

MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING OCTOBER 7, 2014

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

Present in the audience were James Caldwell, Jason Petraitis, Jeff Samuelson, Larry Underwood, Jean Underwood, Maureen Wesolawski, Andrew and Edi Hubacz, Joan Small, Trish Miller, Charles Marshall, and Claudette Marshall.

Chairman Smith announced that the meeting was being audio and video recorded.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. Approval of minutes of September 15, 2014

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to approve the minutes of September 15, 2014 as written. So voted.

- b. Approval of minutes of September 30, 2014

Mrs. Walter asked that the minutes of September 30, 2014 be reviewed at the end of this meeting. Chairman Smith agreed to the request.

II. APPROVAL OF WARRANTS

- a. Approval of School Warrant #1018 for \$155,158.95
- b. Approval of General Warrant #1019 for \$241,551.60
- c. Approval of Payroll Warrant #7 for \$293,462.51

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

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- a. Public has a brief opportunity to discuss items on the agenda through the Chairman

IV. FINANCIAL REPORT

- a. FY15 Budget Update

Mr. Smith noted that last week the current budget deficit was estimated at \$370,134.00. There has been \$242,115.00 in adjustments through the certification of Free Cash (\$131,230.00) and New Growth (\$44,534.00), the deduction of money from the ALS Contract (\$17,000.00), a reduction in the School Budget Choice In (\$45,351.00) and a reduction in bussing costs for Bay Path Vocational School (\$4,000.00). \$128,0019.00. After adding in an additional \$16,000.00 to address stormwater problems on Gilbert

Street, the net deficit is approximately \$144,019.00. Mr. Smith explained that it is impossible to cut operating budgets that amount without major reductions in service. The money will most likely come from the Stabilization Account. Mrs. Walter asked if this was something that would still be able to be discussed. Mr. Smith stated that it could be discussed, but that he had gone over this issue and he feels that departments have been cut and level funded for over five years stretching the budgets to the limit.

V. OLD BUSINESS

a. DISCUSSION

i. Fire Dept \$2 Million Grant Proposal

Fire Chief Brad Gannon, Assistant Chief Joe Holway, and Deputy Chief Kevin Rockwood were present to discuss a grant for \$2 million that was included in the state's capital bond budget. The funds are earmarked for the "construction and renovation of the North Brookfield Fire House," and is among many other projects that far exceed the funds available. The Governor has the right not to release certain funds. The Selectmen need to write a letter to the Governor explaining why the North Brookfield's project should be allowed to go forward. Mr. Smith asked the Fire Department members to help write the letter of support by providing facts and figures pointing out the outdated facilities and other concerns.

Chief Gannon stated that the age of the building, the size and the fact that things are spread out all over the place. The department would like to build a new building on the former Aztec property facing south, or next to the Highway Department with the back of the building facing the North Brookfield Pizza. He said that they need a 60' x 100' building with 20' ceilings in order to accommodate the trucks. He has been in touch with a metal building manufacturer to inquire about prices, which may be less expensive than repairing the existing building or building a new fire station.

Chief Gannon noted that the current fire station has had seven additions over the years, the long term goal should be to remove those additions and return the building to its original footprint. The building could then be used for other purposes.

Mrs. Walter asked if the Department could try to find a third option for the location of the building. Chief Gannon stated that there are not a lot of options near the Town's center. Mr. Smith stated that we don't need to specify a location yet, just put forth the reasons that North Brookfield's project should be funded. Mr. Smith stated that a letter would write to the Governor on behalf of the people of North Brookfield using the information provided by the Department.

Joe Holway interjected that the EMS was applying for a grant with East Brookfield and Brookfield and requested signatures for this grant. Mrs. Walter asked if this could be done at this meeting. She stated that she was familiar with the grant which was written by CMRPC. The form required one signature and Mr. Smith agreed to sign it. Ms. Burton asked if she could make a copy of it and return it in the morning.

