Chairman. **1) Kathleen Rheaume.** Ms. Guilarte-Walker introduced Kathleen stating that she is a retired teacher and has experience in grant writing. She stated Ms. Rheaume is thrilled to have this opportunity to look over the grants that will be proposed by the Council. **2) Mary Contino.** Ms. Guilarte-Walker stated that Ms. Contino has her Master's Degree in Education and taught for more than 30 years, has grant writing experience, volunteers for St. Patrick's Church, and is Chairperson of the Board of Registrars. Ms. Contino stated that she is looking forward to serving on the Cultural Council. Selectman Melia asked if Ms. Guilarte-Walker could explain the mission of the Cultural Council. Ms. Guilarte-Walker explained that the Cultural Council is in charge of promoting cultural activities through grants provided by the State. She also pointed out that the Cultural Council is in charge of applying for the grants to fund the programs. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Collins to appoint Kathleen Rheaume and Mary Contino to the Cultural Council. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Bylaw Review Committee (BOS- 2 designees) / Vote to appoint 1 Select Board member and 1 Member at Large. Richard Sasseville (Member at Large). Mr. Sasseville stated that he spent 18 years with the Northbridge Department of Public Works and a great deal of time writing bylaws and attending Bylaw Review Committee meetings, so he is very familiar with how it works. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Athanas to appoint Mr. Richard Sasseville as one of two Selectmen's designees (Member at Large) on the Bylaw Review Committee. Chairman Cannon asked the Board if any members were interested in joining

this committee as well. Selectman Melia stated both he and Selectman Collins are currently serving on the Charter Review Committee and felt it should be another Board member. Chairman Cannon stated she would fill the position if neither Selectman Ampagoomian nor Selectman Athanas were interested. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to appoint Chairman Cannon as the Board's designee to the Bylaw Review Committee. Vote yes/Unanimous.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT/None

Linda Usher/Request to hold the 33rd Annual Whitin Five-Mile Road Race, Thursday, November 25, 2021, subject to the safety requirements of the Northbridge Police Department. Town Manager Gaudette stated that this road race has been going on for some time and there have never been any issues. He advised the Board there is a map of the race route included in the agenda packet as well as comments from the DPW Director and Chief of Police advising that they have no issues with the request. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Athanas to approve Ms. Usher's request to hold the 33rd Annual Whitin Five-Mile Road Race, Thursday, November 25, 2021, subject to the safety requirements of the Northbridge Police Department. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Safety Committee Meeting Minutes [October 14, 2020]/Vote to accept recommendations. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to accept the recommendations as laid out in the October 14, 2020 Safety Committee Meeting minutes. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Town Clerk/Request to hang a banner across Church Street from Sunday, May 9, 2021 to Sunday, May 23, 2021 to announce the Annual Town Election to be held on Tuesday, May 18, 2021. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian seconded/Mr. Collins to approve the request to hang a banner across Church Street from Sunday, May 9, 2021 to Sunday, May 23, 2021 to announce the Annual Town Election to be held on Tuesday, May 18, 2021. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Pine Grove Cemetery Deeds (Vote to approve the sale of lot(s))/ 1) James and Jeanne Westbury [Lot No. 24B, single grave, Locust Ave. South]. Selectman Athanas asked about the status of finances for Pine Grove. Town Manager Gaudette stated that the funds for Pine Grove are good, and recently work was completed for tree removal and minor road work. He explained from a capital standpoint we are still maintaining and typically we try to use any leftover operating money, so the large capital remains. A motion/Mr. Athanas seconded/Mr. Melia to approve the sale of lot No. 24B, single grave, [Locust Ave. South]. Vote yes/Unanimous. **2) William and Deborah Ballou [Lot No. 33A and 34, 3 graves, Birch Path North].** A motion/Mr. Athanas seconded/Mr. Melia to approve the sale of lots No. 33A and 34, 3 graves, [Birch Path North]. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Riverdale Cemetery Deeds (Vote to approve the sale of lot(s))/1) Linda and Bruce Allen [Lot 10-C, Hemlock Ave.]. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian seconded/Mr. Collins to approve the sale of Lot 10-C, Hemlock Ave. Vote yes/Unanimous. **2) Maryelizabeth and David Ryder [Lot No. 611, Willow Ave.].** A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Collins to approve the sale of Lot No. 611, Willow Ave. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Spring Annual Town Meeting/Vote to close the warrant on Friday, March 5, 2021 at 12:00 Noon. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Athanas to close the Spring Annual Town Meeting Warrant on Friday, March 5, 2021 at 12:00 noon. Vote yes/Unanimous.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT: Key Meetings Attended: 1) Monday, December 28, 2020 – Held Firefighter Union negotiations via Zoom. Monday, December 28, 2020 – Held DPW Union Negotiations via Zoom. Monday, December 28, 2020 – Attended the Board of Heath Zoom call on school winter sports. Tuesday, December 29, 2020 – Conference call with staff and Town Counsel regarding personnel FMLA

