

TOWN OF BROOKFIELD

SELECTMEN'S MEETING
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 15, 2011

REGULAR SESSION

Vice Chairman James Allen called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance. Other members present: Peter O'Connell. Excused: Rudy Heller

Camera Operator: None

Press: Jennifer Grybowski, Karen Trainor, David Dore

Public: John David Holdcraft

APPROVAL OF WARRANTS:

Mr. O'Connell moved to ratify the following Payroll Warrant of January 25, 2011 for \$180,350.12; to ratify following dated February 1, 2011: Expense Warrant \$61,148.08, Wire Transfer of \$139,035.00 and Motor Vehicle Refund 2010 for \$250.83; further to ratify the February 8, 2011 Payroll Warrant for \$174,987.14 and to approve the following for February 15, 2011: Expense Warrant for \$167,811.84, Wire Transfer of \$24,930.28 and Real Estate Abatement for 2010 for \$875.36; Mr. Allen seconded; so voted.

APPROVAL OF SELECTMEN'S MINUTES:

Mr. O'Connell moved to approve the Selectmen's minutes of: 12/29/10; 1/4/11; 1/13/11; and 1/25/11; Mr. Allen seconded; so voted.

MONTHLY REPORTS & MINUTES OF OTHER DEPARTMENTS:

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

Recreation Committee: 12/6/2010; 1/3/2011

EMS Dept.: January 2011

Conservation Commission: 12/21/2010

Fire Dept.: January 2011

Town Hall Custodian: Dec. 2010; Jan. 2011

Board of Health: 6/7/10; 1/11/11

Council on Aging: 1/19/2011

Tax Collector's receipts: 12/2010; 1/2011

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mr. Allen read the announcements which included the schedule for the Annual Town Election.

Old Business:

1. **REPORTS/UPDATES**

• **FY 12 Budget discussion:**

The Board agreed to have Mrs. Neylon schedule budget reviews with the Department Heads with the larger departments (Police, Highway, etc.) be allotted as much as 45 minutes, with meetings beginning on Wednesday, March 2nd at 1:00 pm. Mrs. Neylon will check with Senator Brewer's office for a schedule of when information would be ready on the State's budget.

• **Capital Improvement Planning Committee's (CIPC) first meeting:**

Mr. O'Connell reported that the first meeting of the CIPC had full attendance and the meeting was productive. Heather Lemeiux was elected Chairman; Jim Dunbar was elected the group's Treasurer, and Mr. O'Connell was elected Vice Chairman/Clerk. The committee has developed forms which were scheduled to be sent to all departments and committees today asking for capital requests for the next ten years to be submitted by March 3rd.

• **Formation of Agricultural Commission: No report.**

• **Teacher Negotiations:**

Mr. Allen reported that this group has had one meeting and the second is scheduled for February 16th. At the first meeting, requests were presented and ground rules were set.

• **Town Hall Roof & Barrier Removal Project:**

Mr. Allen reported that he is waiting for a report from the Building Inspector about the bathroom conversion before he contacts the Plumbing Inspector. He has also determined that the Town Counsel will not be involved in the roof repair project until it is time to review the RFP for repairs.

Mr. O'Connell had read the minutes of the February 8th meeting of the Board with the Council on Aging and senior citizens of the community and thought the meeting was promising related to the establishment of the Senior Center in the basement level of the Town Hall. He volunteered to talk with Bill Scanlan about CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) funding and strategy for a senior center. He said that the person that he had spoken with at the Massachusetts Municipal Association Conference had suggested that the Board talk with the head of CDBG to get clarification about the possibility of receiving funding in successive years for different Town Hall renovation projects. He said the Board also needs to remember to budget for Bill's time in the FY 2012 budget.

The question of how the value of the Town Hall is calculated came up again. When the Town spends 30% of this value, the whole building must meet codes. The Assessors value the building, not including land or furnishings, at \$1,628,300. Therefore, the Town can only spend about \$488,000 before the entire building must be

brought up to code. The Administrative Assistant will contact the Architectural Access Board in Boston to determine whether land value can be included in the Town Hall valuation.

- **Saw Mill Pond Dam**

The Town has not yet received notification of whether it has received an extension of the February deadline to submit the Fuss and O’Neill assessment report.

- **Meeting with Water Commissioners**

The Water Commissioners are scheduled to meet on March 9th and only Mr. O’Connell will be able to attend. He asked that both Mr. Allen and Mr. Heller give him their list of topics that they would like discussed.

- **Tax Title Reports from Treasurer and Tax Collector**

Only the report from the Treasurer was received; the Tax Collector told Mr. O’Connell that she might have the report ready in two weeks. Mr. O’Connell reviewed the Treasurer’s report stating that the Treasurer has a total of \$882,000 in tax title (including interest and fees) but about half of that is attributed to the former Lakeside Campground and Resort on Hobbs Avenue.