Mr. Smith asked Mr. Hevy if he was interested in working on this project. Mr. Hevy stated that he would.

ii. Town House Project Update

Mr. Smith noted that on August 28th the Selectmen received an e-mail from the state asking us for a timeline and scope of services for the Town House project. Mr. Smith tried to contact the person that sent the e-mail for two weeks. When he finally was able to speak with the woman he told her that the Town needs more information on the conditions of the grant. He was given the name of Ketav Patel, the new CFO at the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development. When Mr. Smith contacted Mr. Patel, he was informed that this money is in the state's general operating budget, not in the capital budget like the Fire Station project. This means that the funds must be expended by June 30, 2015. We need to determine how this money is going to be spent. Mr. Patel followed up with paperwork including a copy of the contract after a call to Mr. Patel stating that no information had been received from EOHD after the initial contact with the office. The goal of this meeting is to discuss how quickly we can identify what has to be done with the money.

Trish Miller of the Friends of the Town House asked to speak on the subject of the efforts and progress of the Friends on the Town House project. Mrs. Miller gave an overview of the work of the Friends over the past four years. The complete text of Mrs. Miller's presentation is (Attachment #1). The following description is a summary of those remarks.

The Friends were formed in response to a request from the Selectmen that they research grant funding and explore future uses of the Town House.

According to Mrs. Miller, the Friends reached out to the George A. Bernard Company of Worcester. They visited, assessed and evaluated the water infiltration into the building. Bernard referred the group further to Benoit Reardon Architects, who visited the building saw potential for renovation. They agreed to review the 2007 SEA plans. Benoit Reardon also introduced The Friends to the use of Tax Credits and suggested that they meet with Preservation Massachusetts. Preservation Massachusetts indicated that at present there is not a lot of grant money available for historic renovations, and suggested that the Friends look into the tax credit program.

She stated that the Friends had developed a vehicle by which the Town House can be renovated/restored at no cost to the Town by developing relationships with prominent professional firms. MacRostie Historic Advisors, the consultant working with the Friends on the tax credits program, toured the building and held two public forums. They have filed six applications for tax credits. The Friends currently have certificates for \$900,000.00 in State tax credits, and have applied for an additional \$100,000.00 through the State program. An additional application for \$1,000,000.00 in Federal Tax credits has been submitted to the National Parks Service and notification of award is anticipated in November.

Mrs. Miller asked that the Town not embark on isolated repair projects that may undermine the tax credits, and instead do the entire building project at once.

Mr. Smith stated that he was advised by Mr. Patel that the state funds cannot be combined with other funds.

Maureen Wesolowski asked if there were any way for the concerns of the Selectmen and the Friends can be addressed by discussing things with the Friends' consultants? She urged the Selectmen to take the opportunity to address these issues so the tax credits are not endangered. Mrs. Wesolowski suggested as many variables as possible need to be eliminated before embarking on any movement in any direction.

Mr. Hevy asked what prints the Friends are talking about. The latest prints that he is aware of are the SEA plans. He asked if the Friends have more current prints. Mrs. Miller stated that prints were required in the tax credit application process to demonstrate the viability of the project. The architectural drawings by Benoit Reardon included some information that was not part of the SEA plans.

Mrs. Walter noted that the Friends helped to define the project early on with data from a survey. Town also cleaned up petroleum contamination at the rear of the building using grant funds. She does not see how spending the \$1 million in State funds will jeopardize the state tax credits.

Mr. Hevy stated that we all want to work together to restore the building. He stated that he was in favor of putting together a steering committee to work with the Friends, but still move forward with plans to use the grant funds by June 30th. Mrs. Miller asked if the Selectmen were willing to listen to the proposal of the consultants. Mr. Smith said that he believes we can do both, meet with the consultants and Friends, but also have a renovation committee to move forward with the plans to use the \$1 million. He suggested a phased approach.

