

MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING SEPTEMBER 23, 2014

Chairman Smith called the meeting to order in the Senior Center at 6:05 PM with Mrs. Walter and Mr. Hevy also present. Mr. Smith reminded those in attendance that the meeting would be both audio and video taped.

Mr. Smith opened the meeting by stating that the last meeting on September 16, 2014 was not properly posted. When this error was discovered the next morning, Mr. Smith determined that the Selectmen should rectify the situation at the earliest opportunity. The Selectmen would review each agenda item and whatever discussion that had taken place, and then rescind and revote any votes that were taken. On September 17th the Selectmen's office contacted the Open Meeting Law Division of the Attorney General's Office and self-reported the problem, and explained the plans to correct the situation. An attorney from the AG's office confirmed that this would be the proper procedure to follow.

This is a review of the September 16th agenda (Attachment #1) and any discussions that took place, and any decisions made:

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 8, 2014

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to rescind approval of the minutes of September 8, 2014. So voted. As there was no discussion on these minutes, Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to approve the aforementioned minutes. So voted.

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. USE OF SURPLUS VEHICLE BY NBEMA

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to rescind last week's vote to allow the North Brookfield Emergency Management Agency to use the Fire Chief's old SUV. So voted. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to transfer use of the former Fire Department SUV to the North Brookfield Emergency Management Agency (NBEMA) with the stipulation that it remain in Town except when in use, preferably at the Police Station. So voted.

B. TECO-BLOC TIF

Mr. Smith explained that there was no action required or taken on this item last week. Mrs. Walter reported that she spoke with Rosemary Scrivens of the Massachusetts Office of Business Development about the state's Economic Assistance Coordinating Council (EACC) decertification of the Techo-Bloc Corporation. This was due to the

company's request to voluntarily withdraw their project from Certified Project Status. (Attachment #2)

In accordance with EACC Board policy, the Town no longer has an obligation to Techo-Bloc because "the project no longer fulfills the terms and conditions of the municipal action authorizing the host community to enter into the TIF agreement."

According to Ms. Scrivens the Town does not have to do anything further regarding this project, but we will reiterate her advice in a letter to her just to confirm, and Techo-Bloc will be copied.

Mr. Smith noted that the Town has lost nothing because of this; the TIF was only for any improvements that were to be made.

C. CABLE TV ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to rescind a vote to amend the name of this committee to the Cable Advisory Committee. So voted. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to amend the name of this committee to the Cable Advisory Committee. So voted.

At last week's meeting Chuck Marshall, Peter Barstow, and Peter Rouette were present before the Board. The three men all presented letters expressing their interest in serving on this committee. (Attachment #3) Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to rescind the appointment of the three to the Cable Advisory Committee. So voted. Mrs. Walter then moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to appoint the three to the Cable Advisory Committee. So voted. Mr. Smith noted that the Selectmen created the committee to have five members, along with a member of the Local Public Access Channel (LPAC) as an ex-officio member. In addition, a member of the Finance Committee would also serve in an ex-officio capacity if needed.

D. MASSWORKS DEADLINE EXTENSION REQUEST

At last week's meeting the Selectmen reviewed a Change Order request from Fuss and O'Neill for the Murphy Road Bridge MassWorks project. (Attachment #4) Mrs. Walter noted that this is a result of state rules on when work may be performed in or near a cold water stream. The Town must obtain a Category 2 registration from the Army Corps of Engineers instead of the Category 1 registration that was previously specified. Mrs. Walter explained that with a Category 1 registration we would only be allowed to work from July 1st to September 30th, with the Category 2 registration work may begin May 15th.

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to rescind approval of Change Order #1. So voted. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to approve Change Order #1 for up to \$6,000.00. So voted.

In addition, because of these limits on when work may be performed, the Town needs to request an amendment extending the contract through June 30, 2015 instead of December 31, 2014.

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to rescind the vote to request a contract extension to June 30, 2015. So voted. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to request a contract extension to June 30, 2015. So voted.

E. FY15 BUDGET UPDATE/POSSIBLE SPENDING FREEZE

Last week Mr. Smith noted that the Selectmen had met with the Finance Committee to discuss the Town's budget deficit, which is now approximately \$450,000.00. They planned to, and did, meet again this past Monday to continue the discussion. Most of the upward change in the deficit has been caused by changes in School Choice funds for students leaving the district.

Mr. Smith went on to say that at the last meeting he mentioned the possibility of instituting a spending freeze for discretionary spending.

Water Superintendent Steve Jones asked if this freeze would affect items already approved and ordered but not paid for? Mr. Smith said that the freeze would not apply to something that has already been approved.

Mrs. Walter asked about using the blue sheets that are currently used for discretionary spending over \$250.00? Mr. Smith suggested that any discretionary purchase over \$100.00 require approval by the Selectmen.

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to rescind a vote instituting a spending freeze on discretionary spending over \$100.00. So voted. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to implement a spending freeze on all discretionary spending using the spending guidelines and definitions that were used in FY09. So voted.

