

## BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING

March 27, 2023

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman Collins at 7:00 PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. Board Members Present: Ampagoomian, Begin, Collins, Melia and Paulhus. **Also Present:** Town Manager Adam D. Gaudette.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

***Presentation: Volunteer Service Award presented to Harry Berkowitz in honor of his more than 30 years of service to the Town of Northbridge.*** Chairman Collins read aloud and presented a plaque to Mr. Harry Berkowitz and congratulated him on his 30+ years of service. Chairman Collins thanked him for his service to the Town.

***Certificate of Special Recognition: Jillian Shenian – First Female State Trooper from Northbridge.*** Representative Muradian and Senator Fattman were present to recognize Northbridge's first female State Trooper. Also in attendance were members of the State Police, Northbridge Police, and Ms. Shenian's family to witness this proud moment. Representative Muradian spoke to Ms. Shenian stating that she makes our community so proud and he knows that she is going to do great work. He then read aloud a special citation from the Mass. House of Representatives. Senator Fattman reminded those present of how serious a job it is to be a police officer, with what happened this afternoon in Nashville. He also expressed respect for Ms. Shenian's courage and willingness to help people in need. He then read aloud a special citation from the Mass. Senate. Chairman Collins expressed that we appreciate Ms. Shenian and her family for being a part of this town and all that she has gone through to become a State Police Officer. He added that we hope for her safety every day. He then read aloud the Certificate of Special Recognition from the Town of Northbridge.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES: 1) December 5, 2022.** A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Begin to approve the December 5, 2022 meeting minutes as presented with the readings omitted. Vote yes/Unanimous. **2) December 19, 2022.** A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Begin to approve the December 19, 2022 meeting minutes as presented with the readings omitted. Vote yes/Unanimous.

**PUBLIC HEARING/None**

**APPOINTMENTS: By the Board of Selectmen (Vote to reappoint): Ann Riley, Board of Registrars.** A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to reappoint Ann Riley to the Board of Registrars. Vote yes/Unanimous.

**By the Town Manager (Vote to Nominate): Danielle Edmands, Alternate Animal Inspector [emergency backup].** A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Melia to approve the nomination of Danielle Edmands as the Alternate Animal Inspector as the emergency backup. Vote yes/Unanimous.

**CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT/None**

**K & B Krayons & Beyond, Inc./Request to hold a boot drive at Memorial Square and Oviaan Square on 1) Saturday, June 3, 2023 [Rain date: June 10, 2023] and 2) Saturday, August 12, 2023 [Rain Date: August 19, 2023]/Present: Brandi Cespedes.** Ms. Cespedes explained that K&B Krayons is a local non-profit organization and she has lived in Northbridge herself since 2004. She explained she took a trip in 2017 to the Dominican Republic, where she noticed children that should have been in school standing on the side of the road with no clothes on, which is why she started this organization. She was hoping to hold

a boot drive to help raise awareness and get some recognition. She informed the Board that their major fundraiser takes place at Gillette Stadium, since all of their concession stands benefit non-profit organizations and they have had a contract with them for about 8 years now. Up until now that has been the sole source of funding and she has added in some poker nights and things like that. She also indicated she partners with Net of Compassion in Worcester, who has an outreach program on Wednesdays, and she helps supply some of the items that they provide to those in need. She also works with Project Just Because in Hopkinton. Chief Labrie stated that he has a couple concerns that he would be looking to address down the road. He said there currently is a policy under which Boot Drives are allowed. He recommended that the Board limit her request to one drive, to give others a chance to participate. He also expressed his concerns for safety issues as it is a very busy intersection in town. He added that with all the social media avenues available, it would be easier for organizations to go that route if the Boot Drive Policy were to be removed. He recommended the Board eliminate these all together in the future. He added that if the Board did not wish to eliminate them that they make more stringent changes such as checking these non-profits and show proof of where this money is going. Town Manager Gaudette noted that the bylaw currently allows one boot drive per month from April to November. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to approve K & B Krayons & Beyond, Inc.'s request to hold a boot drive at Memorial Square and Ovia Square on Saturday, June 3, 2023 [Rain date: June 10, 2023]. Vote yes/Unanimous. The Board denied the request for a boot drive at Memorial Square and Ovia Square on Saturday, August 12, 2023 [Rain Date: August 19, 2023].

