

MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING APRIL 7, 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 announced that the meeting would be both audio and video taped.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- **March 19, 2015 minutes**

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

- **March 24, 2015 minutes**

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

- **March 31, 2015 minutes**

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

- **March 31, 2015 Executive Session minutes**

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

- **Release of March 4, 2015 Executive Session minutes with Town House Advisory Committee**

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to approve the release of the aforementioned minutes into the public domain. So voted.

II. APPROVAL OF WARRANTS

- **Debt Service Warrant #1049 for \$50,518.75**
- **School Warrant #1050 for \$80,619.12**
- **General Warrant #1051 for \$296,955.73**
- **Payroll Warrant #20 for \$272,462.13**

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 announced that people in attendance are able to briefly comment on any of tonight's agenda items.

IV. FINANCIAL REPORTS

A. Highway Department

Mr. Smith noted that the Snow and Ice deficit currently stands at \$168,000.00.

B. Council on Aging

Mr. Smith explained that the Selectmen met with the Council on Aging last night and had a very good meeting. The Selectmen will be assisting the COA in managing their budget.

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Project updates

- **Murphy Road Bridge update**

Mrs. Walter noted that the Murphy Road project is on time. There are some questions regarding the logistics of moving heavy equipment and cranes to the site, but those should be able to be resolved shortly.

- **Town House update**

Mr. Hevy noted that the Town House Advisory Committee met last week to review preliminary plans from the architect, and will be reviewing additional drawings over the next few weeks. The cease and desist order from the Architectural Access Board has been lifted. The committee is recommending a joint meeting with the Selectmen on April 15th. He noted that the bid documents should be ready by April 17th, and the project should appear in the Central Register April 22nd.

Mr. Smith offered his thanks to Mrs. Walter for her diplomacy in resolving the cease and desist order with the AAB.

Julie McCarthy, President of the Friends of the North Brookfield Town House, was present to let the Selectmen and everyone know that the Friends have received a total of \$1.9 million in tax credits; \$1 million in federal credits, and \$900,000.00 in state tax credits. She thanked Albert Rex and MacRostie Historic Advisors for their work with this.

In addition, Ms. McCarthy reported that the Friends have paid Kirk and Associates of Boston to do a marketing study for the Town House. The Friends are reviewing the draft study, and will be meeting with Kirk and Company to finalize the study.

Finally, the Friends are sponsoring a fundraiser at Pizzeria Uno in Sturbridge from May 2nd to 6th. When you present a "donation ticket" at the restaurant on those dates, up to 20% of the meal tab will be given to the Friends for the restoration of the Town House.

- **Tax Title auction**

Mr. Smith explained that the auction of town owned tax title properties is proceeding, although the auctioneer feels that it should be pushed to a later date. The auctioneer also feels that grouping some of the lots together will bring a higher price. Treasurer Anne Jannette and Accountant Nancy Nykiel are speaking with the Department of Revenue regarding the use of funds at the time they come in after the auction.

B. Accept donations to Police Vehicle Gift Fund

There were no donations to the Police Vehicle Gift Fund this week.

C. Town Forest proposal from Ross Hubacz

The Selectmen reviewed a letter from Ross Hubacz, a forester with Hull Forest Products, proposing to prepare a Forest Stewardship Plan for town owned land on Smith Hanson Road. (Attachment #1) The plan will include maps, a forestry analysis, and a schedule of management activities to be completed over the next ten years. Once the plan is completed Mr. Hubacz will submit it to the Selectmen for review, and then it will be submitted to the Department of Conservation and Recreation for approval. Mr. Hubacz anticipates that logging will be done on the site sometime this fall.

D. Review town meeting articles

The Selectmen reviewed draft warrants for the May 8th Annual and Special Town Meetings. (Available in the Selectmen's office) The articles will be reviewed again at the next meeting, and then the warrants will be signed on April 21st.

E. Water Department question re: vacation policy

Mr. Smith noted that the Selectmen received a question regarding vacation policy that was referred to town counsel. The question asks for an interpretation of language in the town's Personnel Policy. (Attachment #2) The opinion letter will be forwarded to the Water Department.

F. Discussion re: CORI policy and hiring policy

The Selectmen received a copy of a proposed CORI policy that was drafted by town counsel. (Attachment #3) It was agreed that each member will review the policy and prepare for discussion at the next meeting. Leslie will forward the policy to Chief Thomasian for his input.

Mrs. Walter suggested a implementing a new policy that would require that any new employee of the town, or any person being appointed to a board or committee, appear before the Selectmen at the time of appointment. Mr. Hevy will put this new policy in writing for the next meeting.

G. Discussion re: quorums

Mr. Hevy proposed a new town by-law that would change the definition of a quorum. (Attachment #4) Mr. Smith stated that he believes that the term in the general law refers to a state law, not a town by-law. It was agreed to send this request to town counsel for his opinion.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Representative Donald Berthiaume

Representative Berthiaume was not in attendance.

