

**TOWN OF BROOKFIELD**  
**SELECTMEN'S MEETING**  
**TOWN HALL, SELECTMEN'S OFFICE**

**MINUTES OF JANUARY 6, 2010**

**SPECIAL SESSION**

Vice Chairman James Allen called the meeting to order at 9:00 m and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance. Other members present: Peter O'Connell; Rudy Heller was excused.

**Camera Operator:** Michael Jones

**Press:** David Dore

**Public:** John David Holdcraft, Acting Police Chief Christopher Welsh, William Simpson

**APPROVAL OF WARRANTS:**

Mr. O'Connell moved to ratify approval of the Warrants of December 29, 2009 in the amounts of \$160,034.40 (Payroll) and \$32,873.00 (Expense); and to approve the Expense Warrant of January 5, 2010 in the amount of \$35,718.05; Mr. Allen seconded; so voted.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

There were no minutes.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Mr. Allen read various announcements which included:

**Public Hearing:** 1/26/10 at 7:15 pm as part of the Selectmen's Meeting to review the Fiscal Year 2010 Community Development Block Grant Application.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF MONTHLY REPORTS & MINUTES**

Mr. O'Connell moved to acknowledge the receipt of the following monthly reports and minutes; Mr. Allen seconded; so voted.

CDBG Advisory Comm.: 11/17/09	Fire Dept.: December 2009
Treasurer's Cash Reconciliation: 8/31/2009; 9/30/2009	EMS: December 2009
Tax Collector: December 2009	Common/Mall Committee: 11/09/09
Town Hall Custodian: December 2009	Planning Board: 11/04/2009

**Public Access Period:**

John David Holdcraft said there definitely was a “tree cutting policy” and he was “disappointed” that it couldn’t be located at the last meeting. He said that the Administrative Assistant had alluded that he had walked on the slate roof and that was why there was not a warranty on the roof. He said he would never walk on the roof as it was too steep; that he was “not going to be a punching bag”; the slate is still falling off; “had been signed off by the Board of Selectmen, the same as the gutters”.

*Old Business:*

**1. TAX TITLE PROPERTIES**

Mr. Dunbar, Treasurer, had given the Board a printout of the tax title properties in town, excepting the property at the former Lakeside Resort and Campground on Hobbs Avenue. Mr. O'Connell explained that was because that property was in litigation. Mr. O'Connell also explained that this report was created as a result of part of the auditor’s report that said the Town should make progress in resolving tax title issues in case the town needed to borrow. The total value of the properties listed in this report was \$129,800. According to Mr. O'Connell, much of this land is either wetlands or abuts wetlands so it may not have its full value when sold. He further stated that about half dozen of these properties may be worth pursuing as their value is about \$60,000. There was no further discussion and Mr. Dunbar will be asked to attend a January meeting of the Board to discuss the matter further.

**2. POLICE BOAT**

The boat that the police department had purchased with the aid of a Jeppson Grant and Community Policing grants has never been used. Acting Chief Christopher Welsh was present to explain that, at this time, the Police Department was not interested in maintaining ownership of the boat. He stated that they did not have any Community Policing funding available to train the officers in the proper use of the boat. Chief Welsh said the Fire Department had the training, access to the boat and the ability to tow it to where it would be needed.

When asked if the boat was in the condition that the Town thought it should be, Chief Welsh said that, in the perspective of the seller, it was. After the initial delivery, the Selectmen had directed the boat to be returned to the dealer for certain changes; Chief Welsh indicated that although the boat was at the dealers for an extended period of time, it did not appear to him that any changes had been made.

Mr. O'Connell stated that Fire Chief Peter Martell and the firefighters had tested the boat and felt it was safe but needed minor changes. Chief Martell believed that the Town should retain ownership of the boat. The Board agreed to ask Chief Martell to attend their Wednesday, January 20<sup>th</sup> meeting so that the matter could be discussed further.

3. **APPROVE SELECTMEN'S BUDGETS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2011**

The budgets, as prepared by the Administrative Assistant, were reviewed by the Board members. All were level-funded except for an increase of \$10,000 to the General Insurance Account. The budgets will be reviewed again in context with the other budgets of the departments that report to the Selectmen and then be turned over to the Advisory Committee. Budgets received for FY 2011 from other departments will be turned directly over to the Advisory Committee.

4. **TREE TRIMMING & CUTTING: NATIONAL GRID**

A report from National Grid was given to the Selectmen via the Tree Warden. This report includes 20 trees to be cut and 2 to be trimmed. Some of the trees are in the center of the Town but none are on scenic roads. Some trees are on private property. National Grid will notify those property owners themselves but the Town will hold a public hearing as part of the Selectmen's meeting on January 26, 2010 at 7:45 pm. It is understood that the expected cutting and trimming will be done during February.