process. Tuesday, January 5, 2021 – Met with Police Chief and Police Lt to prepare for Union negotiations. Tuesday, January 5, 2021 – Attended the Lieutenant Governor’s Weekly Conference Zoom Call for Town Managers. Tuesday, January 5, 2021 – Conference call with Denise Baker from MMA who asked that I co-host a managers’ networking forum at the annual meeting (being held virtually) at the end of January. Thursday, January 7, 2021 – Negotiations via Zoom with the Dispatchers Union. Thursday, January 7, 2021 – Conference Virtual Meeting with Howard-Stein-Hudson and DPW staff to prepare for a CMMPO TIP Presentation later this month. Friday, January 8, 2021 – Virtual Conference call with the Town Clerk and the Moderator with a vendor for electronic voting equipment. Friday, January 8, 2021 – Conference Call with my co-Chair for Managers/Police Chiefs Committee to discuss recently approved Police Reform Bill.

2) Balmer School Building Project: Project construction by Fontaine Brothers continues with precautionary measures in place per State construction guidelines for construction projects moving forward during the pandemic. The majority of the site work has been completed allowing for work to be conducted in the interior of the building (framing, drywall, painting, finishing, etc.). The Town Manager is working with Town Counsel on agreements for fence replacement for the abutters off Overlook Street. The Town Manager worked during the last week of December with the CM and Town Accountant on applying for CARES Act Funding for reimbursement on any COVID-related expenditures. **3) Lasell Field Turf Project:** The project is nearing completion. The GC Green Acres is working through punch list items. The handicapped-accessible lift has been inspected and approved by the State. The project has been issued a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy and now that the lift has been completed, the Building Inspector will be able to issue the full Certificate of Occupancy once he receives the State inspection documentation. **4) Fire Station Project:** The RFQ for the OPM was advertised and the Town received 7 proposal submissions on November 12th. A working group of the BPCC reviewed the proposals initially in order to narrow down a recommendation to the BPCC to interview 3 finalists. The 3 finalists were CHA, Colliers, and Pomroy Associates. After holding interviews the BPCC voted unanimously to select CHA. The Town Manager has begun negotiating an agreement for general terms and conditions as well as scope and fee with CHA. Once an agreement is in place, the next step is to develop an RFQ to select a design team (architect). **5) FY2021 Budget:** The Town Manager has initiated the FY2021 Budget and Capital Development process providing all staff assignment documents last week. Staff submittals are due next week. The Town Manager has advised the school department of the budget and capital plan outlook. **6) State Budget News:** Representative Muradian shared that he was able to include several requests by the Town Manager in Bond Bill proposals this week. The Transportation Bond Bill includes \$1,200,000 to be expended for the reconstruction of the Sutton Street bridge deck and the School Street culvert improvements. It also includes \$1,500,000 for enhancing circulation, reducing congestion, and improving pedestrian safety along Linwood Avenue. The Economic Bond Bill includes \$35,000 to be expended for economic development purposes and \$500,000 to be expended equally to the city of Worcester and the towns of Auburn, Grafton, Leicester, Millbury, Northbridge, Shrewsbury, and Upton for economic development purposes. The next step is to pass the Senate and also to be signed by the Governor. Please note, that even if achieving these successful hurdles, the monies will only be available if released by the Governor during his remaining term. Selectman Athanas asked about the Police Reform Bill and what it does. Town Manager Gaudette explained that there is a call out at the State and Federal level to look at policies and procedures that towns have in place in terms of reviewing officer’s certification processes. Town Manager Gaudette stated that he sits on a committee with the Massachusetts Municipal Association with Police Chiefs and a lot of work was put into this bill on potential racism through Police activity, and one item discussed was certifying officers and there will be a civilian review. Another discussion topic was qualified immunity, which allows for public officials to have immunity, which was held back and will be studied by a committee. Selectman Melia asked if there was money left over in the Pine Grove Cemetery account if the sign coming into the cemetery could be sandblasted and painted.

SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS: Selectman Athanas stated that there is a panel missing on the salt shed and asked if someone could repair it. The Highway Superintendent stated that Superior Roofing is coming in to repair it. Selectman Ampagoomian 1) asked if anyone knew when Burger King would be holding

their grand re-opening. Town Manager Gaudette stated he was not aware of a grand re-opening, but he will reach out to staff to see if any information has come in. **2)** asked if there has been any feedback on Plummer's Corner. Mr. Luchini advised that he has not heard anything about the study being completed on the Route 122 corridor and added that field work has slowed down so they are still waiting for a report. **3)** mentioned there were a lot of potholes in downtown Rockdale. Mr. Luchini replied that he would have his guys go out and take a look. **4)** asked Town Manager Gaudette if he had any word on when our Police and Fire personnel would be receiving the vaccine. Town Manager Gaudette replied that we have been working with the Town of Upton on a regional effort and they are getting their first vaccine this week. He explained that the State requires a minimum of 200 patients in order to have a site set up. **Selectman Collins** acknowledged that the former Compost Site Monitor, Paul Monast, will be greatly missed and always did a great job at the site. He sent his condolences to the Monast family on behalf of the Board of Selectmen. **Selectman Melia 1)** witnessed a sink hole in the northbound lane of Hill Street near Marston Road and brought it to the attention of the Town Manager. He announced that it is scheduled to be repaired tomorrow and the Highway Superintendent confirmed same. Selectman Melia then asked if we could have a discussion with the company that does the work on water leaks as it seems anytime there is a water leak repaired, we always end up with a sink hole. He understands that roads do settle but feels they should do a better job, especially since the repairs are right in the middle of the road. Mr. Luchini said unfortunately, a lot of times when they make the repair from a water leak the surrounding area is saturated and when they back fill it, it will naturally settle, which is why they wait to pave roads after a new water line has been installed. He also mentioned he would reach out to them and see if they can do a better job keeping up on them until the permanent patch goes in. **2)** received many compliments on the lights that were installed downtown and gave a job well done to the individuals who assisted.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA/None

CORRESPONDENCE/None

EXECUTIVE SESSION/None

Chairman Cannon announced that the next meeting will be held on Monday, January 25, 2021.

A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mrs. Collins to adjourn the public meeting. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:33 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Russell D. Collins, Clerk

/mjc

**LIST OF DOCUMENTATION
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING - OPEN SESSION
January 11, 2021**

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. 1) August 17, 2020

-Copy of August 17, 2020 meeting minutes

2) September 14, 2020

-Copy of September 14, 2020 meeting minutes

3) September 28, 2020

-Copy of September 28, 2020 meeting minutes

4) October 5, 2020

-Copy of October 5, 2020 meeting minutes

II. PUBLIC HEARING/None

**III. APPOINTMENTS/By the Board of Selectmen: B. Cultural Council (2 vacancies): 1)
Kathleen Rheume**

-Copy of talent bank form of Kathleen Rheume

2) Mary Contino. Present: Yurima Guilarte

-Copy of talent bank form of Mary Contino

**C. Bylaw Review Committee (2 designees) / Vote to appoint 1 Select Board member and 1
Member at Large/Richard Sasseville (Member at Large)**

-Copy of talent bank form of Richard Sasseville

IV. CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT/None

V. DECISIONS:

**D. Linda Usher/Request to hold the 33rd Annual Whitin Five-Mile Road Race, Thursday,
November 25, 2021, subject to the safety requirements of the Northbridge Police
Department**

-Copy of email request for the Annual Whitin Five-Mile Road Race

-Copy of race route

-Copy of Hold Harmless Agreement

-Copy of email approval from DPW Director James Shuris

-Copy of email approval from the Chief of Police Walter Warchol

E. Safety Committee Meeting Minutes [October 14, 2020]/Vote to accept recommendations

-Copy of Safety Committee Meeting minutes from October 14, 2020

**F. Town Clerk/Request to hang a banner across Church Street from Sunday, May 9, 2021
to Sunday, May 23, 2021 to announce the Annual Town Election to be held on Tuesday,
May 18, 2021**

-Copy of memo from the Town Clerk's Office requesting to hang a banner

G. Pine Grove Cemetery Deeds (Vote to approve the sale of lot(s))/ 1) James and Jeanne

Westbury [Lot No. 24B, single grave, Locust Ave. South]

-Copy of cemetery deed for James and Jeanne Westbury

2) William and Deborah Ballou [Lot No. 33A and 34, 3 graves, Birch Path North]

-Copy of cemetery deed for William and Deborah Ballou

H. Riverdale Cemetery Deeds (Vote to approve the sale of lot(s))/1) Linda and Bruce Allen [Lot 10-C, Hemlock Ave.]

-Copy of cemetery deed for Linda and Bruce Allen

2) Maryelizabeth and David Ryder [Lot No. 611, Willow Ave.]

-Copy of cemetery deed for Maryelizabeth and David Ryder

I. Spring Annual Town Meeting/Vote to close the warrant on Friday, March 5, 2021 at 12:00 Noon/No documentation

- VI. DISCUSSIONS/None**
- VII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT/None**
- VIII. SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS/No documentation**
- IX. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA/None**
- X. CORRESPONDENCE/None**
- XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION/None**