

## Minutes of the Board of Selectmen Meeting

This meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 6:00PM on Tuesday, May 9, 2023 at the Police Department. Jason Petraitis, John Tripp and Brooke Canada present.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to approve the minutes from 3/21/23, 3/25/23, and 3/25/23 executive session. So voted.

Approval of Warrants: Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to approve the following warrants-Payroll # 23 \$355,016.46, General # 1057 \$88,775.00, School # 1058 \$203,616.75, and General # 1059 \$104,732.20. So voted.

### Financial:

ARPA-Mr. Petraitis explained a review of a past study committee, and the Master Plan, have indicated North Brookfield needs a Town Administrator. Mr. Petraitis read a letter from ARPA. Mrs. Canada moved, and Mr. Tripp seconded, a motion to approve \$400,000.00 to pay for a Town Administrator for 3 years. Discussion: Mr. Tripp said he has an issue with tying up \$400,000.00, we could use the money a better way, we don't need a Town Administrator, and he hasn't seen the money used that was set aside for the landfill and Senior Center. Mrs. Canada said she thinks its important to follow the Master Plan and ARPA recommendation. Mr. Petraitis said this has been discussed for years, he's torn on it. The idea has merit, he's talked to area towns, most are happy. Mr. Tripp asked if we could table this for two weeks. Mr. Petraitis asked Ethan Melad if this would fund the position for 3 years, Ethan said the money has to be spent by 2026. Mr. Petraitis asked how long \$400,000.00 would fund the position, Ethan said it depends on salary and benefits, but this gives us some leeway. Mrs. Canada asked if this included a consultant fee. Ethan said not specifically, but its up to the Board on how to use the funds, ARPA's recommendation is to hire a Town Administrator, the Board can come back to ARPA and request more funds if available. Ethan said Bill King reached out to area towns, Brookfield hired a Town Admin 2 years ago, she happens to be a lawyer, and has saved Brookfield 50% on their legal fees. Warren has an administrator that functions as HR, does performance reviews, and a grant writer. Ethan said the job description should explain this job requires multitasking. He said the 2007 Master Plan identified this as a need, and asked when we would be able to capitalize on this again, it's worth exploring. Mr. Petraitis agreed it is worth exploring, but wants to take some time to look into things. Mr. Petraitis agreed we should table the vote for two weeks. Bill King said this has been a need since 2007, this will be our only time to fund the position without raising taxes. Brandon Avery said if you hire the right person, they will pay for themselves through grants, there are so many available but they are a ton of work. Mr. Petraitis agreed Bill made a good point about it not being tax payer money. Mr. Tripp said it won't make a difference to wait two weeks. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to table this vote for two weeks. So voted.

APRA-Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to approve ARPA recommendation to spend \$1,377.58 for a server upgrade due to new software for the Assessor's. So voted.

### New Business:

Request for Resources: The VFW and American Legion requested to have a Memorial Day Parade on May 29<sup>th</sup> from 9:00am to about 11:30am. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to approve

the request. Discussion: Mrs. Canada asked if the street would be shut down, and if there were services in front of the Library and Church. Mr. Petraitis confirmed. All in favor: aye. So voted.

Performance Hearing: At 6:15PM Mr. Petraitis opened the performance hearing for CMRPC. Chris Dunphy was present and explained CMRPC (Central Mass Regional Planning Commission) is an agency that helps small towns apply for and manage grants. He spoke of a federal program that started in the 1970's, people like it, but a majority of the funds go to entitlement cities, they get money automatically through a formula and work with HUD; smaller towns need to compete for grants, and CMRPC works with Boards and Committees for funding. Currently we have 3 program years open, FY 19, FY 20, and FY 21 is just launching.

For FY 19 we received \$600,000.00 which was mostly Housing Rehab and West Side Infrastructure Study. The funding was for 12 homes, low to moderate income that have building code issues, not for renovations, just rehabilitation. FY19 is winding down and they will recommend closing this out soon. Mr. Tripp asked how many properties had been done, Chris said they were able to complete 9 properties, 10 units. The cost of supplies has increased so they were not able to hit the goal of 12 homes.

