

## MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING FEBRUARY 2, 2010

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

I. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Filipkowski seconded, a motion to approve the minutes of January 26, 2010 as amended. So voted.

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Filipkowski seconded, a motion to postpone action on the January 26<sup>th</sup> executive session minutes. So voted.

IA. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Filipkowski seconded, a motion to approve school warrant #1038 for \$65,035.25, general warrant #1039 for \$394,507.25, and payroll warrant #16 for \$282,282.96. So voted.

### II. OLD BUSINESS

A. Mr. Petraitis reviewed a memo from Town Clerk Sheila Buzzell listing the various offices up for election on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. The last day to submit nomination papers is March 15<sup>th</sup>, and the last day to register to vote is April 13<sup>th</sup>.

B. Mrs. Walter reviewed a letter from Carol Muschler of Tri Valley Elder Services regarding the use of the North Brookfield Senior Center as a meals site. Mrs. Walter stated that she believed that the selectmen were going to be signing the attached agreement, but it has already been signed by Senior Center Director Louise Bouchard. Mrs. Walter noted that she would have liked the opportunity to determine the cost to the town before the agreement was signed. Mrs. Walter asked that the agreement be re-executed with signatures from the selectmen. After a brief discussion Mr. Petraitis called for a motion for the Chairman to sign the contract with Tri-Valley. Mrs. Walter so moved, and Mr. Filipkowski seconded the motion. So voted, after Ms Burton asked Mr. Petraitis if Mrs. Bouchard should attend the next meeting with a new contract for the Chair to sign. Mr. Petraitis agreed to the suggestion.

C. Last week Mrs. Walter proposed that the Outreach Coordinator position be a contract position rather than a town employee position. There are already three towns that use the outreach services, and Mrs. Walter stated that two other towns have expressed an interest. Mrs. Walter asked that this be explored as an alternative to hiring a town employee. Mrs. Walter noted that using an independent contractor may be a more efficient use of time, and wondered if the duties of the outreach worker were overlapping with the duties of the director.

Mrs. Bouchard was present, and stated that she believes more hours are needed for the outreach worker, but the Council on Aging has been trying to keep the position 19.5 hours per week, under the limit for benefits eligibility.

Mrs. Walter questioned how many hours per week were allocated to each of the three towns, and when Mrs. Bouchard stated that it was difficult to determine how many hours were spent on which town, Mrs. Walter if Mrs. Bouchard could attempt to break down how the hours were allocated in order to determine how each town should be charged.

Mr. Petraitis and Mr. Filipkowski both stated that the regional approach is an excellent idea, but questioned how much time it may take to put it all together. Mr. Petraitis suggested leaving the outreach position as it has been in the past for this fiscal year, but considering the regional contractor approach for the next fiscal year.

Mrs. Walter noted that there are currently three towns participating, it shouldn't be that much more work to include two more towns.

Mr. Filipkowski noted that he has been waiting for the job description from Mrs. Bouchard, and now that he has it he will be better able to make a decision on the outreach position.

Mrs. Walter asked that the Council on Aging be asked for their input at their meeting next week. She is willing to attend that meeting and discuss it with the COA.

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Filipkowski seconded, a motion to defer the decision on hiring a new outreach worker until the next meeting in order to receive input from the COA. So voted.

Mrs. Walter noted that the Fy2011 budget process is underway, and in the past she has been the selectmen's liaison to the Finance Committee. She asked if either Mr. Petraitis or Mr. Filipkowski would like to change this and become the liaison? Mr. Petraitis stated that he would like Mrs. Walter to continue, and Mr. Filipkowski noted that each of the selectmen has their individual duties or special projects, and as long as everyone shares his or her information with the other two members, he has no problem with Mrs. Walter continuing with the Finance Committee.

### III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Jeff Howland, a consultant hired by the Planning Board to do site reviews, was present to ask the selectmen to sign a contract that will allow him to do the site reviews and be paid through a revolving fund by fees paid by a

property owner. Town counsel has reviewed the contract and made several recommendations, which Mr. Howland has incorporated into his contract. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Filipkowski seconded, a motion to approve and sign the contract with Mr. Howland. So voted.

B. Mr. Bill Regienus, site advisor for Ansar Energy, and local property owner David Vandale were present to inform the selectmen about a solar project that Mr. Regienus wants to develop on Mr. Vandale's land. According to Mr. Regienus, the state's Green Communities Act mandates that utilities must begin to derive 15% of their power from solar, wind, or water power. Ansar wants to develop several sites across the state if they are successful bidders to a contract with National Grid.