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to rescind the motion to respectfully request that the School Committee consider a spending freeze on discretionary expenditures. So voted. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to respectfully request that the School Committee implement a spending freeze on discretionary spending pending the outcome of our attempts to balance the FY15 budget. So voted.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. WATER DEPARTMENT NEW HIRE

Last week Water Commissioner John Thomasian told the Selectmen that the Board of Water Commissioners had met and unanimously voted to hire Richard Kennan as the Water Operator. (Attachment #5) Mr. Kennan previously worked for the North Brookfield Water Department for nine years. He understands the system and is fully licensed.

At that time Mrs. Walter noted that Mr. Kennan is a perfect candidate, and she stated that the Selectmen should accept the Water Department recommendation to hire him, but with the understanding that there are no promises made as to future promotional opportunities at this time. Mr. Smith said that he is in agreement with that.

Mrs. Walter asked about Mr. Kennan's starting salary, and was informed that he would be paid \$24.87 per hour, the same as the operator who is leaving.

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to rescind last week's motion to hire Mr. Kennan as the Water Department Operator. So voted. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to appoint Mr. Kennan as the Water Department Operator at a rate of \$24.87 per hour. So voted

Mr. Thomasian then noted that the company that provides school buses in town has asked permission to install an antenna at the Water Treatment Plant for two-way radio communication. This is a safety issue because there are areas of town where the radios do not currently work.

Jim Wilson, who provides two-way radios for area schools and fire departments, is the person requesting permission to install the antenna on the same mast as the NBEMA antenna. He noted that the Water Department or the Town could recoup a nominal charge to be reimbursed for the small amount of electricity that would be used.

The Selectmen asked Mr. Wilson for a formal proposal that includes a description of the equipment to be installed and how Mr. Wilson will ensure that there will be no interference with the existing equipment.

B. HIGHWAY TRUCK PROPOSAL

Mr. Smith noted that at last week's meeting the Selectmen reviewed information from Highway Superintendent Gary Jean about a truck that could be purchased using Chapter 90 money. (Attachment #6) According to Mr. Jean, this truck would replace a 1995 sander truck and a 1976 catch basin truck. Mr. Smith noted that this was informational only; it will be an agenda item sometime in the future.

C. BUDGET TIMELINE

At last week's meeting Mrs. Walter presented a timeline for the FY2016 budget process. (Attachment #7) In October the Selectmen will need to establish budget policies and

guidelines. In November we will need to request budgets from the various departments. Mr. Smith asked that this be put on the next agenda for discussion.

D. REVIEW STM ARTICLE REQUESTS

Last week the Selectmen reviewed eight articles that were submitted for the October 24th Special Town Meeting. (Available in the Selectmen's office) The deadline to submit articles was not until the end of last week, so there may be more article requests coming. This will be on the next agenda.

E. NEW AGENDA FORMAT FROM MR. HEVY

Mr. Hevy presented a new format for the Selectmen's agenda that he would like to see implemented. (Attachment #8) It was agreed to put this on the agenda for discussion at the next meeting.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. 150TH TOWN HOUSE ANNIVERSARY

Mr. Smith read an announcement for this event to be held on September 20th. It is being sponsored by the Friends of the Town House and the 200th Anniversary Committee.

B. REGIONAL HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE DAY

Mr. Hevy read this announcement from the Board of Health regarding this September 27th event.

C. HYDRANT FLUSHING

Mr. Smith reviewed a notice from the Water Department that they will be flushing hydrants in town from September 15th to October 10th. Daily schedules are posted on the department's Facebook page.

V. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

POLICE CHIEF SEARCH COMMITTEE

BEAVER ISSUES

TOWN HOUSE PROJECT

FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION RE: TOWN MANAGER

MURPHY ROAD BRIDGE

SOLTERRA AGREEMENT

CDBG INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

NBDDP

There being no further business, this meeting was adjourned at 7:50 PM. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to rescind the vote to adjourn. So voted.

At 6:45 PM Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to adjourn this summary of last week's meeting. So voted.

NEW AGENDA FOR SEPTEMBER 23, 2014

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 15, 2014

It was agreed to defer approval of these minutes to next week because they have not been completed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 16, 2014

It was agreed that these minutes cannot be approved since the meeting was not properly posted.

**IA. APPROVAL OF SCHOOL WARRANT #1015 FOR \$70,238.27
APPROVAL OF GENERAL WARRANT #1016 FOR \$107,891.27
APPROVAL OF PAYROLL WARRANT #6 FOR \$307,937.36**

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to approve the aforementioned warrants. So voted.

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. FY15 BUDGET DEFICIT/RECAP OF MEETING WITH FINCOM

Mrs. Walter reviewed last night's meeting with the Finance Committee. The plan was to "brainstorm" on how to balance the FY15 budget which currently has a \$370,000.00 deficit without doing too much damage to the Town's financial status. (Attachment #9) There were suggestions made to reduce police overnight hours, sell town-owned land, add vocational classes at the school, or refurbish more police cruisers.

