

MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING JANUARY 4, 2011

Chairman Walter called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM in the Senior Center with Mr. Chabot and Mr. Petraitis also present.

I. Mr. Chabot moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to approve the minutes of December 21, 2010 as amended. So voted.

IA. Mr. Chabot moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to approve School Warrant #1028 for \$67,518.23, General Warrant #1029 for \$314,190.89, and Payroll Warrant #14 for \$276,797.98. So voted.

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. Mrs. Walter noted that the Board of Selectmen received an e-mail from Mr. Robert Filipkowski regarding his concerns about safety issues at the Elementary School. Mr. Chabot moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to approve and sign a response letter to Mr. Filipkowski noting that he should address his concerns to the School Department. So voted. (Attachment #1)

B. Mrs. Walter noted that a few weeks ago the Selectmen received an e-mail from East Brookfield Selectman Larry Gordon complaining that a beaver dam near Hines Bridge Road in North Brookfield had been breached, and that the downstream water level on Lake Lashaway had risen to a level that was unacceptable for the work being done at the Route 9 bridge.

The Selectmen have received an e-mail from the North Brookfield Conservation Commission (Attachment #2) regarding their role in the situation. The e-mail states that the Conservation Commission had given Highway Superintendent Gary Jean permission to press down on the top of the beaver dam to allow water to flow over the top. They believe that this lead to a weakness in the beaver dam, causing it to breach. They noted that they have spoken to East Brookfield Selectman Leo Fayard, and agreed that in the future both Towns would try to keep each other informed of any important issues that could have effects on the other. Mrs. Walter contacted Mr. Jean and confirmed that this information was correct. Mrs. Walter stated that the Selectmen should send a response to the East Brookfield Selectmen as a courtesy. Mr. Chabot moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to send a letter to East Brookfield. So voted.

C. Mrs. Walter presented a memo to town officials regarding the beginning of the new joint purchasing program. (Attachment #3) Mr. Chabot moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to approve and send the letter. So voted. Mrs. Walter noted that she would like to present the letter to town

departments at a department head meeting hopefully to be scheduled for next week.

D. Mrs. Walter presented another memo that she drafted to be sent to the towns of Brookfield, East Brookfield, West Brookfield, Warren, and New Braintree regarding the proposed Human Resources Intermunicipal Agreement. (IMA) (Attachment #4) The letter asks that the officials from each town review the memo and come to the January 13th regional meeting ready to discuss and vote on the IMA. Mr. Chabot moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to approve and sign the letter. So voted.

E. Mrs. Walter noted that at the last meeting the Board of Selectmen discussed a complaint received from Daniel Meloche regarding his neighbor's dogs. At that time the Selectmen voted to refer the matter to Animal Control Officer Jesse Berard for his input. Officer Berard submitted a written response (Attachment #5) indicating that he has spoken with dog owner Karen Oberg regarding methods available to help control the barking. Officer Berard noted that he will follow up with Mr. Meloche and the Obergs in 30 days to see if the barking is still an issue. Mr. Chabot moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion that the Selectmen should send letters to both Mr. Meloche and to the Obergs. So voted.

Mrs. Walter noted that the Town's by-laws state that "no owner or keeper of any dog shall permit such dog, whether licensed or unlicensed, to become a public nuisance.....", and this situation could be considered a nuisance. Mr. Chabot moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to send a letter to Mr. Meloche and to the Obergs. So voted.

F. Mrs. Walter stated that at the last meeting the Selectmen received a complaint from Chris Morrison regarding traffic on South Main Street, and the problems she has encountered trying to cross her horse from her home to a pasture across the street. The Selectmen referred the complaint to Police Chief Thomasian and Highway Superintendent Jean for their input. Chief Thomasian has stated that he will implement extra patrols in the area as time permits. The Chief also sent along some information on speed limits that noted that as South Main Street is also Route 67, the state is in charge of setting speed limits.

Mrs. Walter noted that she drove South Main Street in both directions, and the speed limits vary. Mr. Chabot stated that if the speed limit could be lowered starting at Hardy's garage instead of closer to Town that might help.

