

MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING OCTOBER 21, 2008

Mrs. Walter called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM in the Senior Center with Mr. Petraitis also present. Mr. Foyle was away on business.

I. A. Mr. Petraitis moved, and Mrs. Walter seconded, a motion to sign and post the warrant for the November 4th presidential election. So voted. Mrs. Walter noted that voter information and absentee ballots are available from the town clerk.

B. Mrs. Walter reviewed spending moratorium guidelines that were developed by the Board of Selectmen in response to a recommendation from the Finance Committee. The selectmen declared the moratorium for all town departments on October 8th, and followed up with these recommendations.

C. Mrs. Walter noted that there will be a meeting of the town's financial team on Thursday, October 23rd to address the town's financial crisis.

D. Mr. Petraitis read a spending request from the Highway Department for \$600 for cold patch, and \$30 for copy paper. Mrs. Walter stated that she would like to see Highway Superintendent Gary Jean review the areas that he intends to use the cold patch, and verify that the repairs are needed. Mr. Petraitis moved, and Mrs. Walter seconded, a motion to approve the request for cold patch, provided Mr. Jean verifies that the repairs are necessary. So voted. Mrs. Walter asked that the discussion on copy paper be deferred until she gets clarification of the cost.

The selectmen also approved a request from Mr. Jean for 8 tons of hot top and rip rap stone for Brickyard and Shore Roads.

E. Mrs. Walter announced that the selectmen will be hosting an open house at the new town offices on Saturday between 10 AM and 1 PM.

F. Mrs. Walter announced that there will be a flu clinic at the senior center on Thursday, October 23rd from 10 AM to 1 PM.

G. There will be an Arts and Music Festival in the center of town on Saturday as well.

H. The Playground Committee will be hosting a movie night on the common on Saturday evening at 6:30 PM.

Playground Committee chairman Tabby Leblanc was present to discuss vandalism issues that occurred at the town common this past weekend. A resident had volunteered to paint the fountain and picnic tables, and within hours

someone vandalized his work. The Playground Committee is very frustrated, and is appealing to the kids who did not commit the vandalism, but probably know who did. Mrs. Walter pledged the full support of the selectmen in dealing with the problem.

II. School Committee member James Metcalf gave a 30 minute power-point presentation of demonstration of what he calls the “North Brookfield Educational Master Plan Project.” Mr. Metcalf is proposing that the Board of Selectmen appoint a task force made up of 7 to 11 community members that will identify and analyze issues related to the future of the North Brookfield School System. The task force will recommend a plan to satisfy the North Brookfield educational plan, meet the needs of the town’s citizens, and comply with all state and local regulations.

The task force will not consider school operations, school committee operations, the solicitation of any merger requests from other school districts, and will not interfere with the school program in any way. Mr. Metcalf expects that the task force would be able to deliver their recommendations by April of 2010.

School Committee chairman Jeff Hicks noted that the proposal was put together by Mr. Metcalf, and not by the School Committee. He stated that the school committee has not voted on or accepted the proposal. Brent Hildick of the School Committee felt that Mr. Metcalf’s presentation is vague.

Mrs. Walter stated that she would not trivialize the formation of the task force; everyone involved cares about the school and wants to do what is best.

Mr. Hicks stated that he has some questions regarding the makeup of the committee and its duties.

Mrs. Walter asked Mr. Hicks if the school system is sustainable for the next two years while the task force does it work? Mr. Hicks stated that it would be difficult to predict without knowing the finances, but believes that it is sustainable.

Mrs. Walter stated that she wants to see confidence in the school system restored, and would like to see an increase in school choice “in” students.

Mrs. Walter asked Superintendent Erin Nosek what resources or grants are available from the state to help support a single town school district. Mrs. Nosek replied that state aid is determined in relation to the economic makeup of a town, in North Brookfield state aid accounts for 60 – 68% of the school’s budget.

Mrs. Walter stated that the selectmen would like to take the proposal under advisement. Mr. Hicks said that he would like the selectmen to develop a plan on how the task force will work, and get back to the school committee.

Mrs. Walter reiterated that the selectmen would be taking the proposal under advisement for discussion with a full board, and suggested that the school committee go through the proposal and make any recommendations that they may want.

At 8:40 PM Mrs. Walter thanked the school committee for coming, and promised to get back to them in a few weeks for further discussion.

III. The selectmen reviewed a draft warrant for the November 21st Special Town Meeting. There were several requests for funding from various departments, but not enough money to go around. It was agreed to ask Mr. Foyle for his input, because the warrant must be signed and posted within the next two weeks.

There being no further business, Mr. Petraitis moved, and Mrs. Walter seconded, a motion to adjourn at 9:30 PM. So voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Scott Burton
Administrative Assistant