

MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING OCTOBER 23, 2012

Chairman Petraitis called the meeting to order in the Senior Center at 7:05 PM with Mr. Chabot and Mrs. Walter also present. Mr. Petraitis reminded those in attendance that the meeting was being both audio and video taped.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF OCTOBER 9, 2012 APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 9, 2012 EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF OCTOBER 16, 2012

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to approve the aforementioned minutes. So voted, with Mr. Petraitis abstaining from voting on the October 16th minutes because he was not present at that meeting.

IA. APPROVAL OF SCHOOL WARRANT #1022 FOR \$53,694.73 APPROVAL OF GENERAL WARRANT #1023 FOR \$230,841.53 APPROVAL OF SCHOOL WARRANT #1024 FOR \$7,319.91 APPROVAL OF PAYROLL WARRANT #9 FOR \$286,820.93

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

IB. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There was no one present for the Public Comment Period.

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. LETTER FROM BAY PATH SCHOOL RE: ELECTION RESULTS

Mr. Chabot read a letter from Bay Path Vocational School Superintendent John Lafleche thanking the Selectmen and townspeople for their support of the school's renovation project. (Attachment #1) Mr. Lafleche noted that he would be happy to meet with the Selectmen at any point during the construction process.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. DAN HAYNES RE: FY11 AUDIT

Dan Haynes, the Town's auditor from Scanlon and Associates, was present to review his firm's audit of the Town's FY11 books. (Available in the Selectmen's office) Mr. Haynes noted that 42% of the Town's revenue is funded through state aid, and 58% is

funded through tax dollars. He said that North Brookfield does a great job of managing the collection and receivables of taxes, in fact, better than most towns.

Mr. Haynes noted the Town's A+ bond rating is mostly attributable to the Town having 12% of its budget in the Stabilization Account. The most recent bond rating from Standard and Poor's also noted that the Town does an excellent job of adjusting its expenses to meet declining revenues. The Town uses borrowing effectively; the manageable debt is mostly for infrastructure projects.

Mr. Haynes noted that the Management Letter cites no serious defects, but recommends the hiring of a business manager for the school district.

Mr. Petraitis commended the Town's financial team for the good work that they do. Mr. Chabot stated that the Town has a "world-class" Finance Committee. Mr. Haynes praised their ability to reduce expenses to meet reduced revenues. Mr. Haynes added that North Brookfield has one of the best financial teams around.

Mr. Petraitis noted that 2011 was the year that the school district had an interim superintendent; things should be improved in the FY2012 audit with the new superintendent.

Mr. Haynes reviewed some problems noted with the school's grants and revolving funds, but the problems are not considered serious. The problems just point to the need for a school business manager, perhaps combined with an HR person.

Mrs. Walter said that in her opinion a lot of the issues are breakdowns in process.

The Selectmen thanked Mr. Haynes for his time, and Mrs. Walter noted that he did an excellent job of communicating his concerns.

B. TWO CULTURAL COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Petraitis read a letter from Cultural Council Chairman Eva Brown asking that the Selectmen vote to appoint Thomas Whitestone and Elisabeth Hyder to the committee. (Attachment #2) Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to appoint Mr. Whitestone and Mrs. Hyder. So voted.

Mrs. Walter praised Mr. Whitestone for his contribution to the Town's 200th Anniversary celebration, and Mrs. Hyder for the tour of her studio last weekend. Mr. Chabot offered his thanks to the two residents for volunteering to serve.

C. THREE NBEMA APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Petraitis reviewed the applications of Robert Mayo, Nikki Gonelli, and Kaitlynn Parkin to be appointed to the North Brookfield Emergency Management Agency. (Attachments #3) Only Mr. Mayo was present, and he informed the Selectmen that he

has only lived in North Brookfield for a year, but wants to help out the community by joining NBEMA. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to appoint Mr. Mayo. So voted.

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to also appoint Ms. Gonelli and Ms. Parkin. So voted.

D. CALL SPECIAL TOWN MEETING FOR NOVEMBER 30TH

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to call for a Special Town Meeting on Friday, November 30th at 7 PM in the Elementary School Auditorium. So voted.

E. INVITATION FROM SPENCER TO ATTEND MEETING RE: STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Mrs. Walter reviewed a letter from Spencer Town Administrator Adam Gaudette inviting the Selectmen to attend an informational session for possible inclusion in the 2012 Community Innovation Challenge Grant Application for Regional Stormwater Management. (Attachment #4) The meeting will be held next Tuesday, October 30th, at 9 AM at CMRPC in Worcester. The Selectmen agreed that this is an important topic, and Mrs. Walter stated that she would be available to attend.

