

**MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING
SEPTEMBER 10, 2013**

Chairman Walter called the meeting to order in the Senior Center at 7 PM with Mr. Smith and Mr. Chabot also present. Mrs. Walter reminded everyone that the meeting was being both audio and video taped.

**I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF AUGUST 27, 2013
APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES OF AUGUST 27, 2013**

Mr. Smith moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to approve the aforementioned minutes. So voted.

**IA. APPROVAL OF GENERAL WARRANT #1010 FOR \$897,185.89
APPROVAL OF SCHOOL WARRANT #1011 FOR \$101,697.69
APPROVAL OF GENERAL WARRANT #1012 FOR \$61,108.11
APPROVAL OF PAYROLL WARRANT #6 FOR \$277,090.50**

Mr. Smith moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to approve the aforementioned warrants. So voted.

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. AWARD BID FOR ROAD MILLING

B. AWARD BID FOR BELL STREET DRAINAGE PROJECT

Mr. Smith reviewed a letter from Highway Superintendent Gary Jean announcing that Costello Industries of Newington, CT has been awarded the bid for road milling, and that Spencer Paving/New England Landscaping and Construction of Spencer would be doing the Bell Street drainage project. (Attachment #1)

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. JIM METCALF RE: QVBAC GRANT

Mr. James Metcalf, North Brookfield's representative to the Quaboag Valley Business Assistance Corporation (QVBAC), was present to provide and update on a \$520,000.00 grant that was recently awarded from the Massachusetts Community Development Block Grant program. (Attachment #2) According to Mr. Metcalf, North Brookfield is one of 13 towns in the QVBAC that will benefit from this grant by providing business loans to new or existing small businesses. In addition, a small portion of the funds will be used to train people how to write business plans. Mr. Metcalf explained that he was

happy to get information about this grant out to the community for anyone starting or operating a small business.

Mr. Smith asked about the amount of an average business loan, and Mr. Metcalf stated that it could range from a small loan of \$2,000.00 to \$3,000.00 and up. In addition, Mr. Metcalf noted that through the adult education program at the North Brookfield schools there will be a class on how to write a business plan and start a new business.

Mr. Metcalf also mentioned that the adult education program is looking for people who want to teach a class on any subject, such as cooking, gardening, or dance.

B. ANN HICKS AND CYNTHIA HENSHAW RE: BATES STREET LAND

Ann Hicks, a member of the Conservation Commission, presented the Selectmen with a statement which she read. (Attachment #3) According to the statement, "three years ago the opportunity arose to purchase 30 acres of land on Bates Street called Wendemuth Meadow through the East Quabbin Land Trust (EQLT). Unfortunately, an agreement on price was not able to be reached with the property owners. The EQLT has stayed in touch with the realtor during this period and has reached an agreement with the owners to purchase the property contingent on active involvement with the Town of North Brookfield in conservation of the land.

This request to the Town of North Brookfield Select Board members is to partner with the East Quabbin Land Trust by committing to apply for a state Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) grant for fiscal year 2015 to purchase a conservation restriction on the land. That application is due in mid-July 2014. Each community applying for a LAND grant requires agreement by the Select Board and Conservation Commission, with eventual approval by Town Meeting vote to appropriate funds for the acquisition.

A conservation restriction is a permanent easement on the land that removes future development, mining, paving and dumping threats, leaving future stewardship activities focused on agriculture, recreation, wildlife and scenic values of the land. The LAND grant will cover a portion of the purchase price. Additional funding will be requested from individuals, businesses and foundations. The land trust has experience with land acquisition and management and is committed to working with communities in the region to bring conservation initiatives like this to reality. Conservation success is more likely when the community and land trust partner in the effort.

It is hoped that the Selectboard, the Conservation Commission, and town residents will support EQLT as it works to acquire this property. Demonstrated support from the community leaders is a contingency of our Purchase and Sales Agreement. The East Quabbin Land Trust respectfully requests a letter of commitment from the Select Board to apply for a LAND grant on the property, which will allow the EQLT to proceed with the purchase of the land. The East Quabbin Land Trust will be meeting with the

Conservation Commission and others within North Brookfield to discuss their support for conservation of Wendemuth Meadow in the near future.”

