

MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING OCTOBER 14, 2014

Chairman Smith called the meeting to order in the Senior Center at 6 PM with Mrs. Walter and Mr. Hevy also present.

I. I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. Approval of minutes of October 7, 2014

Mrs. Walter asked to defer approval of these minutes to next week, as she wants to make some changes in the section regarding the Town House discussion.

- b. Approval of Executive Session minutes of October 7, 2014

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to approve the October 7, 2014 Executive Session minutes as written. So voted.

II. APPROVAL OF WARRANTS

None

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public has a brief opportunity to discuss items on the agenda through the Chair

IV. FINANCIAL REPORT

- a. FY15 Budget Update

Mr. Smith reported that the Town's financial picture has not changed from last week. The deficit remains at approximately \$144,000.00, which will be transferred from Stabilization at the October 24th Special Town Meeting.

Mrs. Walter stated that in her opinion it is irresponsible to take such a large amount from the Stabilization Account. She believes that she has the support of others on the Financial Management team with this. She would like to sit down with the Finance Committee and see if there is any possibility of making some cuts to departmental budgets.

Mr. Smith noted that there is only ten days before the town meeting. He is concerned that budget cuts may jeopardize jobs.

Mrs. Walter stated that she believes that this is an exercise that the Board needs to undertake. There is a systemic problem with the budget. It is bad practice to rely on Free Cash to balance the budget. She would like to take one more look at the budget to see if there are any areas that could be cut.

Mr. Hevy said that in his opinion departmental budgets cannot sustain another cut. But there is a little time before the town meeting, so the Selectmen should meet with the Finance Committee to discuss this.

Mr. Smith said that the Selectmen and Finance Committee have been over the budgets many times. Departments such as the Fire Department and the Library cannot be cut. At the Town Offices budgets can't be cut because 80% of the budgets are salary and benefits. He noted that the Selectmen did meet with the School Committee and inform them of the plan to take \$45,000.00 in unanticipated School Choice revenue from their budget.

Mr. Smith stated that he would contact the Finance Committee to try to set up a meeting to discuss potential budget cuts.

V. OLD BUSINESS

a. DISCUSSION

i. Town House Update

Trish Miller of the Friends of the Town House was present to inform the Selectmen that Albert Rex of McCrostie Historic Advisors would like to make a formal presentation to the Selectmen. He is available during the week of October 27th.

Mr. Smith noted that when the meeting with Mr. Rex was discussed last week, he understood that it would be to address concerns raised by Maureen Wesolawski on how a "phased" approach to the Town House renovation would fit together the tax credit program. Phase I would be funded by the \$1 million grant before June 30, 2015, and Phase II would be a longer term process using tax credits. Mr. Smith now understands that Mr. Rex wants to go over the entire Town House plan.

Mrs. Miller noted that Mr. Rex wants to talk about how everyone can work together on the Town House renovation, and the time line for tax credits.

Mr. Hevy noted that he won't be able to attend the Selectmen's October 28th meeting, and hoped that the meeting with Mr. Rex could be scheduled for another date. Mrs. Miller will check on the availability of Mr. Rex for the following week.

James Caldwell presented his list of people he recommends for appointment to a Town House Steering Committee that would advise on the spending of the \$1 million in grant funds that must be spent before June 30th. (Attachment #1)

Mr. Smith asked that discussion on this issue be deferred to the next meeting, as he has names to add to the list. Mrs. Walter stated that she also has names that she would like included on the list.

Mr. Caldwell cautioned that he is sure that the people he has recommended would be able to get the job done in the necessary timeframe. He said that he could not guarantee the same results if other people are added to the committee.

Mr. Hevy pointed out the short time frame to spend the \$1 million grant, and asked that the Selectmen make a decision on this next week.

ii. FY16 budget policy and guidelines

The Selectmen reviewed the FY15 Budget Policy and Guidelines in anticipation of creating the policy and guidelines for FY2016. (Attachment #2) Mr. Hevy stated that he would like to see a three-year projection on budgets, but wasn't sure if this would go in the policy or guidelines.

Mrs. Walter said that she thinks that would be a good idea, we have things like solar revenue coming in the next few years, and it would be good to see that on a long-range forecast. If this information was combined with the information that comes from the Capital Improvement Planning (CIP) committee we would get a good look at the future. She suggested that this be a new item under budget policy.

It was agreed to talk about this again next week.

iii. Draft motions for 10/24 STM

The Selectmen reviewed the motions for the October 24th Special Town Meeting. (Attachment #3) Mr. Smith noted that the Selectmen have reviewed these articles several times in conjunction with department heads. It was agreed that these will be finalized next week.

iv. Priority Development Area study

Mrs. Walter noted that North Brookfield's request for a Priority Development Area (PDA) study for the town's center has been approved by Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission. (Attachment #4) Trish Settles from CMRPC would like to come out Thursday of this week to kick off the study. Anyone who wants to volunteer to participate is welcome to attend. The PDA will cover the downtown area from Maple Street to Spring Street, and Union Street to Grove Street. Mrs. Walter noted that this may be a new way to look at economic development in North Brookfield.

v. Sign consent to representation of Brookfield and East Brookfield in review of proposed regional ALS agreement

The Selectmen reviewed a letter from Attorney Brian Riley of Kopelman and Paige explaining that his firm has been asked to review and revise a Paramedic Service Regional Agreement among the towns of North Brookfield, East Brookfield, and Brookfield. (Attachment #5) Attorney Riley notes that because his firm represents all three towns, he must make this disclosure pursuant to the Rules of Professional Conduct of the Massachusetts Bar Association, and obtain written permission from all three parties concerning this legal work. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to approve and sign the consent to representation. So voted.

vi. Review of October 9th Public Forum for the East Side Infrastructure Project

Mr. Smith noted that last Thursday the Selectmen attended a rather lengthy public forum hosted by Andrew Loew of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. According to Mr. Loew, the purpose of the forum was to introduce the East Side Infrastructure

Project to neighborhood property owners and residents, to present the findings of the engineers' field survey work that was conducted over the summer, and to give residents and property owners a chance to provide local input on infrastructure problems and concerns. Mr. Smith noted that several residents did attend the forum and speak with the engineers.