Mrs. Wesolowski stated that the steering committee should be tasked with working with the Friends and their consultants.

Mrs. Miller stated that she will contact the consultants to see when they would be available for a meeting.

Jeff Samuelson stated that everyone here wants the building to be fixed. He asked if the tax credits expire? Mrs. Miller stated that the credits don't expire, but it is a complex process. If the dormers and roof get done it should be planned so that it won't need to be undone or redone later.

Mr. Samuelson asked if the Friends' capital campaign has started? Mrs. Miller said that a quiet phase of a capital campaign has already begun.

Mr. Samuelson stated that consultant Albert Rex has already stated that it could take up to two years to find an investor to purchase the tax credits. He also mentioned a marketability study that has not yet happened. He said that he is in favor of a building committee, and suggested Jim Caldwell be on it since he knows the building.

Mr. Caldwell said that he is glad that the Friends and the Selectmen are so passionate about the building. The work being considered would enhance the building by stopping the leaks, and would not hinder any plans. In his opinion the 2007 SEA plans are still useful. He stated that he would be willing to serve on the committee, and ideally would plan to be out to bid by Christmas.

Mr. Smith asked Mr. Caldwell if he could see any problems with spending the \$1 million now and then later use the tax credits to continue the project? Mr. Caldwell stated that he did not see a problem.

Claudette Marshall said that the structure should be shored up and made leak proof using the \$1 million in grant funds.

Mrs. Miller stated that investors are looking for a total project as an investment. Mr. Smith noted that the Selectmen have already agreed to meet with the Friends and their consultants.

Charles Marshall said that the Selectmen should go forward with both ideas; the committee could be putting together a bid package to address the water infiltration at the same time the Selectmen meet with the consultants.

Mrs. Walter asked Mr. Caldwell if he could get together a list of projects that could be done during the winter. Mr. Caldwell stated that as long as there is no snow on the roof the gutters and roof projects could be accomplished.

Mr. Hevy stated that he would like Mr. Caldwell to run the steering committee and start looking at what can be done now. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to ask Mr. Caldwell to recommend a committee of five to the Selectmen to plan how to spend the \$1 million. So voted.

Mrs. Miller and Jean Underwood stated that the committee should include representation from the Friends.

iii. Sign 10/24 Special Town Meeting warrant

Mr. Smith reviewed two additional articles that had been added since last week. (Attachment #2); Article 3 added to rescind \$4,000.00 from the Bay Path June vote; Article 2 is the ALS rescind vote and Article 10 is the Gilbert Street infrastructure project. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to approve this final version, and to sign and post the warrant. So voted.

iv. Spending Freeze guidelines

The Selectmen reviewed a cover letter and attachments related to the spending freeze that was approved last week. (Attachment #3) Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to sign the cover letter and send the package out to the various town officials. So voted.

v. FY16 Budget Policy and Guidelines

The Selectmen reviewed the FY16 Budget Timeline and the FY15 Budget Policy and Guidelines. (Attachment #4) Mr. Smith stated that for FY16 he would like to see the budget requests include line item breakdowns. Mrs. Walter asked that the three Selectmen review this information and come back next week with fresh ideas for the policy and guidelines.

b. VOTE - None

c. PENDING INFORMATION

- i. Landfill beaver issues
- ii. Brickyard Road beaver issues
- iii. Town House project
- iv. Murphy Road Bridge Project
- v. Solterra Agreement
- vi. NBDDP
- vii. CDBG Infrastructure Study
- viii. Proposal from Two Way Radio Services
- ix. Trees at 61 Gilbert Street

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- Introduction
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a. Letter from Thomas Waugh re: zoning change

The Selectmen reviewed a letter from Thomas Waugh asking to change the zoning of North Main Street from Grove Street to Route 148. (Attachment #5) Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to refer the request to the Planning Board. So voted.

b. Sign 61A acknowledgements (2)

The Selectmen reviewed two requests for 61A acknowledgements. (Attachment #6) The first was for land at 50 Town Farm Road that is remaining in Chapter 61A. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to acknowledge the transfer. So voted.

