

MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING MAY 22, 2012

Chairman Petraitis called the meeting to order in the Senior Center at 7 PM with Mrs. Walter and Mr. Chabot also present. Mr. Petraitis noted that the meeting would be both audio and video taped.

I. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to approve the minutes of May 15, 2012 as written. So voted.

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to approve the Executive Session minutes of May 15, 2012 as written. So voted.

IA. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to approve School Warrant #1061 for \$193,700.29, General Warrant #1062 for \$351,740.17, Refund Warrant #1063 for \$14,355.60, and Payroll Warrant # 24 for \$272,748.79. So voted.

IB. There was no one present for the Public Comment Period.

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. Mrs. Walter reviewed a letter to be sent to the towns of Brookfield, West Brookfield, East Brookfield, Warren, New Braintree, and Brimfield regarding the intermunicipal agreement to share highway equipment. (Attachment #1) Mrs. Walter asked for a formal vote of the Selectmen to not participate in the arrangement. Mr. Petraitis so moved, and Mrs. Walter seconded. So voted. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to approve and sign the letter. So voted.

B. Mr. Chabot reviewed a list of vacancies on various town boards. (Attachment #2) Mr. Petraitis announced that the Selectmen will be doing the annual appointments on June 19th. He also urged any resident who is interested in any town committee, even if there is not a current vacancy, to fill out a volunteer card at the town offices.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. George Smith of Landcraft Corporation was present to inform the Selectmen about a proposed 3.75 megawatt solar project on 18 acres at 25 Bates Street. He noted that he has no firm plans to go forward; at this point he is just testing the waters to see how residents and the Selectmen feel about the plan. He noted that part of the property is zoned R11, and part is R66.

Mrs. Walter asked if Mr. Smith has an agreement with the property owner yet, and Mr. Smith stated that it is a verbal agreement only. Mr. Chabot asked about the term of the proposed agreement, and Mr. Smith stated that it would be for 20 years with 5 year options.

Mr. Petraitis asked if anyone would like to comment. Mrs. Walter stated that in her opinion this is an inappropriate location because it is a historic and pristine site.

Alan Hodder of Bates Street, a direct abutter, noted that two years ago he was the co-chairman of a committee exploring the purchase of the land, known as the Wendemuth Farm, for preservation. At that time residents in Town felt very strongly that the land should not be developed, and that it should be preserved as open space for everyone to enjoy.

Mr. Hodder explained that he is personally in favor of solar installations, but agreed with Mrs. Walter's assessment of the location as inappropriate. He noted that it was recently designated a historic landscape by the state, and development on the land would go against the Town's Open Space initiative.

Steve Cummings of the Planning Board noted that the two solar sites already approved in Town are well located to be out of sight, there are other locations in Town that would probably be better suited to a solar installation.

Mr. Smith said that he saw no point in wasting any more time; it was obvious to him that there is no support for the project, and he would withdraw his proposal at this time. He thanked everyone for their time this evening.

Doris Matthews read a poem about the site, which is next to where she grew up.

The Selectmen thanked everyone for coming to voice their opinions.

B. Mr. Petraitis read a letter from the Water Department asking the Selectmen to review a bid for backhoe services that was received from E. M. Thibault Excavation of Spencer. (Attachment #3) In the letter Water Commission Chairman Tim Nason noted that this was the only bid received. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to accept the bid from Thibault. So voted.

C. Mr. Petraitis read a letter from the Water Department asking the Selectmen to sign off on Change Order #5 for the Horse Pond Dam project. (Available in the Selectmen's office) Mrs. Walter noted that she has attended all of the project meetings, and the change order is in line and affordable to the project. She recommended approval. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to approve and sign the change order. So voted.

D. Mr. Chabot read an e-mail from Jim Caldwell informing the Board that North Brookfield students Evy Gaudette and Andrew Paquette from Bay Path Vocational School have received medals in the Skills USA competition. Skills USA is a competition among vocational students statewide. The Selectmen offered their congratulations to the two students.

E. Chief Gannon was not present. This item will be placed on the next agenda.

F. Mrs. Walter reviewed an e-mail from Hoston Free Library Director Ann Kidd that the library will be undergoing a software upgrade over the Memorial Day weekend. (Attachment #4) Library services may be limited or unavailable during that time, and some options on the current system will not carry over.

G. The Selectmen reviewed a draft of the warrant for the June 22nd Special Town Meeting. (Available in the Selectmen's office) Mrs. Walter explained an article requesting funds to remove beavers in the Tucker Road and Winter Street areas, noting that the Highway Superintendent approves of the article as a way to save significant money on road repairs.

On an article from Highway Department requesting funds for a truck to be purchased from the Sewer Department, Mr. Petraitis stated that he sees no reason for one department to pay another. It was agreed to have the Sewer Commissioners in to the next meeting to discuss this.

Mr. Chabot thanked the Friends of the Town House committee for hanging flags and bunting on the Town House. He said that the rest of the building is looking rather shabby, and would like to see the building painted. Mrs. Walter stated that the Town was told not to paint the building because of the grant agreement with Mass Historic.

Mr. Chabot stated that he would like to see the committee allowed to install art work in the windows of the Town House, and allow the sale of raffle tickets inside the building. It was agreed to discuss these two things next week.

Going back to the discussions of earlier this evening, Mr. Petraitis stated that he is uncomfortable interfering with a property owner's rights to sell or develop his land. Mr. Chabot said that he believes in free enterprise, but that piece of land is so nice, and there is so much back land available in Town that would be more suitable.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Mr. Petraitis read an announcement from the Water Department that hydrant flushing will continue through the end of this week. (Attachment #5)

B. Mrs. Walter announced that there will be a Town-wide yard sale this Saturday, May 26th sponsored by the North Brookfield PTO. (Attachment #6)

C. Mr. Chabot announced that the Memorial Day parade will begin at 9 AM on Monday, May 28th.

D. Mr. Petraitis announced that dog licenses are now overdue. There will be a \$5 late charge after June 1st and a \$25 late charge after September 1st.

E. Mrs. Walter read an e-mail from Linda Grace that the 200th Anniversary Commemorative Brochures will be arriving this week from the printer. (Attachment #7) They will be available at the Historical Society's Museum Grand Re-opening on Memorial Day between 11 AM and 3 PM.

V. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Mrs. Walter asked that the letter from Edith Doane be put on the next agenda for a response.

Mrs. Walter noted that the parking lease with Quabaug Corporation for the land on Grove Street expired May 1st.

Mrs. Walter asked that the Selectmen follow up with Pioneer Valley Planning Commission regarding CDBG applications.

Mrs. Walter asked that the Selectmen discuss the proposal for a disc golf course at the Town Park.

Mrs. Walter noted that the Board has not heard back from Quabaug Corporation regarding the recommendations of the Quabaug Study Committee. Mr. Petraitis stated that he has spoken with Mr. Rosen, and we are waiting to hear from him regarding a time.

There being no further business, at 7:55 PM Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to adjourn. So voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Scott Burton
Administrative Assistant