

MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING MARCH 10, 2015

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.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- **February 24, 2015 minutes**

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

- **March 4, 2015 minutes**

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

- **March 4, 2015 Executive Session minutes**

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

II. APPROVAL OF WARRANTS

- **Interest Warrant #1044 for \$96,611.25**
- **School Warrant #1045 for \$142,965.90**
- **General Warrant #1046 for \$113,722.00**
- **Payroll Warrant #18 for \$302,079.23**

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

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Smith explained that anyone in attendance can ask questions or comment on any agenda item by going through himself as chairman.

IV. FINANCIAL REPORTS

- A. Highway Department**
- B. Police Department**
- C. Council on Aging**
- D. Fire Department**

Mr. Smith stated that he has reviewed the four budgets and for the most part they are ok. (Attachment #1) Some of the departments may need transfers in the spring. The current Snow and Ice deficit stands at \$100,284.51. The Department of Revenue has advised that this deficit can be carried forward over the next two years.

Mr. Smith noted that the Council on Aging budget will need to be monitored. A number of accounts are either very low or depleted. He met with the COA Director and the Town Accountant to discuss this budget, and the use of state grant, revolving funds,

and gifts from the Friends. When the town budget is exhausted funds are transferred from these other areas.

Also included was a balance sheet from the Accountant showing the FY16 budget using budget requests and preliminary Cherry Sheet figures. (Attachment #2) This shows a deficit of \$607,334.00. Mr. Smith noted that the Selectmen and Finance Committee will be working very hard over the next few months to reduce this deficit.

Mr. Smith also noted that the Selectmen are meeting with town officials tomorrow to discuss how tenuous the budget situation is. The Selectmen do not want take money from the Stabilization Account again this year. Mrs. Walter pointed out that Proposition 2 ½ only gives the Town approximately \$125,000.00 in additional levy limit for FY16.

Mr. Smith said that students who move to North Brookfield but remain in their old school are problematic. The Town is liable for these “choice-out” students. Mr. Hevy stated that School Choice was meant for students to move within a district, not out of district.

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Project updates

- **Murphy Road Bridge contractor recommendations**

Mr. Smith explained that the Selectmen met last week to discuss the recommendation of Fuss and O'Neill for the Murphy Road Bridge project. (Attachment #3) Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to reaffirm the decision of the Selectmen to award the bid for the Murphy Road Bridge project to MAS Building and Bridge for a bid price of \$316,495.00. So voted.

- **Town House Advisory Committee update**

Mr. Hevy explained that the Selectmen met with the Town House Advisory Committee last week. Project architects GDA presented a timeline of the \$500,000.00 project. There are some obstacles which need to be overcome, in addition to the very tight June 30th deadline for completion. GDA will continue to prepare the bid documents.

- **Wendemuth Meadow Conservation Restriction**

This item will be postponed to another meeting.

B. Accept donations to Police Vehicle Gift Fund

Mr. Smith read the list of recent donations to the Police Cruiser Gift Fund. (Attachment #4) The current balance in the account is \$12,564.88. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to accept the donations. So voted. Mr. Hevy asked if we are waiting to collect the entire \$40,000.00 before purchasing or leasing a cruiser? Mr. Smith stated that North Brookfield Savings Bank is doing a fundraiser for this in March. Perhaps the cruiser can be purchased by the end of the fiscal year.

C. Vote to authorize Treasurer Anne Jannette to hold a tax-title auction on May 6, 2015 at 12PM at the Police Station

Mr. Smith noted that the Selectmen have been reviewing various parcels of town-owned land for an auction in May. There are nine parcels of land that were taken for back taxes with a total assessed value of \$741,000.00. Treasurer Anne Jannette has already contacted auctioneer Paul Zekos about having a tax-title auction on May 6th. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to authorize Mrs. Jannette to auction up to 9 parcels of town-owned land on May 6, 2015. So voted.

VI. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

There were no departmental reports.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Water Commissioners re: recommendation for operator

Water Commissioners John Thomasian, Jim Kularski, and Tim Nason were present, along with Water Superintendent Steve Jones, to update the Selectmen on the search for a new Water Department operator. Mr. Thomasian explained that they advertised for the position and interviewed two very good candidates last night. It is the unanimous recommendation of the Water Commissioners to recommend that Christopher Connolly of Springfield be hired as the new Water Operator. Springfield is within the required one hour commute to the plant as required by DEP. Mr. Connolly is currently employed by the Town of Charlton, and runs a plant very similar to North Brookfield's. According to Mr. Thomasian, Mr. Connolly will be paid \$24.87 per hour.

