

MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING APRIL 21, 2015

Chairman Smith called the meeting to order in the Senior Center at 6:05 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

- **April 6, 2016**

The minutes for this meeting with the Council on Aging were not available.

- **April 7, 2015**

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

- **April 8, 2015**

The minutes for this meeting with the Finance Committee were not available.

- **April 14, 2015**

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

- **April 15, 2015**

The minutes for this meeting with the Town House Advisory Committee were not available.

II. APPROVAL OF WARRANTS

- **School Warrant #1052 for \$82,086.65**
- **General Warrant #1053 for \$249,315.20**
- **Payroll Warrant #21 for \$277,459.12**

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to approve these 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 have the opportunity to briefly comment on any of tonight's agenda items by going through himself as chair.

IV. FINANCIAL REPORTS

A. Highway Department

Mr. Smith noted that except for the Snow and Ice deficit of almost \$183,000.00, the Highway budget looks fine. (Attachment #1) He noted that the Department of Revenue is allowing cities and towns to spread this deficit over the next three years if necessary, but Mr. Smith said that he would like to only amortize over two years. There may be some FEMA reimbursement money for the January snowstorm.

B. Council on Aging

The COA has approximately 16% of their overall budget remaining. (Attachment #2) The lunch program is now being run by Tri Valley Elder Services, which should help preserve the remaining budget. The town has received funds from Brookfield and East Brookfield that will supplement the Outreach Coordinator's salary.

Mr. Hevy stated that it would be helpful to see line items defined instead of one large "purchase of services" account.

Mr. Smith noted that the Town Accountant has estimated the gas, electric, phones, and alarm bills thru June 30th. If we use the remaining salary in the Program Assistant salary account there should be some breathing room in the budget, and we will not end the year in a deficit.

C. FY 16 budgets

Mr. Smith noted that the Selectmen and Finance Committee are scheduled to meet Thursday evening to discuss the FY16 budget. There is still an anticipated deficit around \$400,000.00.

D. School request for Reserve Fund transfer

The Selectmen reviewed a request from the School Department for a Reserve Fund transfer from the Finance Committee in the amount of \$32,017.39. (Attachment #3) Mr. Smith noted that the entire Reserve Fund is not even \$32,000.00. There is approximately \$4,000.00 available. Mr. Smith stated that he is going to request more information from the school on this.

Mr. Smith stated that he spoke with the Superintendent Tencza last week, and was told that the School Committee had approved a \$196,000.00 increase for the FY16 budget. Even with level funded budgets there is a \$400,000.00 deficit. Mr. Smith suggested that the Selectmen should try to meet with the School Committee again.

Mr. Smith said that we need to talk about School Choice, and the large amount of money that the town is losing. He has asked for a report from the superintendent. From 2010 to 2015 the town has lost \$3,705,864.00 in choice-out money.

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Project updates

- **Murphy Road Bridge update**

Mrs. Walter noted that Murphy Road is currently on time and on schedule. The project will be completed by June 30th.

- **Town House update**

Mr. Hevy noted that the Selectmen met with the Town House Advisory Committee last week and approved the 100% drawings. The bid will be advertised in the Central

Register tomorrow, there will be a site walkthrough on April 30th, and bids will be opened on May 7th at 2 PM.

- **Tax Title auction**

Mr. Smith noted that based on the advice of the auctioneer, the tax title auction will most likely be postponed until late June or early July.

B. Review town meeting articles/sign warrants

The Selectmen reviewed the articles for the May 8th Annual and Special Town Meetings. (Attachments #4 and #5) Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to approve the articles and post the warrants. So voted.

C. Discussion re: appointment policy

Mr. Hevy will write up a proposed appointment for the May 5th meeting.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Wendemuth Meadow Conservation Restriction

Ann Hicks and Cynthia Henshaw were present to ask the Selectmen to sign a Conservation Restriction for the Wendemuth Meadow property. (Available in the Selectmen's office) The Town has received a LAND grant to help with the purchase of this restriction, and the Friends of Wendemuth Meadow will raise funds to pay for the remainder. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to sign the restriction. So voted.

B. Solar Letter of Authorization

Mr. Smith explained that the Selectmen met with solar and energy consultants from Power Management Company to discuss their interest in installing solar panels on town property such as the landfill. They have asked us to sign a letter authorizing them to seek information on our behalf. (Attachment #6) Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to approve and sign the letter. So voted.

C. Draft Assessment of Charter performance

Charles Marshall of the Cable Advisory Committee presented a draft assessment of the performance of Charter Communications over the past 4½ years. (Attachment #7) The document gave Charter an overall grade of "B." Mr. Smith asked Mr. Marshall to try to get language from the Town of Leicester that extended service to all areas of town. Mr. Marshall noted that the Selectmen need to send this assessment to Charter, and then Charter will come back with a contract proposal, and then negotiations may begin.

D. Police and Fire Accident renewal

The Selectmen reviewed a proposal from Cabot Risk regarding the renewal of the Town's Police and Fire Accident policy for FY16. (Attachment #8) Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to approve the renewal. So voted.

E. March police report

Mr. Hevy reviewed the police report for the month of March as submitted by Chief Thomasian. (Attachment #9) The report showed 25 incidents and 11 arrest/summons for the month. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to accept the report. So voted.

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Election update

Mr. Smith reviewed the candidates and positions up for election at the May 4th Annual Town Election.

B. Rabies Clinic

Mrs. Walter announced that there will be a Rabies Clinic on Saturday, April 25th at the Second Chance Animal Shelter. The Town Clerk will be available that day for licensing.

C. Town wide cleanup day May 25

Mr. Smith announced that the annual town-wide cleanup day will also be held on April 25th. Residents may bring trash from their street to the Highway Department for collection.

D. May Festival May 2nd

Mr. Smith reminded residents that the annual May Festival will be held at the Haston Library on May 2nd. There will be local food and a plant swap, along with school children from the TREP\$ program.

E. Town wide Yard Sale May 23rd

Mr. Hevy announced that the North Brookfield PTO is once again sponsoring a town-wide yard sale on Saturday, May 23rd.

F. Hydrant flushing

Mr. Smith read a memo from the Water Department that they will be flushing hydrants in town from April 27th to May 22nd. The daily flushing schedule will be posted on the Water Department's Facebook page.

G. Color Fest 2015

There was no new information available about the June 20th Color Fest. Mr. Smith noted that this is a fundraiser for the Wendemuth Meadow project, and will feature music, art and food.

VIII. PENDING/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- **See attached list**

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 7:45 PM Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to enter Executive Session to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real estate, because an open session may have a detrimental effect on the Town's negotiating position, and

also to discuss strategy related to negotiations with non-union personnel. Roll call: Smith, yes; Walter, yes; Hevy, yes. So voted. Mr. Smith announced that the Board would exit Executive Session only to adjourn.

At 8:20 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
Personnel policies
Veterans' Service Officer
Cemetery Road
Smith Hanson Road forestry plan**