

## **MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING FEBRUARY 24, 2015**

Chairman Smith called the meeting to order in the Senior Center at 6 PM with Mrs. Walter and Mr. Hevy also present. Mr. Smith thanked residents who shoveled snow from around hydrants, and also thanked the Highway Department. He thanked the Congregational Church for allowing the use of their building while the Senior Center was deemed uninhabitable, Building Inspector John Couture, and Jeff Samuelson and his snow blower for quickly dealing with the water problems at the Senior Center.

### **I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- **February 10, 2015 minutes**

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

- **February 10, 2015 Executive Session minutes**

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

### **II. APPROVAL OF WARRANTS**

- **School Warrant #1042 for \$149,136.38**
- **General Warrant #1043 for \$99,200.01**
- **Payroll Warrant #17 for \$326,020.55**

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

### **III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

- **The public has the opportunity to briefly comment on agenda items through the Chairman**

Mr. Smith reminded anyone in attendance would have the opportunity to briefly comment by addressing him.

### **IV. FINANCIAL REPORT**

There were no financial reports. Mr. Smith reported that the Snow and Ice deficit currently stands at \$53,000.00.

### **V. OLD BUSINESS**

#### **A. Project updates**

- **Murphy Road Bridge**

Mrs. Walter noted that the Selectmen will be opening bids tomorrow morning for the Murphy Road project. There have been twenty-two requests for bid packets.

- **Town House Advisory Committee**

Mr. Hevy noted that the architect from Garofalo Design Associates (GDA) was scheduled to meet today with the state Architectural Access Board (AAB) regarding the Town House. There will be more details at the next meeting.

**B. Accept donations to Police Vehicle Gift Fund**

Mr. Smith read the list of recent donations to the Police Vehicle Gift Fund. (Attachment #1) He noted that the current balance of the account is \$12,464.88. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to accept the donations. So voted.

**C. Tax Title properties**

Mr. Smith reviewed an e-mail from Treasurer Anne Jannette noting that she has contacted an auctioneer to conduct an auction of town-owned properties sometime in early May. (Attachment #2)

**D. Budget workshop date**

After some discussion it was agreed to schedule a budget workshop for town officials on Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, with one session at 9 AM and another at 1 PM.

**E. Police Chief screening committee**

Police Chief Thomasian presented a tentative timeline for the police chief search process. (Attachment #3) Mr. Smith noted that the Selectmen have received letters of interest from five residents interested in serving on the preliminary screening committee. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to appoint Dale Kiley, Andrew Avedian, David Harris, Edith Hubacz, and Anne Adams to the committee. So voted.

**F. School sign property**

There was no information on this item.

**VI. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS**

There were no departmental reports.

**VII. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Water Commissioners re: recommendation for superintendent**

Water Commissioners John Thomsian, Tim Nason and James Kularski, along with Superintendent Steve Jones, were in attendance to speak with the Selectmen about their process to find a new superintendent. According to Mr. Thomsian, there were five initial applicants. Two declined to continue the process, and one did not possess the proper licenses. The Water Commissioners interviewed the two remaining candidates. Both of them have the proper licenses, but only one has in-depth experience with North Brookfield's water plant, which is Mr. Richard Kennan. The other candidate lives in Holliston, but DEP requires that an on-call employee live within one hour. It is the unanimous recommendation of the Water Commissioners that Richard Kennan be appointed as the next Water Superintendent.

Mrs. Walter asked about Mr. Kennan's experience while he worked in West Brookfield. Mr. Jones noted that their distribution system is similar to North Brookfield's. Mr. Kennan worked nine years in North Brookfield, and then four years in West Brookfield. Mr. Thomasian stated that Mr. Kennan expects to remain as the Superintendent for at least six years.

Mrs. Walter asked if Mr. Kennan would receive the same salary as Mr. Jones does, and Mr. Thomasian said that he would.

Mrs. Walter asked if the Water Commissioners are aware of a study of the town's infrastructure done by Fay, Spofford and Thorndike? That study indicates serious problems with the water infrastructure. Mr. Jones noted that the Commissioners are aware of the study. Mr. Kennan will be able to coordinate these projects. The Water Department will be retiring debt in 2020, and will have the ability to fund the projects.

Mr. Jones noted that he is retiring on June 12<sup>th</sup>, and Mr. Kennan will take over on June 13<sup>th</sup>. The Water Department expects to advertise soon for a replacement operator who will hopefully start on March 25<sup>th</sup>.

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to appoint Mr. Kennan as Water Superintendent effective June 13, 2015. So voted.

#### **B. Request for Special Town Employee status for School Committee**

Mr. Smith reviewed a letter from School Committee chairman Mike Kiszka asking that the Selectmen designate School Committee members as Special Town Employees. (Attachment #4) Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to designate all School Committee members as Special Town Employees. So voted.

