

Minutes of the Board of Selectmen Meeting

This meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order on Tuesday, December 19, 2023 at 5:30PM in the Police Department. Jason Petraitis, John Tripp and Brooke Canada present.

Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to enter into executive session for reason # 3, to discuss litigation strategy – Rural Justice Network v. Town of North Brookfield, et al., Worcester Superior Court, C.A. No. 2385CV01343. Jason Petraitis, yes; John Tripp, yes; Brooke Canada, yes. So voted. Mr. Petraitis noted the Board would exit executive session to return to open meeting.

At 6:03PM Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to exit executive session. Petraitis, yes; Tripp, yes; Canada, yes. So voted.

Mr. Petraitis noted the Board would reconvene in open session at 6:10PM.

At 6:10 PM Mr. Petraitis called the Board of Selectmen meeting back to order.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to approve the minutes from 12/12/23. So voted.

Approval of Warrants: Mr. Petraitis moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to approve the following warrants: Payroll 13 for \$370,599.71, School 1044 for \$145,295.06, General 1045 for \$247,574.05, and WWTPU 1046 for \$678,418.97. So voted.

Mr. Petraitis announced we have a guest at the meeting, new Senator Peter Durant. Senator Durant thanked the Board and said he wanted to stop in and say hi, he serves Worcester and Hamden Counties, consisting of 22 towns. He said his office is in the process of transitioning but he can be reached through his Chief of Staff, Anne Gaudreau or through Curtis Bouchard at 617-727-1540, through email Peter.Durant@masenate.gov, the lines of communication are open. He said he knows its budget season and he's working closely with Representative Berthiaume. He opened the floor to questions.

Brandon Avery asked if Senator Durant would be having local office hours. He said Ann Gaudreau and Donna Farmer would be coordinating that and starting in January he should have hour monthly. Brandon asked if that information would be posted, he said yes, in the past it was sent to the New Leader and other local media.

Financial Items:

Fire Spending Request-Mrs. Canada read a letter from Chief Darin requesting to spend \$375.00 on 2 batteries for engine 2, \$350.00 for brakes for car 2, and \$700.00 for tires for car 1. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to approve this request. So voted.

Highway Spending Request-Mr. Petraitis read a request from Highway to spend \$971.00 on a power control modulator for a vehicle. Ashley explained this is NOT a laptop computer for the vehicle, but part of the machinery of the vehicle. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to approve the request. So voted.

Old Business:

It Grant-Mr. Petraitis explained that Tara Hayes, Town Clerk, put together a grant that was approved for \$17,000.00 through the Community Compact IT Grant Program, this will allow for a few new computers

and software needed in town. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to accept the grant and sign the contract. So voted.

Fire/Highway Building Committee: Eric Hevy offered his services to the Board of Selectmen to help manage the Fire/Highway renovation project, and is requesting to form a committee for that purpose. Eric knows the board has a lot to get done and wants to help, when it comes time to make decisions the committee will be there. He has experience dealing with municipal projects, he helped build the police facility. He has worked with OPM's and architects in the past. He was on the original committee to build a new fire station, but the costs ran too high the project was removed. He would like a 3–5-member committee and approval to manage it. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to approve Eric Hevy to manage a Fire/Highway Renovation Committee. Discussion: Mr. Tripp said he wants to table this for 2 weeks until the board decides. Mrs. Canada said she is in favor of the committee, as we have already experienced delays, the board can outline expectations and create open lines of communication. Mr. Tripp said he thinks adding another committee will add fuel to the fire because Tecton and Colliers seem to have things moving along and they need to come to the Board with their findings. Mr. Petraitis said he can see both points, but Eric has worked with OPM/Architects, he doesn't agree with a 5-member committee, but there's merit with a separate committee informing the Board. Eric said this project was supposed to go out to bid in December, it didn't and shouldn't have been delayed, he said the Board would get updated weekly, or whenever they want them, to make sure it moves forward in a timely manner. Mr. Petraitis asked Mr. Tripp how often he'd want updates, Mr. Tripp said he wants to table this vote for 2 weeks. Eric said these projects are coming in at a decent cost, it's beneficial to the town to get this done quickly. Mr. Petraitis said he won't be at the meeting in 2 weeks, so it will be about 3 or 4 weeks until he can discuss it again. Mr. Petraitis asked Mr. Tripp how many people should be on the committee. Mr. Tripp said 3, but that we don't need a committee. Mrs. Canada agreed with 3. Mr. Petraitis asked who would be on the committee, Eric suggested himself and Chief Anderson. Mrs. Canada asked about someone from Highway, Eric agreed it would be good to have a rep from highway. Mr. Petraitis asked for the vote: Mrs. Canada, yes; Mr. Petraitis, yes; Mr. Tripp, no. Motion passed. Mr. Petraitis said Eric could contact the OPM and architect. Eric said he'd like a letter sent the OPM from the Board of Selectmen's office.

Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to appoint Eric Hevy and Chief Anderson to the new committee for the Fire/Highway Renovation project. Discussion: Mr. Tripp said if anything, Jason Benoit should be the third person. Vote: Mrs. Canada, yes; Mr. Petraitis, yes; Mr. Tripp, no. Motion passed.

New Business:

Sewer Upgrade Update: Sewer Superintendent Jim Nyberg said it's been 6 months since the start of the upgrade to meet the DEP/EPA phosphorous limit. Almost all the equipment is being updated to do as much automating as possible. A copy of the update is available on the town's website. Jim said the project is slightly ahead of schedule. Mr. Tripp asked if they were still able to take septic waste. Jim said that was closed for only 2.5 days, which they had anticipated and adjusted their budget as necessary. Mrs. Canada thanked Jim for the update.

Fire Report: Mr. Tripp read the Fire Report for November. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to accept the report. So voted.

Change Order-Mrs. Canada read an email regarding a change order for the Senior Center roof project, there are funds available through the CDBG grant for this purpose. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to approve and sign the change order. So voted. There was a brief discussion the money leftover from this grant.

Town/Owner Agreement-Mr. Petraitis read an email from PVPC regarding an amendment to the town/owner agreement for 8 Grove Street in Brookfield. Mr. Trip moved, an Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to approve the agreement. So voted.

Public Comment: none

Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to enter into executive session for reason 1, to discuss complaints against an employee. Petraitis, yes; Tripp, yes; Canada, yes. So voted. Mr. Petraitis noted the board would exit executive session only to adjourn.

At 7:23PM the board exited executive session. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to adjourn. So voted.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Barre