

## Minutes of the Board of Selectmen Meeting

This meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 6:00pm on Tuesday, December 1, 2020 at the North Brookfield Police Department. Dale Kiley, Jason Petraitis, and John Tripp present.

Cheryl Zalauskas was present to discuss complaints against the Highway Department and Board of Selectmen. She stated that after 2 months of waiting for a response she received a letter from Dale Kiley. Cheryl said she made contact with Ashley on September 30<sup>th</sup> and has spoken with her 9 times from 9/30-11/30. Cheryl has issues with the letter that was sent. She asked if the BOS understands her complaint, Mr. Kiley confirmed that they do. Mr. Tripp and Mr. Kiley had driven by the property to look at the reason for complaint. Cheryl said she asked Ashley to have the BOS speak with her when they stopped by the property, she is home 24/7, but no one came to her door. The letter she received stated there was no findings based on her complaint. Cheryl stated her complaint was about the Woodland Ave side of her property, a section she drives her trailer through was blocked. Mr. Kiley told Cheryl that she received a letter last year regarding trimming her bushes back from the road. Cheryl was told if she chose not to trim it the Highway Department would, she chose not to trim it, so Highway did this Fall (one year later). Cheryl stated that when she received the letter she spoke to Jason at Highway and he never told her she had to trim. Cheryl stated that she told Jason Benoit to stay away from her landscaped beds. Cheryl said the Highway hacked her burning bushes. She also said that her property line goes to the middle of road, over the years she's pushed her line back to allow for 2 cars to pass on Woodland Ave. Mr. Kiley asked Cheryl if she's asking the Town to no longer maintain those road ways. He said she can't have it both ways, you can't ask the Town to maintain, and then tell them to stay away from the property. Cheryl stated the brush that Highway trimmed was no where near hanging over the road, it is well within her property line. Cheryl claims Highway left limbs blocking her trailer, she had pictures which she showed to the BOS. Cheryl said its impossible to see the limbs because of all the leaves that have fallen.

Jason Benoit said that when he spoke with Cheryl, he told her he would not trim the bushes as long as she took care of it. In his opinion the trimming that took place was not aggressive and that all trimmings were picked up. Highway trimmed many areas and received no complaints.

Cheryl showed the BOS pictures of bark that was stripped off a pine tree and branches left on the ground. Jason Benoit stated that a lot of trees need to be removed, its becoming a problem to plow around them.

Mr. Kiley stated we'd have to finish this conversation later because we have a pole hearing.

At 6:15PM Mr. Kiley opened the hearing for 4 poles on Donovan Road. Mr. Petraitis read the petition. Nat Grid rep stated that Nat Grid is changing out overhead cables, this is for reconductoring, which is a long job. We are going from single phase to 3 phase. Mr. Tripp asked about a pole on property at 5 Donovan Road. The rep was unsure about it. Mr. Tripp said to make sure when old poles are replaced that the pole gets removed. We have many areas in town with double poles. To get old ones removed it probably requires a transfer of cable/telephone wires, and Verizon and spectrum don't make arrangements to get that done. Mr. Petraitis moved, and Mr. Tripp seconded, a motion to approve the pole petition. So voted. Mr. Kiley closed the hearing at 6:29PM.

Mr. Kiley announced that on December 5<sup>th</sup> there will be a Santa Parade in Town from 6-7:30pm. NB Helps is still looking for floats. Mr. Petraitis moved, and Mr. Tripp seconded, a motion to give final approval on the parade. So voted.

At 6:30PM Mr. Kiley opened the Tax Certification hearing. Sheila Buzzell stated the notice was published on 11/27 and she's asking to postpone the hearing for one week until we see what's happening with the tax rate. We should know by next BOS meeting (12/8/20). Sheila said we are over the levy limit. Mr. Kiley said he spoke with Nancy Nykiel a few years ago and historically, with local receipts, PILOTS, revenues ect we see an increase of 3-5%, Dale asked if, when doing the annual budgets, he can estimate a 2.5% increase, which Nancy agreed with. If we only used the tax rate increase the budget would be completely wiped out immediately because that only accounts for about \$165,000.00. Dale said the last few years we've had no less than \$380,000 in Free Cash.

Sheila stated that the levy limit is what we're allowed to raise and appropriate, we need to reduce our raise and appropriate from the June ATM. At this point we are about \$424,000 over budget. A large reason for that is because there was a big increase in the school choice-students choosing to go elsewhere. When a student choice OUT the money comes from the general budget, but when a student choice IN the money goes to the School. Mr. Kiley stated school choice went up almost \$300,000.00 this year. Sheila stated we can't set the tax rate until our raise and appropriate is in balance, we have to rescind from the June ATM. Sheila stated she's never seen this happen in Town before. Mr. Kiley said we have over 1 million dollars in stabilization accounts. In order to get the tax bills mailed out by Dec 31<sup>st</sup>, so they can be collected in February, we must hold an emergency town meeting, we can rescind raise and appropriate, and then transfer money from stabilization. We will have an emergency Special Town Meeting on Wednesday, December 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:00PM. We will notify of the location. There will be an emergency BOS meeting on Wednesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Town Offices so the BOS can approve and sign the warrant. Fin Comm and BOS will have a joint meeting before the STM to figure out where to rescind and transfer.

Mr. Petraitis moved, and Mr. Tripp seconded, a motion to move the Tax Classification Hearing to Tuesday, December 8, 2020 at 6:15PM at the North Brookfield Police Department, 55 School Street, North Brookfield, MA. So voted. Mr. Kiley closed the hearing at 6:59PM.

Cheryl Zalauskas came back in to the meeting. Mr. Tripp said he would go look at her property tomorrow, Mr. Tripp took down Cheryl's phone number so she can show him her concerns.

This issue will be tabled until John Tripp reports back to the BOS with his findings.

There being no further business, at 7:05PM Mr. Petraitis moved, and Mr. Tripp seconded, a motion to enter into executive session. The Board will exit executive session only to adjourn. Dale Kiley; yes, Jason Petraitis; yes, John Tripp; yes.

At 8:13 PM the Board exited executive session, Dale Kiley; yes, Jason Petraitis; yes, John Tripp; yes. At 8:13 PM Mr. Petraitis moved, and Mr. Tripp seconded, a motion to adjourn. So voted.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Barre