*New Business:*

5. **SIGN WARRANTS FOR JANUARY 19, 2010 SPECIAL ELECTIONS**

The Selectmen signed the warrants for the January 19, 2010 Special Election for State Senator and the warrants for the January 19, 2010 Special Election to determine if the Town Clerk's position should change from elected to appointed.

6. **BUILDING CODE EFFECTIVENESS - ISO**

A request was received from the Building Inspector that the Selectmen write a letter to Senator Brewer to complain about the recent rating given to the Town of Brookfield by ISO (Insurance Services Offices, Inc.) Brookfield's rate, and that of many towns in the area, has increased because ISO states the state's building codes do not represent the latest edition of Model Codes available. That could mean that the insurance companies will charge homeowners more for their policies. This also affects new residential and commercial construction. The Town must act within the 90-day waiting period. The Selectmen thought about having the Building Inspector attend one of their meetings but decided to ask the joint Boards of Selectmen to discuss the matter at their January 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Mr. O'Connell explained that he had confirmation from the Town's insurance agent that this change would not affect the Town Hall Barrier Removal project.

7. **REVIEW “COMP TIME” POLICY**

Mr. Allen said that there were problems with the “Comp Time Policy” because people would receive the time at one rate and then would take it at another. Mr. O'Connell said that that the Town’s by-laws and state laws state there should be no comp time for employees but the Selectmen have an operating policy that allows it; this needs to be resolved.

Mr. O'Connell suggested meeting with the staff or to ask the staff to review the policy and poll them and then to forward the revised policy to the Personnel Committee; then to Town meeting to remove comp time from the by-laws. All agreed the matter of comp time must be made clear to all. The Administrative Assistant will ask the members of the STAM organization how this is handled in their towns; Mr. O'Connell will draft the initial changes and the matter will come before the Board again.

*Correspondence:*

8. **MMA ANNUAL MEETING AND TRADE SHOW IN JANUARY**

The Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA will be holding their annual meeting and trade show on January 22 and 23 in Boston. Mr. O'Connell announced that he planed on attending and was paying his own expenses; he also said that he understood that Mr. Heller also planned on attending. There was the question of whether or not this should be posted as a “meeting” and the Administrative Assistant will check with other STAM members to see how they handle it. The initial thought of the Board was that posting was not necessary as they would be attending workshops and would not be discussing Brookfield business.

9. **CLEAR CREEK ESTATES (FORMERLY THE GLEN)**

A copy of the Planning Board’s letter to the current owners of Clear Creek Estates, formerly known as “The Glen” was reviewed by the Selectmen. The Planning Board asked for assurance that the road would be finished before the bond expires. There is no action needed by the Selectmen at this time.

10. **PUBLIC HEARING – CHARTER COMMUNICATIONS**

There will be a Public Hearing regarding Charter Communications bankruptcy proceedings; this Hearing will be held on January 10, 2010 in Boston.

There was some discussion of the ten year contract that the Town currently has with Charter Communications and Mr. O'Connell wondered if the Selectmen could lobby for better service. The Board agreed to ask Mr. Heller to review the contract for leverage that the town may have and the significance of the bankruptcy proceedings on the contract.

*Other:*

**11. FY 2011 BUDGET AND MEETING WITH SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

Mr. O'Connell presented his draft letter to Supt. Daniel Durgin for the Board's review. The letter acknowledged Mr. Durgin's willingness to attend a meeting of the Brookfield Board of Selectmen and suggested certain topics of discussion. The letter was approved.

**Public Access Period:**

John David Holdcraft spoke about the budget process for fiscal year 2011 and told the Selectmen that the "DOR clearly states that the Board of Selectmen do not make the budget up, that the Advisory Committee should do this". He further stated that the "Advisory Committee is headed to be a rubber stamp board", it should be "a separate entity from the rest of the Town"; the confusion at the last Annual Town Meeting was because of the 1% COLA (cost of living) given to the employees against the recommendation of the Advisory Committee and that there was "more control from you guys".

*Other:*

**12.** There was general discussion while the Board members reviewed the Expense Warrant. Topics were:

Account balances: None are in the red at this point; still plenty in the Municipal Heating; about 50% left in the Snow and Ice Account.

**13.** Reporter from the Spencer New Leader, David Dore, asked the Board if there was anything to report regarding Police Chief Ross Ackerman's leave. Both Mr. O'Connell and Mr. Allen reported "no comment and no changes to report at this time".

**ADJOURNMENT:**

At 10:27 a.m. Mr. O'Connell moved adjourn the meeting; Mr. Allen seconded; so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna L. Neylon, Administrative Assistant

Date approved by Board: \_\_\_\_\_