

MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING JULY 29, 2014

Chairman Smith called the meeting to order in the Senior Center at 6 PM with Mrs. Walter and Mr. Hevy also present. He reminded those in attendance that the meeting would be both audio and video taped.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JULY 14, 2014

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Smith seconded, a motion to approve these minutes as written. So voted, with Mr. Hevy abstaining.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JULY 15, 2014

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Smith seconded, a motion to approve these minutes as written. So voted, with Mr. Hevy abstaining.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JULY 24, 2014

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to approve these minutes as written. So voted.

II. APPROVAL OF SEWER DEBT WARRANT #1003 FOR \$171,131.25 APPROVAL OF SCHOOL WARRANT #1004 FOR \$21,819.95 APPROVAL OF GENERAL WARRANT #1005 FOR \$12,000.00 APPROVAL OF GENERAL WARRANT #1006 FOR \$234,395.17 APPROVAL OF PAYROLL WARRANT #2 FOR \$198,929.64

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to approve the aforementioned warrants. So voted.

III. OLD BUSINESS

A. NBEMS REQUEST FOR HOLDEN HOSPITAL FUNDS

Mr. Smith reviewed a letter from the North Brookfield Emergency Squad requesting their annual disbursement from the Holden Hospital Fund. (Attachment #1) Mr. Smith noted that since there is a total of \$14,123.00 in the account, he would like to suggest that \$11,000.00 go to the squad, and \$1,000.00 each to the Police and Fire Departments to be used for medical supplies. Mrs. Walter so moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded. So voted.

B. JOE HOLWAY RE: TOWN PARK UPDATE

Joe Holway, Padgett Berthiaume, and Bob LaFlamme were present to update the Selectmen on the progress of the Town Park Committee, and to request permission to begin laying out trails on the west side of the road. According to Mr. Holway, while they are waiting for the “triangle” piece of the property to be logged, they want to start designing and laying out the trails and ordering signs. Mr. Holway reminded the Board that the development of trails on the property was in the forestry management plans that were filed with the state. But first, the committee wants to know that the Selectmen are in support of the development of a trail network.

Mrs. Walter said that it is a question of jurisdiction, when the committee was formed it was called “town park” committee. The town park is the land on the east side of the road, the land across the street is considered town forest. She wants to know if the west side of the road is within the jurisdiction of the Town Park Committee.

Mr. Holway noted that the committee is willing to extend their work to the land across the street. Residents are really excited about the development of walking trails; these trails could be joined with other trails such as Wendemuth Meadow. He sees this as an opportunity to bring people to North Brookfield.

Mrs. Walter stated that the Town has an agreement with the East Quabbin Land Trust (EQLT) that if they cross over to other parcels they need to negotiate with the Town. She needs to see plans of what the committee wants to do.

Mr. Holway asked for the Selectmen’s backing to start marking trails and then submit the plans to the Board for approval.

Mrs. Walter stated that the committee cannot overstep the Planning Board. Mr. Smith stated that the Building Inspector and the Planning Board need to be involved in the plans. Mr. Berthiaume stated that the committee would develop their preliminary plans first, have the plans approved by the Selectmen, and then go to the Building Inspector and Planning Board.

Mr. LaFlamme stated that the trails need to go somewhere interesting, so the committee would like to tie into other trails in the future.

Mr. Holway noted that the committee wants to clean the park and develop walking trails. The discussions about Frisbee parks and other issues that might happen in the future is not their mission right now.

Mr. Smith asked for a motion to support the efforts of the Town Park Committee to develop plans for walking trails on the west side of the road, with the plans to be brought to the Selectmen for approval. Mrs. Walter stated that she would support that motion as long as it was specified that the land would be used for “passive recreation.” Mr. Smith so moved, Mr. Hevy seconded. So voted.

