

Minutes of the Board of Selectmen Meeting

This meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 6:00PM on Tuesday, April 11, 2023 at the North Brookfield Police Department. Jason Petraitis, John Tripp and Brooke Canada present.

Approval of Warrants: Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to approve the following warrants: Payroll # 21 for \$347,344.88, School #1052 for \$146,798.83 and General # 1053 for \$313,671.20. So voted.

Financial: ARPA Requests-

Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to approve \$4,624.00 from ARPA funds for the library to purchase hotspots, OWL, monitor and air purifier. So voted.

Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to approve \$4,000.00 from ARPA funds for the school to make purchases to bring them into compliance with DEP recycling. So voted.

Old Business: Highway Equipment vote-Mr. Petraitis explained that recently the town voted to spend about \$208,000 for a roadside mower. He found the same mower, used, and last week the Board voted to approve the purchase of the used model in order to save money. The Highway superintendent requested to have a stump jumper to keep from hitting stumps and damaging the equipment. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to increase the purchase price by \$5,000.00 to include the stump jumper, bringing the total cost to \$135,602.13. Mr. Tripp noted that the old machine had a stump jumper and it is necessary. So voted.

Mr. Petraitis stated that two weeks ago the Board approved the Pride event, including the drag show, and said at the time there was not enough information to deny the drag show. Now he has information that prohibits the drag part of the event. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to rescind the vote to approve the Pride event and further move to approve the event without the drag show. Discussion: Mr. Petraitis read a statement-he doesn't want to cause harm, and there may be no intention of sexual innuendo, but drag shows should be deemed adult entertainment, which is prohibited except by special permit (see zoning bylaws). Mrs. Canada said she doesn't think it's adult entertainment, it's freedom of expression. She's been to these shows and she trusts the police to enforce the law. Mr. Tripp said he believes it is adult entertainment. Mrs. Canada said that's an opinion, she's concerned about setting a precedent and asked if we regulate other events in town, she's never seen anything at a pride event that is considered adult entertainment. Mr. Petraitis said it was recommended to him to check out the West Brookfield's event, the performers he saw were fully clothed, but the gestures and language should not be on the common with kids, he feels it's inappropriate. All in favor: Mrs. Canada no, Mr. Tripp aye, Mr. Petraitis, aye. So voted.

Public Comment:

Tonya Matthews said she wanted to address Mrs. Canada and show video of last year's event, it was profane and indecent and had suggestive lyrics. One of the performers was recorded pulling off their skirt and had an ill-fitting leotard, another performer rubbed their hands over their body and did a "come here" signal. She said this is not appropriate for town common and no should be forced to see it.

Deb Arnold said she has new information on their water problem that will change the Board's mind. Deb read a prepared letter that stated the Town constructed and paid for underdrains for storm water, one

crosses their property. There's another to drain the common that goes across School St, behind the church and through backyards on Gilbert St. In 2014 the pipe failed and caused flooding on Stoddard Ct and Gilbert St. The Board of Selectmen held a Special Town Meeting to fund the project, \$16,000.00, to fix failed pipe. At three separate town meetings it was voted to repair their pipe but the Board denied it because it was private property. In 2014 there were 2 private properties that were affected, so this set a precedent. Deb referenced a legal case from February 1999 that stated damages were caused by a municipality (Suffolk) and the town was found liable, the homeowners were awarded \$100,000.00 each. She said the precedent has been set by the Board of Selectmen and this case, and she asking the Board to do what is right. Deb said to pay their bill within two weeks or they will be seeking legal action against the Town. Mr. Petraitis asked Deb to send the information she gathered to the Board's office. Bruce Arnold said he was told to do research, Deb provided the evidence, why do they have to wait two weeks for their money. Mr. Petraitis said they'd take it under advisement. Bruce reiterated that if they did not receive payment in two weeks, they would be taking the matter to court.

Joanne Carey said her home was one that was damaged due to the broken pipe on Gilbert St and thanked the Selectmen that had it repaired. Joanne said she wanted to talk about the drag show, Mr. Petraitis said the matter is done. Joanne said she wanted to be sure nothing was snuck in, Mr. Petraitis advised her to make a formal complaint if she's something.

Bruce thanked Joanne for validating that the Town took care of the broken pipe.

Salvatore Branciforte asked about have a gun show on the common, Mr. Petraitis said he'd need to fill out a request for resources and get approval from the appropriate departments.

Tonya Matthews asked why the carnival is planned for 5 nights, she lives near the common and feels that's too long. Mr. Petraitis said the carnival used to be at least 4 nights. Mr. Tripp said the Coalition for Health North Brookfield had made the request for the carnival. He's excited for the carnival saying it will be fun for North Brookfield, and it's not an all-day event. He noted parking may be an issue, and it will take time to set it up and break it down.

Mr. Tripp said the Welcome to North Brookfield sign on East Brookfield Road was repaired by Randy Beaudin and he's looking for donations to pay Randy, it cost about \$800.00. Mr. Tripp said someone is spray painting signs on the Rail Trail. Mr. Tripp said the Board of Selectmen is trying to plan an event on July 1, 2023 for Independence Day, they are hoping to have a parade, hot dogs, pies, face painting, and other activities. He secured a DJ, Mr. Petraitis is trying to get a band. Donations are welcome. Mr. Tripp asked for donations for the little park for maintenance, and there's an outstanding bill for materials. Mr. Tripp said last Saturday there was a cleanup on the common, Tara, Kristen, Mario, Mike, Jamie and others helped. The baseball diamond is done.

Announcement:

Mr. Petraitis read an announcement from Quaboag Hills

There being no further business, at 6:34 PM Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to adjourn. So voted.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Barre