

MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING MAY 6, 2014

Mrs. Walter called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM in the Senior Center with Mr. Smith and newly elected selectman Mr. Hevy also present. Mr. Smith thanked former selectman Richard Chabot for his many years of service to the town.

Mrs. Walter reviewed the election results from the prior day's Annual Town Election, and thanked everyone who took the time to run for an office, and those who came out to vote.

Mr. Hevy thanked everyone who voted him into office for their support.

REORGANIZATION OF BOARD

Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Smith seconded, a motion to nominate Eric Hevy for chairman of the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Hevy stated that he would decline the nomination. Mr. Hevy moved, and Mrs. Walter seconded, a motion to nominate Robert Smith and chairman. So voted.

Mr. Smith moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to nominate Mrs. Walter as vice-chairman. So voted.

Mr. Smith moved, and Mrs. Walter seconded, a motion to nominate Mr. Hevy as clerk. So voted.

Mrs. Walter stated that because this is the busy season for the town budget, she thinks that the Board should begin weekly meetings until July. Mr. Hevy and Mr. Smith agreed to begin weekly meetings next Tuesday, May 13th.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF APRIL 17, 2014 APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF APRIL 22, 2014 APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES OF APRIL 22, 2014

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

MOVE ALL EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES RELATED TO CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS WITH HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT GARY JEAN AND WATER SUPERINTENDENT STEVE JONES INTO OPEN DOMAIN

Mr. Smith moved, and Mrs. Walter seconded, a motion to remove the aforementioned minutes from Executive Session. So voted, with Mr. Hevy abstaining.

**IA. APPROVAL OF SCHOOL WARRANT #1057 FOR \$97,630.12
APPROVAL OF GENERAL WARRANT #1058 FOR \$211,339.30
APPROVAL OF PAYROLL WARRANT #23 FOR \$274,904.36**

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

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. CIC STORMWATER GRANT

Mrs. Walter reviewed an e-mail from Spencer Town Administrator Adam Gaudette asking if North Brookfield will be participating in the next round of a Stormwater Management program that is funded through the state. (Attachment #1) Because the state does not fully fund the program, participating towns are asked to pay a portion of the cost. The cost for participating in the FY2015 program will be \$4,000.00. Mrs. Walter noted that, unfortunately, we have been unable to fully participate in the program to date. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to notify Mr. Gaudette that North Brookfield will not be participating in FY2015. So voted.

B. REVIEW TOWN MEETING MOTIONS

The Board reviewed motions for Friday night's Special and Annual Town Meetings. (Available in the Selectmen's office) The first article on the Special Town Meeting requests \$141,000.00 for the Snow and Ice Account. Mrs. Walter noted that it was a very difficult winter. She said that all or some of this amount could be deferred into FY2015 if necessary, but it was agreed to fund the amount since the funds are available.

Article #7 on the Special Town Meeting requests more than \$23,000.00 for the Fire Department Salary Account. Mr. Smith asked Fire Chief Brad Gannon why this amount is so high? Chief Gannon stated that the Valley View School fire in October, coupled with several large structure fires, mandatory training, and mutual aid resulted in the men working much more than usual. Chief Gannon also noted that this amount is only an estimate for May and June, and those can traditionally be very busy months for brush fires. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Smith seconded, a motion to use \$24,000.00 from Free Cash to fund this article. So voted, with Mr. Hevy abstaining because he is a member of the Fire Department.

Mrs. Walter reviewed Article #14 on the Special Town Meeting which asks for the Town to allow the purchase of a conservation restriction for the Wendemuth Meadow property. Mrs. Walter noted that a promissory note from the East Quabbin Land Trust (EQLT) will be signed before Friday's meeting. This promissory note states that the Town will not borrow any funds for the project until EQLT receives grant

money from the state, and an additional amount of money is raised through private donations. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Smith seconded, a motion to approve the motions for the Special Town Meeting. So voted.

The Board reviewed the motions for the Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Hevy stated that the Finance Committee had some questions on Articles #20 and 21 regarding a revolving fund for the Board of Health, so it was agreed to postpone action on those two until the June 20th adjourned session. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to approve the motions for the Annual Town Meeting. So voted.

