

**Town of Brookfield  
Selectmen's Meeting  
Elementary School, Library  
Tuesday, November 22, 2011**

Mr. O'Connell called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance. Other members present: Rudy Heller and Stephen J. Comtois II.

**Camera Operator:** James Sniffen  
**Press:** Karen Trainor, David Dore  
**Public:** John David Holdcraft, Ronald Couture, Keith Karrmann

*Note: The minutes of this meeting reflect the order of the printed agenda NOT the order of the actual meeting.*

**APPROVAL OF WARRANTS:**

Mr. Heller moved to ratify the Expense Warrant for 11/22/11 in the amount of \$84,129.21 and the Real Estate Refund for 2011 of the same date in the amount of \$1,000.00; Mr. Comtois seconded; so voted.

**APPROVAL OF SELECTMEN'S MINUTES:**

Mr. Heller moved to approve the minutes of 10/11/11; 10/18/11 and 10/25/11 as edited; Mr. Comtois seconded; so voted.

**MONTHLY REPORTS & MINUTES OF OTHER DEPARTMENTS:**

Mr. Heller move to acknowledge receipt of the below-listed monthly reports and minutes; Mr. Comtois seconded; so voted.

Treasurer's Cash Reconciliation: 3/31/11; 4/20/11; 5/31/11  
Planning Board: 10/5/11

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Announcements were read by Chairman O'Connell including a reminder of the November 30<sup>th</sup> deadline to submit comments to the Brownfield Steering Committee regarding the Mill Street Brownfield project. Additionally, the residents were asked to forward photographs to the Highway Department of tree damage along the rights-of-way in the town due to the October 29<sup>th</sup> storm. These photos will be used to help justify up to 75% reimbursement for work done to date to open public roads and for brush chipping.

**Public Access Period:**

John David Holdcraft commented that he believed Article 6 of the November 18<sup>th</sup> Special Town Meeting (to transfer \$83,127.42 from Stabilization to lower the tax rate) needed to be explained to the residents of Brookfield. He also stated that he does not agree with a joint police building with the West Brookfield Police Department. He feels that Brookfield's Police station should be located in downtown Brookfield.

Agenda:

1. **6:30 pm** **RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF H1972 “AN ACT REGULATING ELECTION PRIMARIES” – M. SEERY**

Mr. Seery, Town Clerk, could not attend the meeting but told Mr. Comtois that he was in favor of House Bill 1972 because it would save the Town about \$1200. This combination of elections would take place every four years and includes moving the date of the State Primary to coincide with the Federal Primary; both would then be held in June. Mr. Heller reviewed the seven points in the summary of H1972 and moved to support H1972 and indicate so in a letter to the Chairman of the Committee at the House of Representatives; Mr. O’Connell seconded; so voted with Mr. Heller and Mr. O’Connell voting yes and Mr. Comtois voting no.

2. **FOLLOW-UP OF SPECIAL TOWN MEETING**

Blackboard Connect contract: Mr. Keith Karrmann, Brookfield’s Emergency Management (BEMA) Director attended the meeting to explain the contract before he presented it to the Board to sign. He explained that the Purchase Order also needed to be signed and since the Town doesn’t normally use Purchase Orders, this was drafted to the specifications of the Blackboard Connect Company. There will be an annual fee of \$2,589.96 and an annual support fee of \$957.13. The period for the first contract is December 1, 2011 through November 30, 2012. The voters at the November 18, 2011 Special Town Meeting had authorized the Selectmen to enter into this contract. Mr. Comtois moved to authorize the Chairman to sign both the contract and the Purchase Order; Mr. Heller seconded; so voted.

Mr. Karrmann explained that he and Fire Chief Peter Martell (BEMA Asst. Director) have been working on a policy for the use of this program which would give examples of use (i.e. emergencies, etc.). He further explained that there will be training on this program and it is expected to begin in December.

