

## **MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING AUGUST 27, 2013**

Mrs. Walter called the meeting to order in the Senior Center at 7 PM with Mr. Chabot and Mr. Smith also present. She noted that the meeting was being both audio and video taped.

### **I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JULY 24, 2013**

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

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JULY 30, 2013**

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

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF AUGUST 13, 2013**

### **APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES OF AUGUST 13, 2013**

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

### **IA. APPROVAL OF SCHOOL WARRANT #1008 FOR \$161,037.16 APPROVAL OF GENERAL WARRANT #1009 FOR \$369,105.34 APPROVAL OF PAYROLL WARRANT #5 FOR \$203,536.05**

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

## **II. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. CMRPC APPOINTMENTS**

Mrs. Walter noted that the Planning Board has voted to appoint Bill King and Mary Walter as delegates to the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission. (CMRPC) The Selectmen now need to appoint another delegate and one alternate. According to Mrs. Walter an appointee would need to attend quarterly meetings in Worcester, usually on Thursday evenings. She asked that any resident who is interested in serving in this capacity contact the Selectmen's office.

## **B. JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

Mrs. Walter asked if Mr. Chabot and Mr. Smith would consider meeting with Attorney Jack Dolan sometime in September to discuss the implementation of job descriptions. Both men agreed that it would be a good idea. Mrs. Walter will contact Attorney Dolan to set up a meeting.

## **C. PURCHASE ORDER FORMS**

Mrs. Walter said that at the last meeting the Selectmen voted to implement new Purchase Request forms, pending input from Town Accountant Nancy Nykiel. Mr. Smith noted that he spoke with Mrs. Nykiel this morning, and she approved the forms. She is concerned about how she will go into the system to encumber the money, but she is sure that it can be worked out.

## **D. GIC DISCUSSION**

Mr. Smith noted that he has been suggesting that the Town look at purchasing employee health insurance through the state's Group Insurance Commission (GIC) for some time. He read some material on the subject this morning, and also spoke with Treasurer Anne Jannette, and he now has some concerns. There are four different contribution rates among town employees and that would need to change. Also, the GIC rates for retirees might be higher than current rates. Mr. Smith noted that by mid-September Mrs. Jannette should be able to "pencil out" some numbers for the Board to look at. Mrs. Walter noted that the GIC program for state employees is different from the GIC program for municipal employees.

## **E. MURPHY ROAD UPDATE**

Mrs. Walter stated that she has spoken with North Brookfield resident Don Gillette, who works in the road construction business. He said that the state has several temporary bridges available. The town would have to contact its representatives for assistance in obtaining one. Highway Superintendent Gary Jean noted that he is still waiting for a final report from Mass DOT on the condition of the Murphy Road bridge. Mrs. Walter said that the beaver dam that was upstream is now gone, and some residents are concerned that it was deliberately taken down, and that this may have caused damage to the bridge. Mr. Jean stated that he does not think it was done deliberately, it is so far upstream that it would be very difficult for someone to get to the dam.

## **III. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. DAN HAYNES RE: FY12 AUDIT**

Dan Haynes of Scanlon and Associates, the Town's auditing firm, was present to go over the FY12 audit of the Town's books. Mr. Haynes explained that an audit is only a

“backhanded” opinion of the Town’s internal controls, but it may serve to keep employees motivated to do well. The auditors do not look at every transaction.

The Selectmen, as the town’s management, are responsible to see that proper records are maintained, facilitate communication with the auditor, follow up on audit recommendations, and to implement a cost effective method of internal controls.

Mr. Haynes reviewed the management letter for this audit, which summarizes the audit findings. (Available in the Selectmen’s office) This year’s management letter noted 11 areas of concern, none of them serious. There are two new items this year, and 9 from prior years. The two for FY12 were both school related; first that requests for reimbursement of the school windows project were not submitted in a timely manner, and second, that there are deficit balances and no computer backups for the student activity funds.

