

TOWN OF NORTH BROOKFIELD
Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Selectmen
Tuesday, February 16, 2016

Present: Selectman Eric Hevy, Selectman Mary Walter, Selectman Robert Smith. Diane Nichols, Senior Center Director, also attended.

The meeting was called to order at 3:31 PM by Chairman Hevy in the Selectmen's Office.

The Board reviewed a request to hire a part-time employee at the Haston Library which had been submitted by Ann Kidd, Town Librarian. The individual would serve as an on-call substitute and also work a limited number of hours on Saturdays. The cost of the part-time position would have no impact on the FY 16 budget. Members of the Board expressed support for the proposal, but indicated that prior to final approval a proposed job description, estimate of cost, proposed hourly rate, and number of hours proposed should be submitted. Mr. Smith was asked to contact Ms. Kidd for this information. (Attachment)

Ms. Nichols briefed the Board on various activities at the Senior Center. She noted that the nine-hour per week Program Assistant was removed from the budget in the Spring of 2015 and the funds re-allocated to other lines. Previously, the part-time Program Director worked on the Senior Center Newsletter, prepared letters and provided other support, and was responsible for programming. These responsibilities were assumed by volunteers. The Center's State Grant does not cover these activities. She indicated that an adjustment to her present budget might be possible to restore the part-time Program Assistant this year, if the Board would approve such a request. Various typing needs at the Center could also be met in this way. Funds would be re-allocated from various line items where savings had been achieved to date. Needs of other employees could also be met in this way. Ms. Nichols agreed to assess needs and propose a way of meeting them. She agreed to provide this information to the Board for further discussion. In general, the Board was supportive of her proposal, and agreed that a Program Assistant should be restored to the Center. Mr. Hevy asked Ms. Nichols to review her FY 17 budget proposal, and see how that could be done. Mr. Hevy also asked Ms. Nichols to prepare a 'vision statement' for the Senior Center—what were her plans for the future (expansion of programs, services, and cooperative arrangements with other area Senior Centers). She agreed to do so. Ms. Nichols noted the need for various improvements at the Center—telephones are not networked, computers are outdated and cannot work together, etc. Ms. Walter suggested adding the capital needs of the Center to the Capital Improvement List. It was noted by all that problems relating to the roof and the siding at the Center still needed to be addressed.

The Board agreed to meet with Ms. Nicholas again to discuss the needs of the Center more thoroughly. They thanked Ms. Nichols for her update.

The Board began its review of budget requests for FY17 which had been submitted by various Departments. At the outset, in view of its interest in streamlining Technology purchases following a study of the Town's IT needs generally, the Board agreed that in FY 17 all Technology-related requests, if approved, would be placed into a single account ('Technology') and removed from individual budgets. Exceptions, however, could be made in certain unique circumstances.

The Board reviewed twelve budget requests:

Accountant—it was noted that the software request in the budget request was specific to the Accountant's Office and may remain in the final budget, pending further discussion. A question regarding sick-leave buyback in the FY 16 budget, but not present in the FY 17 request was raised. Mr. Smith was asked to seek more information. With the exception of these two items, no other issues were raised. Otherwise OK.

Animal Control—it was noted that the budget was level-funded. No questions were raised. OK

Assessors—it was noted that \$3,775 was included for software. Further discussion with the Assessor was needed. However, tentatively it was agreed that this line item should be transferred to the 'Technology' account. Otherwise OK.

Board of Health/Landfill—it was noted that no FY 17 request had been received to date. The Board deferred action on this budget. No action.

Building Inspector—it was noted that an increase over FY 16 was requested, for salary. Cuts made in FY 09 to this budget had never been restored and hours reduced accordingly. After discussion, tentative approval was given to the request. Tentatively OK.

Cemetery and Burials—it was noted that an increase was requested for tree removal. The budget is self-funding. OK

Town Clerk—it was noted that an increase was requested for a required voting machine software upgrade. Since this software is specific to the Town Clerk, it will remain in the Town Clerk's Budget. OK

Conservation Commission—although the FY 17 budget request is slightly higher than FY 16, tentative approval was given. OK

Council on Aging—it was suggested that the cost center title be changed to 'Senior Center' for FY 17. The budget request is level-funded. However, based on the Board's

discussion with Director Nichols at the beginning of the meeting, a revised budget request (to include restoring a part-time Program Assistant) will be reviewed at a future meeting. Generally, the Board was supportive of the other requests in the FY 17 budget proposal. Tentative OK.

CMRPC—the Board reviewed the proposal and expressed support. OK

NB Emergency Squad—the Board reviewed the proposal, and noted a \$2,000 reduction from FY 16, which it was assumed was a result of lower reimbursement expenses to the Town for fuel and heating. Further information will be obtained. Otherwise OK.

Finance Committee—it was noted that the FC Reserve was increased to \$20,000 from FY 16's \$15,000. The Board expressed support for the proposal.

The Board will review all other FY17 budget proposals at its next several meetings. It was noted that the Finance Committee also had begun to review FY 17 budget requests with the various Departments. Final approval of individual budgets will be given only after all budget requests have been reviewed, and the Town's FY17 financial position assessed following the release of the House and Senate budget proposals. (Attachments)

The Board briefly discussed the proposed IT Advisory Committee which was discussed at a previous meeting. It will include a consultant as well as representatives from various Town Departments. The Board will discuss the composition of this important new committee at a future meeting.

The Board also briefly discussed the upcoming CMRPC Community Compact study on opportunities for regionalization of services. Ms. Walter stressed that it was important for the Board to develop a list of achievable goals—not overly broad goals—for the undertaking to be worthwhile. The project is funded by a grant to the Town. She suggested using the so called 'COG' model. Ms. Walter agreed to expand upon her ideas and present them for further discussion at a future meeting.

Prior to adjournment, Mr. Hevy asked Ms. Walter and Mr. Smith to review his draft of the annual report of the Selectmen. They agreed to do so. (Attachment)

There being no further business before the Board, a motion was made by Ms. Walter, seconded by Mr. Smith, to adjourn the meeting. The vote was unanimous. The meeting was adjourned at 5:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Smith, Clerk