Cooley Hill – authorization to dispose of property: Mr. O’Connell asked the Board members if one of them would take the lead on this but the matter was resolved that he would draft a fact sheet which the Administrative Assistant would then send to the following organizations to see if they would be interested in purchasing the property and either fixing or removing the existing dam. The letters will be sent to Trustees of Reservations, Fisheries & Wildlife (even though they said 2 years ago that they weren’t interested), Mass. Audubon, Opacum Land Trust, Rehabilitation Resource, Inc. (Blanchard Means), and North Brookfield Selectmen.

Right-of-Way by Eminent Domain: This is the property also known as Kroll or Mundell. Mr. O’Connell said that he and Ms. Neylon were planning to attend a right-of-way workshop put on by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation on Wednesday, December 7<sup>th</sup>. He explained that there had been an example of

excellent teamwork with at least the following individuals and groups working together to gather information on this property and trace its history: Assessors (especially Donna Wentzell); Gary Simeone, Zoning Enforcement Officer; Conservation Commission members; Town Treasurer, Sheila Frangiamore; two attorneys at Kopelman and Paige; and Donna Neylon, Administrative Assistant. Mr. Heller pointed out that Mr. O'Connell had spent considerable time on this research project and in coordinating the materials.

Other follow-up: Once the Town Clerk has the votes certified, copies will be sent to Town Counsel and to various other departments.

Transfer from Stabilization: In response to Mr. Holdcraft's question during Public Access, Mr. O'Connell explained that the \$83,127.42 that was transferred from Stabilization to reduce the tax rate does not further reduce the tax rate but covers the Snow & Ice costs from the previous budget year bringing the budget into balance under Proposition 2 ½ and eliminating any deficit.

3. **PROPOSAL TO MAKE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT POSITION A SALARIED POSITION – P. O'CONNELL**

Mr. O'Connell said that the Administrative Assistant position is the only professional position in the Town Hall that is still "wages" and not "salary". He felt that making this position a salaried position would make it more attractive to a new person. The Administrative Assistant currently also acts as a supervisor, is involved in budget development and grant administration. These are all subjects that a salaried Administrator would have as a higher priority. Mr. Comtois wanted to defer the discussion to another time; Mr. Heller will do a report. It was agreed that there was no urgency to this proposed change but that this would again be considered during the upcoming budget discussion.

4. **FY2013 BUDGET DEVELOPMENT AND HADLEY INDICATORS**

The Board reviewed Mr. O'Connell's draft budget package and cover memo, the new form from the Capital Improvement Planning Committee (CIPC), budget sheets (2 year actual expenditures), wage and salary request form, request for articles, and alternative sources of revenue. Mr. Heller moved to approve the forms as provided and include them in the packet; Mr. Comtois seconded; so voted.

There was discussion of whether or not to include instructions to calculate a 2% Cost of Living (COLA) for each employee but eventually the Board agreed to have the Department Heads submit level funded salaries and wages but know that the Selectmen want to give a 2% COLA if there is sufficient funding. Mr. O'Connell will revise the cover memo to so indicate.

Each Selectman will consider areas of savings for the budget preparation meetings.

5. **CHARTER INVITATION TO OPEN CONTRACT RENEWAL DISCUSSIONS**

Correspondence was received from Charter indicating that the current contract expires on July 1, 2014. The Board will call Sharon Mahoney and James Sniffen to an executive session to begin to discuss strategy regarding the contract renewal. Mr. O'Connell will contact Mrs. Mahoney to set up this meeting. In the meantime, Ms. Neylon will acknowledge receipt of the Charter letter.

6. **ASSIGN SELECTMEN'S REPORT FOR ANNUAL TOWN REPORT 2011 & PROPOSAL FOR DEDICATION**

As the drafting of the Selectmen's report for the Annual Town Report has traditionally been done by the Clerk, Mr. Comtois agreed to take on the project. The Board is looking for ideas for a person to dedicate the report to and for photographs for the front and possibly the back covers of the report. Since 2011 is the anniversary of the Civil War, perhaps a photograph of the Civil War Monument at the Cemetery could be considered; other ideas were a photograph of the Theatre in the Town Hall or a photo of the Town Hall Clock/Bell Tower.

