

TOWN OF BROOKFIELD
SELECTMEN'S MEETING
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, LIBRARY

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 23, 2010

Chairman Rudy Heller called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance. Other members present: James Allen and Peter O'Connell.

Camera Operator: David Holdcraft

Press: Karen Trainor

Public: John David Holdcraft, Barbara Wilson

APPROVAL OF WARRANTS:

Mr. Allen moved to approve the Payroll Warrant of February 23, 2010 in the amount of \$168,464.33; Mr. Heller seconded; so voted.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Allen moved to approve the minutes of Selectmen's Executive Session meetings of February 17, 2010 as amended; Mr. Heller seconded; so voted.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF MONTHLY REPORTS & MINUTES: None received.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mr. Heller read various announcements.

Public Access Period:

John David Holdcraft objected to the votes taken by the Advisory Committee to approve the payment from the Reserve Fund of \$1500 to the Town Accountant to maintain the FY11 budget spreadsheet for both the Advisory Committee and the Board of Selectmen and to link that spreadsheet with other financial data kept by the Town Accountant. He also questioned the Advisory Committee approval of her request for a new computer and printer, since her current ones were at risk. Mr. Holdcraft cited Department of Revenue guidelines suggesting that the Reserve Fund be used only for emergencies or expenses that could not have been foreseen in the budget process. Mr. Heller inquired what the vote of the Advisory Committee had been on these matters. Mr. Holdcraft replied that the vote had been 6-2. Mr. Heller and Mr. O'Connell said they felt the Advisory Committee had the authority to determine whether these items were unanticipated expenses and had done so.

Mrs. Wilson felt that both of these expenses could have been anticipated and that the Advisory Committee was abusing the Reserve Fund. She also noted that she had not been receiving minutes of the Advisory Committee and the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Heller responded that the backlog of BOS minutes had been addressed at the last Board of Selectmen's meeting and he believed that the Advisory Committee was doing so as well.

Old Business:

1. **BOSTON POST CANE**

Mr. Allen moved and Mr. Heller seconded a motion to award the Boston Post Cane to Mrs. Grace Prizio, certified by the Town Clerk as the current oldest resident of Brookfield and to authorize the Chairman to set up a ceremony at which he and the Town Clerk would present the cane to her at a time mutually convenient to all; so Voted.

Mr. Allen noted that both he and Mr. O'Connell had suggested edits to the policy drafted by Town Clerk Linda Lincoln. Further, Mr. Allen expressed concern that the policy did not address the situation in which an elderly person moved into a health care facility in Brookfield and lived there for five years (minimum length of residence in the proposed policy), but had otherwise not been a resident. Mr. Heller agreed to work with the Town Clerk to revise the policy and put it on the agenda for discussion and approval at a Selectmen's meeting in the near future.

2. **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN:**

Since no further information was available from BEMA Coordinator Keith Karmann, the Board passed over this item.

3. **RESPONSE TO MASTER PLAN REQUEST FOR INFORMATION NEEDED FOR THE GOVERNANCE CHAPTER OF THE MASTER PLAN**

Mr. Heller reported that Bill Simpson had agreed to remove from the proposed survey questions which asked for an evaluation of current government services. He will now proceed to answer questions with input provided by Mr. Allen and Mr. O'Connell as they see fit.

4. **REVIEW OF THE DRAFT SELECTMEN'S ANNUAL REPORT**

A second draft of the Selectmen's Annual Report was provided that did not yet include Mr. Allen's comments. Mr. Allen said his comments were primarily edits and complimented Mr. O'Connell on the thoroughness and quality of the report. Mr. Heller said he would make his comments before the next meeting so the Board could approve the report.

New Business

1. **QQLA PRESENTATION: LONG-TERM PLANT MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Because the representatives of the QQLA were not present, this item was deferred to a future meeting.

2. **MEMA PROXY VOTE**

This item was passed over.

3. **LOCATION OF THE MARCH 3, 2010 PUBLIC HEARING ON THE TOWN HALL RENOVATION PROPOSAL**

Mr. Heller noted the conflict between the March 3, 2010 Town Hall Renovation Project Hearing and a scheduled Planning Board Public Hearing. Mr. O'Connell moved and Mr. Allen seconded a motion to hold the Town Hall Public Hearing in the cafeteria of the Brookfield Elementary School on March 3, 2010 at 7 P.M. and to notify all parties of the change in location; so voted.