The second was for land on Brickyard Road that is being removed from 61A. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion not to exercise the Town's right of first refusal. So voted.

c. Request from Bay Path for sign

The Selectmen reviewed an e-mail from Peggi Corsi of the Bay Path Vocational School asking for permission to place a sign in town advertising their open house. (Attachment #7) The Selectmen agreed that they would prefer to put the information on the sign in the center of town.

VII. DEPARTMENT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Monthly
 - a. Police – None
 - b. Fire – None
 - c. Highway - None
- Quarterly
 - a. Bring 2 quarterly reports to discuss.

The Selectmen discussed how to manage this section of the agenda. Mr. Smith stated that he would like to see quarterly reports from the Collector and the Treasurer, and Mr. Hevy said that he would like to hear reports from the Cable Advisory Committee and the Playground Committee.

Charles Marshall of the Cable Advisory Committee stated that the committee has been unable to have their first meeting yet. Two members of the committee are gone for the winter, so there is a desperate need for two additional members. He appealed for volunteers to contact the Selectmen's office if interested. He said that he would like to see an attorney on the committee, and perhaps a resident that does not have cable tv.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. Special Town Meeting reminder

Mr. Smith announced that there will be a Special Town Meeting on October 24th. The last day to register to vote is October 14th at the Town Clerk's office.

b. NB Cultural Council Seeks Grant Proposals

Mr. Hevy announced that the Cultural Council is accepting grant proposals until October 15th.

c. Hydrant Flushing

Mr. Smith announced that the Water Department will continue flushing hydrants until this Friday, October 10th.

d. Public forum to be held on Oct 9th for East Side Infrastructure Plan

Mrs. Walter announced that there will be a public forum at the Senior Center this Thursday, October 9th on the Town's application for another block grant to continue with

the East Side Infrastructure project. Mrs. Walter noted that public participation is critical in this process. She encouraged residents who recently received a survey in the mail to return them as soon as possible, as the information is needed for the application process.

e. North Brookfield Theater Guild is presenting "Oliver"

Mr. Smith read an announcement from the North Brookfield Theater Guild announcing their presentation of "Oliver" that is taking place November 7th, 8th, and 9th.

f. Trick or Treat hours

Mr. Hevy announced that Trick or Treat will be held on October 31st from 5:30 to 6:30 PM.

IX. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

a. Finance Committee Recommendation Town Manager

Mr. Smith noted that Frank Hubacz is trying to arrange to have a speaker on this subject come to give a presentation.

b. Town House gutters

Mrs. Walter noted that the name of this item has been changed to Town House Project, not just gutters.

c. Police Chief Search Committee

d. CDBG Infrastructure Study

e. NBDDP

f. Budget Workshop

g. Highway Truck Proposal

h. North Brookfield EMS (ALS) Contract Amendment

The Selectmen reviewed the minutes of September 30th. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to approve the minutes. So voted.

Mrs. Walter said that she was confused as to Mr. Hevy's e-mail to the Fire Department inviting them to attend this evening's meeting. She thought that the Selectmen were going to discuss this among themselves first before inviting the Fire Department to attend. She felt unprepared for tonight's meeting. Mr. Smith stated that he thought Mr. Hevy was going to send an e-mail to the Fire Department to invite them to tonight's meeting.

X. EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 8:30 PM Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to enter Executive Session to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real estate, because an open session may have a detrimental effect on the Town's negotiating position. Roll call: Smith, yes; Walter, yes; Hevy, yes. So voted. Mr. Smith announced that the Board would exit Executive Session only to adjourn.

At 9:15 PM the Board came out of Executive Session. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to adjourn. So voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Scott Burton
Administrative Assistant