

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

MINUTES OF JANUARY 20, 2011

REGULAR SESSION

Note: the meeting was originally posted for 6:30 pm, Tuesday, January 18, 2011 at the Elementary School but because of weather conditions, it was re-scheduled to 1:00 pm, Thursday, January 20, 2011.

Chairman Rudy Heller called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. Other members present: James Allen and Peter O'Connell.

Camera Operator: Sharon Mahoney
Press: Jennifer Grybowski
Public: Police Chief Michael Blanchard, Nicholas Abair, Sean T. Moreno, and Mrs. Paula Abair.

Some items were taken out of original agenda order:

Old Business:

1. APPOINTMENTS

Because the camera could be at this meeting, Chairman Heller invited Police Chief Michael Blanchard to present his two new full-time officers (Nicholas Abair and Sean T. Moreno) at this meeting and review reviewed the employment background and hiring procedure for each new officer. The Board again welcomed the new officers and photographs were taken for the record.

APPROVAL OF WARRANTS:

Mr. O'Connell moved to approve the Expense Warrant in the amount of \$417,026.99 and the Wire Transfer of \$17.21 both for January 18, 2011 and to ratify the Expense Warrant of January 13, 2011 for \$1,000.00 and the Payroll Warrant for January 11, 2011 for \$172,488.22; Mr. Heller seconded; so voted.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The approval of minutes was passed over.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mr. Heller read various announcements which included a recognition award to the community for its Outstanding Solid Waste Program, the brush burning season information and the following schedule from the Town Clerk for the Annual Town Election to be held on Monday, May 2, 2011 from 9 am to 8 pm:

Nomination Papers available: Tuesday, Feb. 1, 2011; Last day to obtain and return nomination papers: Monday, March 14th at 5:00 pm; Last day to withdraw from ballot: Wednesday, March 30th at 8:00 pm and the last day to register to vote for the Election: Tuesday, April 12th at 8:00 pm.

Clearing of Sidewalks: Mr. O'Connell noted the busy winter season for the Highway Department and the fact that the Town's insurance carrier had advised the Town of increased liability should sidewalks are not cleared in a timely manner. When the Highway Superintendent found that the Town's snow-clearing "Bombardier" with its v-shaped plow could not clear the sidewalks, he asked for an emergency meeting of the Selectmen on January 13 to consider the purchase of a snow-blowing tractor and renewed his request for the purchase of a sander that could be towed by the Bombardier.

At the meeting, Highway Superintendent Chaffee informed the board that the Elementary School had approved the use of their snow-blowing tractor to clear the sidewalks, so an emergency purchase of a tractor was not necessary. Mr. O'Connell moved and Mr. Heller seconded a motion to authorize the purchase of a pull-behind sander for the Bombardier from the Snow and Ice Account at a cost not to exceed \$3,500, with the understanding that an equivalent amount of funds from the Highway Expense Account will be used in the Spring to pay for the overage in the Snow and Ice Account. Mr. Allen opposed the motion, saying that such purchases should be made at the Annual Town Meeting. The motion passed with Mr. Heller and Mr. O'Connell voting in favor and Mr. Allen against. Mr. Heller also thanked the Elementary School for the loan of their equipment and noted that the Town needs to consider a long-term solution during the upcoming budget process.

Mr. Heller noted that in response to a complaint from a citizen, snow had been cleared from sidewalks and Central Street opposite the Elementary School. He said that, with the cooperative effort of the citizens in being vigilant in notifying the Highway of any trouble spots that they see, the Highway Department will continue with clearing the sidewalks. Citizens were also reminded to be good neighbors and clear fire hydrants near their home and that they could obtain sand mixed with salt at the Highway Barn on Mill Street but the supply should not be abused or used for commercial use.

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.

