

TOWN OF BROOKFIELD

SELECTMEN'S MEETING
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

MINUTES OF MARCH 15, 2011

REGULAR SESSION

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

Camera Operator: James Sniffen

Press: Jennifer Grybowski, Karen Trainor, Mary Catherine Byszek

Public: Philip Peirce, Laurence Van Cott, Jr., Gerald Johnson, Chief Michael Blanchard, Jason White, Steven Pariseau, Barbara Wilson, John David Holdcraft

APPROVAL OF WARRANTS:

Mr. O'Connell moved to ratify the Payroll Warrant of March 8, 2011 for \$167,688.83 and to approve the Expense Warrant for \$292,902.09 and Wire Transfer of \$8.96 both dated March 15, 2011; Mr. Allen seconded; so voted.

APPROVAL OF SELECTMEN'S MINUTES:

Mr. Allen moved to approve the Selectmen's minutes of: 2/08/11 as amended and 3/01/11; 3/2/11; Mr. O'Connell 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.

Town Hall Custodian: February 2011

Fire Dept.: February 2011

Police Dept.: February 2011

Tax Collector: February 2011

Conservation Commission: 1/25/11

Historical Commission: 2/10/11

Banister Common/Mall Committee: 12/13/2010; 2/15/11; 2/17/11

The Selectmen also commended the Town Clerk for the progress he has made in getting minutes of meetings and other reports onto the Town's website.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mr. Heller read the announcements, which included the schedule for the Annual Town Election, the date of the Annual Town Meeting and the upcoming Rabies Clinic.
New Business:

Note that these minutes more closely reflect the order of the AGENDA than the order they were taken at the meeting.

Old Business

1. REPORTS/UPDATES RE:

A. FISCAL YEAR 2011 BUDGET

• Snow & Ice Expenditures

Mr. O'Connell expressed the concern of the Advisory Committee regarding the purchase of a wing plow from the Snow & Ice Account. He explained that the plow purchase enabled the Highway Department to clear snow in only two passes whereas it currently takes two passes in each direction. When considering the savings in manpower, fuel and wear and tear on the vehicles which is calculated to be about \$6,000 per year, it is estimated that the plow will pay for itself within two years. The plow cost about \$9,500, not including the Highway Department's own labor to assemble and mount.

Mr. O'Connell stated his belief that all equipment purchases should come before the Board of Selectmen for approval and made the following motion which was seconded by Mr. Allen and voted unanimously:

“Effective immediately, all equipment valued at over \$3,000 and purchased by any department answering to the Board of Selectmen must be forwarded to the Board of Selectmen for their approval. Said equipment request will also be forwarded to the Advisory Committee and the Capital Improvement Planning Committee (CIPC).”

All purchases of \$10,000 or more must be approved by the CIPC, Advisory Committee, Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting.”

During the Board's recent budget meeting with and at the Highway Department, it was learned that someone from Town had called at least one vendor used by the Highway Department and eluded that he/she was a particular town employee and was rude to the vendor. Mr. Heller expressed his concern that this could damage our relationships with our vendors.

Mr. O'Connell said that some information requested in a recent public records request had been supplied at no cost because he had also asked for the information for the Selectmen's use. If further details are needed, the records requester has been given an estimated cost and will have to pay.

- **Cost of Inspections of Fire Extinguishers in Municipal Buildings**

According to recent correspondence received from the Fire Chief, all extinguishers in all municipal buildings must be re-inspected and certain work performed on some of the extinguishers to make them operational. The vendor that had previously been used had lost his license to operate and several deficiencies had been found with his work. It will cost about \$1,900 to update the extinguishers; this includes all municipal building except the Fire Station where the work is already done. Fire Chief, Peter Martell, recommended that this additional cost come from the Reserve Fund as it was an unexpected expense. Mr. Heller entertained a motion to request \$1,900 from the Advisory Committee to come from the Reserve Fund. Before the entertained motion there was some discussion when Mr. Allen suggested the Town attempt to get reimbursement from the vendor and Mr. O'Connell asked if any of the departments had enough money in their budgets to cover the unanticipated costs.

Mr. O'Connell moved to authorize Fire Chief Peter Martell to work with the department heads and contract with Baker Equipment for the necessary work; further to seek funding from the Advisory Committee; if he should be denied to return to the Selectmen; Mr. Allen seconded; so voted.

- **Computer Replacement Update**

Mr. Heller and Mr. Van Cott, Jr. had been working with Mr. Peirce toward the goal of updating all of the computers in the Assessor's office to include a network for the three computers.

Mr. Van Cott, Jr., of Xibexa, explained that there are two options: new versus refurbished equipment and that the cost was \$6,013 for new versus \$3,569 for refurbished, about a \$2,500 difference. His estimates include labor.

