

**Town of Brookfield
Selectmen's Meeting - Special
Town Hall, Selectmen's Office
Tuesday, March 27, 2012**

Chairman O'Connell called the meeting to order at 8:00 am in the Selectmen's office of the Town Hall and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance. Other members present: Stephen J. Comtois II. Rudy Heller was excused.

Camera Operator: None
Press: None
Public: Chief Michael Blanchard, Betty Benoit, Kevin O'Malley, Martha Lyon, Brenda McElroy, Michael Seery

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

Unless otherwise stated, all motions were made by Mr. Comtois and seconded by Mr. O'Connell and so voted. A summary of the voted figures is included in the chart at #5 of these minutes.

1. VOTES ON POLICE BUDGETS

Police Chief Michael Blanchard was present to discuss his budget. The following was voted: Part time wages – Reduced from \$72,857 to \$56,673; Police Expenses: Reduced from \$38,266 to 36,966 (elimination of physicals and \$500 in equipment, which will be charged to the Police donation account.

2. ACCOUNTANT BUDGET REVIEW

Ms. Benoit began with a summary of her conversation of yesterday with Chairman O'Connell relative to the funding of articles from free cash at a Special Town Meeting (STM) versus an Annual Town Meeting (ATM). She recommended using free cash to fund non-recurring capital articles rather than subsidizing the operating budget.

The Town Accountant's budget was approved as submitted. In response to a question from Mr. O'Connell, Ms. Benoit indicated that when she was hired, the Selectmen agreed that she would be paid for 36 hours per week, which meant that she would work a number of hours from home. Mr. O'Connell noted that her hourly rate was above the Town's wage and salary maximum for her grade for someone working for the town for 30 years (her term of employment is less than 10 years). Ms. Benoit responded that she had been told that the wage and salary schedule did not apply to salaried individuals and that the personnel policies were

in need of revisions. She urged that in fairness any wage increase be applied to all staff.

3. TAX COLLECTOR

Ms. McElroy discussed her budget, which was approved by the Selectmen as submitted except for the reduction in her expense budget from \$8,650 to \$8,100. She reported that she proposed to extend the existing contract with MMA for one more year to assist her with the collection of back taxes, including doing tax takings. Mr. O'Connell asked her to write a memo to that effect to the Board of Selectmen so the Board could take a vote to extend the contract. Ms. McElroy indicated that many of the records relating to delinquent taxes for 2005 and before were in error and were taking a lot of her time to resolve. In response to a question from Mr. O'Connell, Ms. McElroy said that she and MMA would be able to take the necessary steps to do tax takings for delinquent taxes for the years 2009 and earlier to perfect the town's liens on those properties (if the town had not already lost those rights because the properties have transferred to new owners).

Mr. O'Connell reminded Ms. McElroy to write a memo to the Board detailing the cases where taxpayers had paid their bills in cash, had a receipt, but the Tax Collector's records did not show the bills as being paid so the Board could make a decision about whether to notify the bond company of the previous tax collector.

4. TOWN CLERK, ELECTIONS & REGISTRATIONS, PARKING CLERK BUDGETS:

Mr. Seery attended and reviewed his proposed budgets. He was asked to reconsider his Election & Registrations budget in case there would be a special election relative to an override for a new police station and/or Town Hall renovations. He did re-calculate his budget but said it would be sufficient to pay for a debt exclusion vote, should there be one. The Selectmen approved his budgets as submitted for Elections and Parking Clerk, and Town Clerk except for a reduction from \$2,900 for Town Clerk Expenses to \$2,700.

5. **OTHER BUDGETS NOT PREVIOUSLY VOTED (or voted at this meeting):**

Department	Line Item Description	FY13 Requested	FY13 Voted by BoS
Police	Wages Full-Time	129,587	129,587
	Chief Salary	60,734	60,734
	Wages Part-Time	72,857	56,673
	Clerk Wages	9,302	9,302
	Overtime Wages	16,714	16,714
	Expenses	38,266	36,966
	Station Expenses	23,046	23,046
Tax Collector	Salary	30,214	30,124
	Clerk wages	5,699	5,699
	Certification	0	0
	Expenses	8,650	8,100
	Software	1,000	1,000
Accountant	Salary	45,229	45,229
	Expenses	3,290	3,290
	Audit	16,500	12,500
Town Clerk	Salary	27,500	27,500
	Assistant Wages	1,500	1,500
	Certification	0	0
	Expenses	2,900	2,700
Elections & Registrations	Wages	4,600	4,600
	Expenses	6,000	6,000
Parking Clerk	Salary	250	250
	Expenses	100	100
Emergency Squad	Wages	111,181	111,181
	On Call Wages	0	0
	Expenses	32,380	32,380
Municipal Telephone	Municipal Telephone	11,000	11,000
Building Inspector	Salary	14,121	14,121
	Assistant Wages	307	307
	Expenses	100	100
Gas & Plumbing Inspector	Salary	3,442	3,442
	Assistant Wages	298	297
	Expenses	790	500