Fire: December 2010

Police: December 2010

Recreation Committee: 11/1/10; 11/15/10; 12/6/10

Old Business continued:

2. STREET LIGHT ON GREEN STREET

A resident had requested that a street light on Green Street be turned back on, but Ms. Neylon had learned that the light had been paid for by a private citizen who stopped paying and authorized the removal of the light apparatus. Since the addition of a street light is a long-term financial commitment, and since the Police had found no safety hazard, Selectmen took no action.

3. IMA – OFFICE & CLEANING SUPPLY CONTRACT

Selectmen announced that the IMA (Inter-municipal Agreement) for Office Supplies had been unanimously approved at the Regional Selectmen's Meeting on January 13, 2011. The chosen vendor is W.B. Mason who will be in contact with all of the Town Departments soon. The vendor for the cleaning supplies was not announced.

4. DOR – FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REVIEW

The Department of Revenue Financial Management Review requested by the Selectmen will occur in late February.

5. CLASS II, III AUTO DEALER'S LICENSE REQUEST

Mr. Heller requested that this matter be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

6. BUDGET DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Mr. O'Connell reported that the Advisory Committee had met and the Town Accountant was making some minor, agreed upon changes to the format of the spread sheet; the cover memo was drafted and the package would be going out to Department Heads next week. The deadline for submission of budgets is the end of February.

7. APPOINTMENTS (BY-LAW COMMITTEE)

Letters of intent or e-mails had been received by the Board or forwarded by the Town Clerk that the following persons were interested in being appointed to the five-person By-Law Committee: James Cooke; Linda Lincoln; Cindy Mundell; Barbara Wilson. Verbal requests were received from Town Clerk, Michael Seery and, at this meeting, Chairman Rudy Heller.

Mr. O'Connell moved to appoint James Cooke, Rudy Heller, Cindy Mundell, Michael Seery and Barbara Wilson to the By-Law Committee; Mr. Heller seconded; so voted with Mr. O'Connell voting aye; Mr. Heller voting aye; and Mr. Allen abstaining. Mr. Heller will ask Mr. Seery to coordinate the first meeting of the committee.

New Business:

8. HAMPSHIRE COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (COG)

The contract with Hampshire Council of Governments (COG) for electricity for the coming year (electricity is currently supplied by National Grid) is due for renewal. Mr. Heller noted that the Town had realized substantial savings when it switched from National Grid to the Hampshire COG. However, the Board asked Procurement Coordinator Neylon to check rates from Constellation and National Grid before renewing the Hampshire COG contract.

Other (not on the posted agenda)

9. WAGE AUTHORIZATION FORMS – POLICE OFFICERS

Wage Authorization Forms (WAF) for new full-time police officers Abair and Marino were presented to the Board, reviewed and signed with the effective date as January 11, 2011. Since these were not new positions, the WAF's did not have to be approved by the Personnel Board but they will receive a copy for their records.

10. REPORTS FROM MR. ALLEN

Town Hall Roof: Earlier this week, snow cascaded from the Town Hall roof with such force that it reached the front sidewalk, as it has done from time-to-time since 1905 when the building was first built. Ms. Neylon said the Custodian will put out saw horses to block the sidewalk after a heavy snow when temperatures rise and snow is likely to come off the roof. The Administrative Assistant will call our engineering consultant ask the engineer to expedite cost estimates on (1) specifications for installation and/r replacement of roof tiles, (2) slate “catching” options, and (3) specifications for “reinforced snow guards.”

Town Hall ADA updates:

Mr. Allen said that he has contacted the Building Inspector regarding making the current first floor bathroom ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant. Mr. Taylor, the Building Inspector, had already done measuring and will give a plan to the Board with dimensions and approximate cost of carpentry for the project. Mr. Allen still needs to contact the Plumbing Inspector for a cost estimate.

