

Minutes of the Board of Selectmen Meeting

This meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 6:00PM on Tuesday, September 26, 2023 at the North Brookfield Police Department. Jason Petraitis, John Tripp, and Brooke Canada present.

Minutes: Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to approve the minutes from 9/5/23. So voted.

Warrants: Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to approve Payroll # 7 for \$330,716.22, School # 1018 for \$61,590.40, General # 1019 for \$449,829.08, and WWTPU # 1020 for \$383,023.51. So voted.

Financial Items:

- a. ARPA Funds AED Batteries: Ashley explained that the Board approved ARPA funds for \$296.00 but it was recommended to get infant and child size pads, in addition to adult size, increasing the price to \$531.00. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to approve the request to increase the original approval to \$531.00. So voted.
- b. Parks and Recreation \$250.00 for Blade for asphalt cutting: Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to approve Parks and Recreation to spend \$250.00 on a blade for asphalt cutting. Discussion: Mr. Tripp asked who's doing the cutting. Jason Benoit said he's borrowing a walk behind cutter. Brandon Avery said he and Jason went over the plan to remove deteriorated asphalt at the Playground. Part of the basketball court is still serviceable, they can cut a clean line and make the broken part useable, perhaps a pickleball court. Brandon said the blade for the cutter may be a little less than \$250.00. All in favor: Aye. So voted.
- c. Highway \$400.00 Hydraulic valve: Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to approve highway spending request to spend \$400.00 on a hydraulic valve for the plow. So voted.

New Business:

- a. Mount Pleasant Street Improvement Project Informational Session: Mr. Petraitis said we have a hearing at 6:15PM so Joe and Doug may have to break for that and continue after. Joe Ferguson from CMRPC explained this is an update for the FY21 CDBG grant. The project is fully funded for complete design, and the first phase of construction is funded. Future CDBG grants will fund the second phase. The West Side Infrastructure study gave us a cost estimate, developed by Haley Ward engineering, that included Mt Pleasant Street roads, drainage, water, and pedestrian safety. The design is almost 100% complete. Phase 1 will include new water main, service lines, fire hydrant for full length of Mt Pleasant St, as well as temporary trench and asphalt repairs. Doug from Haley Ward echoed what Joe described and said they would make it a plowable surface. Joe said they would go out to bid late this year or early next year and we should be able to start construction in the Spring of 2024. Mr. Tripp asked if they were just doing water lines, Doug said the water lines will be done in phase 1, Mr. Tripp asked about sewer or drainage, Doug said that will be done in phase 2. Mr. Tripp asked if they would be digging up the street again, Doug said no, the drainage will run parallel to the water lines. Mr. Tripp asked about funding for phase 2, Joe said he would work with Ashley on that grant. Jason Benoit said this is a similar sequence as the work done on North Common Street.

- b. Pole Hearing: At 6:15PM Mr. Petraitis opened the pole hearing and read the pole petition. A National Grid representative was present on behalf of Lashaway Homes LLC, they are putting new houses on Brickyard Road. One is already constructed and they need a new pole to meet the clearance. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to approve the pole petition. Discussion: Mr. Tripp asked if there were any abutters present. Ashley indicated that abutters were notified of the hearing, none are present. All in favor: aye. So voted. Mr. Petraitis closed the hearing.
- c. CMRPC contract amendment: Joe Ferguson explained this would extend the town's contract with CMRPC through December 31, 2023. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to approve and sign the CMRPC contract extension. So voted.
- d. BOH Contract for Landfill swales: Mr. Petraitis read a letter from Ethan Melad, they received two proposals, this one is more affordable. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to sign the contract. Discussion: Mr. Tripp asked if the BOH had Town Counsel look at this, and suggested we have it reviewed before signing, even though it will cost us money. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to amend the motion to sign the contract after it has been approved by Town Counsel. So voted.
- e. Ray Baillargeon Conroy Ave: Ray said he bought his home 14 years ago on Conroy Ave which has flooding issues and said his property turns into a lake. One of previous Highway Superintendents wanted to turn his property into a pond and flood it. Nothing has been done. He has 4 catch basins on his property. He's gone through 3 water heaters and 2 sump pumps because his cellar floods, his pump is constantly running. He just wants it fixed. On Bradshaw Street he looked at the pipes which are cut toward the path, which he owns, to the basin, then to Main Street. Rain from 148/67 comes down Reed St, there's a catch basin there, at the end of Conroy on the corner, then to the street, he just wants it fixed. His pipes are lower than street level. He said the town will have to raise his property. These pipes were put in in the early 1900's, which was done by hand because machines weren't invented then. He wants it fixed, he can't use his property, he can't mow. The catch basins are illegal. Water and dirt block up the holes, there are 2 basins you can't get to. He repeated multiple times he wants his property fixed. He said he's been saying this for 14 years. He's spent \$1,500.00 on water heaters. He said the town had a grant and he was put on a committee but the other members said they couldn't get a hold of him. The committee spent \$400,000.00 to tell the town they needed streets and sidewalks, but that money was supposed to go to fix his problem. He can't mow his property. Ray again said multiple times to fix his property. He owns $\frac{3}{4}$ of the school path, he can't use his property. Jason Benoit said from an expense stand point we're talking some serious money. Jason also said the town owns the easement behind his home, it might be cheaper to work behind there than in the street. Ray said the town would have to get rid of all the trees and raise his property. He said the pipes are 4 feet underground. Jason said they didn't need to be. Jason and Ray were talking at the same time so this discussion was unclear. Ray said he has a hole in his yard from when a pipe broke in 2018. Mr. Petraitis asked Ray to give us a chance to look into this and come back in two weeks. Ray said he's been waiting 14 years. Mr. Petraitis said this is a major project and it's Ray's personal property, not town property. Mr. Petraitis asked old the house is. Ray said it was built in the 1800's, he found books from an old town counselor. Mr. Petraitis said he thought that drain goes to the Common. Ray said he has a catch basin at the corner of his property, you can see the pipe from Bradshaw, then another from pond, then goes toward the street, his neighbor's