Wiring Inspector	Salary	3,471	3,471
	Assistant Wages	307	307
	Expenses	400	400
Zoning Enforcement Officer	Salary	8,824	8,824
	Expenses	380	380
Conservation Commission	Clerk Wages	777	777
	Expenses	500	500
Planning Board	Clerk Wages	3,199	3,199
	Salary	2,679	2,679
	Expenses	1,110	1,110
Zoning Board of Appeals	Wages	756	756
	Expenses	700	700
Annual Town Report	Printing of Town Report	1,800	1,500
Municipal Diesel Fuel	Municipal Diesel Fuel **	20,039	24,000
Municipal Gasoline	Municipal Gasoline **	27,254	28,000
Animal Control	Salary	5,092	5,092
	Assistant Wages	672	672
	Expenses	2,000	850
Tree Warden	Expenses	10,350	10,350
Shade Tree	Expenses	2,400	2,400
BEMA	Salary	370	370
	Blackboard Connect Annual Fee	0	3,600
Municipal Custodian	Wages	12,025	12,025
Town Hall	Expenses	8,615	8,615

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The increases in Municipal Gasoline and Municipal Diesel Fuel were due to rising fuel prices. The vote regarding the BEMA (Brookfield Emergency Management Agency) budget involved changing the location of the Blackboard Connect fee from Selectmen's budgets to BEMA (\$3,600) and reduced BEMA expenses from \$6,650 to \$3,280; the BEMA salary was level-funded. The Board also approved the School budgets as submitted at the public hearings. The Selectmen expect to complete their budget review at their April 3rd meeting.

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6. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

At 10:30 am, Mr. O'Connell entertained a motion to adjourn to Executive Session under Exemptions [Three and Six](#) (see below) and to return to Open Session immediately thereafter to conduct other business on the agenda; Mr. Comtois so voted; Mr. O'Connell seconded; so voted with Mr. Comtois voting aye and Mr. O'Connell voting aye.

Exemption 3. To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares;

[Exemption 6. To consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body;](#)

At 10:55 am, Mr. Comtois made the motion to adjourn the Executive Session and return to Open Session; Mr. O'Connell seconded; so voted with Mr. Comtois voting aye and Mr. O'Connell voting aye.

7. **SETTING FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next meetings of the Board are all Tuesday evening meetings: April 3, 10 and 24. There will be at least one evening meeting (Thursday) held jointly with the Advisory Committee but that date was not immediately available.

The Board agreed to begin their meeting on Tuesday, April 3rd at 6:00 pm with Executive Sessions. One letter (signed by the Chairman) will be sent to one employee and the complainant will also be invited to this meeting.

8. **Other**

a) **Eagle Scout Court Invitation:**

Mr. Comtois agreed to attend this event honoring Brookfield Troop 159 member and North Brookfield resident Tyler Davis; the event will be held on Saturday, May 5, 2012 at 2:00 pm in North Brookfield. The Administrative Assistant will RSVP for Mr. Comtois.

b) **Cemetery Grant Application:**

Martha Lyon attended to request the Board sign a grant application for \$25,000 with a Town match of \$25,000 to complete work for funding from the Massachusetts Preservation Commission. The Cemetery Commissioners are requesting this money to complete the work on the granite part of the archway; the iron work has already been completed. The Commissioners intended the money to come from the following

distribution: \$7,500 Perpetual Care; \$10,000 Cemetery Preservation Fund and \$7,500 to be raised and appropriated or transferred by a vote at the Annual Town Meeting vote. The Selectmen agreed that the distribution should be changed to take advantage of the bond money that was received as a result of the prior contractor abandoning the work. Mr. Comtois moved to authorize the Chairman to sign the grant application and to fund the Town's \$25,000 matching grant with \$7,500 from the Perpetual Care Account and \$17,500 from the Cemetery Preservation Fund; Mr. O'Connell seconded; so voted.

c) **Mill Station Park:**

Mr. Kevin O'Malley of Precise Paving, Inc. came by with the contract papers, which Mr. O'Connell signed as previously voted by the Board. The project is slated to begin on Monday, April 2, 2012 and the work part of the project is expected to be completed by the end of April.

d) **Reserve Fund Requests:**

Three Reserve Fund Requests were received; two were from the Board of Health and one from the Highway Department. The Highway department is requesting \$200 for the towing of the 1981 Mack Highway Truck that experienced a fire in the "dash board" and engine compartment on Monday, March 26. It is expected that the Town will receive reimbursement from the insurance company for the towing charges.

No action was necessary or taken on the Board of Health's two requests but Mr. Comtois moved to authorize the Chairman to sign the Request for Reserve Fund money for towing the highway truck; Mr. O'Connell seconded; so voted.

e) **Special Town Meeting:**

Mr. Comtois moved to hold a Special Town Meeting at 6:15 pm at the Elementary School on Friday, June 8, 2012 prior to the Annual Town Meeting; Mr. O'Connell seconded; so voted.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 11:12 am, Mr. Comtois moved to adjourn the meeting; Mr. O'Connell seconded; so voted.

Respectfully submitted

Donna L. Neylon, Administrative Assistant

Approved: [April 3, 2012](#)

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