Mrs. Walter asked that this item be deferred to next week in order to give Mr. Jean a chance to respond.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. The Board reviewed six articles proposed for the January 21st Special Town Meeting. (Attachment #6) Mr. Petraitis asked if Articles #1 and #2 could be combined, but Mrs. Walter noted that the school is responsible for Article #1, and the Town is responsible for Article #2. Mrs. Walter stated that the funding for both articles can be combined; the cost to certify one town employee as a Certified Municipal Purchasing Professional Officer (CMMPO) is approximately \$1,500.00. Mr. Chabot moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to approve and sign the warrant. So voted.

B. This item to discuss the Emergency Management Performance Grant will be deferred to next week, when hopefully Doug Blood will be available.

C. Mr. Chabot read an e-mail from Town Accountant Nancy Nykiel (Attachment #7) informing the Selectmen that the contract with Scanlon and Associates for auditing the town's books expires after the FY10 audit, and the Town should be seeking quotes for future years. Mr. Chabot noted that this firm has done the Town's audits for many years, and has always done a good job. Mrs. Walter noted that auditing services are exempt from bidding laws. Mr. Chabot moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to stay with Scanlon. So voted.

D. Mrs. Walter stated that the Selectmen should schedule a meeting with the North Brookfield Downtown Development Commission (NBDDC) to be brought up to date on the remediation issues. Mr. Petraitis suggested that Neil Thurber of AECOM be invited as well. Leslie will contact everyone to set this up.

E. Mr. Petraitis read a letter from Charter Communications (Attachment #8) regarding payment to the Town for \$68,000.00. Mr. Chabot moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to accept the check for the LPAC Gift Account. So voted.

F. Mrs. Walter announced that there will be a meeting for Department Heads next Wednesday, January 12th at 9 AM at the Police Station.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Mr. Chabot showed a close-up picture of the Town Clock showing the poor condition of the wood. Mr. Chabot stated that he will leave the picture at the Senior Center for anyone who would like to look at it. He noted that Jeff Samuelson has built a mold for the three clock faces, which are each 8' across. The clock numbers will be made from 1/8" aluminum stock, powder coated, and then gold leafed. Mr. Chabot read the list of donors. (Attachment #9) Mr. Chabot

moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to accept the donations for the Town Clock Gift Fund. So voted.

B. Mr. Petraitis announced that the Hearts for Heat group will be hosting a Spaghetti Supper on Saturday, January 22nd from 5 PM to 7 PM. Mrs. Walter stated that it is a privilege to have this group in Town providing another option for residents who are struggling to pay for heat.

C. Mrs. Walter announced that the Harlem Superstars will once again take on the North Brookfield Dream Team on Saturday, January 15th at the High School. The Dream Team will consist of members of the School Administration and Staff, and local “celebrities.” This even is being sponsored by the Friends of the North Brookfield Playground Committee.

D. Mr. Chabot read an e-mail from Julie McCarthy of the Friends of the Town House announcing that they will be holding an Open House at the Town House on Sunday, January 16th at 1 PM. There will be a “brainstorming session” afterward from 2 PM to 3 PM at the Police Station.

E. Mr. Petraitis announced that Bright Star Health will be hosting a Ladies Night on January 21st from 6 PM to 8 PM.

F. Mrs. Walter reminded everyone of the Special Town Meeting to be held on January 21st at 7 PM at the Elementary School.

V. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

A. Mrs. Walter noted that next week the Selectmen will hold an executive session to discuss strategy in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel, and to discuss strategy with respect to litigation, because an open session may have a detrimental effect on the town’s negotiating position.

B. Mrs. Walter noted that the Selectmen have received preliminary budget numbers tonight, and should be ready to discuss them next week.

C. Mr. Petraitis asked if the Selectmen should review the after-action report of the North Brookfield Emergency Management Agency regarding the ice storm of 2008.

At 7:50 PM Mr. Chabot moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to enter Executive Session to consider the purchase, lease, value, or exchange of real estate, because an open session may have a detrimental effect on the Town’s negotiating position. Roll call: Walter, yes; Chabot, yes; Petraitis, yes. So voted. Mrs. Walter announced that the Board would exit Executive Session only to adjourn.

At 8:30 PM the Board came out of Executive Session. Mr. Chabot moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to adjourn for the evening. So voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Scott Burton
Administrative Assistant