**Town of Brookfield**
**Selectmen's Meeting**
**Town Hall, Banquet Room**
**Tuesday, February 5, 2013**

Mr. Comtois called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance. Other members present: Mr. Heller and Mr. Thomo.

**Camera Operators:** Sharon Mahoney
**Press:** Karen Trainor, David Dore,
**Public:** Susan Brogan, Barbara Wilson, John David Holdcraft, Michael Blanchard (Police Chief), Peter Martell (Fire Chief) , Arthur Jay and Peter Masuzzo (Cemetery Commissioners), Michael Seery (Town Clerk), Sheila Frangiamore (Treasurer), Donald Taft (MFPC & CIPC), Clark Rowell and Ryan Stollie of UniBank

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

## APPROVAL OF WARRANTS:

Chairman Comtois entertained a motion to ratify the following Warrants; Mr. Heller so moved; Mr. Thomo seconded; so voted:

APPROVE PAYROLL WARRANT for 2/5/13: $178,844.18
APPROVE EXPENSE WARRANT for 1/9/13: $1,530.00
APPROVE EXPENSE (WIRE) WARRANT for 2/1/13: $128,512.50
APPROVE EXPENSE WARRANT for 1/31/13: $647.41
APPROVE PAYROLL WARRANT for 1/30/13: $3,937.58
APPROVE EXPENSE WARRANT for 1/28/13: $1,229.18
RATIFY EXPENSE WARRANT for 1/29/13: $34,984.22

## APPROVAL OF SELECTMEN'S MINUTES:

Mr. Comtois entertained a motion to approve the minutes of January 22, 2013 (regular) and January 29, 2013 (special); Mr. Heller so moved; Mr. Thomo seconded; so voted.

## MONTHLY REPORTS & MINUTES OF OTHER DEPARTMENTS:

Mr. Comtois entertained a motion to acknowledge receipt of the below listed monthly reports and minutes of other departments; Mr. Thomo so moved; Mr. Comtois seconded; so voted.

Advisory Committee: 10/4/12; 10/31/12
CIPC: 12/5/12; 1/17/13
Municipal Custodian: January 2013
Fire Dept.: January 2013

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**
Chairman Comtois read aloud the announcements which included the brush burning regulations, food pantry, announcement of the time period for accepting resumes for the Administrative Assistant position and (from the Town Clerk) the deadlines relative to the Annual Town Election and the positions to be on the ballot.

**Public Access Period:**

Susan Brogan: requested an increase in police patrols on Allen Road. She said there were a lot of speeders and this was dangerous for walkers. She further stated that more patrols were needed in the area of the Jeppson Beach at South Pond during the summer swimming season.

John David Holdcraft: said he had seen a cruiser on Allen Road yesterday for an hour and a half. He thanked the Selectmen and the Highway Department for putting up the signs that he had requested on Allen Road.

*Agenda:*

**1. 6:45 PM PRESENTATION FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS RE: ON-LINE BILL PAYING PROGRAM**

Ms. Sheila Frangiamore, Treasurer, introduced Ryan Stollie of UniBank who gave the Selectmen a brief review of their fees and the program that would be free to the Town and would allow residents to pay their Real Estate, Personal Property, Motor Vehicle, Water taxes, dog licenses, fines, document research request and copy fees in the Town clerk's office all on-line with a minimal cost to the user. The program is easy to navigate with the fees clearly marked. Mr. Stollie told the Board that UniBank specializes in municipal on-line payments. He had given a presentation to the Department Heads who would be using the program and each one was in favor. Ms. Frangiamore told the Selectmen that she and the involved departments had also received a presentation from another company that features on-line payments for municipalities but all agreed that they preferred UniBank's version for its simplicity, larger support staff, a stronger focus on Massachusetts municipalities and for the lower rates to the users. She recommended that the Selectmen enter into contract with Unibank. As soon as they sign the contract the program will be set up and can be used immediately.

The Board agreed to review the contract between now and their next meeting (Feb. 19th) when it would again be on their agenda. Mr. Stolli was thanked for his presentation.

**2. REQUESTS FOR A SPRING SPECIAL TOWN MEETING**

The Town Treasurer and Town Clerk were present to ask for a Special Town Meeting so that they would have needed funding to pay certain bills.

Mr. Michael Seery, Town Clerk, needed extra funding to pay for an additional election that the State has scheduled for April 30th. Mr. Seery explained that he

will need additional funding of about $2,564 for Payroll and $1,956 for Expenses for the Special Senate Election. The Expense amount was reduced from his original request since he learned that the State will reimburse the Towns $1,500. His list of reasons for not wanting the Senate Election combined with the Annual Town Election (even though this allowed by State Law) along with another e-mail listing the details on the amount requested are attached to these minutes.

