

## **MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING JANUARY 29, 2015**

Chairman Smith called the meeting to order at 4 PM in the Senior Center with Mrs. Walter and Mr. Hevy also present. Mr. Smith thanked all town employees, especially the public safety and highway workers, for working above and beyond during the blizzard over the past two days.

### **I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- **January 13, 2015 minutes**

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to approve the minutes of January 13, 2015 as written. So voted.

- **January 13, 2015 Executive Session minutes**

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to approve the Executive Session minutes of January 13, 2015 as written. So voted.

### **II. APPROVAL OF WARRANTS**

- **School Warrant #1038 for \$45,421.94**
- **General Warrant #1039 for \$69,181.95**
- **Payroll Warrant #15 for \$290,938.60**

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

### **III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

- **The public has the opportunity to briefly comment on agenda items through the Chairman**

Mr. Smith announced that anyone in attendance would be able to briefly comment on any agenda item this evening.

### **IV. FINANCIAL REPORT**

- **Police, Fire, BOH and Highway budgets**

Mr. Smith noted that last week the Selectmen stated that they would be reviewing these budgets. (Attachment #1) Mr. Smith stated that he has looked at the budgets and does not see anything alarming at this time. One or two of the Highway line items are getting low, some of the line items for fuel in other budgets are lower than expected for this time of year. The Police budget looks to be in good shape, but the overtime continues to be a concern as there is only 27% of the line item remaining. The ACO expense is at 26%. Overall the budgets are in good shape.

Mr. Smith went on to say that the COA Senior Wheels line item is almost depleted, but they have trust funds that can be used to supplement the account. The COA salary accounts are low.

The BOH expense for electricity at the landfill is up, as is the fuel account. The bag account is in deficit, but the BOH has submitted a Reserve Fund request to the Finance

Committee to cover that. The Finance Committee would like to know what went wrong; in June the Finance Committee did not support the BOH request for bags, and instead gave an average of the past three years.

- **Request for Snow and Ice deficit spending**

Mr. Smith reviewed a letter from Highway Superintendent Gary Jean asking for permission to spend in deficit in the Snow and Ice account. (Attachment #2) This letter was dated prior to Tuesday's snowstorm. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to approve the deficit spending. So voted.

- **Letter re: Chapter 90 funds**

Mr. Smith reviewed a letter from Governor Baker announcing that North Brookfield's Chapter 90 apportionment for 2015 will increase from \$312,874.00 to \$469,311.00. (Attachment #3)

- **Tax Title properties**

The Selectmen reviewed a list of town-owned property that is available to be auctioned. (Available in the Selectmen's office) Mr. Smith noted that the Finance Committee has asked the Board of Selectmen to act more quickly on the disposition of tax-title properties. Mrs. Walter asked if the Shore Road property that is listed as Town Forest land has any restrictions on it? Leslie will ask the Assessors for a copy of the deed.

Mrs. Walter said that she would like more time to look at the list. It was agreed to put this on the agenda for next time.

- **Budget workshop**

The Selectmen discussed a date for a Budget Workshop for town officials, possibly sometime in February. Mr. Smith asked that this be put on the next agenda for a decision.

## **V. OLD BUSINESS**

- **Town House Advisory Committee update**

Mr. Hevy explained that the Town House Advisory Committee is waiting for feedback from town counsel and Garofalo Design Associates (GDA) on the contract between the Town and GDA.

- **Accept donations to Police Vehicle Gift Fund**

Mr. Smith reviewed a list of recent donations made to the Police Vehicle Gift Fund. (Attachment #4) Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to accept the donations. Mr. Smith noted that the fund now stands at \$11,769.88.

- **Job descriptions**

Mr. Hevy stated that he is almost done reviewing the job descriptions. He said that he will put his concerns into an e-mail this weekend. Mr. Smith asked that this be put on the next agenda.

## **VI. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS**

- **None**

There were no departmental reports.

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

- **Resignation of Eugene Caille**

Mrs. Walter read a letter from Eugene Caille resigning as the Town Historian. (Attachment #5) Mr. Smith said that he was sorry to hear of this resignation. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to accept the resignation with deep regret and to send a letter of thanks. So voted.

- **Resignation of Brandon Fullam**

Mr. Hevy reviewed a letter from Officer Brandon Fullam resigning from the Police Department. (Attachment #6) Mr. Smith thanked Officer Fullam, noting that he has been very effective in his position. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to accept the resignation. So voted. It was noted that Officer Fullam put 2014 on his resignation letter instead of 2015, and we really should ask for a revised letter with the correct dates.