#### **C. Request of Police Chief to hire**

Mr. Smith reviewed an e-mail from Police Chief Thomasian asking for permission to begin the process of replacing a full-time officer and hiring two additional part-time officers. (Attachment #5) Chief Thomasian was in attendance, and stated that he would like to hire only the part-time officers at this point, due to the uncertainty of next year's budget. He currently has one officer who was injured on duty, and another who has an operation scheduled for the end of March. He could use the remainder of Officer Fullam's salary to pay for the part-timers and overtime.

Mr. Smith asked how much longer before the overtime and part-time salary accounts are depleted? The Chief stated that currently there is approximately \$5,000.00 in the overtime account, and \$6,400.00 in the part-time salary account.

Mrs. Walter asked if there is an opportunity for a part-time officer to become a full-time officer? The Chief stated that the opportunity is there, but the officer would have to attend the full-time academy for 3 – 4 months.

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to authorize the Chief to hire two part-time officers as soon as possible. So voted.

#### **D. Appointment of William Skrobul to Cable Advisory Committee**

Mr. Smith reviewed a letter from William Skrobul asking to be appointed to the Cable Advisory Committee. (Attachment #6) Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to appoint Mr. Skrobul. So voted.

#### **E. CMRPC**

- **Request for community description**

Mrs. Walter reviewed an e-mail from Chris Ryan of Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) asking for a brief description of North Brookfield to be posted on the DataCommon website. (Attachment #7) She suggested that we ask for input from other departments on this.

- **DLTA Scope and Time Budget**

Mrs. Walter reviewed a memo from Eric Smith of CMRPC asking for approval of a draft "Scope and Time" for the Downtown Central Business Priority Development Area project. (Attachment #8) Mrs. Walter explained that the \$3,200.00 cost of the project will be paid for with technical assistance time, and won't cost the town anything. This is a grant that was awarded for analysis of the downtown area. She noted that the Master Plan is very helpful when we do this type of project. The Master Plan will be expiring in 2017 and will need to be revised and updated at that time. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to approve the scope and timeline for this project. So voted.

#### **F. Request from Andrew Loew re: waiver of lien**

The Selectmen reviewed an e-mail from Andrew Loew of Pioneer Valley Planning Commission asking for the Selectmen to waive a lien in the amount of \$650.00 from a cost overrun from a housing rehabilitation project using block grant funds. (Attachment #9) Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to waive the lien. So voted.

### **VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **A. Election update**

Mr. Hevy reviewed a memo from Town Clerk Sheila Buzzell listing the offices up for election and the current office holders for the May 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Town Election. Mr. Smith urged residents to consider running for a term on the School Committee or the Housing Authority, both of which have multiple vacancies.

#### **B. Tyler Wolanin from Senator Gobi's office will hold office hours in North Brookfield at the Town Offices on Wednesday, February 25<sup>th</sup> from 2 PM to 3 PM**

Mr. Smith announced this.

#### **C. Foundation Budget Review Commission Public Hearing 02/28**

Mr. Smith announced that a meeting of the Foundation Budget Review Commission will be held on Saturday, February 28<sup>th</sup> at the Florence Sawyer School in Bolton.

#### **D. Color Fest 2015**

Brandon Avery and Janine Drake were present to explain their plans for a Color Fest sometime in June, hopefully June 20<sup>th</sup>. This will be a benefit for Wendemuth Meadow. There is still a lot of details to be ironed out, but it is expected to be a family event with arts and food, and a “color throw” which is powder made of cornstarch and food coloring.

Mr. Smith said that it sounds like a great event, and pledged the assistance of the Selectmen. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to approve the concept of a color fest for a date of June 20<sup>th</sup>. So voted.

#### **E. Hearts for Heat dinner**

Mr. Smith announced that this Saturday night the Hearts for Heat organization will be sponsoring a spaghetti dinner from 5 PM, and the PTO will be sponsoring a family movie at 3 PM.

#### **IX. PENDING/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- **See attached list**

Mr. Smith stated that he would like to review budgets for the Highway and Senior Center next time.

#### **X. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

There was no executive session scheduled.

There being no further business, at 7:45 PM Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to adjourn. So voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Scott Burton  
Administrative Assistant

#### **PENDING/FUTURE SELECTMEN’S ITEMS**

**Wendemuth Meadow  
Solterra Agreement  
NBDDP/Aztec  
Gilbert Street Stormwater issues  
Town Offices server recommendations  
Cable license renewal Oct 2015  
PDA Study  
Purchase Orders  
Vacancies on town boards  
Creation of Financial Advisory Committee**