

Minutes of the Board of Selectmen Meeting

This meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order on Tuesday, May 25, 2021 at 6:00PM at the North Brookfield Police Department. Dale Kiley and John Tripp present.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Tripp moved, and Mr. Kiley seconded, a motion to approve the minutes from 3/2 exec session, 3/16 and 5/7. So voted.

Approval of Warrants: Mr. Tripp moved, and Mr. Kiley seconded, a motion to approve the following warrants: Payroll # 20 for \$333,531.12, School Warrant # 1049 for \$127,126.16, and General Warrant # 1050 for \$302,095.73. So voted.

Financial Items:

Reserve Fund Request: Board of Selectmen and Board of Health

Mr. Tripp moved, and Mr. Kiley seconded, a motion to approve the Board of Selectmen Reserve Fund Request in the amount of \$919.00 to pay for Elderly Services. So voted. Fin Comm had previously approved the request. Tri-Valley did many in home calls during the COVID pandemic.

Mr. Tripp moved, and Mr. Kiley seconded, a motion to approve the Board of Health Reserve Fund Request in the amount of \$869.22 to pay for Clinic expenses. So voted. Fin Comm previously approved the request and the funds are 100% reimbursable through FEMA.

Transfer Requests: BOH, Town Clerk, Highway

Mr. Tripp moved, and Mr. Kiley seconded, a motion to approve the Board of Health Transfer request of \$148.86 from Clinical Stipends to Clinical. So voted. Fin Comm previously approved the request. The transfer was to cover miscellaneous expenses related to COVID clinics.

Mr. Tripp moved, and Mr. Kiley seconded, a motion to approve the Town Clerk's Transfer request of \$138.93 from Registrars Salary to Other Expenses. So voted. Fin Comm previously approved request. Town Clerk needs to pay final expenses for elections in FY 21.

Mr. Tripp moved, and Mr. Kiley seconded, a motion to approve the Town Clerk's Transfer request of \$1,889.88 from Election & Census Salary to Election & Census Other Expenses. So voted. Fin Comm previously approved request. Town Clerk needs to pay final expenses for elections in FY 21.

Mr. Tripp moved, and Mr. Kiley seconded, a motion to approve the Highway Department Transfer request of \$4,850.00 from Highway Salary to Wood Chipper Expense. So voted. Fin Comm previously approved request. Jason Benoit needed additional funds to cover cost of wood chipper.

Mr. Kiley spoke about the budget as it stands now. The school is short about \$378,000 from level funding. There's a lot of talk of the school cutting gym class, art, ect. If the Town votes to level fund the school the money will have to be taken from other departments. Some options are: cut road salt, approximately \$75,000. The roads will be cleared of snow. The Recycling Center could be eliminated for about \$163,000 (about \$100,000 in contracts). Board of Selectmen will cut \$35,000 from Street Lighting, and monies for Playground, Rail Trail, Beaver Eradication, Town Beach, Town Forest Park, could all be cut. Midnight shifts at the Police Department and weekend shifts at the Fire Department may need to

be cut. If all those budgets are cut, we still won't have the \$378,000 to cover the school. Only three departments' budgets increased this year: Board of Health because of the recycling/waste management contracts, Accountant-we had to hire a new accountant after a few bad experiences, and a small increase to the Police Department.

Mr. Kiley asked all departments to identify at least 2% of their budgets to cut, with every department taking a 2% cut we'll save about \$58,000, which won't touch the shortfall at the school. Difficult times come with difficult choices. In recent years North Brookfield was able to get the stabilization fund near \$1 million, and an AA- bond rating for borrowing. If we take monies from stabilization that will leave us short the Town will maybe get 2 years of funding for the school out of it before it is gone completely.

Mr. Tripp said that the school mentioned an override, but that would be difficult for our elderly and fixed income residents. Mr. Kiley stated the Rich Lind said it would benefit all departments in Town, but other department heads and Superintendents feel they've maintained their budgets and don't want to be part of the override.

Karen Kiley said that an override is forever, a debt exclusion falls off once paid. If we did a 15-year debt exclusion it would about 28 cents/\$1000 on real estate. If your home is worth \$275,000, you'd pay an additional \$77 a year (for a \$750,000 debt exclusion). If we did a \$750,000 override that would be about \$1.68/\$1000 on real estate. If your home is worth \$275,000, you'd pay an additional \$455 a year, in perpetuity. Mr. Tripp said that a lot of people cannot afford an override.

Mr. Kiley said that 54% of the Town's budget goes to the school. Net school spending is 3.4 million, we gave 6.1 million last year. There are a lot of budget items that don't factor into that number, like benefits, transportation, and school choice out. If we regionalize many of those costs do become reimbursable.