From another report submitted by the Tax Collector, Mr. O’Connell determined that about \$138,000 has been collected in back taxes in the period since July 1, 2010 but this amount does not include interest or fees. An additional \$108,000 was collected in the prior six months (Jan – June 2010) after the Board began working with the Tax Collector establishing a schedule of tax collection for her to follow.

Mr. O’Connell said that the Board needs to make sure that the payment plans approved by the Tax Collector and Treasurer follow a uniform policy. The Administrative Assistant will ask for a copy of each payment plan policy to be submitted to the Board by February 22nd, she will also ask the Tax Collector if she believes that the program with MMA (Municipal Management Association) or tax collection is working. The Board needs to determine this before the Treasurer turns over his collections to them; this is scheduled for April 1st. Mr. O’Connell will ask for a status report of the seven or eight individuals who were disputing their tax bills and ask the Tax Collector and Treasurer to determine if the FY11 Tax Title budget line is sufficient for the remainder of the year and an estimate of costs for FY 2012.

Mr. Allen stated that policies regarding tax title, etc. must be established before the election of the new Tax Collector in May.

2. REVIEW TOWN HALL EMERGENCY CLOSING POLICY

Mr. O’Connell explained that the basic problem with the existing policy seems to be “equity” between the “essential” and the “non-essential” employees and that the policy doesn’t seem to distinguish between benefited and non-benefited employees. Mr.

O'Connell had some suggested changes but it was agreed to place this on the agenda for the Board's next meeting (February 22nd) when all members would be present.

3. REVIEW OF HIGHWAY SNOW REMOVAL GUIDELINES

The Guidelines, as drafted by the Highway Department were reviewed and both Mr. Allen and Mr. O'Connell like them. They would like the Highway to include something about their policy for replacing mailboxes and then have the guidelines posted on the Town's Website and possibly published in the *Brookfield Citizen*.

4. PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

Some reviews that were completed were signed by the Board.

5. DOR'S FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REVIEW

The Department of Revenue is sending Melinda Ordway to Brookfield on Tuesday, February 22nd for the requested financial management review. Ms. Neylon reported that much information has already been forwarded to Mrs. Ordway and a schedule has been established for her. She will join the Selectmen at 12:30 for a half-hour before their scheduled 1:00 pm meeting.

6. POSSIBLE GIFT OF LAND TO THE TOWN

Mr. O'Connell moved that the Board authorize the Treasurer to work with the executor of the estate of the owner of 16 Hobbs Avenue to accept the gift of property (approximately ¼ acre) contingent upon a favorable Town Meeting vote and the estate covering all legal fees, delinquent taxes, interest and collection fees; Mr. Allen seconded; so voted.

New Business:

7. POLICE CHIEF'S GOALS & OBJECTIVES REVIEW

Mr. O'Connell, liaison to the Police Department, reported having concluded the three month performance review of Chief Michael K. Blanchard. He read the five goals and their results aloud and concluded that Chief Blanchard had achieved a Very Good-to-Excellent progress report. Mr. O'Connell moved that he be empowered to sign the interim performance review; Mr. Allen seconded; so voted.

Mr. Allen commented that he believed Chief Blanchard was doing an excellent job and that he had received many favorable comments from Brookfield residents and others outside of town.

8. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLOSING

It was reported that classes were only missed one day because of excessive snow on the roof of the elementary school building. A structural engineer viewed the building on that day and declared it safe although there is some work to be done.

9. DAMAGE AT HIGHWAY BARN

There was some damage to the Highway Barn due to the excessive snow but the extent cannot be determined until all of the snow is off the roof.

Correspondence:

10. ASSESSMENT FOR FY2012 FROM CMRPC

The assessment for Fiscal Year 2012 from Central Massachusetts Regional Planning is \$735.05. The Board agreed that they are "getting their monies worth".

11. CHARTER COMMUNICATIONS

The Selectmen acknowledged receipt of three documents from Charter: (1) Annual Form 500 (Complaint/Outage Report) for 2010, (2) Announcement: Internet Speeds increased AND (3) \$5,000 received from PEG grant (contract negotiation)

Pubic Access:

During Public Access the reporters present asked a few questions for clarification and Mr. John David Holdcraft arrived to ask if there was a Town Hall Barrier Removal Committee. He was told that the committee was defunct.

ADJOURNMENT:

As there was no further business before the Board, Mr. O'Connell moved to adjourn at about 7:53 pm; Mr. Allen seconded; so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna L. Neylon, Administrative Assistant

Date approved by Board: _____