

## MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING DECEMBER 3, 2013

Mrs. Walter called the meeting to order in the Senior Center at 6:05 PM with Mr. Smith and Mr. Chabot also present.

Mrs. Walter stated that she would like to apologize to residents for the technical problems that were experienced with the last meeting; it was broadcast live but not able to be repeated during the week.

Mrs. Walter went on to say that the Selectmen have received some feedback regarding the lack of discussion at the November 22<sup>nd</sup> Special Town Meeting. She explained that the Selectmen have a limited role at Town Meeting. The Board offered to answer questions during an informational session, but the voters did not want to do this.

Mr. Smith said that he has been approached by some residents who were unhappy that they were not able to ask questions about the O'Neill case, but as Mrs. Walter stated that Selectmen's role at Town Meeting is limited to providing information when requested. The Selectmen made the recommendation to take the money from Stabilization because it was felt that it would be in the best interests of the Town. Mr. Smith said that he did not exaggerate when he stated that this issue is a serious threat to the financial stability of the Town.

Mr. Chabot noted that no one on the current School Committee or Board of Selectmen was in office when the O'Neill contract was negotiated.

### **I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 19, 2013**

Mrs. Walter stated that she would like to amend these minutes to include a statement regarding the November 22<sup>nd</sup> Town Meeting. Mr. Chabot moved, and Mr. Smith seconded, a motion to approve the minutes with that addition. So voted.

### **APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 19, 2013**

Mr. Chabot moved, and Mr. Smith seconded, a motion to approve the aforementioned minutes as written. So voted.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 25, 2013**

Mr. Smith moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to approve the aforementioned minutes as written. So voted.

### **IA. APPROVAL OF SCHOOL WARRANT #1027 FOR \$87,410.95 APPROVAL OF GENERAL WARRANT #1028 FOR \$257,296.38 APPROVAL OF PAYROLL WARRANT #12 FOR \$305,642.41**

Mr. Chabot moved, and Mr. Smith seconded, a motion to approve the aforementioned warrants. So voted.

## **II. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. TOWN MEETING REQUESTS NOT PLACED ON WARRANT**

The Selectmen reviewed seven requests for articles that were not placed on the recent special town meeting. (Attachment #1) Mrs. Walter stated that the Selectmen need to prioritize these requests. Some of the items are listed on the Capital Improvement Planning (CIP) schedule. All will continue to be problems for the departments until they are addressed. Three of the requests were for vehicles for the Police, Fire, and Emergency Management departments. Mr. Chabot stated that the Cemetery Department also needs a new vehicle.

Mrs. Walter stated that all of the vehicle requests should be listed under one category. The Selectmen should consider bringing the heavy equipment needs of the cemetery and highway departments together so there could be some exchanging of resources. This could be an opportunity to begin a DPW.

Mr. Smith will check on the status of a cemetery revolving account that was started a few years ago, and will speak with Kirk Burnham about the needs of that department.

It was agreed to discuss this again at the next meeting.

### **B. MURPHY ROAD HEARING 12/17**

Mrs. Walter noted that letters to the abutters on Murphy Road went out today for a public hearing on December 17<sup>th</sup> on the feasibility of paving the road. She asked that the notice also go out to the Conservation Commission and other Town departments.

## **III. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. RENEWAL OF ALCOHOL LICENSES FOR 2014**

Mr. Smith read the list of alcohol licenses to be renewed for 2014. (Attachment #2) Mr. Smith moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to approve the renewals pending payment of all charges due to the Town of North Brookfield, and subject to approval by the ABCC. So voted.

### **B. RENEWAL OF ALL OTHER LICENSES FOR 2014**

The Board took turns reading the list of all other licenses to be renewed for 2014. (Attachment #2) Mr. Smith moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded all but the Class II

renewals, Mrs. Walter seconded those, a motion to approve all of the licenses pending payment of all charges due to the Town of North Brookfield. So voted.

