

**MINUTES OF THE  
BROOKFIELD ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

THURSDAY MARCH 17<sup>ST</sup>, 2011

BROOKFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LIBRARY

Members present: Paul Ayers, Robert Barnes, John D Holdcraft, Gerald Johnson, Roger Lafleur, Cindy Mundell, and Ian VonHold

Tim Roughan arrived at 7:12PM

Mary Beth Harrity arrived at 7:25PM

Residents present: Mike Breur, Dan Leahy, Steve Comptois, Peter O'Connell. Mike Seery and James Cooke arrived after 8:00PM

David Dorr from the New Leader

Video

Pledge of Allegiance

Called to order at 7:02PM

Cindy brought it to the Committee's attention that Roger Lafleur has missed 5 (five) consecutive meetings, which creates a vacancy on the committee. Roger stated with his work its sometimes hard to make meetings that are scheduled a week in advance when his schedule is made two months in advance. He would like to stay on the committee. Cindy pointed out since she has been on the committee Roger had made six out of eighteen meetings. Jerry asked the committee for their input. Robert asked if there is someone else that is interested in being on the committee? Mike Breur is present and is interested in serving on the committee, has many years education with finance and budgeting. Cindy feels that with Rogers work maybe it's time to step down if unable to make meetings. Paul feels that leaving it open for Roger and see if he can get the time in. Ian same as Paul. Dave feels that if someone is here that wants to serve them give them a chance. If people can't show up get off the board. Ian commented that because of Roger's experience on the board and being we are into budget season, maybe we should wait until after our annual town meeting and then see if a change should be made. Cindy then commented that when Tim missed seven meetings in a row, the Selectman reappointed Tim. Cindy asked if the Selectman had approached Jerry about reappointing Tim.

Jerry motioned no. Maybe it should have been up to the board whether he should have been reappointed. Cindy said she doesn't want to see that happen again. Paul questioned what rules I am going following at this point, I told him the Advisory Board rules. Paul asked what the rules say because he doesn't know what they say. Jerry explained if you miss five meetings in a row the person has to acknowledge he wants to continue to be a member, they would submit a letter to that effect. The time frame for when the Selectman will appoint, as to the time the committee will reappoint. Peter O'Connell said the Selectman appoint/reappoint within thirty days of the annual town meeting. If the Selectman fail to do this then it is up to the Advisory Committee to fill a vacancy. Tim arrived Jerry filled him in on the rules of the committee. Members filled Tim in on their views on this subject. Tim feels keep him on the committee, It can be difficult for members to get to these meetings here I am getting here at 7:15, leaving Waltham at 6:15. Tim would prefer to wait until new fiscal year. Jerry feels the same.

Paul motioned to keep Roger on as a member until after the Annual Town Meeting, and the reassess the situation then. Ian second Jerry, Ian Paul and Tim yes. Robert, Cindy and Dave opposed.

Jerry asked for Minutes from previous meeting, Cindy doesn't have them finished she received the disc late and not feeling well.

Roger will need to sworn in again to be able to vote.

New Business: Snow and Ice Account: Motion to allow Betty to speak: Ian motioned, Paul second. No discussion. So voted. Paul motioned to allow Peter O'Connell speak, Ian second. No discussion. So voted.

Betty explained that the Selectman have voted to allow deficit spending with no dollar amount for the Snow and Ice Account and since then the Advisory Committee has taken two votes, one for 30,000 and one for 45,000. Betty called the DOR, spoke with dept. rep. Deb Wagner and asked her if we could do something like buy a wing plow, explained that the Board of Selectman had taken a vote with no restrictions and now we are out of money can she pay them. Deb Wagner contacted legal and this is the handout. Need to distinguish between deficit spending and the town budgeting format. The person Deb Wagner spoke with said it is legal to do what they did. Betty said she needs another 45,000 to pay this account. She thinks it will get them through the season, but we don't know what April will bring. Tim suggest going with his original suggesting about going with the Selectman and deficit spend without a number and sort it out in the budget process, so whatever it is we sort it out in the budget process. It is what it is. Robert thinks there should be some changes; Ian says if the roads need to be done then do it, previous years have been lower. We need to pay the bills. Cindy agrees the bills need to be paid but she thinks this account is out of line, I asked for a Public Records request from the Highway Department, Cindy wanted to know what the wing plow cost, Cindy was told if I want to know everything nuts, bolt ect. It would cost 225.00 for those invoices, Cindy felt that's a little steep, Cindy Thompson did offer the invoices she gave to the Selectman the cost was about 11,000 to purchase and attach to the truck.

