

MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING FEBRUARY 24, 2009

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

I. OLD BUSINESS

A. Mr. Petraitis reviewed the timeline of the town's planning for and reaction to the FY09 local aid cuts. He asked Mrs. Walter if town departments were asked to cut 10% of their overall budgets, or 10% of their expenses. Mrs. Walter stated that cuts were requested from expenses, and the selectmen very clearly stated that they did not want personnel cuts.

Mr. Petraitis asked if departments were asked to cut 10% of their expenses, why did the police chief have to cut salary? Mrs. Walter stated that it was the chief's decision to make personnel cuts such as animal control as a way to reduce his budget. Mrs. Walter stated that she is working on some potentially less damaging cuts to the police budget that she will submit to Mr. Petraitis and Mr. Foyle.

Mr. Petraitis asked about cuts to the Fire Department's training budget. Mrs. Walter noted that Chief Black volunteered this cut. Some budgets like the library cannot sustain 10% cuts without losing state funding and certification.

Mrs. Walter read a budget status memo that she had prepared that outlined a potential convergence of financial catastrophes such as a snow and ice deficit, the December ice storm costs, and the local aid cuts that will all affect this year's budget.

Mrs. Walter also noted that the purpose of The Reserve Fund is to help out any department with unexpected costs. Any extra funds will be available to any department that needs it.

Mr. Petraitis asked why the school wasn't giving more. He read e-mails from the School Department offering to cut as much as \$135,000. Mr. Petraitis stated that he thinks the school should contribute more than \$13,000 rather than cutting public safety. Mrs. Walter suggested that Mr. Petraitis take up his questions with Mr. Foyle, Mr. Hicks, and Mrs. Nosek.

Mr. Petraitis noted that the Finance Committee Chairman has spoken with the Superintendent and the School Committee, and wondered why the selectmen hadn't been informed before the meeting, instead of after the fact.

Mrs. Walter suggested that the selectmen invite Mr. Hicks and Mrs. Nosek to meet with the selectmen next week.

B. Mr. Petraitis moved, and Mrs. Walter seconded, a motion to defer this item to next week when more information is available from the Town Accountant and the Highway Department on the Highway Clerk's hours.

C. Mrs. Walter showed off a box containing over 900 surveys that detail the preferences of town residents in regards to the town house. The surveys were sent out with the annual town census, and are still coming in. The selectmen have designated Gene Caille and Julie McCarthy of the Town House Renovation Committee as the people who will tabulate the results. Any additional surveys that come in will be counted as they come in.

II. NEW BUSINESS

A. Mrs. Walter noted that FEMA would like to know if the town is going to do the spring cleanup of fallen trees, or will a contractor be doing it? It was agreed to postpone this to next week to get input from the Highway Superintendent and the Tree Warden.

B. Mr. Petraitis read a letter from Dale Kiley resigning from the Zoning Board of Appeals. Mr. Petraitis moved, and Mrs. Walter seconded, a motion to accept the resignation with regret and to send a letter of thanks. So voted.

C. Mr. Petraitis read a letter from the School Committee asking for a reduced rate on sewer and water rates. Mr. Petraitis moved, and Mrs. Walter seconded, a motion to refer the issue to the Sewer and Water Commissioners for a response back to the Board of Selectmen. So voted.

D. Mr. Petraitis announced that the Building Inspector will now be in North Brookfield on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month, and in East Brookfield on the 2nd and 4th Monday. Residents from either town can go to which ever office is more convenient.

E. It was agreed to table the anticipated spending requests until next week so Mrs. Walter can compare the requests to the departmental budgets.

There being no further business, Mr. Petraitis moved, and Mrs. Walter seconded, a motion to adjourn at 7:45 PM. So voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Scott Burton
Administrative Assistant