Mr. Peirce thought that refurbished equipment meant "buying someone else's problems" but Mr. Van Cott, Jr. explained that the refurbished, besides costing about half as much, are more reliable (due to extensive testing by the manufacturer and himself) than the new equipment which is only tested to see if it will turn on! The refurbished equipment has the same service guarantee as the new equipment. There is only enough money in the Computer Acquisition Account to cover the cost of the refurbished.

Mr. Peirce agreed with the purchase of the refurbished equipment and Mr. O'Connell moved to authorize the purchase of the equipment for the Board of Assessors as quoted by Xibexa; Mr. Allen seconded; so voted.

Mr. Heller said it was the intent to give the newest of the Assessors computers to the Building Inspector and the Zoning Enforcement Officer.

B. **FISCAL 2012 BUDGET AND CAPITAL PLANNING**

• **FY 12 Budget and Capital Planning**

CIPC Forms: The Board received the forms received from the Capital Improvement Planning Committee (CIPC) which had been drafted by Ms. Neylon and Mr. O'Connell. The Board agreed to review the forms and discuss them at the next meeting.

Junior High School Roof: Mr. O'Connell said that his comments regarding the financing of the Junior High School roof may have been premature but the roof needed to be added to the CIPC sheets. The total cost estimate to replace this roof, received today is \$1,109,324. The roof will be financed with some partial reimbursement (54.16% from the School Building Assistance Bureau and some transferred from "School Choice" funds. The balance of \$300,000 is to be borrowed over a five year period through a bond-anticipation note, first payment in 2013. Brookfield's share will be about \$11,000/year for 5 years. The law relative to a project like this mandates that each town hold a Town Meeting within 60 days of the Regional School Committee's vote or the Town is presumed to have approved the borrowing.

Mr. O'Connell said he would like the School Committee to defer their vote until May 16th so that Brookfield could include this on the Annual Town Meeting warrant. Mr. Heller explained that the vote is time sensitive so that the project can be accomplished during this summer. Mr. O'Connell questioned why the term of the note was only five years and wouldn't the solar panels that are going to be placed on this roof generate enough revenue to eliminate any assessment to the member towns? The Board agreed that if Mr. O'Connell could attend the next School Committee meeting, he could ask these questions for the Selectmen. Mr. Allen asked who would be responsible for any possible roof leaks, the roofing contractor or the company installing the solar panels.

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

Roof Repairs: Passed over.

Barrier Removal/Bathroom: A draft sketch of proposed changes to the Town Hall main floor bathroom that would make the bathroom handicap accessible was reviewed. It was agreed to forward the plan to the Plumbing Inspector for his review.

- **Report on meeting with Water Commissioners**

Mr. O'Connell attended the recent meeting of the Water Commissioners and reported:

- a) There is a written agreement with neighboring towns should a back up be needed.
- b) The Commissioners are, in principal, very supportive of extending water lines where it is cost effective. Having water lines on Rice Corner Road makes the most sense but only if Nanatomqua and Wagon Wheel would participate and if the Town could get help from the United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development (USDA RD). This would have to be voted by the townspeople. The Commissioners agreed to attend a meeting with USDA RD, the two mobile home parks and others when it is scheduled. This meeting was set for Thursday, March 24th at 3:00 pm in the Town Hall. The Board of Health, CDBG Advisory Committee will also be invited.
- c) They are not in favor of moving their office to the Highway's building.
- d) They do not want any formal agreement outlining a sharing of any town employees but the matter of insufficient back-up should be addressed.
- e) The Commissioners are on board with a solar RFP for the Herbert Road property.
- f) The segregation of duties, as outlined in a recent audit, was discussed and the Commissioners will submit their written response to the auditors.

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

The Selectmen have received a partial report from the Tax Collector. Copies of tax title payment plans have not yet been received from either the Treasurer or the Tax Collector. The Tax Collector is now working on a complaint that is a year old. The Treasurer has a proposal for payment from one of the single largest delinquent tax payers but the Town cannot, by law, do as the taxpayer proposes.

- **Solar Project RFP and Evaluation Committee**

See page 9 for this discussion.

2. CHOOSE PHOTO FOR COVER OF ANNUAL TOWN REPORT

Several photographs were submitted for cover photos and they included the Civil War Monument at its initial installation; Civil War era soldiers marching down Central Street in front of the old Town Hall; and a flag/soldier/weathervane collage.

Mr. O'Connell moved to approve the front cover with the Civil War era soldiers in color; Mr. Allen seconded; so voted. Mr. Allen moved to approve the back cover also in color which was a photograph of the gazebo on the Common at night at Christmastime; Mr. O'Connell seconded; so voted. The Board agreed to incorporate the other two photographs within the report, if possible.

