

MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING DECEMBER 22, 2009

Chairman Petraitis called the meeting to order in the Senior Center at 7 PM with Mr. Filipkowski also present. Mrs. Walter was attending a regional selectmen's meeting in West Brookfield.

I. Mr. Filipkowski moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to approve the minutes of December 15, 2009 as written. So voted.

IA. Mr. Filipkowski moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to approve school warrant #1029 for \$12,000.00, sewer warrant #1030 for \$61,442.38, school warrant #1032 for \$79,370.47, general warrant #1033 for \$109,266.61, and payroll warrant #13 for \$277,514.19. So voted.

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. Mr. Filipkowski reviewed a memo from Highway Superintendent Gary Jean informing selectmen of his recent problems with D. K. Burke, the town's provider of gasoline and diesel fuel. Mr. Jean noted that he has had to call Burke every week of this winter season to ask for a second delivery. Mr. Jean also stated that Burke was delivering the wrong grade of gasoline until Mr. Jean notified them of the error. Mr. Jean asked that next year's bid notice specify that the provider must deliver twice per week during the winter. Mr. Filipkowski noted that this has been a lesson learned, and now everyone knows what we have to do for the FY2011 fuel bids.

Mr. Filipkowski thanked Tabby LeBlanc and all of the volunteers who made last weekend's Christmas on the Common such a success.

Mr. Petraitis and Mr. Filipkowski noted that last week's flu clinic was successful, thanks to the efforts of Superintendent Erin Nosek and the school, the Board of Health and Harrington Hospital, and the North Brookfield Emergency Management Agency volunteers. An "After Action" meeting will be held to discuss the clinic, and to plan for the second clinic that will be held sometime in January.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Tim Hansen of Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Agency and Steve Cummings, co-chairman of the Planning Board and a member of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Advisory Committee, were present to discuss the town's Community Development Strategy (CDS) and the town's potential block grant application that is due in February.

Mr. Hansen noted that the CDS was first adopted by the selectmen in August of 2007, and is currently being updated by the CDBG Advisory Committee, which consists of Mr. Cummings, Water Superintendent Steve Jones, Sewer Superintendent Rodney Jenkins, Highway Superintendent Gary Jean, and community representative Joe Zegarra. Among the changes being made are the removal of projects that are now completed such as the library, and the inclusion of reference to the town's Master Plan. The fact that North Brookfield has been very active regionally is a plus for the town.

Mr. Hansen noted that the town's CDS is limited to only seven pages. The previous CDS had "Smart Growth" principles, but the new CDS will focus on "Sustainable Development Principles."

The CDBG Advisory Committee has been very helpful in setting the town's priorities and projects. The water and sewer infrastructure issues have been a major problem for the town, as is the fact that the Town House is still vacant after nearly eight years. Mr. Cummings pointed out that the CDBG Advisory Committee's job is to point to issues that need to be addressed by the town, not to target a specific strategy or action. Whether a person supports the restoration of the Town House or not, it is still an issue that the town needs to address.

Other areas of concern to be included in the updated CDS include repairing the Horse Pond Dam, the combining of regional services, and ADA accessibility to all of the town's buildings.

Mr. Hansen reported that the committee looked at all of the town's projects, and identified two that seem to meet one of the national objectives. Those two projects were the water line on Maple Street that has had continual problems, and a mixed use building project at 209 North Main Street.

The town submitted its downtown slum and blight target area to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for approval. DHCD has asked for clarification on some items, and has questioned the inclusion of three properties that were rated "fair" that DHCD thinks should be rated "good."

Mr. Hansen pointed out that even if the Maple Street project is not accepted by DHCD, the town could use town funds to fix the water line and CDBG funds to do the sidewalks and road surfacing.

Mr. Cummings noted that a lot of these projects need to be studied and engineered to support the grant application, but that takes money. Any work that is done now will make the town better prepared for the next grant cycle.

Mr. Hansen noted that DHCD has changed the rules somewhat on the housing projects. The mixed use building project for 209 North Main Street will now be in

a less competitive Economic Development Fund (EDF) program. This is not a bad thing for the project, but it will have to be pulled from consideration for this grant application.

The Community Wide Target Area should not to be confused with the slum and blight area. The slum and blight area must be within the community wide target area. Since North Brookfield's population is under 5,000, the entire town can be considered the target area. Inside the target area is a downtown village area that has been designated as the slum and blight area. This slum and blight area has already been approved by the selectmen and has been submitted to DHCD, but Mr. Hansen is not sure that the water and sewer projects will fall within the slum and blight areas.

Mr. Filipkowski asked what is the plan for trying to get funding for the water and sewer infrastructure issues? Mr. Cummings stated that the town needs to document the history of the problem areas, which Mr. Jones and Mr. Jenkins are now doing.

Mr. Hansen noted that he will make changes to the slum and blight designation that were requested by DHCD, and Mr. Cummings will make changes to the CDS and will present it to the selectmen in two weeks for approval. Mr. Hansen stated that the CDBG application is due in February, but the grant applications for the next cycle will be due in December of 2010.

The selectmen thanked Mr. Hansen and Mr. Cummings for coming to the meeting and updating everyone on their progress.

Mr. Petraitis wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

There being no further business, Mr. Filipkowski moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to adjourn at 7:35 PM. So voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Scott Burton
Administrative Assistant