

Town Clerk

From: kathcrevier@aol.com
Sent: Wednesday, January 25, 2023 8:04 PM
To: mszalansky@comcast.net; csl208@yahoo.com; mpetraitis@gmail.com; rlocatelli@yahoo.com; karen.e.kiley@gmail.com; jtrentacosta10@gmail.com; Selectmens' Office; Shiela LeBlanc; Town Clerk
Subject: Minutes

North Brookfield Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting

January 12 , 2023
NB Senior Center Meeting Opened at 6:30

Present: Mike Zalansky, Chet Lubelczyk; Bob Locatelli; Michelle Petraitis, Kathy Crevier; Absent: Karen Hubacz, Joe Trentacosta Also present: Shiela LeBlanc, Town Accountant

November 29th Minutes approved as corrected: Did not list Karen Hubacz and Bob Locatelli as absent

Has the Tank which is to be used for the storage of diesel fuel been moved from Techo Bloc to Highway Barn on Donovan Rd.? Chet to check into this.

Shiela reported that a double payment on fire truck would result in a savings of \$1,021.78. Payment due on 8/23/23

Police Chief, Mark Smith, present to request the purchase of two discounted demo cruisers at 2022 cost:

2022 Ford Interceptor - Marked with light bar -	\$50,084.35
2022 Ford Interceptor - Unmarked	\$45,091.35
Total Cost	\$95,175.70

To replace 2015 cruiser with 96, 579 miles, with electrical issues, shocks, struts, etc., and 2016 cruiser with 137,312 miles and wear issues.

Of the two current cruisers, one will be used for Animal Control and the other will be surplus property which will go out for bids.

Need to act quickly in order to purchase at this price.

Special Town Meeting in February or March

Will ask that we take money from Free Cash, and also

Rescind vote taken at December STM where \$55,000 was voted to buy 10,000 gallons of diesel fuel to be stored in the tank being moved from Techo Bloc to Highway Barn on Donovan Rd.

Liaison Reports:

Library - Kathy - Attended a recent meeting of Library Trustees and suggested they look into ARPA funds for the repair of roof leak where the old library is joined with the newer addition.

They needed some urging to follow up on this, and not sure if they are doing so.

COA - Kathy - Met with Donna (Director), Courtenay (Asst. Director/Outreach), Judy Manning (COA Chair) several times to review their budget, and with the help of Sheila (Town Accountant), they are in good shape. All is well.

Fire - Chet - Reported that Fire Chief stated that their issues are minor.

Short discussion on new Fire Station

School - Michelle - Setting up a meeting with FinCom, School Superintendent, and School Committee

Will send dates that would work

Highway - Chet - Reported that he and Mike attended an Executive Session meeting with the BOS and Jason Benoit, Highway Superintendent..

Jason was offered a job with the Town of Southbridge which includes a \$120,000 salary, and although he does not want to leave North Brookfield, this offer is much higher than his current salary of \$83, 232.

BOS came up with a substantial salary increase which would take place over three years.

Lengthy discussion:

It was asked by both Kathy and Michelle if he presented an Offer Letter. He did not.

Have there been any Performance Reviews or Evaluations which would show that he should receive this increase?

Why were we not shown the salaries of surrounding town Highway Superintendents, besides West Brookfield, Paxton, and Leicester.

What would be the reaction from all department heads, and other town employees, if we give such a substantial increase? They would expect the same.

Why were not all FinCom members included in this meeting?

It was brought up that, while serving as Highway Superintendent, he was discharged from two other towns

Both Mike and Karen should recuse themselves from voting because of a conflict of interest.

From information provided by Shiela: In the BOS salary proposal he would receive an increase of \$10,000 in January of 2023, \$6,000 in January of 2024, and \$6,000 in January of 2025, AND the anticipated annual 2% for all town employees. This would bring him up to \$114,526. Why was the 2% increase also included? Chet disputed these figures; said they were not correct. (See attached)

We were informed that there are no current Highway Dept. employees who are interested in taking over as department head.

This matter would have to come before a Town Meeting, and a vote was taken to see if the FinanceCommittee was in agreement with the Highway Superintendent salary increase proposed by the BOS. Chet and Mike were in favor, Michelle and Kathy opposed. Bob abstained.

It was asked where the money would come from to pay for the salary increase....

Chet brought up the rental of the storage units at the Donovan Rd. Highway Barn.

Discussion on the town's unfunded liabilities - pension and other post-employment benefits.

BOS is forming a committee to look into the state unfunded mandates. This committee would include reps from the BOS, School, and FinCom. Mike offered to serve on the committee.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25.