

**MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD MEETING
MONDAY, AUGUST 17, 2020**

Chairwoman Manupelli called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. via remote participation. Participating members were Mrs. Gonzalez, Mr. Wallner, Mr. Stuto, Mr. O'Leary, and Town Administrator, Michael Gilleberto.

CALL TO ORDER OPEN SESSION

Chairwoman Manupelli called to order the open session at 7:00 p.m.

Members recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES

MADAM CHAIR, I MOVE TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 3, 2020 REGULAR SESSION MINUTES AS AMENDED.

MOTION BY:	MR. STUTO	
SECONDED BY:	MR. O'LEARY	
VOTED BY:	MR. STUTO	AYE
	MRS. GONZALEZ	AYE
	MR. WALLNER	AYE
	MR. O'LEARY	AYE
	MRS. MANUPELLI	AYE

VOTE: 5-0 (UNANIMOUS)

MADAM CHAIR, I MOVE TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 3, 2020 EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES AS WRITTEN.

MOTION BY:	MR. STUTO	
SECONDED BY:	MR. O'LEARY	
VOTED BY:	MR. STUTO	AYE
	MRS. GONZALEZ	AYE
	MR. WALLNER	AYE
	MR. O'LEARY	AYE
	MRS. MANUPELLI	AYE

VOTE: 5-0 (UNANIMOUS)

BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Mr. O'Leary: Nothing to report in relation to his liaison role. Mr. O'Leary mentioned that he spoke last meeting in support of mail in ballots and now he is unsure about advice to constituents given recent National developments. He is unhappy with the Post Master General actions and is concerned that the President is withholding funding to Post Office. We have seen these actions having an impact outside of just voting; mail has been delayed, prescriptions for many are late, mailed reimbursements have been delayed. Mail that previously took days now is taking weeks. Mr. O'Leary believes that if you see something, you should say something. Mr. O'Leary believes

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we should bring this to our elected officials at the State and Federal level. “Politics aside, this is not right.” Mr. O’Leary believes in advocating from the local level up.

Ms. Manupelli asked if the Board should prepare a resolve and polled the members:

- Mr. Wallner would like time to review the current postal situation. He agrees with Mr. O’Leary on the discomfort of what appears to be happening on the federal level. He is not opposed to sending a message. Would like to review a draft. Mr. Wallner is firmly against any efforts that interfere with voting. He would like additional details on what would be in statement, but he is comfortable with general message Mr. O’Leary has proposed.
- Mrs. Gonzalez is not willing to sign at this time. She would like the opportunity to view any drafts before sending. Not willing to sign resolve this evening.
- Mr. Stuto also feels that he needs additional information on what is happening on the Federal level. Mr. Stuto supports making voting easier, but he is not prepared at this time to sign a letter. Mr. Stuto mentioned that he doesn’t feel that constituents of North Reading are concerned with this issue at this point.
- Mrs. Manupelli is in full support of a prepared resolve being sent to State and Federal officials.

Mr. Wallner will draft a document and the Board will review at the next meeting.

Mr. Wallner updated the Board on the contract for AARP Initiate. Things have been progressing and the contract is currently sitting with Town Administrator. Mr. Wallner also mentioned that the planned LUC meeting scheduled for last week to review grant information for the bike trail project, that meeting did not happen.

Mr. Stuto thanks those who came out to show their support at the “Support the Blue” event which was hosted by Mrs. Gonzalez. Mr. Stuto was pleased to see that the event had a representation of varied members of the community.

On behalf of the ZBA, Mr. Stuto has nothing to report at this time.

Mrs. Gonzalez states that the Community Impact Team along with NRPD and NRFD, will be hosting a free masks to Community event on Saturday Aug 22nd at NRHS. The event runs 9-10:30a.m. for residents 60 and over. 11am for any age group.

Mrs. Gonzalez thanked Mr. Stuto for his words supporting the “Support the Blue” event. She also offered a thank you to the other organizers, Laina Simone, Peter Acolla and Annette Gentile. She also thanked CR Signs for a banner, Mr. Jeff Yull for video and Mr. Al Pereira for photos. There are also additional “Support the Blue” signs available for free of charge through the Facebook page.

Mrs. Manupelli proposed a resolve for the Board to consider. She mentioned that data collection for the US Census is shortening the deadline by a month. She feels this has obvious red flags. She would like to issue a resolve to the Congressional Delegation to address shortened deadline. Mrs. Manupelli would prefer an extended deadline due to COVID. She then asked for a poll of

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the Board members; Mr. O’Leary, Mr. Wallner, Mrs. Gonzalez and Mr. Stuto all in support of sending a resolve.

