# RYAN MICHAELS

Berwick, Maine | rtgmich@gmail.com | October 22, 2026

**TO:** Members of the Berwick Select Board, through the Town Clerk

**CC:** Timothy Towne, Interim Town Manager / Chief of Police

**RE:** Formal Complaint and Evidence Preservation Notice - October 20, 2026 Public Comment

Dear Members of the Berwick Select Board,

I submit this formal complaint concerning Chair Michael Laterreur's decision to terminate my public comments during the October 20, 2026 Select Board meeting. I request an impartial review of the decision, the stated justification, and the rules applied.

## STATEMENT OF FACTS

1. **September 16, 2025:** I submitted a complaint and supporting evidence to the Select Board concerning the September 12, 2025 incident at the Berwick Police Department.
2. **October 1, 2025:** Chair Laterreur acknowledged the submission, stated that the Board would review and follow up, and disclosed that he had recused himself from discussions involving votes or decisions concerning my complaint. (Exhibit B.)
3. **October 15-16, 2025:** Town Manager Arthur Capello and Vice Chair Linda Hutchins-Corliss communicated that the Board had found the complaints unfounded. Vice Chair Hutchins-Corliss wrote: "On October 7, 2025, the Berwick Selectboard met and reviewed your complaint in detail. After careful consideration we have determined that the complaints against Chief Towne, members of his department, and the Town Manager Arthur Capello are unfounded." (Exhibit C.)
4. **October 2025 onward:** I sought records and explanations concerning the Board's determination and the handling of related surveillance footage. Questions concerning what was reviewed and the footage remained disputed.
5. **May 27-June 12, 2026:** After the May 14 budget discussion at the Berwick Public Library, I wrote to Town Manager Capello on May 27 asking the Town to consider live virtual participation in future public discussions, citing disability, transportation, financial, and other barriers that can prevent residents from attending in person. I followed up June 8. On June 12, Town Attorney Matt Tarasevich replied that the Town had no virtual-access policy for informational meetings and community discussions, had not considered remote participation for that budget event, and was open to exploring options subject to budget and technology. Although this was not a formal Select Board meeting, the exchange placed public-access concerns before Town officials. (Exhibits F, G, and H.)
6. **August 13, 2026:** I informed the Town's attorney in writing that I had repeatedly attempted to attend Select Board meetings to follow up on the September 12 recording and intended to raise that issue during public comment. (Exhibit D.)
7. **August-October 2026:** The Town acknowledged a technical problem with my access to the August 4 meeting and stated it had been remedied. On October 20, I again reported being held in the Zoom waiting room while the meeting was underway, before attending in person. (Exhibit E.)
8. **October 20, 2026:** During public comment, I questioned the Board's unfounded determination and the footage. Chair Laterreur stated that he had not watched the footage and had not participated in the earlier determination. (Exhibit A - Town-held recording, not attached.)
9. I turned toward Vice Chair Hutchins-Corliss to reference her October 16, 2025 written statement. The recording captures me beginning to refer to the vice chair: "You were the select board and you're vice chair. You told me, and I

believe..." Chair Laterreur interrupted before I could complete that explanation. (Exhibit A.)

10. When I asked why he was closing public comment, Chair Laterreur stated: "Because right now you are accusing the board of something." He also stated: "A public comment is just a public comment. There's no facts." (Exhibit A.)

## BASIS FOR COMPLAINT

I dispute the characterization of my unfinished statement. I was referencing the Board's own written determination, communicated by its vice chair, not asserting that Chair Laterreur personally participated in the earlier decision. I am concerned that my opportunity to address the Board may have been terminated because I was questioning official conduct, rather than under an identified, neutrally applied public-comment rule. I request review of that question without presuming the outcome.

The budget-discussion correspondence and subsequent Zoom difficulties also provide relevant context: I had raised concerns about residents being able to participate in real time despite access barriers, then documented repeated difficulty accessing Select Board meetings remotely. I ask the Town to review whether its participation practices and responses to reported access problems adequately supported meaningful public access. I do not suggest that the public-library discussion and formal Select Board meetings necessarily had identical rules.

## REQUESTED ACTION

1. An impartial review by individuals who were not responsible for the challenged decision.
2. Identification of the specific rule applied, the conduct said to violate it, my allotted and elapsed speaking time, and how the same rule is applied to comparable speakers.
3. Preservation and review of the Town's original, complete October 20 meeting recording and metadata, applicable rules, meeting notes, and communications concerning the interruption and its justification.
4. Preservation of relevant October 20 Zoom waiting-room, host-admission, and access records, to the extent they exist.
5. A written explanation of procedures for remote access to Select Board meetings, including how participants can obtain assistance if waiting-room admission fails, and whether corrective measures are warranted.
6. A substantive written response addressing the findings and any corrective action, and acknowledgment of this preservation notice.

Please distribute this complaint to the full Board. Chief Timothy Towne is copied for notice and preservation in his capacity as Interim Town Manager and as an official present at the meeting. Given his involvement in the underlying complaint, I request that he not serve as the sole reviewer of this matter.

My purpose is to establish an accurate record and ensure that residents can question official decisions without improper restrictions on their opportunity to participate in local government.

Respectfully,
Ryan Michaels

## EXHIBIT INDEX - TOWN-HELD RECORDING AND EMAIL ATTACHMENTS

**Exhibit A (not attached).** October 20, 2026 Select Board meeting recording, published on the Town of Berwick's official website and held by the Town. The recording captures the public-comment exchange, interruption, and Chair Laterreur's stated justification. The Town is requested to review and preserve its complete original recording and associated metadata.

**Exhibit B (attached).** October 1, 2025 email from Michael Laterreur acknowledging the submission, promising follow-up, and disclosing recusal.

**Exhibit C (attached).** October 16, 2025 email from Linda Hutchins-Corliss communicating the Board's unfounded determination.

**Exhibit D (attached).** August 13, 2026 email to Town Attorney Matt Tarasevich identifying the recording issue and intended purpose of public comment.

**Exhibit E (attached).** October 20, 2026 contemporaneous email documenting the Zoom waiting-room access issue.

**Exhibit F (attached).** May 27, 2026 email to Town Manager Arthur Capello concerning live virtual participation at public discussions.

**Exhibit G (attached).** June 8, 2026 follow-up email requesting answers about public access and virtual participation.

**Exhibit H (attached).** June 12, 2026 response from Town Attorney Matt Tarasevich concerning virtual access to public discussions.