Cindy pointed out that this truck that they got from Chapter 90 money was bareboned and is being outfitted and these are not repairs they are improvements. Anything over 10,000 is capital improvements. This is one area that this type of spending needs to stop. These are not repairs as listed. These are not repairs these are improvements to this vehicle. This is just the wing plow not everything else going on the vehicle. Peter O'Connell did a hand out on this, and this might provide the answers needed. There are two issues related to the wing plow.

Is it a reasonable cost, was it a good decision to buy.

What the process used appropriate.

When this was run by the Selectman what the logic was, will it save the town money. They were satisfied and he went ahead to purchase it. Peter went over cost of making second pass (without wing plow) 6,000. Cost of major parts of wing plow at about 9,600. Peter pointed out the truck was purchased with an approved article. The cost of the Wing Plow and labor to attach the plow to the truck cost to roughly 11,000. Peter said the wing plow will pay for itself in two years. This plow will last for 25 years and if you look at only 10 years, the projected savings is about 25,000 and over 25 years the projected saving is 75,000. Selectman feel it was a terrific idea to buy this wing plow and it is only for snow and ice so they thought is reasonable to charge to snow and ice. For years it's been done this way. Advisory Board has taken vote a previous meeting to take a discrete look at this account. The Selectman feel this needs to be done. There may be some legal steps to go through to break this up, wages, equipment ect. Cindy asked Peter if this was what was submitted to the Selectman for the wing plow? If so there invoices missing from this purchase. How do they control the wing plow from the cab of the truck it they don't include the console. There a quite a few things that go along with this wing plow that have not been included which puts it over 11,000.00 which makes this a capital improvement. This should have been a vote of the town. I'm not saying the wing plow was a bad idea, I'm saying it should go through the proper channels. Peter said moving forward we agree with you but it has not been the practice of the past. Cindy pointed out the Capitol Improvement bylaw states 10,000. Peter said we don't have a bylaw to that effect. Betty said I'm confusing a capital expenditure with something the 10,000 fixed asset capitalization rule if something is fewer than 10,000.00 it can be considered capital improvement, it now taken on as a fixed asset or depreciated. There's the difference. The 10,000 or 5 years is the limit that was set. So you will depreciate on your financial statements. (I could not here all of what she said Gasby 34 came along, Betty says I'm talking about two different things. I told I don't see the difference. Betty said when the town has there audit they may say deprecated and if not it will end up on my inventory list. Cindy's concerned that outfitting this truck is coming out of our free cash. Going forward this is going to change. Cindy still feels this is capital improvement. Betty said that's for the auditors to decide. Peter said this in a piece of equipment for snow and ice. Cindy asked how much money has been sunk into this truck has he used any money from, has he used any of his regular budget money for repairs on this truck? Peter does not know. With the excess amount of snow, the truck is not on line yet. Cindy asked if this was legal to do, with the way our bylaws are written, Betty said the DOR said yes. Cindy question that this was not a repair but an improvement. Cindy asked for how process works if the board doesn't vote to approve this. Betty explained process. Law 44 31 d. Peter commented that 50,000 is really not a large amount and overages are expected. 50,000 is not a

reasonable amount. Mary Beth wants to move on but feels that equipment purchases should be reviewed because other departments do not have this same freedom.

Tim motioned to deficit spend on Snow and Ice account with no dollar amount, Mary Beth 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Discussion: Dave stated that we are not questioning the wing plow purchase to be good or bad the issue is the department budget. He checked with other towns and they do not do this. Betty said this discussion has been going on for years and have given advice both ways but it is not the time in the middle of the season to change this. If you want it different in FY12 do you're planning now, she said this in 2002, 03 ect. Mary Beth mentioned adding a line item for equipment. Betty has recommended this many times, putting this in the budget. Cindy mentioned that we are voting another 45,000.00 without seeing a spreadsheet, invoice ect. And to me and for the board we need that information to make a healthy financial decision. That information is needed. That's why I asked for a public records request and got a 225.00 quote for that information. How can we give a good decision if we do not have information provided to us? Tim said he feels we have people that are doing that, we do not need to micromanage that. Jerry asked for a motion, board reminded him that was done and we were having discussion, Dave asked for a number Jerry said 45,000.00 Tim brought to Jerry attention that is was a voted to deficit spend snow and ice no number. In favor: Jerry, Ian, Mary Beth, Paul and Tim. Opposed: Cindy, Robert and Dave.