### **C. APPOINTMENT OF SUE LAFLAMME TO CULTURAL COUNCIL**

Mr. Smith read a letter from Eva Brown, chairman of the Cultural Council, asking the Selectmen to appoint Sue LaFlamme as a new member, and to reaffirm the memberships of Harbour Fraser Hodder and Trevor Bruso. (Attachment #3) Mr. Smith moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to confirm the three members, and to thank Mrs. Brown for serving for the past six years. So voted.

### **D. OCTOBER POLICE REPORT**

Mr. Chabot reviewed the police report for the month of October as submitted by Chief Thomasian. (Attachment #4) The Chief reported 17 incidents and 25 arrest/summons for the month. Mr. Chabot moved, and Mr. Smith seconded, a motion to accept the report. So voted.

### **E. USE OF EXISTING PROGRAM INCOME WITH CDBG GRANT**

The Selectmen reviewed an e-mail from Andrew Loew of Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) regarding the potential of using approximately \$50,000.00 in Program Income funds towards the current housing rehabilitation project. (Attachment #5) These funds came from previous housing rehab programs done by the Town. PVPC estimates that two large projects or three or four smaller projects can be done with these additional funds. They will charge about \$4,500 per unit in administrative fees. Mr. Loew also explained that these funds can be used toward an infrastructure project if desired.

Mr. Chabot stated that his choice would be to add the Program Income funds to the current housing rehab program in order to assist more residents with their housing issues. Mrs. Walter and Mr. Smith agreed. Mr. Smith moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to enter into a contract with PVPC to administer the additional housing rehabilitation funds. So voted. Leslie will send the contract to Town Counsel for review.

### **F. TOWN HOUSE WATER INFILTRATION PROJECT**

Contractor Jeff Samuelson, who is working on the restoration of the Town House Bell Tower, was present to speak with the Board about stopping the infiltration of water into the building. Mrs. Walter noted that voters at a Special Town Meeting last year authorized the borrowing of up to \$120,000.00 in order to address these problems.

Mr. Samuelson presented the Selectmen with a copy of an Invitation for Bid for carpentry services used by the Town of Spencer. (Attachment #6) Mr. Samuelson explained that Spencer goes out to bid each year for on-call carpentry, plumbing,

electrical and other services. This avoids going out to bid for each project. He said that this is just an example of how one town does it; this may not be the right thing for North Brookfield. Mr. Smith said that he would like to have it reviewed by Town Counsel.

Mrs. Walter asked Mr. Samuelson if he had brought a copy of his estimate to address the water infiltration issues, but Mr. Samuelson stated that he did not feel comfortable speaking about his bid in a public forum. He believes that if the Town were to contract for the on-call services it would avoid the cost of having plans and specs drawn up.

Mr. Smith asked who oversees the work done in Spencer by the on-call contractors? Mr. Samuelson stated that he did not know, but would try to find out. In North Brookfield Mr. Samuelson said that it would probably be Building Inspector John Couture who would oversee any work.

Mr. Smith asked how this Invitation for Bid would relate to the Town House work, and Mr. Samuelson stated that it would allow him to continue to work on the building on an hourly basis. When Mr. Smith asked what would be the alternative, Mr. Samuelson explained that going through the formal bid process would involve paying an architect or engineer to draw up plans and specifications, which could be costly. Mrs. Walter noted that under MGL 44B the Town is required to prepare the plans and specs, this would not exempt the Town from doing that. Mr. Samuelson stated that the plans could be "less formal" this way.

Mrs. Walter asked where the water infiltration is happening, and Mr. Samuelson stated that the dormers are the major problem. The gutters need to be rebuilt. The upper roof is missing shingles, but is mostly ok since there are four or five layers of shingles up there. He said that addressing all of these issues could take as long as eight months.

Mrs. Walter asked what could be done in the interim to waterproof the building, and Mr. Samuelson stated that he will buy some spray foam and close up any areas where the water can get through.

Mr. Smith asked where the tower reconstruction stands, and Mr. Samuelson stated that the structural members are ready to receive the tower in the spring. He anticipates taking down the staging on Summer Street before the winter.

