

MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING APRIL 8, 2014

Chairman Walter called the meeting to order in the Senior Center at 6:05 PM with Mr. Smith also present. Mr. Chabot was present remotely via cell phone.

- I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MARCH 4, 2014
APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MARCH 24, 2014
APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES OF MARCH 24, 2014
APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MARCH 27, 2014**

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

MOTION TO MOVE ALL MINUTES RELATED TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING WITH THE POLICE OFFICERS' UNION FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Smith moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to move all minutes related to negotiations between NEPBA Local #73 representing the North Brookfield police officers and the Board of Selectmen from Executive Session into the public domain. So voted.

- IA. APPROVAL OF INTEREST WARRANT #1051 FOR \$53,893.75
APPROVAL OF SCHOOL WARRANT #1053 FOR \$80,562.66
APPROVAL OF GENERAL WARRANT #1054 FOR \$109,029.72
APPROVAL OF PAYROLL WARRANT #21 FOR \$291,359.60**

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

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. WENDEMUTH MEADOW UPDATE

Harbour Fraser Hodder, co-chairman of the Friends of Wendemuth Meadow, reported that the East Quabbin Land Trust (EQLT) has purchased a 30 acre Bates Street property from the Davey family for \$325,000.00. EQLT held an open house at the property this past weekend that was well attended. Mrs. Hodder explained that this purchase completed the first step in the process of preserving the property; the second step will be the purchase of a conservation restriction that will be held by the Town through its Conservation Commission. Mrs. Hodder stated that the purchase of the conservation restriction will be funded by a LAND grant from the state along with money raised through donations to the Friends of Wendemuth Meadow. She stressed that there will be no cost to the Town.

Mrs. Walter noted that later in the meeting the Selectmen will be reviewing articles that have been submitted for the May 9th town meetings, including an article to authorize the purchase of the conservation restriction. Mrs. Walter asked that Mrs. Hodder and Cynthia Henshaw of EQLT stay for the discussion of the town meeting article.

Mrs. Walter encouraged residents to go to the property and walk the land; Mrs. Hodder noted that the property is always open. There is another open house scheduled for May 3rd from 1 PM to 4 PM.

B. REVIEW ARTICLES FOR MAY 9TH SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

The Selectmen reviewed articles that have been submitted for the May 9th Special Town Meeting. (Attachment #1) While most of the requested articles involve transfers within a departmental budget, one request to cover the Snow and Ice Account deficit and another requesting funds for the Fire Department Salary Account will require transfers from other sources.

Mrs. Walter asked Ms. Henshaw what obligations would the Conservation Commission be taking on if the purchase of the conservation restriction goes through? Ms. Henshaw stated that the ConCom would be required to monitor the property annually and approve any farming plan. There would be no day-to-day obligation to the ConCom.

Mrs. Walter asked who will be writing the LAND grant application, and Ms. Henshaw stated that EQLT would be responsible for that, but it must be signed by the Board of Selectmen and the Conservation Commission. Mrs. Walter asked if the state has any rights to the land, and Ms. Henshaw stated that the state could step in if the conditions of the conservation restriction are not being met.

Mrs. Walter reviewed a draft letter from Town Counsel Katherine Kline that is basically a promissory note from EQLT to the Town. (Attachment #2) Ms. Henshaw pointed out that the town meeting article specifically states that the borrowing will be done only if EQLT is successful in obtaining the LAND grant and other necessary donations.

The Selectmen thanked Mrs. Hodder and Ms. Henshaw for their time.

C. REVIEW ARTICLES FOR MAY 9TH ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

The Selectmen reviewed articles that have been submitted for the May 9th Annual Town Election. (Attachment #3) Mr. Smith questioned two articles submitted by the Board of Health asking for a revolving fund to be funded by 10% of trash bag sales revenue in order to purchase the trash bags. Leslie will ask Cindy for clarification. Mr. Smith wondered if the Finance Committee is aware of the request for funds for the Town Forest Park, and was informed that a budget request was submitted to the Finance Committee.

Mr. Chabot asked if Valley View School could be asked for reimbursement for costs to the Town associated with their October fire through their insurance company. Leslie will ask MIIA if this is possible.

D. DISCUSSION RE: REQUESTS FOR VEHICLES

The Selectmen reviewed several requests for vehicles that have been submitted over the past few months. There were two from the Fire Department for a new fire engine and an SUV, one from the Police Department for an SUV, one from Emergency Management for a pickup truck or SUV, and one from the Cemetery Commission for a pickup truck or one-ton truck. Mrs. Walter noted that it is good for the Selectmen to discuss these requests in the open so that voters are aware of these needs.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. DRAMASTIC FARMS PRESENTATION

Michael Hogancamp of Dramastic Farms was present to inform the Selectmen about his plans to start a farming program for at-risk youth. (Attachment #4) Mr. Hogancamp explained that he has a commitment from DYS for seedlings, and a grant for supplies and equipment, but he needs approximately 15 acres of land for the program. Mr. Hogancamp noted that he has already spoken to Police Chief Thomasian and has gotten very positive feedback.