At 6:27PM Mr. Kiley opened a Fuel Storage License Hearing for CCS Realty, submitted by CMG.

Jim Bernadino from CMG and Al from CCS were present. Jim explained the redevelopment of the property on North Main Street. The current building will be raised, and a new convenience store/gas station will be built. They've gone through the permitting process with the Planning Board and the only thing remaining is the fuel storage license. The BOS reviewed the application, there will be 3 tanks and propane storage on site. CMG and CCS have been through everything with the State Fire Marshal and Chief Joe Holway. Mr. Kiley asked Chief Holway if he had anything to add. Chief Holway said the application looks good, fuel storage licenses are good for life of property, and the design looks extremely safe.

Mr. Tripp moved, and Mr. Kiley seconded, a motion to approve the Fuel Storage License for CCS Realty. So voted. Mr. Kiley closed the hearing at 6:34PM.

Old Business: Contract with Waste Management/Casella: Mr. Kiley said we would review the contract and wait until after the Annual Town Meeting to sign the contract, we need to make sure we can get out of it if need be.

Tina Floria stated that the School Committee plans on reading letters from students in Town at the Adjourned Annual Town Meeting, and asked if she could do something similar explaining the budget process. Mr. Kiley said that Finance Committee has put together a Power Point presentation.

There was some discussion about Charter School Assessments, in FY20 it cost \$80,000, in FY21 it cost \$119,000 and in FY22 it's projected to cost \$190,000.00 We get offsets in return, but we only got \$17,000 in offsets last year.

New Business:

Sign letter for Sewer-SRF list removal: Mr. Tripp moved, and Mr. Kiley seconded, a motion to sign a letter requesting the Sewer Department to be removed from the SRF list. So voted. This will help them get other grants for the Sewer upgrade. They may request to go back on the list in the future if circumstances change.

Fee for Fuel storage license: Mr. Tripp moved, and Mr. Kiley seconded, a motion to set a fee of \$150.00 for the Fuel Storage license. So voted.

Police Reports for March and April: Mr. Tripp read the Police Reports for March and April. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mr. Kiley seconded, a motion to accept the reports. So voted.

Chapter 90 Reimbursement request: Mr. Tripp moved, and Mr. Kiley seconded, a motion to sign the Project Requests for Highway department for North Street, Brooks Pond Road, Bullard Road, and Brickyard Road. So voted.

One day liquor license amendment: Mr. Tripp moved, and Mr. Kiley seconded, a motion to amend the Fire Department's one day liquor license to June 19 for Pay Night. So voted.

Town House letter of support: Mr. Tripp moved, and Mr. Kiley seconded, a motion to sign a letter of support for the Friend of the Town House. So voted. This letter will help get potential grant funds for Town House restoration.

Public Comment:

A resident said it was helpful for people to hear School Committee and FinComm/BOS sides as to worst case scenario for the budget and where we'll need to make cuts. Mr. Kiley said there are certain legalities involved with the budget, for example we give the school a lump sum and they are allowed to transfer anywhere in their budget. Mandates from the state require that the school provide certain things.

Kim Bent asked what happens next year and stated that we can't lose weekend FD shifts or midnight PD shifts. The FD has already handled 4 emergencies recently, just by having someone at the station.

Announcements:

Friday, June 4th at 7:30PM the Annual Town Meeting will resume at the Elementary School. There will be a revisiting of Article 16. Mr. Kiley stated that Jim Caldwell was not comfortable with the vote, and wasn't sure if it should be 2/3 or majority. Mr. Kiley stated he wasn't comfortable with the fact that the motion was not read aloud. Jim and Mr. Kiley have been in contact with Town Counsel, and all agree that the Article should be revisited and revoted.

Mr. Kiley read an announcement from Brandon Avery about an event at the Senior Center on June 17th at 7:00PM.

Mr. Kiley stated that Memorial Day services will be held at the library at 9:30AM. Joseph Jablonski mentioned that they'd be visiting the cemeteries as well, starting at Walnut Grove around 8 or 8:30AM.

Mr. Tripp mentioned the park off Brickyard Road (off Rail Trail) is clear. It took about 5 weeks, it's nice up there, looking to put up some benches. It may be a half mile from trail to park and back.

At 7:14PM Mr. Tripp moved, and Mr. Kiley seconded, a motion to enter Executive Session to hear complaints against an individual. Roll Call: Kiley: yes; Tripp, yes. So voted. Mr. Kiley noted the Board would exit Executive Session only to adjourn.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 7:58PM. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mr. Kiley seconded, a motion to adjourn. So voted.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Barre