

Minutes of the Board of Selectmen

This meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 6:00PM on Tuesday, March 28, 2023 at the North Brookfield Police Department. Jason Petraitis and John Tripp were present, Brooke Canada arrived later in the meeting.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Tripp moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion the minutes from 2/21/23, 2/23/23, 2/28/23, 2/28/23 exec, 3/1/23, 3/16/23. So voted. Mr. Petraitis noted we would approve the other minutes after Mrs. Canada arrive.

Approval of Warrants: Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to approve Payroll #20 for \$355,929.79, School # 1049 for \$147,071.64, General # 1050 for \$1,263,088.54 and General # 1051 for 159,895.27. So voted.

Financial Items: Reserve Fund Requests-There were two Reserve Fund Requests for a Highway employee that resigned from their position and is entitled vacation pay out sick leave buy back. The first request is for \$4,634.04 to be transferred to Highway Salary, the second is for \$2,894.00 to be transferred to Board of Selectmen Sick Leave Buy Back. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to approve both requests. So voted.

Old Business: Request for Resources from Corwin Castonguay. Mr. Petraitis reviewed the Request for Resources from Corwin Castonguay to host a Small Town Pride event on the Town Common. Mr. Petraitis confirmed they had changed the date of the request from July 1 to June 24. Mr. Petraitis asked if the Rural Justice Network had insurance certificates. Corwin provided copies of their certificates from the past few events and stated he would provide updated copies pending approval of the event. Mr. Petraitis asked if they were having a police detail, Corwin said yes. Tashena Holmes said they don't need a detail, but she respects it is wanted just in case. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to approve the Small Town Pride event pending payment of police detail and updated insurance information. Discussion: Mr. Tripp asked what kind of dancing and vendors would be present, would there be lewd and pornographic dancing? Mr. Tripp noted there would be kids at the event, and kids that live next to the Common. Tashena Holmes explained that at last year's event, which was 4-5 hours long, there was a 50-minute drag performance. She also stated that there is a lot to the LGBTQIA/Queer Community, not just drag, but that it is a big part of the community, and that the dancers are not more provocatively than the kids at Kara Anderson's Dance Studio, or Beyonce, and that they are covered. Mr. Petraitis confirmed with Tashena that this would be the same as the event in West Brookfield. Doug Borowski said he was a part of the event and that it is family oriented, lots of kids present and activities for the kids, and there's nothing untoward. Mr. Petraitis asked if there were pictures of the performance, Tashena said that on her website there are videos from the performance last year. Joanne Carey stated she has pictures of the headliners from last year, and that they are dressed in tight clothing and danced provocatively and compared the dancers to pole dancers at a strip club. Tashena refuted Joanne's argument and said the goal is to keep the event family friendly and compared the dancing to what take's place at the dance studio in Town and what is shown on television. She said the only difference is the gender non-conformance. Mr. Tripp said that his personal opinion is that it's not child friendly and should be 18+. He wouldn't want his children or the neighborhood children to see it. Doug Borowski said they don't have to, Mr. Tripp said there are kids that live near and around the Common. Corwin explained that drag performers know their audience and have different skits directed at their audience. Joanne Carey explained that she knows of a group called Gays Against Groomers and read an excerpt