Chris explained the FY 20 grant was joint with Brookfield for the housing rehab portion. They've done 8 units, 3 in North Brookfield, 5 in Brookfield. There is still room for more projects, but the qualification and inspection processes are lengthy. The Senior Center roof is also part of this grant. Initially this portion was underfunded, and we wanted to add floors, as well as a handicap accessible egress from the building. The bid for all projects came in way over budget. CMRPC hired an architect and put together a plan for the roof. There were some unknown aspects of the roof, they hired an abatement specialist who said there is asbestos in the roof but this can be resolved easily. Chris said we should go out to bid for just the roof portion, because pooling all the projects together drove the bid quite high. If we separate the projects, we could even use a local contractor. Mr. Tripp asked if there were plans, Chris said yes, they're available and CMRPC knows qualified contractors. Chris said he doesn't feel the floor needs work right now. The surface does have different colors and textures which could interfere but its in decent shape.

Chris announced if anyone is interested in housing rehab, they should contact CMRPC.

Brandon Avery asked if the ceiling was included in the Senior Center roof project. Chris said no, but we can always loop back in future years. Mr. Tripp said we could get donations of tiles; the grid is fine. Chris said there could be other monies available. Someone asked if architects estimates include allowance for deck replacement, Chris confirmed there is a contingency for decking.

Chris said the FY21 project is not part of this formal hearing, we're just getting started on it. This year is an outgrowth of the West Side Infrastructure Study. Mt. Pleasant St was determined to be done first, the engineering and design is restricted to just water main replacement/repair. This is a phased design, future CDBG grants or other sources can be used for drainage, streets, sidewalk, sewer. We signed a contract with Haley Ward Engineering a few months ago to complete the design, Chris will probably recommend extending the grant, bidding in Winter, and getting started in the Spring.

Mr. Tripp questioned spending \$149,000.00 on paper work. Chris said it's not just paperwork. CMRPC does not draw tax money, they need to charge overhead. Chris said its about 20% spent on CMRPC for writing, applying, administering the grant, and a clerk, which is important to oversee projects. He

encouraged North Brookfield to look for funds through the One Stop program and said if we need help, we can call them. Mr. Tripp asked if Chris was looking for grants, he has ideas; formally the STRAP now rolled into One Stop, to address local roads with safety issues. Mr. Tripp asked about Sewer and Water, Chris said that would be the next phase, we don't know for sure but maybe by March funds will be available. The Board thanked Chris for the updates.

One Day Liquor License Request: Mr. Petraitis read the request from Art Deome for Stars and Stripes to host a customer appreciation day in their parking lot on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to approve the request. Joe Jablonski said Art changed his mind and wants it this Saturday (May 13). Mr. Petraitis said he did think July 1<sup>st</sup> was too far out to be making the request now. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to revise their vote to approve the one-day liquor license for May 13. So voted.

Open Space Guidelines: Mr. Petraitis asked who wrote this, Brandon Avery did. Mr. Tripp read the guidelines. Brandon made some clarifications: 1-No cutting or taking of wood, stone, or any other materials SHOULD say except by permission of governing authority. 2-No building of structures temporary or permanent-this should allow tree stands during hunting season where hunting permitted, and only for 1 week before, and 1 week after, hunting season. Brandon also wanted to add a rule of no alcoholic beverages. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to approve the guidelines as amended. So voted.

Accountant request: The Board read a letter requesting to remove Nancy NyKiel and add Shiela LeBlanc as cloud admin. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to approve this request. So voted.

#### Public Comment:

Jamie Gilman thanked Tara Hayes, the poll workers, and the Police Department for their efforts in the recent local election. He was impressed by their efficiency and said it was a welcome and pleasant voting experience.

There being no further business, at 6:45PM Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to adjourn. So voted.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Barre