

Minutes of the Board of Selectmen Meeting

This meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 6:03PM at the North Brookfield Police Department on Tuesday, October 13, 2020. Dale Kiley, Jason Petraitis and John Tripp present.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Petraitis moved, and Mr. Tripp seconded, a motion to approve the minutes from 9/29. So voted.

Approval of Warrants: Mr. Petraitis moved, and Mr. Tripp seconded, a motion to approve the following warrants: Payroll # 8 for \$351,523.87, 1016 School for \$71,221.88 and 1017 General for \$243,409.32. So voted.

Financial Items:

- a. Approve CARES Act Funds: Mr. Petraitis moved, and Mr. Tripp seconded, a motion to approve the CARES Act requests for the Library and the Selectmen office to purchase PPE and sanitizing solutions. So voted.
- b. Fire Department Transfer: Mr. Petraitis moved, and Mr. Tripp seconded, a motion to approve a request to transfer \$3,300.00 from Fire Equipment to Turn Out Gear. So voted. When Fire Chief Joe Holway was given the spreadsheet to plan his FY21 budget, he was given incorrect numbers. This transfer is to correct an error.

Old Business:

- a. Update from the Downtown Development Committee: Sheila Orsi was present to give an update on the Downtown Development Committee (DDC).
 - a. The DDC has been hosting Friday night movies next to the PD, it's been going well. They are hoping to have a few more in the Spring. The program was funded through grant funds, funds went through the Friends of the Townhouse, as they are a non-profit organization.
 - b. Planning Board would like to have a member attend the DDC meetings.
 - c. DDC is putting together a map of the Trails around Town, they need to apply for grant money to pay the person putting together the maps.
 - d. DDC is working on creating a local Business Association. They've been doing "Business Bites" on their Facebook page-giving businesses a place to advertise and engage with the community.
 - e. Complete Streets-there is a project list, 27 projects, located on the DDC page on the town's website. The projects are prioritized. Sheila met with Jason Benoit and Kim from Highway and Ian and Gemma from CMRPC-Jason has a project slated for Spring 2021, so DDC will submit a grant application in May to get projects started in August 2021. Project #'s 1,2,3 & 6 will connect the Adams Block to trail head (rail trail). Every year the Complete Streets program can provide up to \$400,000.00 for projects, but we need the projects to be engineered, which is about 10% of the total cost. Jason Benoit is supposed to ask the BOS for funds for preliminary engineering and bids.
 - f. There was discussion about the state of the sidewalks and traffic patterns in the center of Town. Possibly a rotary or making a section of Main St one way, Grove St one way, to provide more parking on Main St and to bring more attention to the Common.

- g. Mr. Kiley stated he'd like to start doing quarterly meetings to bring everyone together to share project ideas and progress.

New Business:

- a. Set Special Town Meeting: Mr. Petraitis moved, and Mr. Tripp seconded, a motion to set the Special Town Meeting date for Friday, November 6th at 7:00PM at the Elementary school. So voted. This meeting will enable the Town to appropriate free cash, which has been certified at \$403,000. We are doing financially well this year, but next year the state may not be able to give assistance. Please submit all articles for the STM by Thursday, October 15th to Ashley Barre.
- b. Appoint CMRPC Delegates: Ashley is going to double check who the planning board wants as the CMRPC delegates as there was some confusion.
- c. Medicare Contracts for Insurance Advisory Committee: Anne Janette submitted a recommendation to the board based on research done and advise of the Insurance Advisory Committee. Mr. Petraitis moved, and Mr. Tripp seconded, a motion to approve the renewal of the Town's Medicare contracts with BlueCross/BlueShield and Fallon. So voted.
- d. Discuss Unfunded Mandates: tabled for end of meeting.
- e. Fire Chief Joe Holway to present Life Saving Awards:
 - a. There were 3 incidents in the last year the Fire Chief Joe wanted to present awards for Life Saving Skills, teams and individuals were awarded as follows:

10/04/2019 Industrial Accident Brookfield Fire, Life Flight U-Mass, North Brookfield Police, North Brookfield EMS, North Brookfield Fire, Shawn Adams, Brad Gannon, Michael Splaine, Mark Lovely, Peter Martell, and David Churchy.