C. SOLTERRA PPA

Mrs. Walter explained that at the last meeting the Selectmen briefly discussed this Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) between the town and Solterra, Inc. and agreed to have a conference call with town counsel. The Board did in fact speak with Attorney Rick Holland from Kopelman and Paige, and it was agreed to have Attorney Holland speak with the attorney for Solterra to try to iron out the differences. She noted that the Selectmen are doing their best due diligence on this agreement that could potentially save the town up to \$60,000.00 per year.

D. FINAL DECISION RE: MURPHY ROAD

Mrs. Walter noted that the Selectmen held a public hearing on the conditions of Murphy Road back on December 17, 2013, but did not come to a final decision at that time. Everyone in attendance was allowed to speak, and several people did offer written comments as well. The road is located in an area of town that has traditionally been gravel roads, not paved. There are people who love living on a dirt road, and there are people who want to see it paved. There are only four residences on this one-mile long stretch of road. The cost to pave this would be prohibitive. Her conclusion is that we leave the status quo.

Mr. Smith noted that when he first became a Selectman he received phone calls on this road, and also on the condition of the bridge. When it was determined that there was a problem with the bridge it was closed. Mrs. Walter applied for a received a \$500,000.00 grant from the state to repair the bridge. He noted that Murphy Road has been on the Board's radar for quite a while. The majority of the people who attended the December 17th hearing do not want the road paved.

Mr. Smith moved, and Mrs. Walter seconded, based on the December 17th hearing at which several residents expressed their opposition to the paving of the road, that the Selectmen take no further action to pave the road. So voted, with Mr. Hevy abstaining.

E. BUDGET UPDATE

Mr. Smith noted that the Town Accountant is in the process of closing the books for FY14 and submitting the necessary paperwork to determine the Town's Free Cash. This should all be finalized within the next few weeks.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. DIESEL FUEL BIDS @ 6:30 PM

The Selectmen opened the one bid received for diesel fuel from R. J. McDonald of Barre. Their bid was a base of \$2.9481, a .2400 excise tax, and a .1022 markup,

making a total bid price of \$3.2903 per gallon. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to refer the bid to Highway Superintendent Gary Jean for his recommendation. So voted.

B. WATER COMMISSIONERS RE: NEW HIRE

Water Commissioner John Thomasian and Water Superintendent Steve Jones were present to ask the Selectmen to appoint Kristen Thacker as their new administrative assistant. (Attachment #2) Mr. Thomasian stated that Ms. Thacker lives in North Brookfield and has previously worked as an administrative assistant. She has experience working with the public and handling money. She is very enthusiastic about the job, and they believe that she will be a good employee.

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to rescind the appointment of Melissa Tremblay, who did not accept the position previously. So voted. Mr. Smith moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to appoint Ms. Thacker. So voted.

C. DONATION OF VEHICLE FROM NBEMS

North Brookfield Emergency Squad Board of Directors Chairman Joe Holway was present to give the Town a 2010 Ford Explorer to be used as the Selectmen choose. (Attachment #3) Mr. Holway explained that the vehicle is in showroom condition, and the squad has enough money in their budget to do this for the Town. Mr. Smith thanked the directors for this offer and asked for a motion to accept the donation with gratitude. Mrs. Walter so moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded. So voted.

D. LETTER FROM CIP RE: CAPITAL EXPENDITURE EXCLUSION

Mrs. Walter noted that Capital Improvement Planning Committee (CIP) chairman Chris Donais was unable to attend this evening. She explained that the CIP committee is made up of one representative from the Selectmen, one from the Finance Committee, and one member from the Planning Board, along with two at-large members. The recommendations of the committee come from those groups.

Finance Committee representative to CIP Bob Locatelli reviewed a letter from the committee, along with their annual report for 2013 and the project list through 2019. (Attachment #4) The CIP Committee is recommending that an \$80,000.00 capital expenditure exclusion be presented to voters for approval in order to purchase two police cruisers. This is similar to a debt exclusion, but there are no interest payments because the debt is paid within the first year. Mrs. Walter noted that there is a \$3,000 savings for each vehicle by purchasing this way instead of leasing. The Town is behind schedule on replacing cruisers, doing two vehicles at once will help get back on track. Moving to 4WD vehicles is a necessity in order to ensure the safety of the officers and the general public. According to the Town Treasurer, the cost to the average taxpayer will be \$44.72/year, or \$3.73/month, or .86/week.