C. PROJECT UPDATES

Mrs. Walter reviewed an e-mail from Trish Miller of the Friends of the Town House asking for permission to sell books and dvds when the Town House bell tower is reinstalled next weekend. (Attachment #2) Mrs. Walter noted that the Selectmen need to discuss the location, as there could be some safety concerns. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to notify Mrs. Miller that the Selectmen approve the selling of the items, but the location will be up for discussion. So voted.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. POLICE CHIEF WITH NEW OFFICER

Police Chief Aram Thomasian, Jr. was present with new police officer Cody Thomasian. Chief Thomsian explained that Officer Thomasian is currently working for the UMass police department. Mrs. Walter asked why he wanted to work here, and Officer Thomasian stated that he grew up in North Brookfield and wanted to give back to his community. Mrs. Walter asked what he needed for training, and Officer Thomasian stated that he is fully trained, he just needs field training for this job. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to appoint Cody Thomsian as a full-time officer effective May 13, 2014. So voted.

B. RESIGNATION OF CHARLES BUCHANAN

Mr. Hevy reviewed a letter of resignation from Police Sergeant Charles Buchanan. (Attachment #3) Sergeant Buchanan stated that he was honored to have served for the past 27 years. Mrs. Walter said that she couldn't say enough about Sergeant Buchanan. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to accept the resignation of Sergeant Buchanan with regret, and to send a letter of thanks. So voted.

C. RODNEY JENKINS WITH NEW TEMPORARY EMPLOYEE

Sewer Superintendent Rodney Jenkins was present with his new temporary employee Jason Bryant. Mr. Jenkins explained that Sewer Department worker

Michael Mercandante was in a car accident recently, and expects to be out of work for a minimum of 4 months. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to hire Mr. Bryant as a temporary worker for \$12 per hour. So voted.

D. ROSS HUBACAZ RE: EXTENSION OF LOGGING CONTRACT ON WEST BROOKFIELD ROAD

Ross Hubacz of Hull Forest Products was present to ask the Selectmen to sign an extension of the logging contract for the Town Forest property on West Brookfield Road. (Attachment #4) According to Mr. Hubacz the site is just too muddy, and his company would like an extension to November 1st of this year. Mr. Hubacz noted that he is hopeful that the work can be completed before then if the summer is dry. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to approve and sign the extension. So voted.

E. OUI LAST DRINK DATA

Mrs. Walter noted that the Selectmen received notices from the state listing where drivers convicted of drunk driving say that they had their last drink. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion that an advisory letter be sent out to all license holder during the December renewal process letting them know about these notices, and encourage the license holders to be aware. So voted.

F. FY15 POLICE AND FIRE INSURANCE RENEWAL

Mrs. Walter reviewed an e-mail from Laura Peckham of MIIA regarding the Town's FY2015 renewal police for Police and Fire Accident coverage. (Attachment #5) The quote for next year is \$11,398.00. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to approve the renewal. So voted.

G. WATER COMMISSIONERS @ 6:30 PM

Water Commissioners James Kularski and Tim Nason were present to discuss a proposal to raise the pay of their Administrative Assistant position by \$5 per hour. Mr. Kularski passed out a copy of their proposal that also states that the Commissioners would like to offer an additional \$2 per hour if their Administrative Assistant obtains the proper licenses to run the water plant in an emergency. (Attachment #6) Mr. Kularski stated that the additional money for this pay increase would come from the Water Department's Retained Earnings Account.

Mrs. Walter stated that when she met with the Water Commissioners last week this is not what was discussed. The proposal to add operator duties to administrative duties is mixing two different positions and pay grades.

Mr. Smith stated that he would like time to think about the proposal. Mrs. Walter stated that she would like to examine the impact of this proposal. Mr. Hevy

questioned whether an Administrative Assistant who possessed operator licenses would be willing to stay and work for the lower pay rate. It was agreed to put this on the next Selectmen's agenda.

H. QUABAUG CORPORATION WILL BE HOLDING A CELEBRATION EVENT ON FRIDAY, MAY 16TH

Mrs. Walter reviewed an e-mail from Richard Caron of the Quabaug Corporation regarding their plans for a 50th anniversary celebration. (Attachment #7) They are looking for permission to close School Street on May 16th from 2 PM to 5 PM. Chief Thomasian stated that he has been working with Mr. Caron to coordinate the day's events. Information received earlier today is that the street closing has been pushed up to 9 AM in order to set up. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to approve the closing of School Street on May 16th from 9 AM to 5 PM. So voted.

