

MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING FEBRUARY 25, 2014

Chairman Walter called the meeting to order in the Senior Center at 6 PM with Mr. Smith also present. Mr. Chabot was present remotely via cell phone. The Board offered their condolences to the family of Steve Howe, who recently passed away.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 11, 2014

Mr. Smith moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to approve the minutes of February 11th as written. So voted.

IA. APPROVAL OF SCHOOL WARRANT #1043 FOR \$76,709.79 APPROVAL OF GENERAL WARRANT #1044 FOR \$84,845.91 APPROVAL OF PAYROLL WARRANT #18 FOR \$308,876.57

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

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. NEW HIGHWAY WORKER

Mrs. Walter noted that she has reviewed budget numbers with Town Accountant Nancy Nykiel, and it looks favorable to be able to add an additional worker for the Highway Department by mid-May with no additional funds needed in the salary account. With the number of snowstorms that we have had this winter the men are fighting fatigue and this is a public safety issue. In addition, there is a large project coming up with the repair of the Murphy Road bridge. Mr. Chabot stated that he agrees, at one time the Highway Department had 7 men and right now there are only 5. Mr. Smith moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to support the hiring of an additional worker for the highway department. So voted. The Selectmen will discuss this with the Finance Committee next week.

B. BYLAW AGAINST PLOWING SNOW INTO ROADS

Mrs. Walter noted that the Board discussed this at the last meeting in regards to snow plowing of the lot behind the Town House. She has spoken with the contractor and informed them that the Highway Department would be taking care of that from now on. Mrs. Walter noted that the Town does have a bylaw against plowing snow into the roadways under Chapter VIII Use of Public Ways and Places, and maybe if the Selectmen gave this some attention people would know about the bylaw.

C. MASSWORKS GRANT LETTER

Mrs. Walter reviewed a letter from the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development stating that North Brookfield has been awarded a \$500,000.00 grant to repair the bridge on Murphy Road. (Attachment #1) She and Highway Superintendent Gary Jean had a conference call with the state and have received the go-ahead to start the project.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. ANNE JANNETTE RE: HEALTH INSURANCE

Treasurer Anne Jannette was present to let the Selectmen know that the Insurance Advisory Committee had recommended a one-year renewal of the Town's health insurance with Fallon Community Health Plan. (Attachment #2) There will be a 5% increase in premiums. Mr. Smith moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to accept the recommendations of the Insurance Advisory Committee. So voted.

B. ANDREW LOEW RE: CDBG PROJECT

Andrew Loew from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission was present to speak to the Selectmen about the current status of the Community Development Block Grant that was awarded to the Town last year. He provided a written summary of the grant status. (Attachment #3) Part 1 of the grant was for housing rehabilitation, and Mr. Loew reported that 8 units in North Brookfield have been income qualified and rehab specifications are being developed.

Part 2 of the grant provides \$153,090.00 for an infrastructure planning project for the east side of town, to include inventories of the drainage systems, roadways and sidewalks, and sewer and water systems. Also included is exploration of the drainage problems that exist in some areas near the center of town. Mr. Loew reported that he has drafted an RFQ for engineering services, which has been reviewed by the various town departments. The RFQ will be published in March, a consultant selected, and work on the planning project should begin in April and be finished by the fall. The Town can apply for future CDBG funds for Phase II of this project which would be the design and engineering, and Phase III which would be the actual construction.

C. JIM METCALF RE: TREPS

Jim Metcalf, Chairman of the School Committee, came in to speak to the Selectmen and to residents about the TREPS program, which is short for "entrepreneur." This is a program for children in grades 4 – 8 during which they learn about and launch their own businesses. The program starts March 10th and the finale is a showcase at the annual Haston Library May Festival. Three students were present and explained their businesses, one of the students has sold her product as far away as Brazil. Mr. Metcalf

explained that volunteers are needed to help with the program, and if anyone is interested they should contact the school.