property floods as well. Mr. Petraitis said it has been raining a lot. Mr. Tripp asked where the \$400,000.00 went, Mr. Petraitis said they would look into it.

- f. Accept Resignation: Mr. Petraitis read a letter from Michelle Thayer on Parks and Recreation explaining her reasoning for resigning from the committee. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to accept the resignation. So voted. The Board all thanked Michelle for serving on the committee.
- g. Sign Special State Primaries Warrant: Mrs. Canada read the warrant. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to sign the warrant. So voted. Mr. Tripp asked about the polling location, Mrs. Canada said it wasn't listed on the warrant. Mr. Petraitis said we should announce it. Mrs. Canada said it will be at the Senior Center from 7am to 8pm
- h. Sign DPU Letter Re: Electrical Aggregation. Mr. Tripp read the letter to DPU. Mr. Petraitis asked if there was a deadline to submit this letter. Ashley said it's Wednesday, September 27th. We can submit the letter later, but Colonial Power wants it ASAP because they are meeting with DPU. Ashley explained that North Brookfield, in partnership with Colonial Power, submitted an aggregation plan to DPU in May of 2019. Finally, DPU responded, but the municipalities are not happy with the terms because they essentially make it impossible for municipalities to aggregate, and the requirements are extremely over regulated. History shows that when a plan is submitted to DPU it takes several years for approval. If North Brookfield wanted to change their plan (if ever approved) it could take years for that change to go into effect. Colonial Power, their attorney's, and the Town are working to get more control over their own aggregation plans. The aggregation plan would be town-wide, residents can opt-out, but the goal in 2019 was to get locked in at a low electric rate, now we are in 2023 so the rates are higher, but we are still hoping to benefit from this plan. Mrs. Canada moved, and Mr. Tripp seconded, a motion to sign the letter. So voted.
- i. BSC Group Bidding Contract: This will be tabled until Town Counsel has reviewed.
- j. Chapter 90 Project Request for Barnes Road: Jason Benoit said there will be \$17,000.00 from WRAP to grind Charles Lane and turn it into dirt, which will cost about \$16,000.00 and change. WRAP doesn't require project request. The Chapter 90 request is for Barnes Road to start of Charles Lane/Rufus Putnam triangle, this will be a binder. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canada seconded, a motion to approve the request: Discussion: Mrs. Canada questioned the amount, is it \$31,356.00? Jason Benoit confirmed that is part of it, but the \$17,000.00 is not, as that's WRAP money. All in favor: Aye.

Announcements:

LPAC Survey for Spectrum/Charter is now on the Town's website

Water Department Flushing October 2 -November 3

Town Clerk information about Special Primary Election

Oktoberfest 9/30 at Common Ground to benefit Town House

Public Comment:

Brandon Avery thanked Michelle Thayer for her help on the Parks and Recreation Committee, they are now looking for a new member, please contact P&R or Tara Hayes if you're interested.

Mr. Tripp had a letter from the Water Department, they had requested funds from ARPA but nothing happened. Mr. Tripp read the letter. This was talked about last year but pushed aside, they will need a hydrant near the new highway barn, the well won't be enough for their needs. Mr. Tripp read a second letter from the Water Department requesting funds to resurface the water tank. He said according to DEP the tank is aging, the joints between concrete slabs are failing a little bit, ice and water build up, if that cracks there will be bacteria and residents will have to boil their water. Water Dept needs ARPA money to do repairs or we won't have potable water in North Brookfield. If we could move on this, ARPA is holding funds, if ARPA doesn't act, we'll be in dire need, so many projects need to be done. Mr. Tripp suggested changing the process for the ARPA requests, they should go to BOS first, not ARPA. ARPA is advisory only; they should be saying if these projects fit the guidelines. Mr. Tripp said the ARPA Committee shouldn't have an agenda. He said the Tree Warden asked for \$45,000.00 because their budget was cut in half. Mr. Tripp said during a storm the previous day a tree branch came down near his house and knocked out power to about 9 houses. He said if we can get some of the dead wood off the wires we should. He said ARPA pushed the Tree Warden aside and he doesn't think that's right. He said the ARPA money is for infrastructure and to make road ways safe.

Mr. Tripp Thanked Brandon Avery and everyone for their help at the Playground. He said he mentioned last meeting that they needed volunteers but no one showed up so he and Brandon did the work.

At 6:57PM, there being no further business, Mr. Tripp moved, and Mrs. Canda seconded, a motion to adjourn. So voted.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Barre