

TOWN OF BROOKFIELD
SELECTMEN'S MINUTES
TOWN HALL, SELECTMEN'S OFFICE

MINUTES OF June 29, 2010

REGULAR SESSION

Chairman Rudy Heller called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. Other members present: James W. Allen and Peter S. O'Connell.

Local Cable Access Camera Operator: None

Press: Ruth Lyons, Karen Trainor

Public: Acting Police Chief Christopher Welsh, Retired North Brookfield Police Sergeant Doug Blood, Barbara Wilson, David Holdcraft

Mr. O'Connell moved to enter Executive Session and Mr. Allen seconded, giving reason #2 below and to return to Open Session immediately thereafter; so voted with Mr. Allen voting aye; Mr. O'Connell voting aye; and Mr. Heller voting aye.

(2) "To consider the discipline or dismissal of or to hear complaints or charges brought against a public officer, employee, staff member or individual."

At about 7:50 PM, Mr. Heller called the Open Session back to order. As required by the Open Meeting law, Mr. Heller announced that Mr. Holdcraft had informed him that he was videotaping the meeting with his own camera.

Mr. O'Connell moved to ratify the expense warrant of 6/22/10 in the amount of \$88,147.13 and the wire transfer for the same date of \$23.36 and further to approve the payroll warrant of 6/29/10 in the amount of \$376,422.15; so voted.

Mr. Allen moved to acknowledge the reports and minutes of the Recreation Committee for 5/17/10 and 6/7/10 and the Town Hall Custodian's report for May 2010; so voted.

Mr. Heller read the announcements as printed on the agenda.

Mr. Heller noted that with the decision by Acting Police Chief Welsh to take a position with the Palmer Police Department effective July 1, 2010, the Town needed to appoint an acting Chief of Police no later than that evening until such time as the Town could select a permanent Chief of Police. He noted that the West Brookfield Board of Selectmen were considering the Town's proposal to hire West Brookfield Police Chief O'Donnell as Brookfield's Acting Chief of Police on a ten-hour-per-week consulting basis and would call later in the meeting with their decision. Mr. Heller called on Acting Chief Welsh to present retired North Brookfield Police Sergeant Doug Blood as a possible candidate.

Chief Welsh noted Officer Blood's 14 years of experience as a patrolman and 14 years as administrative Sergeant, his academy training, his knowledge of area towns and their police departments and his excellent reputation and suggested that he would be highly qualified to serve as the permanent Chief of Police, should he wish to come out of retirement.

Officer Blood indicated that his only desire was to serve as an interim Chief and that he would happily make himself available for 20 hours per week to perform the duties of an Acting Chief of Police for the Town of Brookfield. After some further discussion, Mr. Allen moved and Mr. O'Connell seconded a motion to appoint Officer Doug Blood as Brookfield's Acting Chief of Police effective July 1, 2010 to serve until such time as the Town could appoint a permanent Chief of Police and to authorize Mr. O'Connell to negotiate specific terms of employment that would be satisfactory to Officer Blood and the Board of Selectmen; so voted. Mr. Allen complimented Acting Chief Blood on his fine reputation. Mr. O'Connell noted with appreciation the role Chris Welsh had played in securing commitments from both Doug Blood and Chief Tom O'Donnell to serve as Acting Chief, thereby avoiding a situation in which the Town had no Acting Chief.

Serendipitously, West Brookfield Administrative Assistant Johanna Barry called to notify the Board that the West Brookfield Board of Selectmen had voted to allow Chief O'Donnell to serve as Brookfield's Acting Chief of Police. Mr. O'Connell asked her to inform her Selectmen that the Brookfield Board had just appointed Doug Blood as Acting Chief and to express the Brookfield Board of Selectmen's great appreciation to both the West Brookfield Selectmen and to Chief O'Donnell for their willingness to extend their helping hand. Mr. Allen moved and Mr. O'Connell seconded a motion to have Mr. O'Connell, as Clerk of the Board, write a letter of appreciation to the West Brookfield Board of Selectmen; so voted.

1. **SETTING BOARD PRIORITIES:** This was deferred to the next BOS meeting.
2. **PERFORMANCE REVIEWS:**

Mr. O'Connell noted that last year's final copies of the employee performance reviews had not been distributed due to a miscommunication between the Administrative Assistant and the Board. Mr. Allen moved and Mr. O'Connell seconded the motion to have Ms. Neylon distribute these reviews as soon as possible, to obtain employee signatures, and to make copies for the employees' and BOS files.

For current year performance evaluations, the Board agreed to use the performance evaluation form approved last year, to have each Selectman do the performance reviews on Town employees within their areas of liaison, and to set a goal of completing the reviews by August 4th so they can be discussed by the Board.

3. LIAISON SYSTEM FOR FY11

Mr. Allen said that he had only minor objections to the way the liaison system worked over the past year. His only concern with the operation of the liaison system over the past year was that on occasion an employee speaking to one Selectman may have thought the Selectman was speaking for the whole Board. Mr. O'Connell noted that he was experiencing a time crunch in attempting to provide liaison to both the Police Department and the financial team, given the number of issues that had required board attention over the past year. The Board agreed to further discuss the possible rotation of liaison duties at a future meeting.

4. AWARDING OF CONTRACT FOR INSPECTION OF SAW MILL POND DAM

Proposals were received from Tighe and Bond, Fuss and O'Neill, and Lenard Engineering. After a brief discussion in which Mr. O'Connell noted that the Town was already working with Fuss and O'Neill on the Finney Brownfield assessment, which could mean a stronger working relationship, Mr. Allen moved and Mr. O'Connell seconded the motion to award the contract to Fuss and O'Neill of West Springfield for the amount of \$3400.

