

Minutes of the Board of Selectmen Meeting

This meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 6:00PM on Tuesday, May 2, 2023 in the Town Offices. John Tripp and Brooke Canada present.

Reorganize Board: Mr. Tripp said he'd like to keep the board as is, with Jason Petraitis as Chair, himself as Vice Chair, and Mrs. Canada as Clerk. Mrs. Canada said she has concerns about the leadership and wants to be Chair herself. Mr. Tripp reminded her she's only been on the Board of Selectmen for 8 months. Mr. Tripp asked Ashley to call Mr. Petraitis to weigh in. Ashley called and explained what was said, Mr. Petraitis said it's not traditional for the Clerk to move to Chair. He said the Board would talk about it on Thursday when they meet with Finance Committee.

Sewer Contract-Jim Nyberg presented several copies of the contract with Methuen for the Sewer renovation project. He explained it's a standard contract and Methuen has provided surety bonds and insurance certificates. Mr. Tripp asked if everything had gone to bid, Jim said the bids are complete, Mr. Tripp asked if the final number was 23 million dollars, Jim confirmed that would be the max and includes design and engineering. Mrs. Canada moved, and Mr. Tripp seconded, a motion to sign the contract with Methuen for sewer upgrades. So voted.

Jim explained that Don Gillette, a North Brookfield resident, is employed by Methuen as on-site engineer, which is good because we have an engineer backing our Town. Jim said they are pushing to get things done quickly, some materials have a lead time of 80 weeks, they will make accommodations.

Town Beach: Michelle Thayer said she wasn't sure if the Board is aware of issues with invoices for lifeguards, East Brookfield was redacting information, when she asked for more information, it was radio silence. She was told East Brookfield has full time lifeguard coverage for the Summer, but she was told by abutters to the beach that no lifeguards were on duty. North Brookfield pays two electrical bills and porto-potties. This year East Brookfield contracted with a porto-potty company and sent North Brookfield the bill, leaving NB with no say in any decisions. She also heard the company is a friend of someone on the EB Recreation Committee. Mr. Tripp asked if EB Rec Comm was still meeting at someone's house, Michelle confirmed they are and said she's written complaints to East Brookfield Board of Selectmen and got no response. Michelle said their focus is environmental, which is great, but she doesn't understand why it's so hard for them to communicate. She said NB wants parking stickers, EB said no, it's a public beach, but Michelle said it's not, its for EB and NB residents only. She suggested doing a seasonal pass or a one day pass. Mr. Tripp said the Board has discussed not entering into an agreement with EB and having them pay taxes on the land. Michelle said she's not done fighting for the beach, it's fantastic. Tara Hayes said she's willing to help. Mr. Tripp said we should do a 5 year renewable contract. Ashley suggested the Parks and Rec committee come up with what they're willing to negotiate on and what they're not. Mr. Tripp agreed we should get everyone's thoughts on this. Michelle Thayer suggested it be mandatory that committees work with the abutters to the beach, and with the Lake Lashaway Association, they are committed and invested, but receive no help from East Brookfield's committee, she would like an association member involved. She suggested making it part of the agreement with EB that a lake resident must be on their committee.

Parks and Recreation Committee: Tara Hayes said the Town voted to create a Parks and Recreation committee, she thinks best practice is to put the word out and see who applies to serve. We discussed this process and said it would be a 5-member committee. Michelle Thayer said she wants to be on it,

Mrs. Canada wondered if we should keep one position open for a beach resident. Michelle said the priority should be to get an agreement with EB. Brandon Avery said if there are 5 people on the committee, they will go to EB meetings. There was a discussion on meeting in public places, not private residences. Mr. Tripp suggested every other month meet in each Town, and asked if Tara and Michelle could get a list of concerns together bring it to the BOS. Michelle Thayer said EB will cut NB out of everything, she asked about swim lesson and they said no, they're not open to NB residents. Tara and Michelle agreed to come up with some recommendations.

Jason Benoit Mower-Jason said last week he purchased a mower, when he looked at it Friday, he realized it comes with a big set of problems, he found some and the dealership found more: the transmission is wrong, mower doesn't work, and they're unclear on the warranty. He's suggesting the Board Passover the article to rescind the money and change to actual purchase price until he can figure out if he'll need more money for repairs.

Jason Benoit Bay Path-Jason said he spoke to Bay Path Regional about the Huck's project, it looks very promising and there will be a decision made in August/September, which will be good timing. They perform electrical work, HVAC, cabinetry, and plumbing, they're hopeful to have a decision in the Fall. We need to send a letter of interest. Mr. Tripp asked about procurement, Tara said this wouldn't fall under that. Mr. Tripp asked about materials, Jason said we do that separate and have accounts for each store. Tara said he still needs to get quotes on materials and asked Jason to talk to the Shiela LeBlanc about it. Mr. Tripp suggested making a stock list and giving it to 3 separate stores.

Tara Hayes said as a citizen, herself and many others are concerned. She asked if the Board would be looking at the designs and making decisions such as "no to 3 single bathrooms", and try in every way possible to get the cost down. Jason Benoit said he thinks there's language included that says we can change the design in construction process. Mrs. Canada said she remembers the architects cost estimates were high because he hadn't looked at Huck's. Jason said the Clerk of the works is a key role, he works for North Brookfield. Mr. Tripp said the Board did knock off a lot of cost. Jason suggested waiting for the design to be complete then do a closer look, Tara said people are concerned. Mr. Tripp asked what the timeframe is for getting a design, Ashley will check. Mrs. Canada said her concern is that cost is rising exponentially, it's better to get the project done now.

Jason Benoit said he's heard nothing about credit card usage reimbursement, Ashley explained the issue, Jason said he can't use his credit card he will need ten to fifteen thousand more dollars in his budget. There was more discussion on the credit card. Jason said he'd continue this conversation on Thursday with the Board and Finance Committee.

Reserve Fund Requests-Mr. Tripp read the following requests: \$5,000.00 to Highway for Gasoline/Diesel, \$6,082.00 to Highway Salary for union negotiation wages, \$4,000.00 to Police for Gasoline, \$4,000.00 to Police Overtime because of time-off and staffing issues, and \$4,247.00 to Police Office expense for unanticipated expenses. Mrs. Canada moved, and Mr. Tripp seconded, a motion to approve the requests as read. So voted.

Town House Committee-The Committee requested access to the Town House for tours and photographs. Mr. Tripp suggested keeping people out of the backrooms, just keep them in the upper hall area, use main entrance, and keep to 10 people at a time. Brandon Avery said he would help with the lighting for photographs.

Brandon Avery said he's looking to get official vote and policy in place for open space. He said there's a truck and wood on town property, and someone is stealing wood from town property. Brandon he's the liaison to CMPRC, he's looking to extend the Rail Trail to South Common Street, but we'll need a site assessment done. Mr. Tripp asked how much that would cost, Brandon said we fill out a nomination form and submit it, Brandon explained we would not be disturbing the ground.

Mr. Tripp said we need to have a fence viewer and policy about not putting fences right at sidewalk, they should have to get a permit, maybe create a zoning bylaw.

At 8:20PM, there being no further business, Mrs. Canada moved, and Mr. Tripp seconded, a motion to adjourn. So voted.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Barre