Sidewalk safety:

Mr. Allen said that the Board needs a finite list of the sidewalks to be plowed and the order of priority. He again expressed his concern about the lack of sidewalks along Route 9 and the poor condition of those that exist, particularly on South Maple Street. Should the unsafe sidewalk be posted as such? What is the process to decertify a sidewalk? Mr. Allen agreed to draft a letter to MassDOT (Massachusetts Department of Transportation) and copy CMRPC (Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission), and Senator Brewer and Representative Gobi with these questions and concerns.

CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) Advisory Committee (AC) Meeting:

Mr. Allen announced that the CDBG AC will meet at 9:00 am on Monday, Jan. 24th and expects to have a recommendation for the Selectmen regarding the recent decision of the state to deny funding for the granite curbing installed as part of the CDBG-R project on Lincoln Street instead of asphalt curbing.

11. SAW MILL POND DAM REPORT:

Mr. Heller reported the results of his research:

- The 2/15/11 deadline to have the report filed at the Office of Dam Safety (ODS) is not a fixed date if the Town is clarifying issues with Fuss and O'Neil who developed the report. ;
- The report, once filed, will become the framework for future actions and correspondence regarding the dam. Therefore, the ODS representative advised the Town to review every item on Fuss & O'Neil's report with another engineer as the Town will need to rebut and/or refute statements in their report;
- There is a discrepancy in the height of the dam. This will need to be clarified because a dam of 6 feet or less IS NOT under the jurisdiction of the ODS. Fuss & O'Neil measured the dam as 11 feet but an earlier report by Tighe and Bond, on file at the ODS, lists the dam height as 6 ft.
- The dam is "significant" because a dam washout would wash out Lake Road;

In discussion, Mr. Heller recommended hiring a consultant to review our consultant's work but noted that there will be a cost. Mr. Heller will contact CMRPC and the North Brookfield Selectmen's office (they recently underwent a similar situation with a dam in their town). He will also get names and costs of consultants for this process. The Board agreed to schedule a meeting with Fuss & O'Neil before February 15th.

Mr. Heller said that Cindy Thompson, of the Highway Department, had done a considerable amount of research in an attempt to locate the plans of this dam all to no avail. She did, however, locate some documents and plans in Brookfield's possession that she would like to forward to other towns as they are of no use to us. Mr. O'Connell moved to authorize the Highway Department to distribute the records in the Town's possession as appropriate; Mr. Allen seconded; so voted.

12. POSSIBLE GIFT OF LAND TO THE TOWN:

Mr. O'Connell explained that the Board had received a memo from the Board of Assessors, passing along the willingness of a taxpayer's estate to grant to the Town a ¼ acre of a property that is in tax title. The Board agreed to ask the Highway Superintendent, Water Department Superintendent and Treasurer for their comments and/or recommendations.

13. CLOSING OF THE TOWN HALL:

Mr. Heller felt that there should be a sign out in front of the Town Hall on days when the building is closed to the public due an emergency. Ms. Neylon said that the Custodian already has such a sign and has created a way to mount the sign to the entryway to the building.

14. PERFORMANCE REVIEWS:

Mr. O'Connell moved to approve the Performance Reviews as submitted for the Director of EMS, Fire Chief, Town Accountant and the Town Treasurer; Mr. Allen seconded; so voted. The next step is to send them to the department heads, request their signatures and comments, and return them to the Selectmen for signatures.

ADJOURNMENT:

At about 2:45 pm, Mr. Heller entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session citing (and reading aloud) Exemptions three and six and to return to open session only to adjourn; Mr. O'Connell so moved; Mr. Allen seconded; so voted with Mr. Allen voting aye; Mr. O'Connell voting aye; and Mr. Heller voting aye.

Exception Three - "To discuss strategy relating to collective bargaining or to litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the governmental body, to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel, to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel."

Exception Six - "To consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property, if such discussions may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the governmental body and a person, firm or corporation."

As there was no further business before the Board, Mr. O'Connell moved to adjourn at about 3:30 pm; Mr. Heller seconded; so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna L. Neylon, Administrative Assistant

Date approved by Board: _____