**Spring Annual Town Meeting [May 2, 2023] / 1) Vote to sign warrant upon completion and final review by Town Counsel.** A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Begin to sign the Spring Town Meeting Warrant [May 2, 2023], upon completion and final review by Town Counsel. Vote yes/Unanimous.

**Dog Hearing [Holt] / Vote to set a dog hearing at 7:05 PM on Monday, April 10, 2023.** Town Manager Gaudette explained that we have received a complaint from a resident who would like to have a vicious dog hearing per the Bylaw. Tonight, the Board would be setting the date to hold the hearing, and from there we will notify the complainant and defendant of the set date and time. Chief Labrie noted that they received a couple of complaints regarding an unleashed dog in a multifamily neighborhood and that one of his officers did respond and will plan to attend the hearing to testify. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to set a dog hearing at 7:05 p.m. on Monday, April 10, 2023. Vote yes/Unanimous.

**Safety Committee Meeting Minutes [January 18, 2023]/Vote to accept the recommendations.** A motion/Mr. Begin, seconded/Mr. Melia to accept the recommendations of the Safety Committee as outlined in the minutes of January 18, 2023. Vote yes/Unanimous.

**Sign Purchase & Sale Agreement for Castle Hill Farm Purchase / Present: Glen King, CPC Chair.** Mr. King noted that they are moving forward with the acquisition of a portion of the Castle Hill property that was approved at the Fall Annual Town Meeting. They are now at the point of signing the Purchase and Sale Agreement. Selectman Melia asked if he could explain the portion of the agreement that notes the Seller has informed the Buyer that the Seller will make a monetary donation in the amount of \$50,000. Mr. King explained that the Sellers are making a contribution that will be managed by the Conservation Commission for the maintenance of the property. Currently, discussions are underway to see what fields should be mowed, cleaned up and whatever maintenance needs to be completed. The Seller graciously offered to begin the funding of that, which can only be used for the maintenance of Castle Hill. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Begin to sign the Purchase & Sale Agreement for the Castle Hill Farm purchase. Vote yes/Unanimous.

**Open Sky Community Services/Request to hold the Annual Valley Friendship Tour 5K on Saturday, June 3, 2023 beginning at 8:30 AM.** Town Manager Gaudette expressed concern that the Road Race is the same date as the boot drive. Chief Labrie stated that the race comes down Douglas Road and runners

turn right onto Linwood Ave. then left on Cross Street, straight up Prospect Street, left onto Cottage Street, left onto Hill Street and back. He added that it is a walk, which is usually escorted by police so there are plenty of officers. He did not believe it would be an issue. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to approve Open Sky's request to hold the Annual Valley Friendship Tour 5K at 8:30 AM on Saturday, June 3, 2023. Vote yes/Unanimous.

**Cable Franchise Agreement Renewal Update / Present: Harry Berkowitz.** Mr. Berkowitz noted that he met with the representative last week from Charter to present their requests. He reported that they requested a 5% grant each year for the next ten years, in addition to a capital grant on years 1 and 5 for \$250,000, which would be for equipment. As of right now, it doesn't sound like they will exceed 5% total. The 5% is based on revenues taken in from cable customers. Mr. Berkowitz explained that they requested to have 3 HD channels added to the Spectrum line up, the local access channel, the School channel and the government channel. Charter reported that that request could only be done on a lease basis and we would be required to pay Charter back \$10,000 a year per channel. They also requested an electronic programming guide for the local channels and offered to pay the cost. In addition, they requested keeping the local origination site at the Cable Studio, Town Hall and Northbridge High School. They would like to lock their local channels and keep them in sequence. For the \$10,000 annual charge for the HD channels, they would request that be a separate deal and not part of the contract, so they have the ability to drop it if needed. Charter will no longer give seniors discounts and refuse to give capital equipment funding. Mr. Berkowitz reasoned that Grafton is receiving 5% plus capital equipment funding along with other towns. Worcester is receiving the program guide but Charter is refusing to give it to the Town of Northbridge. Selectman Paulhus asked if the local channels are still able to be streamed. Mr. Berkowitz replied that the local channels are streamed through the web but that is thanks to the crew at the cable studio. Selectman Paulhus asked where the funding comes from for them to be able to stream the local channels. Mr. Berkowitz replied that it is their own expense.