MADAM CHAIR, I MOVE TO ALLOW MRS. MANUPELLI TO WORK WITH MR. GILBERTO TO DRAFT A LETTER ON BEHALF OF BOARD.

MOTION BY:	MR. O’LEARY	
SECONDED BY:	MR. WALLNER	
VOTED BY:	MR. STUTO	AYE
	MRS. GONZALEZ	NO
	MR. WALLNER	AYE
	MR. O’LEARY	AYE
	MRS. MANUPELLI	AYE

VOTE: 4-1(MRS. GONZALEZ OPPOSED)

Mrs. Gonzalez would like to review letter prior to voting in favor.

Mr. Wallner mentioned the theft in lawn signs around town and asked that we all just try to respect each other. Rather than take steps against each other, Mr. Wallner encouraged constituents to get involved in an organization that supports their beliefs. Mrs. Gonzalez agreed that nobody should be taking signs. She feels that you can support BLM, the Police and other organizations, it’s not an either or situation. Mrs. Manupelli agreed that you can support movements without being against others. BLM supporters who attended the “Support the Blue” event were peaceful. Overall it was good to see support and groups peacefully coexisting. Mr. O’Leary was unable to attend the event due to being out of town. Feels it is important to support local law enforcement. Mr. O’Leary feels that BLM, supporters of law enforcement, and first responders can coexist.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Jeff Yull of 427 Park Street – Spoke that he was confused about Hornets Against Hate group, BLM movement and how it relates to Town Government. Mr. Yull said he believes that Mr. Wallner on his personal time was involved with the Hornets Against Hate group. Mr. Yull asked in what official capacity is Mr. Wallner representing BLM, Hornets Against Hate and NR Youth Against Racism. Mrs. Manupelli noted that NRYAR was discussed at a previous Board meeting and the Board offered its unanimous support to the group. Mr. Wallner volunteered to be a liaison to the group. Similar to how Mrs. Gonzalez worked on the “Support the Blue” event.

Mr. Wallner addressed Mr. Yull. Mr. Wallner organized two summits to bring many of these groups together. North Reading Youth Against Racism, NRPD and Community Impact Team. Mr. Yull feels Mr. Wallner is creating division in town that was not there before the BLM movement and Hornets Against Hate. Mr. Yull understands the position of Youth groups, but doesn’t feel Mr. Wallner should be involved.

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Mr. Yull - What really was the purpose of the summit/racial summit that was put together?

Mrs. Gonzalez noted that she has felt attacked by members of Hornets Against Hate since her "Support the Blue" event.

Mrs. Manupelli noted that the Board has funded NRPD for 3 year contracts, so the concern of defunding the Police is not an issue in North Reading at this time.

Mr. Stuto suggested to Mr. Yull that he organize with a group of likeminded residents who have similar concerns.

Mr. O'Leary feels that the response of the Board to the youth group is very reflective of the Town's values. Mr. Wallner's willingness to pull groups together and facilitate meetings is reflective of a movement to bring groups together. The Board's responsibility to listen and hear public opinion, but also to help formulate public opinion. Important for Board Members to facilitate groups coming together and listening to each other.

VOTE TO SIGN STATE PRIMARY WARRANT

MR. CHAIRMAN, I MOVE TO SIGN THE SEPTEMBER 1, 2020 STATE PRIMARY WARRANT.

MOTION BY:	MR. STUTO	
SECONDED BY:	MR. O'LEARY	
VOTED BY:	MR. STUTO	AYE
	MRS. GONZALEZ	AYE
	MR. WALLNER	AYE
	MR. O'LEARY	AYE
	MRS. MANUPELLI	AYE

VOTE: 5-0 (UNANIMOUS)

Town Clerk Mrs. Barbara Stats mentioned that she needs three members of the Board to come in to sign warrant. She would like to happen all on one day and this week. Mr. O'Leary, Mrs. Gonzalez and Mr. Wallner can go on Tuesday 8/18/20.

STATE PRIMARY ELECTION OVERVIEW: HOW TO VOTE

Clerk Barbara Stats reported that mail in cards are coming in and they are working on getting ballots out. The process takes time and her office is also working on voter registration simultaneously. The process to get the ballots out requires many steps.

Mr. O'Leary asked about resources to get these ballots out. Do they need more people? September elections are a trial run for November elections.