The Board thanked Jennifer Grybowski for her help in proofreading the Town Report and agreed that, rather than giving credit for each photograph, to include one section in the report thanking all who contributed photographs, proofreading, etc.

3. **PERFORMANCE REVIEWS**

Passed over.

New Business:

4. **OPEN SOURCE MUNICIPAL INTEGRATED FINANCIAL SOFTWARE SYSTEM – PHILIP PEIRCE**

Philip Peirce, Chairman of the Board of Assessors, attended the meeting to get the support of the Board of Selectmen for some software developed by another municipality in the State. This software will be free (offered as an open source software) and can be used by several town departments. He explained this will be an additional opportunity for the Town in regionalization of services. The program will be internet-based, not computer-based and the server will be off-site.

He said that it may take a few years to get this system set up but he wanted to make sure the Town was interested before he went any further. Mr. Heller said that he believed that the Board had already expressed their support of the software; this was great idea but is in its infancy.

5. **APPOINTMENT/RESIGNATIONS (POLICE; ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS; PLANNING BOARD; SOLAR SELECTION COMMITTEE; TREASURER)**

Police Officer Appointments

Police Chief, Michael Blanchard, attended the meeting to introduce his new officers and ask the Board to formally appoint them. The officers are Mr. Jason White of Charlton and Mr. Steven Pariseau who is currently moving from Hawich to West Brookfield. Both will be full-time officers; Mr. White who is scheduled to begin work next week, will replace Nicholas Abair who recently requested the change from full-time back to part-time. Mr. Pariseau will be the Sergeant and will start work the following week once his move is completed.

After a short question and answer period, Mr. Allen moved to appoint Jason F. White of Charlton to the position of full-time police officer with a one year term to expire March 15, 2012 effective immediately; Mr. O'Connell seconded; so voted.

Mr. Allen moved to appoint Steven T. Pariseau of Harwich to the position of full-time police sergeant with a one year term to expire March 15, 2012 effective immediately; Mr. O'Connell seconded; so voted.

Mr. O'Connell and Mr. Heller thanked Mr. Allen for participating in the interview process of these candidates and thanked Chief Blanchard for bringing these candidates to them.

Appointment to Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)

Correspondence was received from the ZBA indicating that they would like the Selectmen to appoint Ms. Carrie Worthington as their Clerk and from Ms. Worthington that she was interested in the appointment. The Selectmen believe that there is not a job description for this position so, if this is true, one will need to be created and approved by the Personnel Board. There is no budget for this position therefore the ZBA will need to take steps to fund it. No charges against this account should be made prior to the appointment or the funding by the Advisory Committee.

Appointment to Planning Board

Correspondence similar to the above was also received from the Planning Board and from Ms. Worthington regarding the position of Planning Board Clerk.

The Town already has an approved job description for a Planning Board Clerk and a budget for same. However, the Board noted that the Planning Board wanted to pay their clerk \$15.00/hour which is more than many experienced clerks already receive who are working for the Town. Mr. O'Connell had spoken with the Chairman of the Conservation Commission where Ms. Worthington is also serving effectively as Clerk and learned that they pay \$15.00/hour but she puts in many hours that are not billed. Mr. O'Connell noted that she is also a member of the Commission and many of these extra hours could be attributed to her membership not her Clerk's position. The Planning Board based their rate of pay on the rate of pay currently paid by the Conservation Commission.

Mr. Allen moved to appoint Carrie Worthington as Clerk to the Zoning Board of Appeals and to the Planning Board with wages subject to the recommendation of the Personnel Board; Mr. O'Connell seconded; so voted. The Wage Authorization Forms along with copies of the job descriptions and resumes will be sent to the Personnel Board to aid in their decision.

Creation of Solar Selection Committee

The Board must consider filling a Solar Selection Committee to review the proposals for a solar project/farm to be installed at the Transfer Station. Per grant writer, William (Bill) Scanlan, the advertisement for the RFP's (Request for Proposals) will be in the March 23rd and March 30th issues of the Central Register and the Telegram & Gazette. Responses are due by April 27th and it is expected to award the project by May 31. It was agreed to put the appointment of the Solar Selection Committee on an early April agenda. Bill Scanlan will be sending a list of certified energy management vendors to Ms. Neylon who will send each receive a copy of the advertisement.

Treasurer Resignation/Appointment

Informal notice of the resignation of Mr. James Dunbar ad Brookfield's Treasurer was received at this meeting. Mr. Dunbar has accepted an appointment as part-time Treasurer for the Town of Princeton and his start date is March 28th. The position change will be quite advantageous for Mr. Dunbar but he has assured the Board that he will not leave the Town "in the lurch". The Town will continue to use his signature on the checks, etc. until an interim is in place.

