

Minutes of the Board of Selectmen Meeting

This meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 6:10PM at the Town Offices on Tuesday, June 30, 2020. Dale Kiley, Jason Petraitis, and John Tripp all present.

Mr. Kiley read a press release regarding the postponement of the Independence Celebrations planned for July 4th, 2020.

Tara Hayes asked the board to approve a lockbox for outside the Town offices for more secure voting and payments. Mr. Petraitis moved, and Mr. Kiley, seconded, a motion to approve the purchase of the lockbox using Cares Act Funding. So voted.

There was a brief discussion with a journalist regarding the postponement of the Independence Day celebration and what lead the Board to make that decision. Mr. Kiley explained that initially it was planned as event for residents in North Brookfield and the Board expected around 250 people throughout the day. The Board of Health contacted the media which lead to statewide coverage of the event. The Board no longer felt it was safe to hold the event as there could be thousands of people in attendance and North Brookfield does not have the Police force to handle that many people.

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission: Mr. Petraitis moved, and Mr. Tripp seconded, a motion to approve four contracts with PVPC regarding home rehabs through CDBG grants funds. So voted.

Lake Lashaway Fee: The Board received an email from a resident asking about charging a fee for residents to use the Town Beach at Lake Lashaway. Mr. Tripp stated that no one would go to the Beach, there is a fee to fish at Doane's pond and very few people fish there because of it. Mr. Kiley said that East Brookfield owns the beach. North Brookfield provides money to assist them in paying for Life Guards, port-o-potties and other items. If someone has a question or suggestion regarding the beach, they should contact the East Brookfield Town Hall.

Special Town Meeting: Mr. Petraitis moved, and Mr. Tripp seconded, a motion to set the Special Town Meeting date for August 4th. So voted.

Side note The Council on Aging has asked the Board of Selectmen to hold their on-camera meetings elsewhere, as the people who attend the Senior Center are a high-risk community. The Police Department sprays after our meetings, but we will move our on-camera nights to the Police Station.

Mr. Petraitis stated that the high school locker rooms need new flooring. We will need two articles on the STM, 1 to vote to approve either Tile or Epoxy for the floor, and 2 to vote to fund the project. Superintendent Richard Lind has received 1 quote for tile and 1 for epoxy, but can't get anyone else to come out and give quotes for the flooring. He should be able to get more after July 4th, he's been trying to get quotes for 10 months now.

Mr. Kiley stated that there is a new mandate from the state regarding our Sewer Department, we must upgrade the system or face fines of up to \$25,000 a day while in non-compliance. Ashley is going to ask Jim to do a brief write up about the project so we can get the information out to the residents for review before the STM. There will need to be a vote to do the sewer upgrade, and there will also need to be a ballot vote in September or November.

Nancy Nykiel asked for a policy to be put in place regarding the Cares Act Money. All bills being paid through Cares Act money must come to the BOS for approval before submitting to accounting. The BOS will sign off on the invoices and ensure it complies with our application. Ashley was informed that in order to use Cares Act Money the Town must apply for FEMA funds. Ashley has emailed the Board of Health twice inquiring if anyone had applied but hasn't received a response. Mr. Petraitis stated that Ashley should go ahead and apply for the FEMA funds.

The Board of Selectmen signed a MEMO to Nancy Nykiel and the Playground Committee requesting a transfer of \$814.39 from BOS Street Lighting Account to the Playground Committee. This amount reflects the money paid by the Playground Committee to National Grid for street lighting. This bill should be included the BOS Street Lighting line item. Ashley will call National Grid to get the bill transferred to the BOS.

Jason Benoit spoke to Ashley regarding the Highway Mechanic and union rules. A new position needs to be created: Head Mechanic. Originally, we thought the job had to be reclassified, but it needs to be a new position. Jason said he would provide Ashley the new job description tomorrow. The Board of Selectmen signed a letter to Eli Gillen regarding the new position and pay rate.

Mr. Tripp asked the Board if they had heard anything regarding the landfill cap at the Recycling Center. Mr. Kiley said he thinks the Board of Health is still dealing with the engineers and DEP.

Jennifer Marquis came in to discuss the position of Town Accountant. She told the Board that she had applied for and received a housing grant through PVPC, she contacted them to see if it would be a conflict of interest for her to accept this position, she is still waiting to hear back. Mr. Tripp asked Jennifer if she had written grants, she said yes. Mr. Kiley told Nancy that the Board had chosen Jennifer for the position unless there was some issue. Nancy asked Jennifer if she had any questions, Jennifer said not yet but that she would be picking Nancy's brain once the training starts. Mr. Kiley asked if there was a certification process, Nancy said yes, in March there are classes she will need to take and she will be to get recertified every 3 years. Mr. Kiley asked Nancy if she was willing to train Jennifer, yes she said. Mr. Tripp asked Jennifer if should accept Nancy's training, Jennifer said yes. The Board explained that they have found Nancy's way is the best, there was some issues with a past accountant. Jennifer asked about the hours she would be working and Nancy explained the schedule. Mr. Kiley asked Nancy if she knew the starting salary for a Town Accountant with no previous experience, Nancy was unsure but said the Board could look around. Nancy said she would be available for questions even when she returns to babysitting her grandkids.

Mr. Kiley said we could offer Jennifer \$30,000 a year to start. Jennifer said she'd like 4 weeks of vacation and she would not be taking the health insurance benefit. Ashley looked up the employee handbook which states the vacation policy. Nancy brought a letter she found when the previous accountant was hired and it showed some negotiations as far as vacation time. Mr. Kiley said he would offer her 3 weeks' vacation to start. Jennifer stated should would think about it and get back to the Board with a response by the end of the week.

Mr. Kiley opened the floor for public comment:

Eunice Jones stated that she had sent a message regarding the 4th of July event and never received a response. She asked why the Board was spending tax payer money and told the Board to review the guidelines from the state.

Fitzgerald Pucci stated that he wanted to start a discussion about the 4th of July event since North Brookfield received attention from the Governor. Mr. Kiley said the Board had already made a statement to the media. Mr. Kiley read the press release again and stated that the event is not going to happen on 4th of July. Mr. Pucci said that because the event was postponed he would table his comments.

Mary Catherine inquired about the Town Beach fee-Mr. Kiley said we had already discussed it, East Brookfield owns the beach so it would be largely up to East Brookfield if they wanted to charge fees.

Eunice Jones stated that next BOS meeting was listed as July 7th. Mr. Kiley said that would be corrected.

At 7:15PM, there being no further business, Mr. Petraitis moved, and Mr. Tripp seconded, a motion to adjourn. So voted.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Barre