4. **LOCATION OF THE MARCH 18, 2010 SPECIAL TOWN MEETING**

Mr. Heller noted that the Board had previously scheduled the Special Town Meeting to occur in the Great Hall/Auditorium of the Town Hall on March 18, 2010 at 7:00 P.M. Because of concerns related to ADA compliance by Mrs. Neylon and Mr. Seery, the Board discussed whether to change the location of the meeting to the Brookfield Elementary School. Mr. Allen expressed his strong feeling that the fate of the Town Hall should be settled in the Town Hall if at all possible. Mr. O'Connell concurred, on the condition that Mr. Heller checks with state authorities to see if our proposed accommodations of two-way television and microphone set-up and port-a-johns would satisfy ADA requirements. Mr. Heller agreed to do this and report to the Board at its next meeting.

5. **REQUEST TO USE TOWN COUNSEL BY THE CEMETERY COMMISSION**

Mr. Heller noted that the Cemetery Commissioners had received correspondence from owners of cemetery plots offering to gift some plots to the Town in one case and to sell them back to the Town in the other. They requested permission to work with Town Counsel to develop a template to transfer ownership. Mr. O'Connell suggested that before using Town Counsel, the Commissioners first consult Cemetery Commissioners in other towns to see if they have legal forms already approved by Town Counsel for such purposes. Mr. Heller agreed to convey this information to the Commissioners and suggested that Donna Neylon put out the same request to STAM colleagues.

Mr. O'Connell raised the question of the apparent conflict in the Cemetery regulations approved by the Town Meeting in 2005, which gave authority to the Cemetery Commissioners to sign deeds for cemetery plots and the Town by-laws which give that authority only to the Selectmen. Mr. Heller agreed to discuss the issue with the Cemetery Commissioners and to put an article before the Town meeting to either change the by-law or to change the Cemetery regulations. The consensus on the Board was to retain the authority to convey deeds, though perhaps with the signature of the Cemetery Commissioners on deeds for cemetery plots.

6. **BUDGET DEVELOPMENT**

Mr. Allen reported that Highway Superintendent Chaffee estimates the cost of moving the Salt Shed to the Highway Department property is \$35,000, but that it may be done in increments. Mr. Allen noted that there was only \$42,000 in the Town Hall Improvement Account and that some of that amount is already budgeted for Town Hall expenses. Therefore it would not be prudent to spend much money from that account to move the Salt Shed.

Mr. Allen also suggested that the Board consider whether to adopt a zero-based budgeting approach for a couple of departments each year.

Mr. O'Connell reported that the Tantasqua budget currently projects a \$92,000 increase in Brookfield's assessment for the regional school and for regional school transportation. The transportation figure is based on a lower state reimbursement than the Governor's budget, so there is a possibility that Superintendent Dan Durgin would use the Governor's figure. However, Senator Brewer and Representative Gobi are suggesting that towns and schools should prepare for a 5% cut in both Chapter 70 school aid and in local aid. A joint House-Senate resolution is due soon, so that will undoubtedly inform budget planning.

The Board agreed to devote the majority of time at its March 3, 2010 meeting to budget planning and review on the following schedule:

9:00	Routine items
9:15 – 9:45	BOS Discussion of Budget Initiatives and Parameters
9:45	Meet with Town Accountant Betty Benoit to review red flags on FY10 budget and the preliminary FY11 budget
10:30	Establish meeting schedule with Departments as recommended by Rudy Heller and Donna Neylon
10:45	Other Board business.

Correspondence

Mr. Allen noted the letter from Stantec requesting an increase in its budget for the Common and Lincoln Street CDBG project. The Board agreed to discuss this matter at its next meeting after the construction bids for the project are opened.

Public Access Period:

John David Holdcraft asked for an update on the Town's request to the Governor to validate the ballot vote in favor making the Town Clerk an appointed position. Mr. O'Connell reported that Representative Gobi had said that it would be difficult, though not impossible, to have the Governor's bill approved before the March 22 deadline by which Town Clerk Linda Lincoln needs to initiate the ballot printing process for the May election.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 8:19 p.m. Mr. Allen moved adjourn the meeting; Mr. Allen seconded; so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter S. O'Connell, Clerk

Date approved by Board: _____