The focus is on problems that are happening to several families when we have heavy rain conditions. The engineers have used the latest technology to do the surveys and mapping, and cameras were used to look inside the pipes. Some of the pipes are as much as 150 years old, and some are on private property. Mr. Smith noted that there is an article on the October 24th Special Town Meeting to appropriate money to try to alleviate some of the problems.

Mr. Smith explained that after the Selectmen receive the recommendations of the engineers sometime in December, we will apply for another round of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. Mr. Smith urged residents to provide any information necessary that is needed for the application process. Residents in the target area have already received requests for household income information.

Mrs. Walter noted that hopefully the information that we receive from the engineers will help with a Hazard Mitigation Grant application as well. She noted that water problems exist on almost every property in town, and the infrastructure is very old.

Joanne Decourcy of 61 Gilbert Street was present to urge residents to return the income surveys, because even if there is no problem on your property you might be helping out your neighbors who do have problems.

Mrs. Decourcy also told the Selectmen that several trees in her yard are dead, which she says is due to flooding from a broken stormwater pipe. She is afraid the trees will come down over the winter onto her house. She said that she would be willing to contribute \$500 towards the cost of tree removal, but she wants the Town to pay for most of it. Mr. Smith noted that the Selectmen are sensitive to Mrs. Decourcy's situation, and are in the process of gathering information. He noted that the Town did purchase a large industrial pump to help alleviate the flooding on her property.

b. VOTE - None

c. PENDING INFORMATION

- i. Tucker Road beaver issues
- ii. Brickyard Road beaver issues
- iii. Murphy Road beaver issues
- iv. Murphy Road Bridge Project
- v. Solterra Agreement
- vi. NBDDP
- vii. CDBG Infrastructure Study
- viii. Proposal from Two Way Radio Services

- ix. Gilbert Street Stormwater issues
- x. Fire Dept \$2 Million Grant Proposal
- xi. Town House Project

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- Introduction

- a. Cemetery Road acceptance

Mrs. Walter noted that the Selectmen and Highway Department did get a lot of complaints about the condition of Cemetery Road. The Highway Department was able to use some extra material to make it better. She is doing some research on how to accept the road as a private town road so that it may be maintained using town funds. She noted that there is a hiking trail there now with a very nice view.

Mrs. Walter also noted that the sidewalks on Bell Street cannot be done with Chapter 90 money because we can't make them 5' wide. In her opinion there is a dire need to appropriate money to do sidewalks.

- b. Sign warrant for November 4th State Election

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to approve and sign the warrant for the November 4th state election. (Attachment #6) So voted.

- c. Sign NBEMA grant application

The Selectmen reviewed a grant application for the North Brookfield Emergency Management Agency that had several blank pages. (Attachment #7) Mr. Smith noted that there is no explanation of what the grant is for, and whether or not there are any matching funds required. It was agreed to send the application back to NBEMA for more information.

- d. Approve FST Invoice #3

The Selectmen reviewed an invoice from Fay, Spofford, and Thorndyke for engineering services related to the East Side Infrastructure Project. (Attachment #8) Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to approve the invoice. So voted.

- e. Changes to health insurance

The Selectmen reviewed an e-mail from Attorney Brian Riley explaining how the Selectmen could make changes in employee health insurance plans. (Attachment #9) The Selectmen agreed to pursue this issue.

- f. Letter re: cable license

The Selectmen reviewed a letter from the state Department of Telecommunications and Cable. (Attachment #10) The letter reminds the Board that the cable license is due to expire in October of 2015, and that we should be nearing completion on the process of determining the cable-related needs of the Town. Mr. Smith noted that the Selectmen have established a Cable Advisory Committee and appointed three people, but two more people are needed.

VII. DEPARTMENT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. Special Town Meeting reminder

Mr. Hevy reminded residents that there will be a Special Town Meeting on October 24th at 7 PM in the Elementary School Auditorium.

- b. Absentee ballots now available for Nov 4th State Election
- Mrs. Walter read this announcement from the Town Clerk.

- c. NB Cultural Council Seeks Grant Proposals
- Mr. Smith announced that the Cultural Council will be accepting grant proposals until October 15th.

- d. North Brookfield Theater Guild is presenting “Oliver”
- Mr. Hevy announced this presentation of “Oliver” on November 7th, 8th, and 9th.

- e. Trick or Treat hours
- Mrs. Walter read an announcement from Police Chief Aram Thomasian, Jr. that Trick or Treat will be held on October 31st from 5:30 PM to 6:30 PM.

- f. Bay Path Open House
- Mr. Hevy announced that Bay Path Vocational School is holding an Open House on October 22nd from 6 PM to 8 PM.

IX. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- a. Finance Committee Recommendation Town Manager
- b. Police Chief Search Committee
- c. CDBG Infrastructure Study
- d. NBDDP
- e. Budget Workshop
- f. Highway Truck Proposal
- g. North Brookfield EMS (ALS) Contract Amendment

It was agreed to add a CORI policy and job descriptions to future agenda items.

X. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

There being no further business, at 8:10 PM Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to adjourn. So voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Scott Burton
Administrative Assistant