- **SCM Elderbus appointment**

Mrs. Walter read an e-mail from COA Director Carol Wheeler asking that she be removed as the town's SCM Elderbus representative and that COA Outreach Coordinator Bill Salsman be appointed in her place. (Attachment #7) Mrs. Walter so moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded. So voted.

- **Police Chief Search Committee**

Mr. Smith reviewed a timeline for the hiring of a new police chief as proposed by Chief Thomasian. (Attachment #8) Mrs. Walter suggested a screening committee of 5 – 7 people. Mr. Smith announced that anyone interested in serving on the search committee should send a letter of interest to the Selectmen's office for consideration.

- **Finance Committee recommendations**

Mr. Smith noted that the Finance Committee gave the Selectmen a list of items to consider in order to improve the Town's finances. (Attachment #9) Mrs. Walter questioned why Animal Control was listed, right now that department is operating very efficiently with the addition of an assistant ACO.

Mr. Smith suggested that the Selectmen review the list and bring any questions to the next meeting.

Mr. Hevy stated that he will meet with Frank Hubacz of the Finance Committee about the recommendation that the Town sell gravel from town-owned property.

Mrs. Walter noted that when you sell off your assets that is a one-time infusion of funds. The Town needs a steady stream of income. Perhaps a Financial Advisory Committee could help the Selectmen with this.

- **School sign property**

Mr. Hevy noted that in August the school received a letter from Pamela Lane regarding the property where the school department's electronic sign is located. (Attachment #10) Ms. Lane stated that she and her brother inherited the land from their late father John Lane and now wish to sell the property. Mr. Lane signed an agreement with the school department in 2011 giving his permission for the sign to be erected on his land. Mr. Hevy stated that he called Ms. Lane and asked if the sign could remain on the property until the school department figured out what to do.

Mr. Smith asked exactly what does the Lane family want?

Mr. Hevy stated that they are willing to "work with the Town."

Mr. Smith said that when he spoke with Superintendent Tencza about this he understood that the sign was going to be moved. The agreement with Mr. Lane gives no time frame, the town is there "at will."

Mrs. Walter noted that the piece of property in question has no setback or frontage zoning requirements and is zoned for business.

Mr. Hevy stated that he did contact Ms. Lane in late December to confirm that her family is considering selling the land. They do not want to continue to pay taxes on the property. Ms. Lane has asked Building Inspector John Couture if the land could be split up in order to donate a small piece to the Town.

Mr. Smith suggested that Mr. Hevy contact the Lane family and see what they want to do.

- **Challenge Course building permit**

Mr. Smith noted that Building Inspector John Couture is asking for the Board of Selectmen, as owners of the property, to approve the issuance of a building permit for the indoor portion of the "Challenge Course" being built at the high school.

Mrs. Walter suggested that the Town's insurance company be contacted again to verify that these indoor elements have met their approval.

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to authorize the issuance of a building permit for the indoor elements of the challenge course at the North Brookfield High School, provided that the design meets the approval of the North Brookfield Building Inspector, and with the approval of the Town's insurance carrier. So voted.

## **VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- **Election update**

Mrs. Walter reviewed a memo from Town Clerk Sheila Buzzell listing all of the offices and incumbents up for election at the May 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Town Election. The last day to return nomination papers is Monday, March 6<sup>th</sup>. The last day to register to vote at the election is Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup>.

- **Hearts for Heat**

Mr. Smith noted that heating assistance is available for North Brookfield residents through the Hearts for Heat organization. Applicants must first apply and be approved by the Worcester Community Action Council.

- **BOH awards**

Mr. Hevy noted that the North Brookfield Board of Health has received two awards from the Central Mass Municipal Recycling Council recognizing the Town's Outstanding Waste Reduction Programs." According to the council, each participating household in North Brookfield averaged less than 1,000 pounds of trash per year.

## **IX. PENDING/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- **See attached list**

## **X. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- **Executive Session to discuss strategy related to negotiations with non-union personnel.**
- **Executive session to discuss strategy related to litigation.**

At 5:25 PM Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss strategy related to negotiations with non-union personnel, and to discuss strategy related to litigation. Roll call: Smith, yes; Walter, yes; Hevy, yes. So voted. Mr. Smith announced that the Board would exit Executive Session only to adjourn.

At 5:50 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

## **PENDING/FUTURE SELECTMEN'S ITEMS**

**Wendemuth Meadow  
Murphy Road Bridge Project  
Solterra Agreement  
NBDDP/Aztec  
Gilbert Street Stormwater issues  
Police Chief Search Committee  
Budget Workshop  
Finance Committee recommendations  
Town Offices server recommendations  
Changes to health insurance tiers  
Cable license renewal Oct 2015  
Water Superintendent retirement  
PDA Study  
Purchase Orders  
Vacancies on town boards  
Creation of Financial Advisory Committee**