I. OPEN MEETING LAW COMPLAINT

Mr. Smith reviewed a complaint submitted by Jeffrey Samuelson alleging that the Board of Selectmen violated the state's Open Meeting Law on April 17th by asking him to wait while the Board met with Worcester Telegram and Gazette correspondent Brad Miner, and to return at a later time. (Available in the Selectmen's office)

Mr. Samuelson was present and asked that Mrs. Walter be the person who speaks with him, since she was the person who asked him to wait. He felt that as the contractor installing the Town House Bell Tower, he should have been at that meeting. Mrs. Walter explained that she asked Mr. Samuelson to wait so that the Selectmen could speak with Mr. Miner about the reinstallation of the tower. Mr. Smith stated that the meeting was an opportunity for the Selectmen to understand what was happening with the entire project, but they were not discussing the specifics of Mr. Samuelson's part of the project. Mr. Smith acknowledged that the situation on April 17th should have been handled differently, but Mr. Samuelson did come back and meet with the Selectmen, and they had a very productive discussion.

Mr. Samuelson said that there isn't much that he can do about this situation; he does not want to cost the town any money. He said that he is sorry that news of this complaint was published in the paper; he does not like to see North Brookfield getting bad press.

Mr. Samuelson stated that he is looking forward to a good day on the 17th, when he will be reinstalling the tower. Mr. Smith said that he would like to meet with Mr. Samuelson prior to the 17th to discuss the scheduling and logistics of that day.

Mr. Smith noted that at the April 17th meeting the Selectmen and Mr. Samuelson discussed some additional work to be done at the Town House as recommended by engineer Rob Johnson. Mr. Samuelson stated that the work is below the area of the

tower that was covered by the insurance company, and the work cost approximately \$1,100.00. Mr. Smith asked that Mr. Samuelson ask the insurance company if they will cover the work.

Mr. Samuelson stated that he would drop his Open Meeting Law complaint. Mr. Smith noted that the Board of Selectmen acknowledges that this situation was not handled properly, and vowed to work together with Mr. Samuelson in the future.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. THE NORTH BROOKFIELD WATER DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN AWARDED A SOURCE PROTECTION AWARD FROM THE PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM AWARDS PROGRAM THROUGH THE MASSACHUSETTS DEP

Mr. Hevy reviewed an announcement that the North Brookfield Water Department has been awarded a Source Protection Award from the Massachusetts DEP. The Selectmen offered their congratulations to the Water Board.

B. THERE WILL BE A CONCERT ON SATURDAY, MAY 24TH AT 7 PM IN THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH. The QUABOAG CHORAL SOCIETY WILL BE PERFORMING A CONCERT TO CELEBRATE THE REFURBISHING OF THE TOWN HOUSE BELL TOWER WITH A TRIBUTE TO GEORGE M. COHAN

Mr. Smith announced that thanks to Eva Brown and the Cultural Council, the Quaboag Choral Society will hold a concert on May 24th at the North Brookfield Congregational Church at 7 PM. The concert will celebrate the reinstallation of the Bell Tower onto the Town House, and will include a tribute to George M. Cohan.

C. THE ANNUAL TOWN-WIDE YARD SALE WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY, MAY 24TH

Mrs. Walter announced that registration for the town-wide yard sale is \$20, or \$15 before May 10th.

D. THE WATER DEPARTMENT WILL BE FLUSHING HYDRANTS THROUGH MAY 23RD

Mr. Hevy read this announcement from the Water Department.

E. VFW POPPY DRIVE

Mrs. Walter read an e-mail from the VFW Post 3439 announcing their annual poppy drive to be held at various locations in town during the week before Memorial Day.

F. SENIOR CENTER 12TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER DANCE

Mr. Smith announced that the Friends of the North Brookfield Council on Aging will be held on May 16th. The cost is \$15 per person.

V. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

A. FY15 BUDGET

Mr. Smith requested that the Town House Bell Tower reinstallation be placed on the next agenda.

It was also agreed to discuss the Quabaug event next time.

At 8:00 PM Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss strategy related to collective bargaining with the North Brookfield School Department. Roll call: Smith, yes; Walter, yes; Hevy, yes. So voted. Mr. Smith announced that the Board would exit Executive Session only to adjourn.

At 8:30 PM the Board came out of Executive Session. Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to adjourn. So voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Scott Burton
Administrative Assistant