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to appoint Christopher Connolly as Water Operator with a starting rate of \$24.87 per hour plus benefits. So voted.

B. Resignation of Mary Sawyer

Mr. Smith reviewed a letter from Mary Sawyer resigning from her position at the Senior Center. (Attachment #5) Mr. Smith noted that he spoke with Ms. Sawyer and gave her opportunity to change her mind but she declined. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to accept the resignation. So voted.

C. MIIA insurance proposal

Mr. Hevy reviewed a letter from MIIA, the town's insurance company, offering a 0% increase in insurance rates for FY16, and no more than a 2.5% increase for FY17. (Attachment #6) Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to accept the offer. So voted.

D. Request for capital projects for Governor Baker

Mrs. Walter explained that we received an e-mail from Representative Donald Berthiaume's office asking for information on capital projects. (Attachment #7) There has been some confusion as to exactly what is being asked for, as Senator Gobi's office has indicated something different. It is believed that Governor Baker is collecting information for a July 1st bond bill. Mrs. Walter suggested that we tell Senator Gobi and

Representative Berthiaume that we would like funds for the North Brookfield Fire Station included in any new bond bill.

E. Memo from Water Department re: budget deficit

Mr. Smith reviewed a letter from the Water Department regarding their plan to run the System Improvement Account in deficit until the next Town Meeting. (Attachment #8) Mrs. Walter said that she was uncomfortable about this, and asked if laws regarding enterprise funds allow for this? Superintendent Steve Jones said that he discussed this with Town Accountant Nancy Nykiel, and she was the one who suggested writing this memo to advise herself and the Selectmen of the deficit. Mr. Jones noted that this winter has been very tough on water pipes, the frost is much deeper than normal and there have been an inordinate number of breaks.

F. January police report

Mr. Smith reviewed the police report for the month of January as submitted by Police Chief Aram Thomasian, Jr. (Attachment #9) The Chief reported 20 incidents and 19 arrest/summons for the month. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to accept the report. So voted.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Election update

Mr. Smith reviewed a memo from Town Clerk Sheila Buzzell regarding offices and incumbents up for election at the May 4th Annual Town Election. (Attachment #10) The last day to return nomination papers is Monday, March 16th at 5 PM, and the last day to register to vote is Tuesday, April 14th.

B. Rabies Clinic

Mr. Hevy announced that there will be a rabies clinic on Saturday, April 25th at the Second Chance Animal Shelter. The cost is \$12, and the Town Clerk will be available for dog licenses.

C. Adult Education at North Brookfield schools

Mr. Smith announced that there will be several adult education classes at the North Brookfield schools beginning March 23rd. The brochure listing the various classes is available at the Town Offices, Haston Library, and various other locations around town.

D. Tyler Wolanin from Senator Gobi's office will hold office hours in North Brookfield at the Town Offices on Wednesday, March 25th from 12 PM to 1 PM

Mr. Smith announced this, and Mrs. Walter suggested putting the information on the town website.

E. Color Fest 2015

Last week the Selectmen heard about a proposal to hold a "color fest" in North Brookfield on June 20th. Mrs. Walter said that the Selectmen should consider this very carefully. The color splash occurs by propulsion from air guns, perhaps this is not

appropriate for the center of town. Maybe Wendemuth Meadow would be a better location. In addition, there is the possibility of large out-of-town crowds coming to North Brookfield for this type of event. Mr. Smith noted that there is still time to look into these potential problems.

IX. PENDING/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Mrs. Walter asked to add discussion of policies for CORI checks and presenting candidates to the Selectmen before appointment.

X. EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 7:30 PM Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to enter Executive Session 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 7:55 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
School sign property
Solterra Agreement
NBDDP/Aztec
Gilbert Street Stormwater issues
Town Offices server recommendations
Cable license renewal Oct 2015
Purchase Orders
Vacancies on town boards
Creation of Financial Advisory Committee