She noted that the Town Accountant send out monthly budget reports to all departments; the Selectmen and Finance Committee should be monitoring these.

Mr. Smith noted that the Selectmen also spoke with the Finance Committee about the potential for new growth that may help. Free cash has not been certified yet, and the \$140,000.00 that was used in May for Snow and Ice really hurt Free Cash. The School Department has received an additional \$45,000.00 in School Choice funds, so the Selectmen and Finance Committee plan to have a conversation with the Superintendent and School Committee about a possible adjustment to their budget.

In addition, Mr. Smith stated that it was suggested that we should explore options on the way some departments use their reserves, and the Selectmen and Finance Committee will do some research on this.

Mr. Smith explained that last week the budget deficit was estimated to be \$450,000.00. We received a call from the Department of Revenue that they decided not to make a retroactive change in our Cherry Sheets; as a result our deficit is now \$370,000.00. Mrs. Walter said that she would like to thank Town Accountant Nancy Nykiel for attending last night's meeting to explain how and why the budget has changed. It really helps to have an objective look at the budget. Mrs. Walter stated that the Selectmen should look into holding budget workshops for department heads before the FY16 budgets are due.

Mrs. Walter explained that the Town is currently working with our energy consultant Tim Butler to purchase electricity at a lower rate. Mr. Butler is also looking into some solar possibilities.

Mrs. Walter noted that there was a lot of complaints from small towns regarding the Chapter 70 formula that is used to determine school aid, and a new state commission is being created to study the formula and make recommendations on any changes. Mr. Smith noted that Spencer Town Administrator Adam Gaudette sent out a letter to area towns asking if people want to meet to discuss this. The North Brookfield Selectmen indicated that we would like to participate in that meeting when it happens.

Mrs. Walter stated that the Selectmen and Finance Committee cannot be complacent and think the Stabilization Account is the answer to our problems. It will cost the Town more to borrow if this account is depleted. She would like to limit the amount coming from Stabilization to under \$100,000.00. Mr. Smith stated that that might not be possible. He noted that a Standard and Poors report on the Town's finances did not refer to the Stabilization Account once.

B. REVIEW TOWN MEETING ARTICLES

Mr. Smith noted that the Selectmen and Finance Committee discussed the 15 article requests last night. (Available in the Selectmen's office) These need to be discussed with the Finance Committee and finalized next week.

C. DISCUSSION OF NEW AGENDA FORMAT

Mr. Hevy presented a new agenda format that he had revised in response to comments made at last week's meeting. (Attachment #10) Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to adopt the new format. So voted. Mrs. Walter asked that Mr. Hevy work with the Administrative Assistant in preparing the agendas until this is finalized.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. REQUEST FOR COMMON VICTUALLER'S LICENSE FOR NORTH BROOKFIELD PIZZA

Mr. Smith noted that this item will be deferred until the next meeting because the new owner of North Brookfield Pizza has not yet submitted the required paperwork.

B. REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF INCOME SURVEY LETTER TO BE SENT

The Selectmen reviewed an e-mail from Andrew Loew of Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) asking the Selectmen to review and approve a letter and questionnaire to be sent to some North Brookfield residents asking for information about household income. This is needed in order to apply for the next round of block grants. (Attachment #11) It was suggested that the names of all three Selectmen be placed on the letter. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to approve the cover letter and survey. So voted.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. ANNOUNCEMENT FROM DEP RE: RECYCLING DIVIDENDS

Mr. Smith read an announcement from the Department of Environmental Protection that North Brookfield is going to receive \$2,200.00 in Recycling Dividends Funds. (Attachment #12)

B. HAZARDOUS WASTE DAY

Mr. Hevy read information from the Board of Health concerning their Hazardous Waste Collection day to be held on September 27th.

C. HYDRANT FLUSHING

Mr. Smith reviewed an announcement from the Water Department that they will be flushing hydrants from September 15th thru October 10th.

D. CULTURAL COUNCIL SEEKS GRANT PROPOSALS

Mrs. Walter reviewed an e-mail from the Cultural Council seeking grant proposals supporting cultural activities in Town by October 15th. The proposals can be for community oriented arts or humanities or science programs. The Local Cultural Council has \$4,300.00 in funds to award. They prefer smaller monetary requests in order to fund a larger number of grants.

V. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

A. REVIEW TOWN MEETING ARTICLES

B. DEVELOP FY16 BUDGET POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

POLICE CHIEF SEARCH COMMITTEE

BEAVER ISSUES

TOWN HOUSE PROJECT

FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION RE: TOWN MANAGER

MURPHY ROAD BRIDGE PROJECT

SOLTERRA AGREEMENT

CDBG INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

NBDDP

There being no further business, Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to adjourn at 8:30 PM. So voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Scott Burton
Administrative Assistant