

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

MINUTES OF February 28, 2007

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Executive Session opened at 7:02 pm. with Barbara Clancy, Barbara Steadman, Matthew Bansfield and Linda Barron present.

The Trustees are concerned that the press was notified of an incident at the library involving teenage patrons taping footage in the Library and placing this footage on web pages. The press had stated that the Library Director's future with the library was in question. The Trustees wanted to go on record to say that they did not call the press and that they were fully behind Brenda Metterville, Library Director. The Trustees had refused to speak to the press.

The Selectmen indicated they were not aware of the situation until notified of the incident by Chief Ackerman and each of the Selectmen stated that they did not call the press.

Mrs. Clancy said that the TV press brought a circus atmosphere and the Trustees felt that an individual had said something that led to the press coming and thinking that Mrs. Metterville was at fault. The Trustees were willing to "let that alone now" but want to critique what happened and set a policy to attempt to avoid future bad press.

There was discussion of how reporters get their story leads.

The Trustees felt that the situation could have been handled more carefully, that their department was compromised and that the children are treated nicely at the library, they get help with their homework and the library is a place for them to go. When a child gets a library card, the parent must sign a card declaring responsibility for what the children see. Computer monitors are all in view and easy to observe. Except for two with parental control all are easily visible from the front desk. There is a sign in sheet for use of the computers.

Mr. Bansfield, also a trustee, conducts routine reviews of the computers and deletes temporary internet files after first reviewing them for pornography, etc.

The filming that was done without the Library's permission or knowledge had to have been uploaded from another location as the Library's computers are not capable. Equipment for the filming was not provided by the Library. When the taping was done, one supervisor was out sick; normally there are at least two adults on duty.

Mr. Dackson said that he had reviewed one tape that he had seen on YouTube.

Mrs. Clancy said that Brenda's voice can be heard telling the boys not to tape. They apparently turned the camera back on without her knowledge. Again Mrs. Clancy said that the Trustees want "this type of thing handled more professionally: and "that a policy is needed".

Mrs. Clancy said that the Police Department was notified immediately (Tuesday, February 20th) and that the filming was done on Feb. 8th; discovered about two weeks later. The press was in Town on February 23rd. Three male juveniles were involved so the matter was turned over to the police.

Mr. Allen moved for the Selectmen to investigate if a town department had mishandled information, what their policies are and get back to the trustees; Mr. Dackson seconded. Ms. Lund voted aye; Mr. Allen voted aye; Mr. Dackson voted aye; so voted.

Ms. Lund said she thought that Town Counsel should be consulted when the TV news is involved.

7:30 PM:

Chief Ackerman and Brenda Metterville were invited to attend the meeting.

Mr. Allen reviewed the situation and said that the Trustees were concerned with the way that information was handled once on TV and said that the Board had voted to investigate, asking for information how such a situation is handled and asking for policies present, if any.

Chief Ackerman said his department operates under ICS (Incident Command System) and NIMS (National Incident Command System). He suggested that others should take the course.

The Chief was asked if there was any current criminal investigation regarding Mrs. Metterville and he responded that there was not. He said that "perps" often try to turn the case around and make charges against the person(s) who make charges against them though.

Chief Ackerman said that the department often gets calls for information that is in their general logs, He said that when News 25 contacted them (police) they (News 25) already knew that another press had the story. Dispatch records will indicate what day the first call came in from the newspapers.

Mrs. Metterville said that she turned in her statement on Thursday at about 11:30 am and the press was in Town on Friday morning.

Chief Ackerman said that the story could have gotten out because the individuals (juveniles) involved had sent the "video" to some of their friends in Malden before it was pulled from You Tube. There was no way to prove who released the information to the press.

Mrs. Barron asked the Chief if it was common for a story that makes the paper for a TV station to show up and are they welcomed by Town Officials? Chief Ackerman said that he welcomed them to show vigilance.

Mr. Allen said that he saw the interview of Chief Ackerman on TV. Chief Ackerman said that the TV news wanted to see the crime scene and he took them to the library during regular hours.

Mrs. Barron said that when dealing with matters with children, it is important to try to impress upon them without bringing in the outside world because this magnifies the problems and gives them a forum. This was not the best way to handle the problem; it was not a crime scene and the Police Department was “making a mountain out of a mole hill”. She asked the Chief if there was an opportunity for more of a relationship between the Library and the Police and the Chief said that there was and that he and Brenda had already discussed using the DARE program more at the library.

Mrs. Metterville said that the problem discussed involved only the smallest percentage of the users at the library. They have a 3 strikes, you’re out for a few weeks policy at the library; there are certain rules the patrons must abide by. She stressed the income and transient issue with the teens in Town and said that this was the first incident in her eight years at the library.

A need for more programs for the youth in town was discussed. Mr. Allen said that maybe too much pressure was being put on the library as a place for teens to hang out.

Mrs. Clancy said that Mrs. Metterville is helping the children with their schoolwork and, as a result several are passing now that weren’t before. She also said that there 120 families making use of the food pantry.

Chief Ackerman agreed that the Library programs are making a positive impact on the teens.

The Trustees said that they may ask permission to work with Town Counsel for polices/procedures to protect the library and they will fill out the necessary form.

Chief Ackerman suggested they contact the Attorney General’s office for assistance at no cost.

Ms. Lund told the Trustees if there are any further incidents or an emergency to call the Administrative Assistant who can get a consensus of the Board members and give permission for legal counsel. This action will be ratified at the Board’s next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

Ms. Lund entertained a motion to adjourn and not to return to open session; Mr. Allen so moved; Mr. Dackson seconded. Ms. Lund voted Aye, Mr. Allen voted Aye, Mr. Dackson voted Aye; so voted. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna L. Neylon
Administrative Assistant

Date Approved by Board: _____

DATE RELEASED: 11/27/2012