Mrs. Walter pointed out that voters appropriated this money for the water infiltration issues because the money that had been previously approved for the soil remediation was not needed when we secured grant funding. She questioned the need to spend this money now if Mr. Samuelson can fix the problems with temporary measures. Mr. Smith said that Mr. Samuelson should do the short term fix now, and the permanent fix later. Mr. Chabot agreed that the temporary fix should be done now while we figure out how to proceed.

Mr. Chabot noted that he has brought up the idea of a town carpenter many times over the years; this could be a cost-effective way of addressing some of the town's building problems. When there is no more work the carpenter can be laid off.

Mrs. Walter noted that the Selectmen should sit down and put together a timeline within 30 to 60 days of how the Town House project will proceed. It was agreed to talk about this again in the future.

#### **G. RESCHEDULING OF NEW YEAR'S EVE MEETING**

Mrs. Walter noted that there is a Selectmen's meeting scheduled for New Year's Eve. Mr. Chabot stated that he will be in Florida by then. Mr. Smith may be having surgery on the 30<sup>th</sup>, so was unsure of his availability on the 31<sup>st</sup>. Leslie will check with the Town Accountant and the Treasurer to see if they might have the warrants ready by Friday December 27<sup>th</sup>.

#### **H. HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT GARY JEAN WITH NEW EMPLOYEE**

Highway Superintendent Gary Jean was present to recommend that the Selectmen vote to hire Wayne Josephson as the new heavy equipment operator for the Highway Department. According to Mr. Jean, Mr. Josephson has an extensive background as an equipment operator and should prove to be an asset to the department. When he was introduced to the Board Mr. Josephson thanked them for the opportunity to serve his hometown, where he has been a lifelong resident. Mr. Smith moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to hire Mr. Josephson. So voted.

#### **I. NEW BUILDING FEE SCHEDULE**

Mr. Chabot reviewed a proposed fee schedule for the Building Department. (Attachment #7) Mrs. Walter noted that Building Inspector John Couture said that he has not raised the fees since 2005. Mr. Smith moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to approve the new fee schedule effective December 4, 2013. So voted.

### **IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **A. DICK FISKE FUN NIGHT OF COMEDY TO BE HELD DECEMBER 20<sup>TH</sup> AT 6 PM AT THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. TICKETS ARE \$10 AND INCLUDE A SPAGHETTI DINNER AND MUSIC BY RICK HENNESSY**

Mr. Chabot announced this Dick Fiske fundraiser, which Mrs. Walter noted is to benefit typhoon victims in the Philippines.

#### **B. NORTH BROOKFIELD'S TAX RATE HAS BEEN APPROVED AT \$15.24 PER THOUSAND**

Mr. Smith announced that the tax rate for FY2014 has been set at \$15.24 per thousand dollars of valuation. The previous tax rate was \$14.75.

C. Mrs. Walter noted that the Quaboag Choral Society will perform a concert on December 14<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints on New Braintree Road. In addition the church will display over 250 Nativities from around the world. Admission is free.

D. Mrs. Walter announced that the annual tree lighting with Mr. and Mrs. Claus in North Brookfield center will held this Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM. Before that, at 4:30 PM, all children are invited to go to the library to write letters to Santa and do holiday crafts.

Mrs. Walter noted that everyone should remember to honor our veterans this Saturday, the anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Mrs. Walter noted that the group of residents working to purchase Wendmuth Meadow held a meeting on Sunday. They have signed a purchase and sale agreement with the property owner and are working to raise money. There will be no cost to the Town for this project.

## **V. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

1. Town vehicle needs
2. Cemetery vehicle needs
3. Murphy Road hearing
4. Town House timeline
5. PVPC contract for housing rehab
6. Wendemuth Meadow progress
7. Rescheduling of New Year's Eve meeting

There being no further business, at 7:35 PM Mr. Chabot moved, and Mr. Smith seconded, a motion to adjourn. So voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Scott Burton  
Administrative Assistant