Mrs. Walter asked what age group Mr. Hogancamp is targeting, and he stated probably 15 to 25 years old. She noted that this is an interesting proposal; the Selectmen are the “eyes and ears,” but there is an Agricultural Commission and a good Planning Board that may be able to help. She recommended that Mr. Hogancamp come to the Town Offices and speak with the Board of Assessors and obtain some contact information for certain town officials and perhaps local realtors.

B. DISCUSSION RE: REMOTE IT BASIC DATA PROTECTION PROGRAM

The Selectmen reviewed an e-mail from the Board of Assessors following up on information from the Department of Revenue (DOR) regarding a “Basic Data Protection Program.” (Attachment #5) The DOR is proposing to provide basic data protection services and off-site data backup for towns that lack IT staffing. There will be no cost to participate in the first year, and then the program is expected to cost between \$500 and \$1,000. The Assessors have done an informal poll of various town departments, and everyone has expressed interest in participating in the program. The Selectmen stated that they would like to pursue this. Leslie will draft a letter to be sent to the DOR stating our interest.

C. READYBUS FOLLOW UP

Mrs. Walter noted that the Selectmen had requested input from residents on a proposal from South Central Massachusetts Elderbus to provide transportation to people who reside and work in town. The information was read at a Selectmen's meeting, was placed on the town's website, and flyers were left at the Town Offices. There was no interest shown in the service.

Mrs. Walter stated that she would like to send out a survey with the annual town census that would ask residents what kind of town services they might like to see.

D. DISCUSSION RE: CONTENT AND QUALITY OF BOS MEETING VIDEOS AND USE OF LPAC FUNDS TO HELP RESIDENTS WITHOUT CABLE SERVICE

Mrs. Walter noted that the Local Public Access Committee (LPAC) has almost \$160,000.00 in their coffers. She spoke with Mike Tillotson about this, and was wondering if some of the money could be used to subsidize the cost of bringing cable service to residents in outlying areas. Grants could be offered to residents who want the service but are facing a very high cost to be connected. Since the contract with Charter Communications is coming up for renewal very soon, this is something that should be addressed with Charter during the renewal process. Mr. Smith and Mr. Chabot agreed that this should be discussed during the renewal process.

Also, Mrs. Walter reported that she has spoken to Mr. Tillotson about the quality of cable broadcasts that originate here at the Senior Center, and he is in the process of updating the equipment.

E. DISCUSS POSSIBLE MEETING ON APRIL 29TH

Mr. Smith stated that he would not be available on April 29th in the event that a meeting was necessary. Mr. Chabot stated that he would likely be on the road on that date as well.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. ELECTION UPDATE

The Annual Town Election will be held on Monday, May 5th. The last day to register to vote is Tuesday, April 15th. There will be a complete update at the April 22nd meeting.

**B. CHRISTOPHER HICKMAN HAS BEEN NAMED NEW VOCATIONAL
TEACHER OF THE YEAR**

Mrs. Walter reviewed an e-mail from Bay Path Regional Vocational School Committee member Jim Caldwell announcing that Christopher Hickman of North Brookfield has been named as the Massachusetts Vocational Teacher of the Year. The Selectmen noted that this is quite an accomplishment. Leslie will draft a letter for Mr. Hickman.

**C. THE WATER DEPARTMENT WILL BE REPAIRING A LEAK ON
FRIDAY, APRIL 11TH BEGINNING AT 7:30 AM ON NORTH MAIN
STREET NEAR ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH**

Mrs. Walter made this announcement on behalf of the Water Department.

D. TOWN WIDE CLEANUP DAY APRIL 26TH

Mr. Chabot announced that the annual Town-wide Cleanup in honor of Earth Day will be held this year on Saturday, April 26th from 9 AM to 3 PM.

**E. THE WATER DEPARTMENT WILL BE FLUSHING HYDRANTS FROM
APRIL 28TH TO MAY 23RD**

Mrs. Walter announced that the Water Department will be flushing hydrants from April 28th to May 23rd. Residents should refrain from doing laundry if temporary water discoloration exists.

**F. NORTH BROOKFIELD RABIES CLINIC TO BE HELD ON SATURDAY,
APRIL 12TH FROM 9 AM TO 11 AM**

Mr. Chabot read this announcement.

G. DOG LICENSES ARE NOW DUE

Mrs. Walter reminded residents that dog licenses are now available at the Town Clerk's office.

V. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

A. PRESENTATION OF TOWN REPORT AND JEFF SAMUELSON

B. UPDATE ON FY15 BUDGET FROM FINANCE COMMITTEE

C. REQUEST FOR APPOINTMENT TO CIP

At 7:30 PM Mr. Smith moved, and Mr. Chabot seconded, a motion to enter Executive Session to conduct negotiations with non-union personnel. Roll call: Walter, yes; Smith, yes; Chabot, yes. So voted. Mrs. Walter announced that the Board would exit Executive Session only to adjourn.

At 8:45 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