Mr. Haynes reviewed the Financial Statements for the town (Available in the Selectmen’s office) which show that the town is in very good standing. He noted that the Town’s reserve position has decreased slightly, from a 12% reserve in 2011 to just over a 10% reserve in 2012. Moody’s considers anything over a 10% reserve “strong.”

He noted that the Town’s revenue increased from \$11 million in 2011 to \$11.35 million in 2012. Expenditures were stable in 2011 and 2012. Approximately 48% - 49% of the Town’s general budget is school expense. The Town’s debt level remained stable.

Mr. Haynes quoted from the Standard and Poors rating for the Town, which is an A+. This is considered very strong, and is because the town has demonstrated the ability to adjust the budget to fit revenue sources, and it has lower than average receivables.

The Selectmen thanked Mr. Haynes for his time.

## **B. OPEN BIDS FOR MILLING OF ROADS @ 7:15 PM**

At 7:15 PM the Board opened four bids for the milling of roads:

1. Garrity Asphalt Reclaiming bid \$1.25/sq yd
2. Rafferty Fine Grading, Inc. bid \$1.728/sq yd
3. Costello Industries, Inc. bid \$.89/sq yd
4. P. J. Albert, Inc. bid \$1.48/sq yd

Mr. Smith moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to refer the bids to Highway Superintendent Gary Jean for his recommendations. So voted.

## **C. OPEN BIDS FOR BELL STREET DRAINAGE PROJECT @ 7:15 PM**

Spencer Paving submitted the only bid for the Bell Street drainage project. To excavate and remove pipe, replace the pipe and backfill, they bid \$49,996.00, or as an alternative

\$620.00 per hour. Mr. Smith moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to refer the bid to Mr. Jean for his recommendation. So voted.

#### **D. ROAD PAVING IMPACT HEARING @ 7:30 PM**

At 7:30 PM Mrs. Walter opened the public hearing on the impact that this year's road work will have on town residents. Highway Superintendent Gary Jean noted that the state requires the public hearing to inform residents of the impact of paving, and to explain exactly what will be done. Mr. Jean explained that he will be replacing 1,500' of drainage on Bell Street and resurfacing the road, and also reclaiming and resurfacing parts of Summer Street and Bigelow Road. If the state releases the balance of the anticipated Chapter 90 money he may be able to resurface part of East Brookfield Road as well. He asked that any resident who has questions contact the Highway Department.

#### **E. FIRE DEPARTMENT EQUIPMENT LEASING PROPOSAL**

Deputy Chief Joe Holway was present to speak with the Selectmen about a proposal from Leasing 2, Inc. to lease turnout gear for the Fire Department. (Attachment #1) Deputy Chief Holway noted that the department is still meeting with other vendors to see what they can offer as well. Mr. Smith asked how many sets of gear the proposal is for, and Mr. Holway stated it is for 30 sets. Mrs. Walter questioned why 30 sets when there are only 23 men, and Mr. Holway stated that they have several new members and expect that the roster will be back to 30 soon. Mr. Smith noted that the Town may not be able to execute a lease term of six years, we need to check on that. Deputy Chief Holway said that the Fire Department appreciates that the Selectmen and Finance Committee are giving this matter their attention.

#### **F. FY2015 BUDGET POLICY AND GUIDELINES**

Mrs. Walter presented copies of the Town's FY14 Budget Policy and the Budget Guidelines letter that is sent out by the Town Accountant. (Attachment #2) She noted that it is time to begin discussion of the FY15 policies. This year she would like the Finance Committee in on the discussions as well. Mr. Smith suggested meeting with the Finance Committee in September to begin the discussion.

#### **G. GIS MAPPING**

Mrs. Walter noted that CMRPC has offered the town a subscription to a mapping program at a cost of \$4,000.00 per year. This program would benefit the assessors, conservation commission, planning board, water, sewer and highway departments, and public safety personnel. This is something the Selectmen and Finance Committee should try to find the funds to participate.