5. MASTER PLAN ZONING CHAPTER FEEDBACK

Mr. Heller asked for another week to give his comments. Mr. Allen said he thought the Master Plan should take a stronger position in favor of the construction of a sewage system, given the poor drainage in the center of Town. Mr. O'Connell said his impression was that the Title V regulations and inspections had addressed several of the problems and asked Mr. Allen to check with the Board of Health to see if they agreed or would recommend the construction of a sewage system at some point in the future. Mr. Allen agreed to do this.

6. BRUSH POLICY

Mr. O'Connell presented the revised brush policy for Herbert Road to be implemented four Saturdays per fall and four Saturdays in the spring with a monitor provided for each Saturday. Mr. Allen had questions: (1) Do we need East Brookfield's permission, (2) What is the definition of "brush, (3) Will the brush be chipped or burned, and (4) If the brush is chipped, can residents have access to the chippings to be used as mulch? Mr. Allen agreed to get answers from the Highway Superintendent before the next meeting.

7. CHANGE OF DATE FOR CHIEF WELSH APPRECIATION EVENT

The Chris Welsh appreciation pot luck lunch originally scheduled for July 7 needs to be delayed because the Selectmen will be meeting with Town Counsel in Boston that day. Mr. Heller will work with the organizing Committee and Chief Welsh to schedule a new date. Mr. O'Connell noted that the by-law was ambiguous about whether Chris Welsh should be paid for unused vacation time, but that in his experience, departing employees are always paid for unused vacation time, but not for personal or sick time. Mr. O'Connell moved and Mr. Allen seconded the motion to authorize the Chair to resolve the question with the Treasurer. Mr. O'Connell asked for Board approval to allow him to do a performance review/exit interview with Chief Welsh. The Board agreed.

8. JULY, AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER SELECTMEN MEETING SCHEDULE

Ms. Neylon had prepared a listing of Tuesday evening and Wednesday morning meetings in alternating weeks for July, August and September. Mr. O'Connell moved and Mr. Allen seconded a motion to authorize Mr. Heller to have the Town Clerk post the meetings with the proviso that agendas will be posted for each meeting at least 48 hours in advance; so voted.

9. MUNICIPAL RELIEF TRANSFERS

Mr. Allen moved and Mr. O'Connell seconded the motion to approve the municipal transfers as requested by Department Heads and as recommended by Town Accountant Betty Benoit, with the proviso that Department heads do a better job of managing their budgets in the future or that they request transfers from the Advisory Committee Reserve Fund; so voted.

10. APPOINTMENTS

Mr. O'Connell moved that the Town Hall Barrier Removal Committee be made 7 members until such time as the Committee recommended a larger number and that Mr. O'Connell be reappointed to the Town Hall Barrier Removal Committee. Mr. Allen seconded the motion; so voted.

Mr. O'Connell moved that the Historical Commission consist of seven, rather than nine members. Mr. Allen volunteered to find out whether the Board of Selectmen could make that change or whether the legislature set the Commission size.

Mr. O'Connell moved and Mr. Allen seconded the motion to set the Local Cable Access Committee membership as five members, pending the recommendation of that Committee respecting its charge and the size and role of its committee members; so voted.

Mr. O'Connell moved and Mr. Heller seconded a motion to not reappoint Mrs. Lois Moores to a fixed term as Tax Collector at this time, but to continue to employ her as a holdover employee/Tax Collector through the end of December, 2010. Mr. O'Connell noted that this action would convey the Board's concerns about the high levels of uncollected taxes for the period 2002-2009, it would give Mrs. Moores the time she requested to complete the necessary paperwork to put the tax-delinquent properties into tax title or to collect the taxes, interests and fees due, and it would give the Board time to analyze the question of whether to appoint the same person to be tax collector and treasurer, an emerging trend in towns like Brookfield. Mr. Allen argued that the question of a joint Tax Collector-Treasurer should come to the Town at an annual Town meeting and that out of compassion; the Board should appoint Mrs. Moores for one year. Mr. O'Connell asked Mr. Allen if he agreed that the Town had a serious delinquent tax problem. Mr. Allen agreed, but said he still favored a one-year appointment. Mr. Heller and Mr. O'Connell voted aye and Mr. Allen voted Nay. Motion carried.

11. FINNEY PROPERTY BROWNFIELD SURVEY

Mr. O'Connell moved and Mr. Allen seconded the motion to authorize him to complete the brownfield assessment survey distributed by Fuss and O'Neill, engineers working as part of the Central Mass Regional Planning Commission grant to assess the Finney Property; so voted.

Public Access:

Barbara Wilson reported that the Elementary School Committee had approved funding to construct a playground at the Brookfield Elementary School. There is still some question about the exact location. She noted also that if the Selectmen were going to appoint a Police Chief Search committee, she would recommend that Principal Kathleen Hosterman be appointed. Finally, as a member of the Cultural Council, she asked that Mr. Holdcraft be reappointed because the committee needed men to do some of the heavy lifting.

Mr. Holdcraft complained about the directions of the Board and spoke about his opposition to the decision involving the Tax Collector. When he began making accusations about the Highway Superintendent and Town Hall Custodian, Mr. Heller first informed him that such accusations were out of order and to move on to a new subject. When he refused, Mr. Heller requested a motion for adjournment. Mr. O'Connell so moved. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter S. O'Connell, Clerk

Date approved by Board: _____