Ms. Henshaw explained that the EQLT will purchase the land from the Davey family for a price of \$325,000.00 and the Town will apply for a LAND grant to purchase the conservation restriction. Another appraisal would need to be done to determine the cost of the restriction. The EQLT will pay for the appraisal. The LAND grant will pay approximately 68% of the cost of the restriction, and the EQLT will raise funds for the other 32%. She noted that they will not be asking the town to use tax dollars to purchase the restriction.

In response to a question from Mr. Smith, Ms. Henshaw stated that she feels the Town’s application for the LAND grant would have a good shot at being approved. She noted that the EQLT must sign a Purchase and Sale agreement by the end of September, and the land must be purchased by April 15, 2014, provided that the Town agrees to pursue the purchase of the conservation restriction.

Christine Morrison, chairman of the Conservation Commission, stated that she personally is in favor of pursuing this, and she is sure that the rest of the committee will support this as well. Harbour Hodder, an abutter, stated that she and her husband consider this purchase to be an “ideal” use of the property.

When Mrs. Walter suggested that the trust may opt to sell the land at some point in the future, Ms. Henshaw stated that by holding the conservation restriction the Town would control the future use of the property. Mr. Chabot asked if the Town would have the first right of refusal, and Ms. Henshaw stated that is something that could be put into an agreement between the Town and the EQLT.

Chabot moved, and Mr. Smith seconded, a motion to give the EQLT the authority to go forward with the purchase, and that the Board of Selectmen will support the efforts of the EQLT and will support the LAND grant application in 2015. So voted.

C. SET NOVEMBER 1ST AS FALL TOWN MEETING DATE. ARTICLES DUE TO SELECTMEN BY SEPTEMBER 23RD

Mr. Smith moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to set Friday, November 1, 2013 at 7 PM as the date and time for a Special Town Meeting. So voted. Articles will be due to the Board of Selectmen by Monday, September 23rd.

D. MASSWORKS GRANT APPLICATION

Mrs. Walter noted that the Town will try for a MassWorks grant to help repair or replace the Murphy Road bridge. Representative Anne Gobi encouraged the Town to apply, and we know we will have her support.

E. ACCOUNTANT RETIREMENT

Mr. Chabot read a letter from Town Accountant Nancy Nykiel resigning her position as of September 3, 2014. (Attachment #4) Mr. Chabot said that he hates to see her go, she will be very difficult to replace. Mr. Smith moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to accept the resignation with regret and appreciation, and to send a letter of thanks. So voted.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. LAKE LASHAWAY DRAWDOWN

Mr. Chabot reviewed a letter from the Town of East Brookfield notifying North Brookfield that the Lake Lashaway drawdown will begin earlier this year, on September 9th. (Attachment #5)

B. SCHOOL GRANTS

Mr. Smith reviewed information from School Superintendent John Provost about the grants received by the School Department this year. (Attachment #6) According to the information provided, North Brookfield Schools have received a little over \$604,000.00 in grants this year. Mr. Smith offered the Board's congratulations to the School Department.

C. HYDRANT FLUSHING

Mrs. Walter reviewed a memo from the Water Department informing resident that they will be conducting hydrant flushing from September 23rd to October 18th. They ask that residents refrain from doing laundry on the days the hydrants near their homes are flushed.

V. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

A. DISCUSSION RE: NEED FOR DEBT EXCLUSION

Mrs. Walter noted that the Town will need to consider the need for a debt exclusion for our share of the Bay Path Vocational School renovation project. The FY14 payment is approximately \$17,000.00, which can be managed within this year's budget, but the payments will go up each year. The ideal time for the debt exclusion process would be in May at the annual town meeting and election.

Mrs. Walter also noted that the Selectmen are grateful to the residents of the area around Reed and Conroy Avenues for their responses to a survey regarding stormwater

flooding. Although the numbers weren't there to support a Hazard Mitigation Grant, there are other options available to the Town and the Selectmen won't give up on this.

Mrs. Walter noted that there have been several capital items requested already for the fall town meeting, these will be reviewed at the September 24th Selectmen's meeting.

Mrs. Walter noted that the final job descriptions, along with sample personnel policies and evaluation forms have arrived from Kopelman and Paige.

Mr. Chabot said that the Selectmen could not close the meeting without mentioning John "Buddy" Lane, who passed away last week. Buddy did so much for the Town of North Brookfield, serving on almost every board or committee except the School Committee and the Conservation Commission. Mr. Chabot offered the Board's sympathies to the Lane family.

There being no further business, at 8:20 PM Mr. Smith moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to adjourn. So voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Scott Burton
Administrative Assistant