New Business:

Betty supplied us with spreadsheets for (in draft): Estimated Revenues, Levy Limit. Went over numbers of total revenue. Went over layout of spread sheets.

Planning Board Budget: Dan Leahy, Level fund budget \$7101.00 Discussed ongoing projects. Some money will be turned back from last year. Expenses are more some years than others; he doesn't want to be cut short.

Mike Seery to discuss BOH and Transfer Station budget. Paul motioned, Robert second to speak to board. So voted. He is reducing this budget. Reason for reduction we contracted with Cassella Waste. Paul asked if there is a gas surcharge. Mike thinks we will be ok. Rates go up a little each year. Discussed expenses, hazardous waste, electronics ect. Mike said he may reduce a little more, as we get closer to town meeting. Jerry noticed some of the numbers don't add up, Mike agrees and will look into this. Robert motioned to go past 9:00PM Tim second. No discussion. So voted. Mike discussed Landfill cap mowing (30 year plan) needs separate account. DEP says cap should be mowed 3 times @ 400.00. If solar panels are put on the part of the cap, this would reduce cost of mowing. Mike explained single stream cost; it is recycling that started this year. Mike will revisit these figures. Jerry will see Mike at the town hall and get updated numbers and email them to the members to put on the spread sheet. Discussed maintenance for compactors.

9:10PM Cindy left not feeling well.

BOH budget: Clerk wages will be going up, but budget would be adjusted to absorb this. Increase Cindy wages about 5 hours a week. Health agent from 500.00 to increase Cindy's wages to 2541.00 Title 5 administration another 400.00 to 550.00. Total for Cindy's wages \$ 2541.00

Cemetery Budget: Level Fund. Jerry questioned account for this budget Preservation Fund and Perpetual Care Fund. Preservation fund was created from donations. Principal can't be touched but he interest can. Perpetual Care is a trust but the Preservation is not at trust. Mike brought up a request for transfer from Reserve Fund for the ZBA. Need for Secretary wages account. \$300.00 needed for remainder of the year. Money needed from Reserve Account. Robert asked if this can be done with the Reserve account. DOR says you can take wages from the Reserve Account. (Ian left meeting.) Mike has request for this, so we can take it under advisement, Jerry will speak to the DOR. Mike added ZBA will be level funded.

James Cooke here to go over Regional School Budget: Budget increase buy 19.4 million dollars, 1.7% increase, 2 new positions. 1.5% increase to teachers. (Tech program) Tech program is more expensive than regular students. James explained general process of budget. Bottom line is 10.4 million for operating budget. Enrollment is down. Assessment is down. James explained assessment, transportation assessment ect. Brookfield's Assessment up by \$839.00 from last year. Junior High roof project: For FY13 Budget, roof needs repair, we can get state assistant of 54% cost is over a million. The state will pick up 54% of this. This is all FYI our share would be about 300,000.00 for the 5 towns. Town of Brookfield would be about 11,000 are year for five years. Roof will last 25 to 30 years. Town has 60 days to decide this. James thinks this is a good deal, getting 54% from the state. Jerry wants to look at a 10 years plan. When he has more concrete numbers James will let us know. If doesn't go on the town meeting warrant this will happen.

Roger made a motion to adjourn; Jerry said we have more information to go over, Jerry has a disc for the Finance Committee Handbook, if anyone wants it will be in the AC cabinet. We can get the updated version of this for \$152.00 and we can take this up at the next meeting. If we do this we will all get a copy of this as of 2010. We would get the 2010 version, not many changes but it may be good to have. Mary Beth asked if we were members or is this renewal. Jerry said this is a renewal.

Jerry passed out FYI information.

Next meeting set for March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011 and April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Roger motion to adjourn, Tim second. Adjourned at 9:57 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Mundell

Brookfield Advisory Committee.