7. **NEW COMMUNITY INNOVATION CHALLENGE GRANT**

Correspondence was received with the announcement that the "Governor and Lt. Governor were announcing a New Community Innovation Challenge Grant, a program to award \$4 Million in Funding for Regionalization and Efficiency Initiatives". This program involves joint grant application to either reimburse communities in the first year of an inter-municipal project or to pay for the second year. Warren is the lead town in the group of towns attending the area Regional Selectmen's group and will consult with William (Bill) Scanlan. Mr. Heller said that he will write a draft of a proposal to share certain highway equipment. There will be an informational program in the Brookfield Town Hall at 6:00 pm on November 30<sup>th</sup> where possibilities will be discussed.

Mr. Heller also advised the Board that the new "regional" Highway Superintendent's group could apply for this grant to help with their plans for regional purchasing of highway equipment. Another grant opportunity could be toward the creation of a multi-town department that could plan/construct a municipal building. This will be brought up at the next meeting of the Regional Selectmen's Group on January 24<sup>th</sup>.

**8. CONTRACT AMENDMENT – M. LYONS FOR BANISTER COMMON/MALL COMMITTEE**

A contract amendment between the Town and Martha Lyons for a detailed survey of the Town Common and Mall (topographical) for a cost not to exceed \$2,000 was received and reviewed by the Board. This is the next step prior to the creation of design plans for this area and is needed in order to apply for grants. Mr. Heller moved to approve the expenditure, funds to come from the 2011 Annual Town Meeting appropriation and to authorize the chair to sign; Mr. Comtois seconded for discussion purposes; so voted.

**9. DHCD FINDING ON ARRA PROJECT**

A routine audit was conducted of the records relating to the 2009 CDBG-R (Community Development Block Grant – Recovery) which included infrastructure work done to part of Common Street and Lincoln Street from the intersection with Route 148 to the end of Lincoln Street Extension. There was one finding: “non-compliance with 31 CDR Section 205 (as interpreted by Massachusetts CDBG policy) regarding the establishment of a Direct Depository Account. The Town failed to establish a Direct Depository Account and have all Massachusetts CDBG funds received by the Town transferred into this account.” Mr. O’Connell entertained a motion to authorize him to sign the response letter as drafted by grant administrator, William Scanlan; Mr. Heller so moved; Mr. Comtois seconded; so voted.

**10. REPORTS:**

a. Status of the Town Hall Clock Repairs – R. Heller

Mr. Heller reported that due to the volunteer efforts of former resident and former Selectman, Carl “Skip” Nielsen, Sr., the Town Hall clock and bell are now working! The Town will, however, receive an invoice for materials. Mr. Comtois moved to send a letter of appreciation to Mr. Nielsen; Mr. Heller seconded; so voted.

b. Town Hall Basement Door – D. Neylon

This was passed over since the matter is still being researched but a report will be ready for the Board’s next meeting.

c. Town Hall Roof & approval to remove orange fence – S. Comtois

Mr. Comtois reported that he and Susan Knack-Brown, engineer, had gone up into the Bell Tower to view the roof and a copy of her letter/report has been forwarded to the Building Inspector. Mr. Comtois summarized the report by stating that there is no evidence of tiles cracking or broken; there are a few

missing. The loss of slate occasionally is a common issue for slate roofs. They also looked at the snow fence options. Mr. Comtois asked the Board to wait on any decision on this until after winter has passed. Then he would like to have the engineer do an RFP (Request For Proposal) to make the changes. He will talk with the Building Inspector, Jeff Taylor, to get the formal approval to remove the snow fence around the building. The Administrative Assistant and Town Hall Custodian will watch after snowfalls for thawing periods when snow will come off of the roof and put out appropriate “hazard” notices.

Mr. O’Connell said that the Board would need an idea of the costs for the upcoming budget process and an article for the Annual Town Meeting.

d. Town Hall barrier removal and construction of new police station – S. Comtois

The Municipal Facilities Planning Committee has nothing firm to present to the Board as yet, according to Mr. Comtois and don’t expect to have anything in time for the January 5<sup>th</sup> budget submission deadline.