Mr. Vandale's land is currently a gravel pit on Hillsville Road, but it is nearing the end of its lifespan. Twenty to thirty acres of the site would be reclaimed by leveling it and planting grass. Then rows of photovoltaic panels five feet high would be built, surrounded by a fence. There would be no noise, no pollution, no use of town services, no hazardous materials, and minimal traffic. The power that is generated would travel over regular electric lines either to the substation on Donovan Road, or to one on Meadow Road in Spencer.

Mr. Regienus stated that they wanted to give the selectmen this information, and also to let the Board know that there would be \$40,000 to \$60,000 that would be returned to the town each year for the 15 year lease period.

Mr. Petraitis noted that from what he heard this evening, this is a fantastic idea. He would have no problem supporting such a project as long as it complies with all local and state laws.

Mrs. Walter asked if Ansar has any sites up and running that the selectmen could visit, and was told that they have no sites yet, but this is a proven technology with many sites operating in the western part of the country.

If Ansar is the successful bidder, they must begin building their sites before the end of 2010, and be completed within one year.

Mrs. Walter wondered what would happen to the site at the end of the 15 years if the lease is not renewed, and Mr. Vandale replied that it will be in his contract with Ansar that all equipment will be removed, and the site restored.

C. Mr. Petraitis reviewed a timeline for the spring annual town election, annual town meeting, and special town meeting. Mr. Petraitis reported that the cost of repairing the Horse Pond Dam is estimated to be \$1.2 million. There will be an informational presentation on the project at the April 20<sup>th</sup> selectmen's meeting. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Filipkowski seconded, a motion to set May 3<sup>rd</sup> and May 7<sup>th</sup> as the dates for debt exclusion votes on the Horse Pond Dam

project. There will be a debt exclusion question on the May 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Town Election ballot, and then another vote at the May 7<sup>th</sup> Special Town Meeting.

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Filipkowski seconded, a motion to set Thursday, April 1, 2010 as the last day to submit articles for consideration to be included on either the May 7<sup>th</sup> Special Town Meeting or the May 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Town Election. So voted. The warrants for both meetings will be signed by the selectmen on April 20<sup>th</sup>.

D. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Filipkowski seconded, a motion to approve deficit spending in the Snow and Ice Account. So voted. According to Town Accountant Nancy Nykiel there is approximately \$32,900 in the account, which will probably be depleted in the next few weeks.

E. Mr. Filipkowski reviewed a memo from Town Collector Donna Gauthier noting her concern that the water department is not contributing its fair share towards the cost of processing their payments in the collector's office. Mrs. Gauthier wrote the letter as an explanation of the repercussions of a 10% budget cut. It was agreed that the selectmen and Finance Committee will address the issue when they meet with her to discuss the FY2011 budgets.

Mr. Filipkowski noted that he would like to send out a memo to town departments asking them to quantify what type of help they may be looking for: administrative, a specialist/operator, or a general labor position. Mr. Filipkowski will draft a letter for the other two selectmen to review next week.

#### IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Mrs. Walter read a public hearing notice from the Planning Board concerning the March 3<sup>rd</sup> hearing on a sub-division preliminary plan filed by Joseph and Elizabeth Noonan of 25 Oakham Road. The hearing will be held at the Senior Center at 7 PM.

B. Mr. Filipkowski reviewed an announcement from Tabby Leblanc of the Playground Committee announcing their Valentine's Spaghetti Supper and Dance on February 13<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Leblanc reported that proceeds from the event benefit a scholarship fund for North Brookfield High School seniors. The dinner will be held at the American Legion, with a cost of \$8 per person with a \$20 family cap.

C. Mr. Petraitis read a letter from Tom Cohan of Charter Communications letting residents know that a letter was sent out in error to many Charter customers indicating that they were in possession of unreturned Charter equipment. Mr. Cohan indicated that Charter has called and sent written notice to all of the affected customers.

Mrs. Walter read a notice inviting the selectmen to the Pack 128 Blue and Gold Banquet on February 27<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM.

V. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Filipkowski noted that he would like to discuss the Senior Tax Abatement Program, the Street Lighting Recommendations, and the letter to town departments asking them to clarify their need for additional help.

There being no further business, Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Filipkowski seconded, a motion to adjourn at 8:21 PM. So voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Scott Burton  
Administrative Assistant