

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING
March 23, 2020

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman James Athanas at 7:00 PM, Northbridge Community Television, 198 Church Avenue, Northbridge, MA 01534. Board Members Present: Athanas, Cannon, and Melia. Also Present: Adam D. Gaudette, Town Manager.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES/None.

PUBLIC HEARING/None.

APPOINTMENTS/Resignations/None.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT. Selectman Melia offered to read aloud a statement he wrote about Richard Lachapelle, a former Northbridge Police Lieutenant, who passed away last evening at the age of 89. Mr. Melia mentioned Mr. Lachapelle became a full-time Police Officer in 1966 and was promoted to Sergeant in 1979. In 1990, Sgt. Lachapelle was again promoted and became Northbridge's first Police Lieutenant as recommended by then Police Chief Thomas J. Melia, III. Mr. Lachapelle retired in 1995, spending his time between Northbridge and Cape Cod. Mr. Lachapelle was the first Safety Officer for the Northbridge Police Department and taught safety classes to many Northbridge students. On behalf of the Northbridge Board of Selectmen, Mr. Melia said Mr. Lachapelle will be missed and offered his condolences to the entire Lachapelle family.

Declaration of Emergency (COVID-19)/Vote to approve. Town Manager Gaudette advised he put this item on the agenda as many other towns have in order to adopt the declaration but since the Governor has declared a statewide state of emergency, there is no requirement for the Town to do so. He said he also reached out to the Department of Revenue [DOR] and the Mass. Emergency Management Agency [MEMA] for clarification regarding spending monies under emergency purposes above appropriations as well as be eligible for reimbursement if funds become available through FEMA or MEMA. As such Mr. Gaudette suggested this item be passed over. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Ms. Cannon to pass over this item as explained by Town Manager Gaudette. Vote yes/Melia, Cannon, and Athanas.

Spring Annual Town Meeting [May 5, 2020]/Vote to sign warrant upon completion and final review by Town Counsel. Mr. Gaudette explained the Board must vote to sign the warrant subject to review by Town Counsel. He also noted that it has not been decided if Town Meeting will be delayed or not, but the warrant can still be posted. He added that for now they will move forward with the May 5th date. A motion/Ms. Cannon, seconded/Mr. Melia to sign the warrant subject to completion and final review by Town Counsel. Vote yes/Cannon, Melia and Athanas.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT. The Town Manager stated the next Selectmen's meeting is scheduled for April 13th but due to the circumstances with the COVID crisis, he wanted to keep things brief tonight and thus he moved the other non-essential items to the April 13th agenda.

SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS: Selectman Cannon asked about the Lasell Field construction that is supposed to start on April 6th and is that still the plan. Mr. Gaudette replied yes, barring

any construction restrictions by the State, it will begin April 6th. **Selectman Melia/1)** pointed out that New Hampshire will be allowing restaurants to sell alcohol with to-go meals and asked the Town Manager if he has heard whether Massachusetts will be following suit. Mr. Gaudette said he hasn't heard anything in that regard yet. **2)** Also asked what is being done to keep public safety employees safe during this pandemic, i.e. are they sanitizing cruisers and ambulances, etc. The Town Manager confirmed they have policies and protocols in place and are following all precautionary measures. **Chairman Athanas/1)** noted that many restaurants are experiencing tough times due to the pandemic and asked if there is any way the town can suspend the small meals tax. Mr. Gaudette responded that anything having to do with taxes and elections come under the jurisdiction of the legislature. However, he pointed out they only pay taxes on what they sell and said he is not aware of any special legislation related to that. **2)** He brought up social distancing and urged the younger folks to follow the guidelines.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA/None.

CORRESPONDENCE/None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION/None.

A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mrs. Cannon to adjourn the public meeting. Vote yes/Melia, Cannon and Athanas.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:11 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Nolan, Clerk

/mjw

LIST OF DOCUMENTATION

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING - OPEN SESSION

March 23, 2020

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES/None

II. PUBLIC HEARING/None

III. APPOINTMENTS/Resignations/None

IV. CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT/None

V. DECISIONS

A. Declaration of Emergency (COVID-19)/Vote to approve.

-Copy of Department of Local Services Bulletin dated March 20, 2020 regarding emergency expenditures and borrowing during the COVID-19 crisis.

-Copy of email dated March 19, 2020 from Town Accountant Vaidya to Town Manager Gaudette with advice from the Director of Accounts [state]

B. Spring Annual Town Meeting [May 5, 2020]/Vote to sign warrant upon completion and final review by Town Counsel

-Copy of warrant [Draft #6]

VI. DISCUSSIONS/None

VII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT – No Documentation

VIII. SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS - No Documentation

IX. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA/None.

X. CORRESPONDENCE/None.

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION/None.