F. PROJECT UPDATES

It was agreed to postpone this item until a future agenda in order to get through all of the items on this evening's agenda.

G. ACCEPT DONATION FROM COUNTRY BANK FOR SENIOR CENTER

Mr. Chabot read an e-mail from Senior Center Director Carol Wheeler asking the Selectmen to accept the donation of \$2,000.00 from Country Bank for the COA Gift Fund. (Attachment #5) Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to accept the donation. So voted.

H. SIGN LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR FRIENDS OF TOWN HOUSE

Mr. Petraitis reviewed a letter of support for the Friends of the Town House, acknowledging their efforts to secure funding. (Attachment #6) Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to sign the letter. So voted.

I. SIGN LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL GRANT

Mr. Chabot reviewed a letter of support to be sent to the US Department of Education in support of a grant for the North Brookfield schools. (Attachment #7) Mrs. Walter noted

that she attended the meeting where the goals were approved. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to approve and sign the letter. So voted.

Mr. Petraitis noted that this is stimulus money, and the school should use the funds for technology initiatives instead of staffing, because the Town will have to fund this when the stimulus money goes away. Mrs. Walter noted that the school plans to do exactly that with the funds.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. THERE WILL BE A SPECIAL TOWN MEETING ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2ND AT 7 PM IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

Mr. Petraitis made the above announcement. He asked that the Selectmen review the motions because he was not present last week when the articles were discussed. The Selectmen proceeded to review the motions. (Available in the Selectmen's office)

Mr. Petraitis expressed his concern that at the June Adjourned Annual Town Meeting additional funding for the School Department was discussed, and the need to take money from the Stabilization Account to cover it. Article #7 is asking to take money from Stabilization to balance the Group Insurance Account.

Mrs. Walter stated that most Town budgets were increased this year, and rather than having the accountant make many small transactions for each budget, this gives us a single transaction to balance the budget.

Mr. Petraitis stated that the School Department was the only one with a 6% increase in its budget, the Police Department was under 4%, and every other Town department's increase was within 2 ½%. If the School didn't go up 6% we would not need to go to the Stabilization Account.

Mr. Chabot noted that last year everyone thought we would have to take money from Stabilization, but the Free Cash was enough to cover it.

Mr. Petraitis entertained a motion to send an e-mail to the Town Accountant asking why we don't have Free Cash certified yet. There was no motion or second.

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to approve the motions. So voted.

B. THE NEXT BOS MEETING WILL BE HELD ON MONDAY NOVEMBER 5TH DUE TO THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Mr. Petraitis made the preceding announcement.

C. TWO ZBA HEARING NOTICES

Mrs. Walter read two ZBA hearing notices, both for October 24th. The first one is for a hearing at 7 PM at the Haston Library on the application of Verizon for relief of rear set-back requirements at 120 South Main Street, and the second announcement is for a hearing at 7:45 PM at the library on the application of Guaranteed Builders to construct a single family home at 40 Brooks Pond Road.

D. THE ANNUAL FIREMEN'S BALL WILL BE HELD ON NOVEMBER 10TH AT SALEM CROSS INN. TICKETS ARE \$40 PER PERSON AVAILABLE FROM ANY FIRE DEPARTMENT MEMBER.

Mr. Chabot read the aforementioned announcement.

E. TRICK OR TREAT WILL BE HELD ON OCTOBER 31ST FROM 5:30 TO 6:30 PM. PARADE WILL BE FROM 4:30 TO 5:30 PM.

Mr. Petraitis announced the Trick or Treat and parade schedules.

F. WHO WAS OLIVER WARD?

Mrs. Walter reviewed an announcement for the North Brookfield Historical Society's presentation of "Who was Oliver Ward?" It will be held on Saturday, October 27th at 10 AM at the Elementary School. According to Historical Society Director Linda Grace, there will be several special guests and contributing artists taking part in the program, including Francis C. Rooney, Jr., John W. Learnard, Herbert Varnum, Kevin Donahue, Ann Parker, and Russell Buzzell.

V. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

A. TAX CLASSIFICATION HEARING ON NOVEMBER 5TH

Mr. Petraitis noted that the annual Tax Classification hearing will be held at the November 5th Selectmen's meeting.

Also on November 5th there will be an update on the various Town projects currently underway.

At 8:05 PM Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss strategy related to collective bargaining, because an open session may have a detrimental effect on the Town's negotiating position, and also to conduct negotiations with non-union personnel. Roll call: Petraitis, yes; Walter, yes; Chabot,

yes. So voted. Mr. Petraitis announced that the Board would exit Executive Session only to adjourn.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 8:40 PM. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to adjourn. So voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Scott Burton
Administrative Assistant