Clerk Stats mentioned that she limited by State computer system that only three people are trained in. It takes eight steps to get one ballot processed. The Town does have election volunteers helping with ballots as they come in. Volunteers have been sorting and prepping. Clerk Stats is confident her office will get through it, it just takes time.

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Mrs. Gonzalez encouraged those who can safely vote in person to please do in order to take pressure off of Town Hall.

Mr. Stuto asked that in the event that we cannot get these issues resolved, as a plan B can we encourage in person voting with safety? Mrs. Manupelli mentioned that the Town will already be offering in-person options. She then allowed Clerk Stats to continue her presentation on the full plan.

Clerk Stats reported that we have already had an election during COVID; not well attended, but run smoothly and safely.

Mr. Gilleberto commented that we've had a successful Town Election, indoor Town Meeting and outdoor Town Meeting. Has a high level of confidence in Town Clerk and staff in running a successful and safe election.

Clerk Stats highlighted the information on voting deadlines. Voter should apply for their ballot by Tuesday, August 26th. Ballots should be returned back to office by election evening at 8pm. Many questions are answered on the Town Clerk website. Ballots can be dropped in box at Town Hall. The Town Clerks Office are the only ones with access to the ballot box. The Town general drop box is safe for ballots as well, but sorted by members of the Finance Department. Days and hours for early voting Sat 8/22 - Friday 8/28. 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. weekend hours; weekday hours Monday - Thursday 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. and Friday 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Early voting will take place in Town Hall gym to allow for social distancing. Polls on Election Day are at St Theresa's Hall. Wear a mask if possible please. There is an in-person option available for those who cannot wear a mask due to medical exceptions. Voters are encouraged to bring their own black or blue pens only. No red. Sanitizer will be available. Official election deposit box to be delivered this week. Voters welcome to use that box once it is delivered.

14 CONCORD STREET – NONEXERCISE OF OPTION

Mr. Gilleberto asked the Chair if he could provide an explanation, and Mrs. Manupelli stated that one was not necessary.

MADAM CHAIR, I MOVE TO NOT EXERCISE THE TOWN'S STATUTORY OPTION PURSUANT TO THE "NOTICE OF INTENT TO SELL AGRICULTURAL LAND" DATED JANUARY 21, 2020 TO PURCHASE LAND AT 14 CONCORD STREET, TO APPROVE THE NOTICE OF RELEASE AND NON-EXERCISE OF CHAPTER 61A OPTION TO PURCHASE LAND, AND TO AUTHORIZE THE CHAIR TO SIGN THE NOTICE.

MOTION BY:	MR. STUTO	
SECONDED BY:	MR. WALLNER	
VOTED BY:	MR. STUTO	AYE
	MRS. GONZALEZ	AYE
	MR. WALLNER	AYE
	MR. O'LEARY	AYE
	MRS. MANUPELLI	AYE

VOTE: 5-0 (UNANIMOUS)

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OCTOBER TOWN MEETING

REVIEW TOWN MEETING ARTICLES

The Town Administrator, Mr. Gilleberto gave a summary of Articles for the upcoming October Town Meeting. There was a brief discussion reviewing draft Articles 9-17. The Board discussed shortening the warrant once again due to COVID-19.

Mr. Gilleberto asked that the Board sign the Warrant on August 31st. Monday after Labor Day (9/14) is too late to print the warrant and send out in order to arrive 2 weeks prior to Town Meeting. The Board can defer signing warrant until Thursday 9/3, but overall it is a tight timeline.

Mr. Stuto - October weather concerning for outdoor meeting.

DISCUSS TOWN MEETING DATE/TIME/LOCATION

The date for Town Meeting is planned for Monday October 8th. This date was originally set at a Board meeting in January and was planned to be held as an evening meeting in the Performing Arts Center. Due to COVID, there still needs to be a detailed conversation with public safety and public health officials. No firm decisions as of yet on how best to proceed. Details to be finalized prior to the August 31st so that a recommendation can be made to the Board.

**DISCUSS ABUTTER REQUEST TO PURCHASE A PORTION OF TOWN OWNED
LAND - MAP 56, PARCEL 62 – 3 CARPENTER DRIVE**

Article 16 - 3 Carpenter Drive (may be combined with Article 17)

Mrs. Manupelli felt it is premature to have 3 Carpenter Drive on Warrant until we have more information and until we complete the current study on that land. She added that there is a letter addressed to her that she has not previously seen. Mr. Gilleberto stated that he is hoping the study to be completed prior to Town Meeting. Mr. O' Leary concurred that he felt adding the article at this time would be premature.