B. Chief Thomasian re: part-time officers

Police Chief Thomasian was present with two new part-time officers to be appointed. They were Darrin Dodge and Nathan Hastings. After the young men introduced themselves, Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to appoint the two men as part-time officers effective immediately. So voted.

C. Julie McCarthy re: Town Wide Cleanup Day

Julie McCarthy, co-chairman of the Decorate Our Town committee was present to update the Selectmen on plans for the annual Town Wide Cleanup Day to be held on April 25th. (Attachment #5) Residents are encouraged to pick up trash from their own roads, and bring that trash to the Highway Department for disposal on the 25th. No personal trash will be accepted, and no trash is to be brought to the landfill. In addition, American flags can be brought to the staging area for proper destruction.

Mr. Smith thanked Ms. McCarthy and co-chairman Trish Miller for their efforts in beautifying the town, especially the downtown area.

Mr. Smith also read a letter from Highway Superintendent Gary Jean (Attachment #6) asking that recyclable material be separated from trash, and that cardboard and metal be left on the ground next to the trucks.

D. Resignation of Carol Wheeler

Mrs. Walter read a letter from Carol Wheeler resigning as the Senior Center Director. (Attachment #7) Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to accept the resignation with regret. So voted.

Mr. Smith noted that the Selectmen met with the Council on Aging yesterday, and they plan to have an interim director while they review the job description and develop an ad for a new director. The Outreach Coordinator will remain, and several COA board members have agreed to help run the Senior Center. With their help we will maintain services at the Senior Center.

Mr. Smith reviewed a letter from Judy Manning offering to serve as the interim director. (Attachment #8) Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to appoint Ms. Manning. So voted.

Mrs. Walter asked if Mr. Smith and Town Accountant Nancy Nykiel would be assisting the COA with their budget, and Mr. Smith said that he and Mrs. Nykiel would do that.

E. Letter from Sewer Superintendent

Mr. Smith reviewed a letter from Sewer Superintendent Rodney Jenkins indicating his intent to retire in November of 2018, and asking to spread his 90 unused sick days over the last three years of his contract. (Attachment #9) Mr. Smith stated that he would like time to review this item.

F. Accept gift for Library Gift Fund

Mr. Smith read an e-mail from Library Director Ann Kidd asking for the Selectmen to accept a gift of \$8,000.00 from the Friends of the Haston Library to the Library Gift Fund. (Attachment #10) Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to accept the gift. So voted.

G. Accept gift from Charter Communications

Mr. Smith reviewed a letter from Charter Communications that was enclosed with a check for \$18,000.00, which is Charter's annual PEG Access operating payment to the Town. (Attachment #11) Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to accept the payment for the LPAC Gift Account. So voted.

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Election update

There was no election update.

B. Rabies Clinic

Mr. Hevy announced that there will be a rabies clinic at the Second Chance Animal Shelter on Saturday, April 25th from 9 AM to noon. The Town Clerk will be available for licensing.

C. Tyler Wolanin from Senator Gobi's office will hold office hours in North Brookfield at the Town Offices on Tuesday, April 28th from 12:30 PM to 1:30 PM

Mr. Smith made this announcement.

D. Color Fest 2015

Brandon Avery and Janine Drake were present to brief the Board on their plans for an Art, Music, and Color Festival to be held on Saturday, June 20th from 10 AM to 4 PM. This event will be held on School Street, and is a fundraiser for the Wendemuth Meadow property. Mr. Avery noted that they have permission from the Congregational Church to have some events in their building, and there will be an art show at the Police Station community room. There will be more of an emphasis on the art and music, and less on the planned "color throw." Mr. Avery noted that the committee did listen to concerns about the previously proposed "color throw," and they will not be selling the color packets. However, they would like to use the color in front of the stage area on School Street.

Mrs. Walter asked what type of bands would be playing, and Ms. Drake noted that there are some acoustic guitar players planned, a bluegrass band, and some rock bands.

Mr. Smith asked if there were plans for food, and Mr. Avery stated that there are plans to sell food, and perhaps beer in the afternoon within a closed area. Mr. Avery said that they have already spoken to the police chief.

Mrs. Walter asked how long will School Street be closed, and asked that the committee coordinate this and the necessary police details with Chief Thomasian. They need to consider the need for access for emergency vehicles.

Mr. Smith asked that the committee members come back in two weeks with more information and details.

VIII. PENDING/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Smith asked that the Selectmen review financial reports for the Highway, Police, Fire and Council on Aging at the next meeting.

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session scheduled.

There being no further business, at 8 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
School sign property
Solterra Agreement
NBDDP/Aztec
Gilbert Street Stormwater issues
Town Offices server recommendations
Cable license renewal Oct 2015
Purchase Orders
Vacancies on town boards
Creation of Financial Advisory Committee
Personnel policies
Veterans' Service Officer
Cemetery Road