

MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING MARCH 16, 2009

Chairman Foyle called the meeting to order in the Senior Center at 7 PM with all members present.

I. Mr. Petraitis moved, and Mrs. Walter seconded, a motion to accept the minutes of February 17, February 24, March 3, and March 10th as amended. So voted.

IA. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to approve school warrant #1041 for \$114,269.65. So voted. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to approve general warrant #1042 for \$120,079.78. So voted. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to approve payroll warrant #19 for \$285,867.28. So voted.

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. Mr. Petraitis moved, and Mrs. Walter seconded, a motion to appoint James Metcalf, Debra Arnold, Marty Toomey, and Gregory Sinner to the Educational Task Force. So voted.

B. Mr. Foyle informed residents that the state has taken back over \$96,000 in local aid that was promised to the town. Since the voters are the spending authority in town, they must reduce the FY09 budget by at least that amount of money. At Friday's special town meeting voters will be asked to reduce some town budgets in order to be in balance with the lower state aid number. Mrs. Walter noted that the selectmen asked for these cuts in order to maintain personnel without affecting town services.

C. Mrs. Walter gave an update on the last regional selectmen's meeting that was held in North Brookfield on March 5th. She reported that 12-15 people from 6 towns attended the meeting that was held at the elementary school. The meeting began with a tour of the emergency management command center. Some of the other towns seemed interested in turning it into a regional center, and there could be grant money available for a regional effort such as this.

Also discussed was the possibility of regionalizing animal control, and other towns sharing North Brookfield's kennel.

There was a speaker who made some recommendations on how to regionalize services. He suggested that Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) were a good way to start out.

The Town of Warren spoke about the potential impact to the area should a casino be located in the town of Palmer in the future.

Mrs. Walter, on behalf of the Town of North Brookfield, noted that she has secured a grant to draft a model wetlands bylaw that could be adapted and shared by area towns.

The meeting was so successful that the group has agreed to meet monthly instead of quarterly.

Mr. Foyle noted that the Franklin County Council of Governments (COG) has been very successful in replacing the services formerly handled by the county. He asked if some of the small towns in the area would consider sharing a town administrator.

III. NEW BUSINESS

G. Treasurer Anne Jannette presented the selectmen with a letter regarding the Insurance Advisory Committee. The IAC has recommended that the town consolidate all active employees to Fallon Insurance, and discontinue Cigna for active employees and retirees. In addition, the plan will have higher co-pays. Mrs. Jannette estimates that these two actions will save the town approximately \$200,000 in the next fiscal year. All four employee unions have voted to accept the changes. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to accept the recommendations of the IAC. So voted.

A. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to approve and sign a new five-year agreement with the State Police for dispatching services. So voted and signed by Mr. Foyle.

B. Mrs. Walter asked that her name be withdrawn for consideration to the NBEMA because she cannot be appointed to a board that is overseen by the selectmen. Mr. Petraitis moved, and Mrs. Walter seconded, a motion to appoint Larry Walter and Stephanie Carmiello to NBEMA. So voted, with Mrs. Walter abstaining.

C. Mr. Petraitis read a letter from the North Brookfield Emergency Squad asking that the town renew the contract with NBEMS for another year beginning July 1st. Mr. Foyle stated that he would like to table the request until the board receives some supporting financial documentation.

D. Chief Thomasian reviewed the February monthly report of the police department. He reported 56 incidents and 13 arrests or summons for the month. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to accept the report. So voted.

E. Mrs. Walter reviewed a letter from M. O. R. E., a consortium of local governments interested in saving money by consolidating services. They are waiving their dues requirement for the remainder of FY09, and for all of FY10. Mrs. Walter noted that this organization seems to be more directed to Worcester and the larger towns in that area. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to table this matter until after the next regional selectmen's meeting.

F. Mr. Foyle reviewed a letter from police officer Chris Donais, who looked at various areas of town where street lighting could be reduced and still preserve a level of public safety. Chief Thomasian stated that Officer Donais is going to refine the list to make sure safety is maintained, and to determine which lights are publicly or privately owned. Mrs. Walter has give Officer Donais a list of town-owned lights to compare to his list. Mr. Foyle asked that the Safety Committee be consulted on the matter, and asked that the committee get back to the selectmen within one month. Mr. Foyle praised Officer Donais for his initiative and his efforts to save the town some money.

H. Mr. Petraitis read an e-mail regarding the annual town-wide yard sale, sponsored by the Haston Library. The date this year is May 16th.

I. The selectmen reviewed the anticipated spending report for the month of April as submitted by the sewer department. It was found to be in order.

At 8 PM Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to go off-camera to sign bills. So voted.

The selectmen signed the bi-weekly bills and payrolls.

There being no further business, Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to adjourn at 8:55 PM. So voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Scott Burton
Administrative Assistant