Mrs. Manupelli polled the Board members. The Board was in unanimous agreement to remove article at this time.

DISCUSS SIGN BY-LAW

The Board entered into a discussion on the sign Bylaw. Not all political signs are related to an election. Bylaw does have size limitations, but these restrictions are exceeded. Mr. Gilleberto noted that the Bylaw can be difficult to enforce and does not necessarily authorize all political signage. The Bylaw does include a statement of protection of 1st Amendment rights. The Bylaw has strict guidelines on temporary business signs. Those are more strictly enforced, although as businesses have been reopening there has been some leniency granted. Members of the Board felt that there are some challenges with the Bylaw and suggested that the Planning Commission could offer some alternatives. Mr. Waller suggested that we ask Town Counsel to review the Bylaw as written to determine what is enforceable and what is not. He also noted that Town

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Council would have additional insight as to how other communities handle signage Bylaws. Mr. Wallner would like a review with respect to 1st Amendment rights.

Ms. Manupelli feels the Bylaw is fine and has clear guidelines. Mr. O'Leary agrees with Mrs. Manupelli, but would be agreeable to a legal review.

Mr. Gilleberto gave an example that the "Defend Ipswich River" signs would not be allowed per the current Bylaw, but does question if the first amendment statement would allow them. Mr. Gilleberto felt that a Planning Commission and legal review would be a good idea. The Board decided to ask the Planning Commission to review the Bylaw.

VOTE TO SELL TOWN OWNED LAND: MAP 78, PARCEL 17, 23 RIVERSIDE DRIVE

The Board tabled the vote on 23 Riverside Drive in order to research whether the sale of this land will affect the G.L.A.M calculations. This topic will be revisited at the August 31st meeting.

MADAM CHAIR, I MOVE TO CONTINUE THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR 23 RIVERSIDE DRIVE UNTIL AUGUST 31, 2020 at 8:00 PM.

MOTION BY:	MR. STUTO	
SECONDED BY:	MR. O'LEARY	
VOTED BY:	MR. STUTO	AYE
	MRS. GONZALEZ	AYE
	MR. WALLNER	AYE
	MR. O'LEARY	AYE
	MRS. MANUPELLI	AYE

VOTE: 5-0 (UNANIMOUS)

COVID 19 UPDATE

Mr. Gilleberto noted that the Town's Public Health Nurse Pam Vath had previously decided to step back from her duties. This change had been know and the position was posted. The Town identified a candidate who decided not to accept position. Ms. Vath has agreed to stay on board while recruitment effort resumes.

Mr. Gilleberto commented that the COVID-19 caseload numbers may differ from statewide reporting. He commented that the numbers had differed slightly since reporting began. Mr. Gilleberto shared that North Reading has had 226 total census of cases. The Town's number of COVID related deaths has remained unchanged since his last report. North Reading has 195 recovered residents and 17 cases currently being monitored. A new positive case has been identified with the person in attendance of new Food Pantry location and has also traveled using the Senior Van. The Food Pantry was closed on Monday. Cleaning and disinfecting has occurred both at the Food Pantry and on the Senior Van.

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TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

No written report. Topics discussed:

Mr. Gilleberto made Board members aware in regards to the Special Town meeting/14 Concord Street, that Mr. Coviello had mentioned a request for zoning change for the parcel. The request is not ready at this time, but could be presented for June Town Meeting. He also wanted to make sure the Board knew that it was not required to send a letter of non-exercise of the Town's option. The Board members felt that the Town was not going to exercise its option.

OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

Mr. O'Leary: Acknowledged the passing of two longtime residents Mr. Francis Heckman and Mr. Tony Terrizzi.

Mr. Wallner: Expressed his thanks to the Board for support tonight during the public comment and for their collective words at the meeting.

Mrs. Gonzalez: no comment.

Mr. Stuto: no comment.

Mrs. Manupelli: no comment.

ADJOURN

MADAM CHAIR, I MOVE TO ADJOURN.

MOTION BY:	MRS. GONZALEZ	
SECOND:	MR. STUTO	
VOTED BY:	MR. STUTO	AYE
	MRS. GONZALEZ	AYE
	MR. WALLNER	AYE
	MR. O'LEARY	AYE
	MRS. MANUPELLI	AYE

VOTE: 5-0 (UNANIMOUS)

ADJOURN: 10:47 P.M.

DATE

VINCENZO STUTO, CLERK