**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT: Key Meetings Attended:** Monday, March 13, 2023 – Participated in the weekly Fire Station Design Team virtual meeting. Monday, March 13, 2023 – Attended the Board of Selectmen Meeting. Wednesday, March 15, 2023 – Met with Whittin Community Center staff and Town Accountant Sharon Emerick to discuss AROA projects. Wednesday, March 15, 2023 – Attended the Finance Committee Meeting; public hearing on the FY24 Budget. Thursday, March 16, 2023 – Attended the Fire Station project site visit meeting. Thursday, March 16, 2023 – Participated in a virtual meeting with MADEP and BOH staff/members regarding the Quaker Landfill. Friday, March 17, 2023 – Held a Department Managers' meeting. Monday, March 20, 2023 – Participated in the weekly Fire Station Design Team virtual meeting. Monday, March 20, 2023 – Ran the Cable Advisory Committee's Zoom meeting with Charter. Tuesday, March 21, 2023 – Met with John Brissette, HUB Insurance, to discuss General Liability Insurance proposal. Tuesday, March 21, 2023 – Attended the BPCC Meeting for the Fire Station and NES projects. Wednesday, March 22, 2023 – Met with Jamie L, DPW, and Terry M and David W of Whittinsville Water Company for a quarterly meeting. Wednesday, March 22, 2023 – Attended a virtual Group Health Insurance Subcommittee Meeting. Wednesday, March 22, 2023 – Attended the Finance Committee Meeting. Thursday, March 23, 2023 – Attended an Electricity Aggregation meeting to discuss this year's bid preparation. Thursday, March 23, 2023 – Attended the Fire Station project site visit meeting. Friday, March 24, 2023 – Met with Michael Welch, CEO of Unibank. Miscellaneous Calls/Visits with Residents, Staff, and Board Members. 2) **Fire Station Project:** Weekly design team meetings continue to occur every Monday morning and weekly construction meetings every Thursday afternoon with the project team, the GC M. O'Connor, and the site contractor Leahy. The steel frame is installed in the main building and light gauge metal framing for the interior walls of the administration area is underway. MEP above ceiling and in wall rough in continues in the apparatus bay and administration area. AVB application for the outbuilding and main building continues. CMU install for the hose tower continues. Next steps include roofing the main building and concrete work for the column infills and the training mezzanine. The BPCC met this past week on 3/21/2023 to approve Change Order #4 and Payment Requisition #10 for the GC as

well as invoices for the OPM, Architect and Testing Services. **3) Northbridge Elementary School Reuse Study:** The architect team from Abacus and the BPCC/Town Manager held a public forum presentation on January 18, 2023, to get feedback from residents on proposed uses and layouts. An existing conditions survey is complete as well as an Environmental Phase 1 and Phase 2. The BPCC met this past week on 3/21/2023 to discuss next steps which shall include finalizing a draft report for BPCC review. The Selectmen have placed an article on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant to get voter authorization to dispose of the property. **4) Linwood Basketball Courts Project:** The Town only received one bid (Quirk Construction) and unfortunately it came in over budget. Thus, the plan is to go to the Spring Town Meeting and seek additional funds such that the contractor can begin construction in June and finish at the end of August. **5) Cable Advisory Committee:** The current Charter/Spectrum Franchise Agreement expires at the end of this May 2023. The Cable Advisory Committee held a public hearing on January 24, 2023 at Town Hall to discuss the Franchise Agreement renewal with the public. The hearing was continued to a later date. The Cable Committee met this past week on 3/21/2023 with Bill Hewig, Attorney from KP Law, and John Maher from Charter to discuss the Town's points of interests. Mr. Hewig will continue to negotiate with Mr. Maher on the suggested terms and the Committee is scheduled to meet again in April. **6) FY2024 Budget and Capital Development:** The Finance Committee met this past week on 3/22/23 and met with NPS, hear presentations on the two petition articles, and vote their positions in order to finalize the Warrant booklet. The Selectmen will vote next Monday, 3/27/23 to set the Warrant pending Counsel's review. The Warrant will then be posted next week on Friday, 3/31/23 in order to comply with the Bylaw requirement.

**SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS:** **Selectman Melia/1)** mentioned to Mr. Luchini that the southern end of Sherry Street is filled with enormous potholes. Mr. Luchini noted that the rain last week didn't help the road situation but said they will take a look at it and use the hot box to repair it. **2)** He also added that Linwood Avenue is in rough shape. Mr. Luchini noted that Linwood Ave. is still under the Complete Streets Program and will be approached this year for an action grant, which won't be a total paving of the road but will include a section of it as well as ADA ramps, intersections and sidewalks. There is also an article on town meeting to match the state grant and cover what the grant doesn't. **Selectman Ampagoomian** asked who is responsible for bridge decking. Mr. Luchini replied that technically it is the Town's, but it requires a lot more engineering so he is trying to get the ball rolling on those.

**ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA: Dog Hearing set for April 10 at 7:05 PM.**

**CORRESPONDENCE/None**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION/None**

A motion/Mr. Begin seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to adjourn the public meeting. Vote yes/Unanimous.

**Meeting Adjourned: 7:51 PM**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Brian Paulhus, Clerk**

/mjc

## LIST OF DOCUMENTATION

### BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING - OPEN SESSION

March 27, 2023

*Presentation: Volunteer Service Award presented to Harry Berkowitz in honor of his more than 30 years of service to the Town of Northbridge.*

*Certificate of Special Recognition: Jillian Shenian – First Female State Trooper from Northbridge*

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

- I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A. 1) December 5, 2022  
-Copy of December 5, 2022 meeting minutes  
  
2) December 19, 2022  
-Copy of December 19, 2022 meeting minutes
- II. PUBLIC HEARING/None
- III. APPOINTMENTS: B. By the Board of Selectmen (Vote to reappoint): Ann Riley, Board of Registrars/No documentation  
  
C. By the Town Manager (Vote to Nominate): Danielle Edmands, Alternate Animal Inspector [emergency backup]  
-Copy of letter from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
-Copy of email from Mrs. Gniadek notifying us that Mr. Guilbault is no longer able to serve  
-Copy of Nomination form for Danielle Edmands as backup
- IV. CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT/None
- V. DECISIONS  
D. K & B Krayons & Beyond, Inc/Request to hold a boot drive at Memorial Square and Ovia Square on 1) Saturday, June 3, 2023 [Rain date: June 10, 2023] and 2) Saturday, August 12, 2023 [Rain Date: August 19, 2023]/Present: Brandi Cespedes  
-Copy of completed Boot Drive Request from for June 10, 2023  
-Copy of completed Boot Drive Request Form for August 19, 2023  
  
E. Spring Annual Town Meeting [May 2, 2023] / 1) Vote to sign warrant upon completion and final review by Town Counsel  
-Copy of draft spring ton meeting warrant  
  
F. Dog Hearing [Holt] / Vote to set a dog hearing at 7:05 PM on Monday, April 10, 2023/No documentation  
  
G. Sign Purchase & Sale Agreement for Castle Hill Farm Purchase / Present: Glen King, CPC Chair  
-Copy of Purchase and Sale Agreement

**H. Safety Committee Meeting Minutes [ January 18, 2023]/Vote to accept the recommendations**

**-Copy of Safety Committee Meeting Minutes**

**I. Open Sky Community Services/Request to hold the Annual Valley Friendship Tour 5K on Saturday, June 3, 2023 to begin at 8:30 AM**

**-Copy of email requesting the Annual Valley Friendship Tour**

**-Copy of route maps for the Valley Friendship Tour**

**-Copy of email from the Chief of Police confirming he has no concerns**

**-Copy of email from the DPW Director confirming he has no concerns**

**VI. DISCUSSIONS:**

**J. Cable Franchise Agreement Renewal Update / Present: Harry Berkowitz**

**-Copy of email regarding the projected Capital Expenses from Attorney William Hewig**

**-Copy of Projected Capital Expenses from NCTV**

**VII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT: Copy of March 13, 2023 – March 24, 2023 Town Managers Report**

**VIII. SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS/No documentation**

**IX. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA/No documentation**

**X. CORRESPONDENCE/None**

**XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION/None**