

TOWN OF BROOKFIELD
SELECTMEN'S MEETING
TOWN HALL, BANQUET ROOM

MINUTES OF APRIL 25, 2006

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Joseph J. Klimavich called the meeting to order at 7:37 p.m. Other members present: Beverly A. Lund and James W. Allen.

Others Present: Herbert Chaffee, Highway Superintendent.

Ms. Lund explained that she had a complaint against Mr. Chaffee and she had written it down and passed it out to all present. It was agreed that Ms. Lund would read the complaint aloud.

Following the reading, Mr. Klimavich asked Mr. Chaffee for his response. He stated that he felt that a fair amount of the information was incorrect. Specifics of the written complaint were discussed and the following are some of the comments:

- Mr. Chaffee stated he “is not a politician” and “not a good speaker” and gets upset easily.
- Ms. Lund said that she feels that she is a trigger for Mr. Chaffee.
- Mr. Chaffee said that she isn’t always the trigger but he felt she has had it out for him from day one. Ms. Lund disagreed and stated that she had tried to work with him and gave some examples.
- Mr. Klimavich said that decisions are made by the Board, each member has his/her own different level of expertise; individual Board members may gather information during the week but it is the Board that makes the decisions.
- Mr. Chaffee felt he was being second guessed.
- Mr. Allen asked what to do about the issue of Mr. Chaffee being discourteous to Ms. Lund. Ms. Lund feels that Mr. Chaffee treats her differently from other Board of Selectmen members. Each felt they had a problem with the other’s tone of voice. Mr. Klimavich said that if this were occurring neither was acceptable behavior and was each other’s perception of reality.
- Mr. Klimavich said that the Board wanted and needed to support Mr. Chaffee with the public but when several complaints are received it is hard to do so.
- Mr. Chaffee agreed that sometimes his voice gets high; often it is because he is working with loud equipment. Mr. Klimavich told Mr. Chaffee that he needs to be more sensitive to this fact. It was agreed that Mr. Chaffee’s type of job was more apt to receive citizen complaints than other town positions so he needs to be more calm when handling these situations and to bring them to the Board to help him if necessary.
- Ms. Lund stated that her complaint was not the only one that has been made against Mr. Chaffee.

- Mr. Klimavich told Mr. Chaffee that the Board knows how busy he has been in the past year and that he has accomplished a lot for the Town. Mr. Allen said that Mr. Chaffee's performance during the October flood was excellent and it was a shame that these other complaints detract from the good job that he does.
- There was discussion of reports due the Board from Mr. Chaffee and how he would be clear of the Board's expectations. The Board told him they knew he couldn't make a schedule that would stay accurate because things come up and he helps other departments but he could make a schedule and put special things he does in his monthly report. Ms. Lund stated that if the Board has his schedule of road work, street sweeping, plowing plan, etc. when a call/complaint is received they would be able to advise the complainant as to when they could expect the work to be done. This would eliminate a lot of problems.
- Mr. Allen told Mr. Chaffee that when he gets a complaint, he should handle it immediately. Ms. Lund asked Mr. Chaffee what the Board could do to help him. Mr. Klimavich suggested Mr. Chaffee keep a log by his telephone to add to and check off completed items. Ms. Lund said she knew he needed someone on a regular basis to help him with office details.
- Mr. Chaffee's current office staff has been doing what she can but she's only been able to give him a couple of hours a week doing his payroll and Chapter 90 work.
- Mr. Klimavich said that Ms. Lund has requested discipline and he asked Mr. Chaffee if he felt it appropriate to place Ms. Lund's letter in his personal file. He explained that the Town has the progressive discipline policy so that each employee will know what is expected of him/her. He told Mr. Chaffee that he needs to know that the Board is serious about bringing a halt to this type of behavior; for him to be confident in his job. Mr. Klimavich said that he felt that much progress had been made tonight with opening dialog. He didn't expect a problem going forward.
- Mr. Allen asked how Mr. Chaffee felt about his relationship with Ms. Lund. Mr. Chaffee replied that if both could talk civilly to each other, all would be fine. Ms. Lund suggested they both take deep breath and try hard to change their old behaviors.
- Ms. Lund stated that it is very hard to talk to Mr. Chaffee as his attitude changes the minute she talks to him and this was evident at the last Selectmen's meeting.
- Mr. Klimavich said that Ms. Lund had requested a formal verbal warning be placed in Mr. Chaffee's personnel file along with the letter of complaint. He explained that if this is done and Mr. Chaffee has no other incidents, the verbal warning would be moot. He said that this Board must be committed to supporting Mr. Chaffee in situations when he is in conflict or potential conflict; Mr. Chaffee should delay interactions until he has the support of the Board.
- Ms. Lund said that the verbal written warning should only include #1 from her letter: "Displaying a disrespectful or inappropriate behavior toward a resident, fellow employee or supervisor".
- Mr. Chaffee apologized to Ms. Lund and she accepted the apology.
- Mr. Chaffee wanted to be sure that he was taking orders/direction from the Board and not from an individual. Mr. Allen agreed there needs to be some process. It

was agreed that directions that the Board votes would come to Mr. Chaffee through the Administrative Assistant.

- Ms. Lund felt that she still has a right to request information from Mr. Chaffee or have questions answered as an individual. But Mr. Allen and Mr. Klimavich both referenced an example in which Ms. Lund had requested information about road types. In the absence of an explanation as to why she was asking for the information, it was understandable why Mr. Chaffee would question the request.

Ms. Lund moved to place a copy of the complaint into Mr. Chaffee's personnel file and to complete the Town of Brookfield Employee Progressive Discipline Form, checking off "Verbal Warning" to be placed into the file also after signing; Mr. Allen seconded; so voted.

It was agreed that since this is an on-going matter, these minutes would not be released for publication while Mr. Chaffee is a Town employee.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Klimavich entertained a motion to adjourn; Ms. Lund so moved; Mr. Allen seconded. Ms. Lund voted aye, Mr. Allen voted aye, Mr. Klimavich voted aye. The Executive Session was adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna L. Neylon
Administrative Assistant

Date Approved by Board: _____

DATE RELEASED: 10/30/12