#### **H. LETTER FROM BAY PATH RE: ASSESSMENT**

Mr. Smith reviewed a letter to the Selectmen from the Bay Path Regional Vocational School District. (Attachment #3) According to the letter, North Brookfield's assessment will be \$767.00 lower than originally anticipated. Mr. Smith pointed out the need for a debt exclusion vote on this project in the future.

#### **I. LETTER FROM DHCD RE: EDF GRANT**

Mrs. Walter reviewed a letter from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) informing the Selectmen that a group of 13 towns, including North Brookfield, have been awarded \$520,000.00 in business assistance funds. (Attachment #4) These funds will be used to recapitalize a business revolving loan fund and to fund a technical assistance program. The grant will be administered through the Quaboag Valley Business Assistance Corporation. The Selectmen agreed that we all do not know much about the QVBAC, and suggested that Jim Metcalf, North Brookfield's representative to that organization, be invited to attend a future Selectmen's meeting to explain exactly what it is all about.

#### **J. LETTER FROM SOUTHBRIDGE RE: RMV CLOSING**

Mr. Chabot read a letter from the Town of Southbridge asking for North Brookfield to support their efforts to stop the state from closing a RMV office. (Attachment #5) They sent a copy of a petition that they are sending to the Registrar and to area legislators, and asked that a copy of the petition be left with the Town Clerk so that residents who support the petition can sign. Mr. Chabot moved, and Mr. Smith seconded, a motion to leave copies of the petition at the Town Clerk's office and also at the Senior Center. So voted.

#### **K. LETTER FROM NBEMA RE: VEHICLE**

Anne Adams, Deputy Director of the North Brookfield Emergency Management Agency (NBEMA) was present to address an e-mail that she sent to the Selectmen regarding their vehicle. (Attachment #6) According to Mrs. Adams, the 1998 Ford Explorer has 173,000 miles on it, and need repairs that exceed its value. She stated that the group is looking for grant funds for a replacement vehicle. Mr. Smith stated that it is difficult for the Selectmen to discuss this without knowing an amount of money that NBEMA is looking for. Doug Blood, NBEMA Director, said that they will begin looking for a vehicle in the \$7,000.00 to \$8,000.00 range.

#### **IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

##### **A. GRANT APPLICATIONS IN PROCESS OR RECEIVED**

Mrs. Walter noted that we are trying to put together an application for a Hazard Mitigation Grant to address flooding problems in certain areas of town, but the numbers are not looking good. The school department is applying for the Race to the Top grant again, and the Selectmen have signed a letter of support.

In addition, the Town received a Community Development Block Grant with the Town of Spencer, this will be an opportunity for low to moderate income residents to improve their homes.

North Brookfield is also working with several other towns through a Community Innovation Challenge Grant to address stormwater issues.

##### **B. CONGRATULATIONS TO ANDREW PAQUETTE**

Mrs. Walter offered the Board's congratulations to Andrew Paquette in attaining the rank of Eagle Scout. She and Mr. Smith attended the award ceremony, and were impressed with the dedication of the scouts and their parents. Mr. Chabot said that he was sorry that he missed the ceremony, he knows that it is a lot of work.

Mr. Smith reminded residents that the North Brookfield Emergency Squad is conducting their annual subscription drive, and he urged everyone to support the squad with a donation.

#### **V. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

##### **A. FALL SPECIAL TOWN MEETING**

Mrs. Walter noted that the Selectmen will vote to set a fall town meeting date at the next meeting.

At 8:35 PM Mr. Smith moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss strategy related to collective bargaining. Roll call: Walter, yes; Smith, yes; Chabot, yes. So voted. Mrs. Walter announced that the Board would exit Executive Session only to adjourn.

At 9:00 PM the Board came out of Executive Session. Mr. Smith moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to adjourn. So voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Scott Burton  
Administrative Assistant