Mr. Locatelli noted that one cruiser has almost 190,000 miles on it; most cruisers are replaced after 100,000 to 120,000 miles.

Mr. Smith noted that the Finance Committee has the dilemma each year of how to balance the town's budget with departmental needs. There is never a good time to do this, but as a matter of public safety we need to deal with this. There is no doubt that these vehicles need to be replaced. The Finance Committee has also recommended that this be done through the capital expenditure exclusion.

Mr. Hevy stated that he is in favor of doing this, but we need to get on a vehicle replacement schedule.

Mr. Locatelli stated that this year the CIP Committee started building a database of all future potential capital expenses. He pledged that the committee would work more closely with town departments to develop this database.

Mr. Smith moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to accept the recommendations of the CIP Committee and Finance Committee to place a capital expenditure exclusion question before the voters in order to fund the purchase of two police vehicles. So voted.

The Selectmen reviewed the wording for the ballot question recommended by the Department of Revenue under Chapter 59 Section 21C(i1/2) which states "Shall the Town of North Brookfield be allowed to assess an additional \$80,000.00 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purpose of purchasing two cruiser vehicles for the Police Department for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2014?" Mr. Smith moved, and Mrs. Walter seconded, a motion to place this question on the November 4, 2014 State Election Ballot. So voted.

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to place an article requesting this capital expenditure exclusion on a Special Town Meeting warrant on October 24, 2014 at 7 PM. So voted.

E. LETTER FROM EACC RE: TECO-BLOC

Mrs. Walter reviewed a letter from the state Economic Assistance Coordinating Council (EACC) informing the Town that they have voted to decertify Techo-Bloc Corporation due to the company's request to voluntarily withdraw their project from Certified Project Status. (Attachment #5) She notes that the Town can continue to offer the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) plan if we so choose. She suggested a meeting with Techo-Bloc officials to ask about their long-range plans in order to decide how to proceed. The Town can dissolve the TIF agreement if they cannot make assurances that they will begin manufacturing here. Leslie will contact Eric Emanuel and try to set up a meeting.

F. REQUEST FOR CMRPC DELEGATE AND ALTERNATE

Mr. Smith reviewed a letter from Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) asking that the Town appoint an alternate to the commission. (Attachment #6) The delegate is appointed by the Planning Board. Mrs. Walter stated that she is willing to continue as the alternate. Mr. Hevy moved, and Mrs. Walter seconded, a motion to have Mrs. Walter continue as the Town's alternate to CMRPC. So voted.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. THE COLLECTOR'S OFFICE WILL BE OPEN ON FRIDAY, AUGUST 1ST TO COLLECT TAX PAYMENTS

Mr. Smith announced that the Town Collector's office will be open on Friday from 9 AM to noon.

B. PLANNING BOARD HEARING NOTICES

The Selectmen reviewed three hearing notices from the Planning Board. The first was for a public hearing on August 20th at 7:15 PM in the Senior Center on the reformatting of the Zoning By-Laws.

The second hearing will be on August 20th at 7:25 PM to amend the Zoning By-Laws to add the definition of Medical Marijuana Treatment Center aka Registered Marijuana Dispensary.

The final hearing will also take place on August 20th at 7:30 PM on the placement of a Registered Marijuana Dispensary in accordance with the Humanitarian Medical Use of Marijuana Act.

C. VACANCIES ON TOWN BOARDS

Mr. Hevy read the list of vacancies on various town boards, including the need for two members and two alternates for the Finance Committee, and two members for the Town Beach Committee.

VI. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

A. CHARTER/COMCAST HEARING 8/12

B. Mr. Smith asked that a budget update be kept on the agenda for the future

C. Solterra PPA

D. Techo-Bloc TIF agreement

There being no further business, Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to adjourn at 7:45 PM. So voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Scott Burton
Administrative Assistant