02/23/2020 Ice Rescue Spencer Fire, Spencer EMS, District 7 Dive Team, North Brookfield Police, North Brookfield EMS, North Brookfield Fire. Patrick Kiristy and George Nolette.

07/26/2020 Near Drowning, East Brookfield Fire, North Brookfield Police , North Brookfield EMS, North Brookfield Police , Zachary Ford, Tyrell Stevenson, Jessica Roy, Patrick Kiristy, Michael Splaine, Ashley Marks, David Messier, James Bain and Connor Fausek.

The Board of Selectmen thanked all departments and individuals for their hard work and skills.

Announcements:

- a. Trevor Brusco from the Board of Health announced a Flu Clinic will be held Thursday, October 15 from 9am to 11am at the Senior Center. Please bring your ID, insurance card and wear short sleeves. There may be another clinic coming up. Trevor also spoke about getting prepared for emergency dispensing, drive thru style, at the school. Mr. Kiley asked if we needed anything for that, Trevor believes we're in good shape. He would like to order about 50 cots and some more PPE for the school, as well as Senior Center.
- b. Trick or Treat was discussed, hours from 5PM to 7PM, asking residents to stay within their own neighborhoods. Parents can provide extra candy for their own children if need be. PTO will be coordinating spreading out throughout Town to avoid congestion in residential neighborhoods.

Unfunded Mandates: Mr. Petraitis brought up unfunded mandates, when the state or federal government instills mandates but does not provide funding for locals to comply. For example, the current Sewer mandate North Brookfield is facing. Mr. Petraitis referenced an article he found in the Republican from April 8, 2016: Over 5 years, ending in December 2105, legislation passed 97 new laws with significant financial impact on cities and towns. Mr. Petraitis went through the numbers of how taxes have increased significantly but state aid has decreased in proportion. He spoke about the Race to the Top in 2008/2009, in which Common Core was forced on the Towns by the State. He also stated that prevailing wage increases cost of construction by sometimes 30%. Prevailing wage meaning we have to pay what a union would pay. Mr. Kiley pointed out that state law exempts employees from the Federal Minimum wage. Mr. Petraitis explained that with the Race to the Top campaign, which bore Common Core, there were initial grant funds involved. But once those grant funds run out it is up to the school and Town to make sure those programs stay in place. We have to be careful with grant money, in some cases it can lock you into something that becomes very expensive to maintain, and in some cases, it would be better to fund the project locally. Mr. Kiley spoke about the state shutting down bridges, but not providing money to help the Town fix it. Mr. Petraitis said there is a bill in the Senate, if it gets passed and North Brookfield gets money for bridge repair, it still could be two years before construction begins. Cider Mill Bridge was funded 4 years ago and it will be starting repair in the Spring. Mr. Kiley spoke about Special Education money, if a child chooses to go to another school with different or better programs, it is on the tax payer to cover the tuition and bussing for that student.

Mr. Tripp thanked the Highway for all the tree removal they've been doing and asked residents to be patient, the Highway department is getting ready for Winter.

Mr. Tripp said there is progress on the rail trail, about 4 miles is open now to Route 9 and East Brookfield. He's seen people hiking, biking, walking, and walking their dogs. Please remember to clean up after your dogs.

Mr. Tripp did some work at the Town Park, Brandon Avery and Sharon Donovan, as well as other volunteers helped. The walkways should be getting started in about 2 weeks. Mr. Tripp is asking for donations to purchase pole lighting. Mr. Tripp said he received 2 flags from residents and Thanks them for their donation. Tecko Block donated \$8000.00 worth of pavers for the walkways. There have been many donations, from F.T. Smith, Bond, and many others in Town.

Mr. Petraitis was wondering if there were plans for a parade on Veteran's Day. He's got a bagpipe band on standby. Mr. Kiley asked if the Veteran's want to do something, Mr. Petraitis stated they are disheartened because younger vets don't seem to want march. If you are interested please contact the Commander of either the VFW or American Legion in Town. You can also contact the Board of Selectmen.

Tashina Holmes stated that the American Legion will be holding raffles on Friday nights from 11/6/20-1/6/21 for \$20/ticket.

There will be a group walk on the rail trail on Sunday 10/25/20 at 1:00PM.

There being no further business, at 7:36PM Mr. Petraitis moved, and Mr. Tripp seconded, a motion to adjourn. So voted.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Barre