D. SCHEDULING OF MEETING WITH FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mrs. Walter reported that she has spoken with Finance Committee chairman Eric Hevy, who has tentatively scheduled a meeting for next Wednesday. Mrs. Walter told Mr. Hevy that the Selectmen would like to attend the meeting in order to explain the Board's priorities for the FY15 budget. Mr. Smith and Mr. Chabot stated that they would try to attend.

E. TOWN HOUSE UPDATE-FINAL REPORT SUBMITTED

Mrs. Walter noted that the final report has been submitted to Mass Historic for the last \$10,000.00 spent from the \$50,000.00 emergency grant. Mrs. Walter stated that we now need to figure out when the tower will be going back up, probably sometime this spring.

F. SIGN CONFIRMATORY MORTGAGE DISCHARGE

Mrs. Walter reviewed a letter from Attorney Robin DeAugustinis asking the Selectmen to sign a confirmatory mortgage discharge to affirm one that was signed in 2006. (Attachment #4) Mr. Smith moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to sign the confirmatory discharge. So voted and signed.

G. SIGN CONTRACT FOR GASB 45 AUDIT

The Selectmen reviewed a proposal by USI Consulting Group to audit the Town's post-employment benefits as required under GASB 45. (Attachment #5) Mr. Smith moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to approve and sign the contract. So voted.

H. HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT DIESEL TANK HAS BEEN DEEMED UNSAFE

The Selectmen reviewed a letter from Highway Superintendent Gary Jean informing them that he has learned that the town's diesel tank has been deemed unsafe and needs to be replaced. (Attachment #6) Mr. Jean included an estimate from LaMountain Brothers that would remove the old tank and replace it with a new 1,000 gallon tank for \$78,854.00. Mrs. Walter noted that two tanks at the school also need to be removed; perhaps we can get better pricing if we do all three tanks.

I. HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT SALT SHORTAGE

Superintendent Jean also sent a letter to the Selectmen regarding the difficulty in obtaining road salt this year. (Attachment #7) Mrs. Walter expressed her deepest gratitude to Senator Brewer and Representative Gobi for their assistance with this problem. We did receive a salt delivery this weekend, but we are advising residents

that we have had to cut back on the salt to sand ratio, and urge people to please drive carefully.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. ELECTION UPDATE

Mr. Smith reviewed the list of offices and candidates for the May 5th annual town election. The deadline to submit nomination papers is March 17th, and the deadline to register to vote is April 15th.

B. SUE LEWANDOWSKI HAS BEEN APPOINTED TO THE MASSACHUSETTS COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Mr. Smith reviewed a letter from the state's Commission on the Status of Women announcing that Suzanne Lewandowski of North Brookfield has been appointed to the Worcester County Commission. (Attachment #8)

C. DOG LICENSES ARE DUE

Mrs. Walter announced that dog licenses are now due, the cost is \$6 for dogs that are spayed or neutered, and \$10 for those that are not.

D. RABIES CLINIC APRIL 12TH

Mrs. Walter announced that the annual rabies clinic will be held at the Second Chance Animal Shelter on Saturday, April 12th from 9 AM to 11 AM.

V. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

A. POLICE CHIEF K-9 GRANT RECOMMENDATIONS

Mrs. Walter noted that the Selectmen are still waiting for a recommendation from Police Chief Thomasian regarding the K-9 grant.

B. SUMMARY OF EMS MEETING

Mr. Smith will give a summary of his recent meeting with members of the North Brookfield Emergency Squad regarding their financial status.

C. Mrs. Walter asked to add an update on the CMRPC projects to future agenda items.

D. Mrs. Walter asked that the Selectmen discuss the propose marijuana bylaw at some time in the future.

E. The FY15 budget will need to be discussed.

At 7:25 PM Mr. Smith moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss strategy related to collective bargaining negotiations with the officers of the North Brookfield Police Department. Roll call: Walter, yes; Smith, yes; Chabot, yes. So voted. Mrs. Walter announced that the Board would exit Executive Session only to adjourn.

At 7:50 PM the Board came out of Executive Session. Mr. Smith moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to adjourn. So voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Scott Burton
Administrative Assistant