Some of the committee’s members have toured the new North Brookfield Police Station to get an idea of what would be needed. They calculate that Brookfield will need between 5,000 and 7,000 square feet, with a potential cost of \$2 million.

The committee is still discussing the Town Hall and may only propose to renovate two floors. The location of the elevator is still in flux and will be the topic of discussion at their next meeting. The possibility of renovating one floor for the seniors has been discussed but may not be necessary as they may be regionalizing with West Brookfield and using their facilities.

e. Handicap Ramp, etc. – 7 Prouty Street & Variance request - S. Comtois

The ramp was discussed with Mr. Couture as part of the discussion of use of the building by the Historical Commission and other like groups. Mr. Comtois said that he is still working on this matter with Mr. Taylor, Building Inspector and should have a report soon.

f. Solar and Geothermal Updates – R Heller

Mr. Heller reported having toured the Town Hall and Library with Mr. Stanley Jenkston with an eye toward geothermal heat. Use at the Library is “a no brainer” with a six year payback. Use at the Town Hall will be discussed at a future meeting when Mr. Jenkston will be present.

According to Mr. Heller, EPG (the company chosen for the Town’s first solar project) has made their presentation to National Grid so there is some progress

being made. EPG is doing a similar project in the Town of Maynard. Mr. Heller reported that a “clone contract” will be coming soon for the Board to review and that construction could start as early as June 2012.

New heating systems for the Library, Fire/EMS building, and Town Hall will need to be coordinated. Mr. Heller will gather the information regarding all styles of heating and cooling systems for this future discussion. At this time, the heating system for the Fire Department (old Highway Building) should be first in line for replacement.

- g. Computer and anti-virus protection and Disposal of unwanted electronic equipment. – R. Heller

This was passed over.

- h. Tree Planting – R. Heller

This was passed over.

- i. Update on Inter-municipal Human Resource Agreement project – R. Heller

Mr. Heller reported that the inter-municipal human resource project is moving along. All of the job descriptions have been received from all four involved towns and there is a great diversity. The re-writing of the job descriptions and policies is a 90-day project. At the conclusion a series of courses will be set up that will continue through April 2012. These courses will be on such things as anti-discrimination. All courses will be held in each of the four Town Halls so that town officials will have plenty of opportunities to attend. The list of courses to be held is not final yet but there will be a minimum of one per month.

The Board discussed the current Personnel Board which is not operating as they are minus several members. It will be the job of the Personnel Board to review the job descriptions and policies before presentation to the Selectmen for adoption. The Board discussed temporarily populating this Board with various appointed Town department heads but agreed to first ask again for volunteers (Facebook and e-mail) and to keep this on the agenda until the positions are filled.

- j. Brownfield grant applications: Town Hall & Prouty Street

There is nothing new to report at this time so this was passed over.

- k. Status of “All Hazard’s Plan” by CMRPC – R. Heller

This was passed over.

1. Meeting with W. Brookfield Selectmen and Police Chiefs

No response has been received from the West Brookfield Selectmen so this was passed over.

11. **USE OF 7 PROUTY STREET – HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

Mr. Ronald Couture, Chairman of the Historical Commission, was present to explain that members of his committee had toured 7 Prouty Street at the invitation of the Selectmen and found that they could use the building as a location for their files and to conduct research. At this time, the building would be “non-public” and they would not expect the building to be handicap accessible or to hold meetings in the building. They would take care of the maintenance of the inside of the building but would expect the Town to care for the outside of the building including the grounds and shoveling the sidewalks, etc. The Historical Commission currently stores their records in the basement of the Town Hall in what used to be the Police Department and this is quite damp causing the dehumidifier to have to be emptied nearly daily during the summer. They would be willing to share space with other departments with a similar focus such as Merrick Public Library – non-circulating genealogical material and books, the Banister Common and Mall Committee – maps, records, hand-outs and surveys and the Cemetery Commissioners – historic maps, records, fund-raising materials. See the attached handout from Mr. Couture for further details on his proposal.