The Board asked Mr. Dunbar to not submit his letter in writing until all details of the change over can be worked out.

Mr. O'Connell presented a revised draft job description and proposed legal ad for an interim Treasurer and Treasurer. The By-Law indicates that a Screening Committee must be created and consist of four residents appointed by the Moderator along with a representative each from the Selectmen, Personnel Board and Advisory Committee. It is believed that the Town will need an interim Treasurer in place while the Screening Committee does its work of sifting through resumes to present the Selectmen with three possible candidates.

Last Thursday, Mr. Dunbar sat with Mr. O'Connell; Ms. Neylon and Mrs. Finney to review the basics of the duties of the Treasurer to make sure everything will be handled. Mr. Dunbar is confident that both Mrs. Finney and Ms. Chisholm can cover the day-to-day responsibilities of payables and payroll.

Mr. Heller entertained a motion to approve the draft job ads subject to edits and to post the ad contingent upon receipt of a formal resignation of Mr. Dunbar; Mr. O'Connell so moved; Mr. Allen seconded; so voted.

The matter of the appointment of interim Treasurer will be addressed at the March 22 meeting and Ms. Neylon will consult with a representative of the Department of Revenue as to the specific wording.

6. **TRIATHLON AUGUST 21ST – PERMISSION TO USE ROADS**

A request was received from Back of the Pack Productions for a triathlon to be conducted partially in Brookfield on August 21st. Mr. O'Connell moved to approve the event contingent upon the approval of the Police Chief and Highway Superintendent and upon payment of any fees that the Police Chief deems necessary; Mr. Allen seconded; so voted.

7. **EAGLE SCOUT – COURT OF HONOR CEREMONY**

Correspondence was received from Boy Scout Leader for Troup 238 in East Brookfield notifying the Board of the Court of Honor scheduled in April for Brookfield resident, Tyler Latour. Mr. Latour will receive his Eagle Scout award at this time. He worked with Robert Wilder, labeling maps and photographs and his work was recently displayed at the library. Mr. Heller will attend the event on behalf of the Board of Selectmen.

8. **STRAP GRANT CONTRACT**

The Small Town Roads (STRAP) grant which was awarded in a Brookfield ceremony last fall with the Lt. Governor, Senator Brewer and Representative Gobi in attendance has finally reached the point when the contract should be received and work can begin. Mr. Heller entertained a motion to sign the contract as soon as it is received. The project includes re-paving part of Rice Corner and Gay roads and drainage work on part of Town Farm Road.

Mr. O'Connell moved to authorize the Chairman to sign the STRAP grant contract as soon as it is received; Mr. Allen seconded; so voted. Mr. O'Connell also moved to authorize the Highway Superintendent to proceed with the project as proposed contingent upon the contract signature of the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen; Mr. Allen seconded; so voted.

9. **SET DATES FOR APRIL, MAY, JUNE SELECTMEN'S MEETINGS**

The Selectmen agreed to post the following schedule of meetings for the next quarter; all meetings will be at the Town Hall unless posted otherwise.

April 5 & 19 1:00 pm (primarily budget review)
April 12 & 26 6:30 pm
May 3 6:30 pm (reorganization of the Board)
May 10, 17, 24, 31 6:30 pm
June 7, 21 6:30 pm

Correspondence:

10. CHARTER COMMUNICATIONS – RATE INFORMATION, ETC.

The Board acknowledged receipt of rate information, etc. from Charter Communications.

Other:

12. CULTURAL COUNCIL EASTER PROGRAM

Mr. Heller read the announcement of the April 23rd Hop Into Spring program that the Cultural Council will be hosting on the Common. The Easter Bunny will be present for photographs.

13. ACCIDENT WITH HIGHWAY TRUCK

Mr. Heller read aloud from the Police Report, the only authoritative report, that there was no improper driving by the truck operator and absolves the driver of any responsibility.

Pubic Access:

John David Holdcraft first complimented Donald Herbert the operator of the Highway equipment that came to Allen Road near his home and cleared a serious water situation. He then charged that there were “false statements in the accident report”. He said that the wing plow had been discussed at the Advisory Committee and that new equipment should not have come from Snow & Ice account. They are trying to keep the deficit down and this shouldn’t come from Snow and Ice.

ADJOURNMENT:

As there was no further business before the Board, at about 9:25 pm Mr. Heller entertained a motion to adjourn; Mr. Allen so moved; Mr. O’Connell seconded; so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna L. Neylon, Administrative Assistant

Date approved by Board: _____