from their Facebook group stating they oppose the indoctrination and sexualization of children under the guise of LGBTQIA+, including drag queen story hour and drag shows for children, the transitioning of minors, and the teaching of gender theory in schools. Tashena asked what the difference between Beyonce and a drag queen. Mr. Petraitis said he didn't want to discuss the differences, and that if they've promised it'll be family friendly, he won't comment on it. Tashena said she's happy to work closely with the Board of Selectmen. She said the Rural Justice Network was founded in North Brookfield she wants each rural community to have a chance to network. As the President of the Rural Justice Network Tashena said it's important to embrace and accept people who are different, and if anyone doesn't want to go of course there's no hard feelings. Mr. Petraitis said that to Mr. Tripp's a point this event will be held on the Common in a neighborhood where a lot of children live and play and may be exposed unwillingly. Doug Borowski asked if there would be an objection if the Knights of Columbus held an event on the Common. Mr. Petraitis said he may object if they were having drag queens on the Common, and that he has nothing to do with the Knights of Columbus and would have no objection to drag queens in their own building. Doug Borowski said the real issue is whether the Board is willing to have gays and transgender people at this event. Mr. Petraitis said nothing was said about any other issue beside drag queens and asked Doug to not put words in his mouth. Doug said he wasn't trying to, but did explain that it is a family friendly event and the kids have a great time. Tashena said studies have shown the suicide risk for this group is extremely high and when their community shows acceptance the rate decreases by 50%. Joanne Carey read something stating that the gay community has been highjacked by the LGBTQIA+ community and is spreading a message of pedophilia. Tashena said that is not factual at all. Jamie Gilman said if there is police present, would they be able to shut down anything that was not allowed, Mrs. Canada said she thought so. Tashena said the statistics show that priests have a much higher chance of sexually assaulting children than anyone from the gay or LGBTQIA+ community. Mr. Petraitis said there was enough going back and forth on the topic and that the motion is on the table to approve the request. Mr. Tripp voted no, Mrs. Canada voted yes pending police detail and required permits, and Mr. Petraitis voted yes. So voted.

New Business:

Finance Committee Appointment: Mr. Petraitis read a letter from the Finance Committee asking for Joseph Trentacosta to be appointed as a full-time member of the Finance Committee. Currently Joe is an alternate. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to appoint Joseph Trentacosta as full-time member of the Finance Committee. So voted. Mr. Petraitis explained that we typically ask people to be at the meeting for their appointment, but Joe is already a member of this committee and has done great work. He's running late tonight and couldn't make it to the meeting.

Mario Polanco Playground Committee: Mario is the last member of the Playground committee. He said reached out to the School Committee to see if students need community service for a planned clean up day at the common on April 8th. Mario spoke with Tara Hayes and she is going to help get volunteers and has reached out to Superintendent Tim McCormick. Mr. Tripp asked Mario if he was interested in staying on the committee if it gets changed to Parks and Rec, he said he wasn't sure. Mrs. Canada asked if there's a planned rain date, he said not yet. Brandon Avery said he had a couple ideas on improving the Playground/Common, like painting the scoreboard and benches.

Review Open Space Guidelines: Brandon Avery had given the Board suggestions for some open space guidelines, but he would like the Board to walk some conservation area/open space with him to allow

for questions and suggestions. The Board will plan a walk with Brandon at the Donovan Road conservation area.

Sign Town Election Warrant: Mr. Petraitis read the Town Election Warrant. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to sign and post the warrant. So voted. Mr. Tripp asked if Playground Committee gets elected members are they automatically on Parks and Rec. Mr. Tripp said there would no longer be a Playground Committee, so the Board would have to appoint and Parks and Rec members.

Haley Ward Engineering Services: Mr. Petraitis explained that Lenard Engineering is now Haley Ward engineering. We are currently working on the West Side Infrastructure project, which Lenard Engineering researched and provided a phased plan for repair and upgrades. We have the option of staying with Haley Ward, or going out to bid the next phase of the project. Mr. Tripp said this firm seems to be on the ball and thinks we should stay with them. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to approve staying with Haley Ward for the West Side Infrastructure/Mt. Pleasant St project. So voted.

Public Comment:

Joanne Carey stated she will be doing a standout protest against the Small Town Pride event on June 24th and that she will inform the Chief of Police.

Bill King asked about the status of the Master Plan Review Committee. Ashley said she will provide specifics and post it on the website.

Brandon Avery said he hopes to open the History Museum soon, he needs to do some heavy-duty cleaning because of construction. Mr. Tripp asked if needed filing cabinets, Brandon said he's received some that were donated.

Brandon Avery asked the status of the Town wide clean up. Mike Hinkley said he's working on it and is looking at April 21-22. He'll be working with Vibram and many town departments.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to approve the minutes from March 13th. So voted.

At 6:35PM, there being no further business, Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to enter executive session for reason # 2: to discuss contract negotiations. Mr. Petraitis noted that the Board would exit executive session only to adjourn. Roll call: Petraitis, yes; Tripp, yes; Canada, yes. So voted.

At 7:42PM the Board came out of executive session. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to adjourn. So voted.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Barre