Mr. Comtois, Chairman of the Municipal Facilities Planning Committee, discussed the possible displacement of the Historical Commission and their files in one or two years when/if there is a need to move Town Hall offices into the dwelling at 7 Prouty Street during the renovation of the Town Hall. Mr. Comtois agreed to work with Mr. Couture to coordinate making 7 Prouty Street handicap accessible for the possibility of holding meetings in this building, etc. If the Town Hall offices would be moved to his location, the building would need to be ADA compliant. Mr. Comtois moved to allow the Historical Commission use and access to 7 Prouty Street as a non-public work space; Mr. Heller seconded; so voted. Mr. Couture will give a more concrete proposal to the Selectmen regarding the maintenance of the building.

Correspondence:

12. **REMINDER: SIGN UP FOR WORKSHOP ON BUILDING LOCAL SUPPORT – AFFORDABLE HOUSING PLAN**

Mr. Heller volunteered to attend this workshop and the Town will reimburse him the \$15 sign-up fee. The workshop will be on December 8<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 am to noon at Sturbridge Village.

*Other:*

**13. INITIAL DISCUSSION OF A “PAYMENT OF TOWN BILLS BY EITHER CHECK OR MONEY ORDER ONLY – NO CASH”**

As a result of a telephone call with Melinda Ordway of the Department of Revenue (DOR), it was learned that the Town cannot have a by-law or policy not allowing cash as payment for any taxes. It was, however, recommended that the Town initiate a numbered receipt policy. Mr. O’Connell will work with the Treasurer to discuss the creation of such a policy.

**14. SIGNING OF PAPERWORK FOR THE WINDOW REPLACEMENT PROJECT OF THE BROOKFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Mr. O’Connell explained that this project had already been approved by the School Committee and the Selectmen, but the bids came in too high so the project was postponed. New bids have been received and the prices were lower so the project will go forward. Mr. Heller moved to authorize the Chairman to sign the necessary paperwork for the window replacement project at the Brookfield Elementary School; Mr. Comtois seconded; so voted.

**15. APPOINTMENTS – COUNCIL ON AGING & HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

Mr. Heller moved to appoint Celeste Leger to the Historical Commission with a term to expire on June 30, 2013; Mr. Comtois seconded; so voted.

Mr. O’Connell entertained a motion to appoint Veronica Kay to the Council on Aging with a term to expire on June 30, 2013; Mr. Heller so moved; Mr. Comtois seconded; so voted.

**16. THANK YOU – DAVID NIXON – REVENUE & EXPENSE FORECASTING TRENDS**

Mr. O’Connell said that he believed the Town should do more than send a simple letter of thanks to Mr. David Nixon for his assistance with the forecasting trends; one suggestion was to take Mr. Nixon out to dinner at the Annual MMA meeting which will be on January 20 – 21, 2012.

*Other:*

**17. HISTORIC CEMETERY LANDSCAPE WORKSHOP;**

Mr. Couture informed the Board that he had attended a Historic Cemetery Landscape workshop in Lowell the previous Friday and gave a presentation on the preservation of stones, slate and monuments. The presentation will be on the Massachusetts Historical Commission’s website and copies of his presentation have been made available to the Selectmen.

18. **SPECIAL MEETING ON NOVEMBER 29**

The Board agreed to change the start time of their special meeting scheduled for November 29<sup>th</sup> (primary purpose: to discuss the Master Plan) from 8:30 am to 8:00 am.

19. **REMOTE PARTICIPATION**

Mr. Heller pointed out that he will be out of state in early January and could miss two meetings. It was agreed to look up the new Open Meeting Law rules on remote participation and add this for discussion to the December 6<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

At 9:40 pm, Mr. O'Connell entertained a motion to adjourn; Mr. Heller so moved; Mr. Comtois seconded; so voted.

Respectfully submitted

Donna L. Neylon, Administrative Assistant

Approved: December 20, 2011