The Treasurer needs $3,388.33 to pay the January invoice for Unemployment Benefits. She explained that when a person who is both a town employee and an employee elsewhere gets laid off from their other job, the Town has to pay part of their unemployment benefits even though they may still be working for the Town! She also said that the Elementary School had let someone go and set him up for Unemployment benefits without informing her and this has caused this budget to be overdrawn. Even a very occasional substitute teacher at the elementary school can collect unemployment from the Town. Because of these kinds of issues, the Treasurer could not safely predict the balance that would be needed for the remaining five months of the year.

Mr. Comtois said he was not in favor of holding a Special Town Meeting; he wanted the Treasurer to deficit spend and to ask the Advisory Committee for the needed funding.

The discussion turned from whether or not to hold a Special Town meeting to one of whether or not the Town should combine its Annual Town Election (scheduled by by-law for Monday, May 6th) with the April 30th Special Senate Election. The Town Clerk spoke against it, citing several reasons including confusion for the voters, a savings of only about $500, etc. (see the attached).

Ms. Sheila Frangiamore, Brookfield's Treasurer and who was once Brookfield Assistant Town Clerk, and Ms. Donna Neylon, Administrative Assistant and former Town Clerk for Oakham, both spoke against combining the two elections.

At the end of the discussion, Mr. Comtois entertained a motion to combine the Annual Town Election with the special State Senate Election scheduled for April 30th and the Town Clerk to advertise the changes in Town Election-related deadlines; Mr. Heller so moved; Mr. Thomo seconded; so voted.

Mr. Seery said that he will also be asking the Advisory Committee for funding so that he can pay his Assistant Town Clerk for extra needed hours. He has underfunded this account for the current year.

## 3. REPORTS FROM S. FRANGIAMORE, TREASURER (CREDIT CARDS, PERIODIC REPORTS, CASH BOOK, FINANCIAL & PERSONNEL POLICIES, SERIAL STATE HOUSE NOTE – FIRE TRUCK, ETC.)

State House Note – Fire Truck:
Mr. Clark Rowell of UniBank attended the meeting to present to the Board new Notes to be signed for the renewal of the loan on the fire truck. He explained that the Town was paying down annually and there was a five year limit on this so the Note that he presented for the Board's signature was for a five year term. The Treasurer had gone out to bid and the lowest interest rate was 2.5% and the low bidder was People's United. There will be no change in the amount of the payments to be made from those made. Mr. Heller moved to sign the notes; Mr. Thomo seconded; so voted. The notes were signed during the meeting and since the Town Clerk was present, he certified their signatures and the previous Town Meeting vote. Mr. Rowell was thanked for his assistance.

Credit Cards:
Ms. Frangiamore told the Board that she was not in favor of having credit cards for municipal use and that the departments purchasing should go through the procurement/vendor process. In the matter of paying for the Town's website, she will contact the vendor to see if the Town can pay ahead of time or if she can set up an automatic withdrawal from out account for easy payment.

Periodic Reports:
The Board gave permission for the Treasurer's report to be on a quarterly basis versus monthly.

Cash Book:
A new cash book had been a recommendation by the Auditors following the last several audits. Ms. Frangiamore has made great progress with this. On the Friday of February 1st, Dan Haynes, head of the audit company that the Town uses, met with Ms. Frangiamore and Mr. Thomo at the Town Hall. He reviewed what she had done and felt it was too complicated. He has a smaller format for her to use and the Accountant has agreed to its use. Ms. Frangiamore expects the transition to the new format to be completed by the 18th of this month.

The Board asked the Treasurer about adding her department, the Assessors and the Tax Collector to the Vadar accounting system currently used by the Town Accountant only. She replied that she had no objection to the change as long as Vadar's service had improved.

Finance and Personnel Policies:
Ms. Frangiamore indicated to the Board that the current Finance and Personnel policies that the Town has are missing much legalese and she had a few samples of policies that she would like to change to. It is her intention to give a copy to

each Town employee once the new polices have been approved by Town Counsel. She also said that the policies should not be included in the Town's by-laws.

She has also discussed the financial policies with the Advisory Committee and the Capital Improvement Planning Committee (CIPC), particularly about incorporating their own part of the process. She would like to add the Town Accountant and the Tax Collector and is working on her own (Treasurer) section. It is her goal to have this completed by early May of this year.

## 4 PERMISSION FOR SUNDAY MORNING CLUB TO USE HALL ON 2/24/13 FOR 13TH ANNIVERSARY PARTY

Mr. Comtois entertained a motion to allow the Sunday Morning Club use of the Town Hall on Sunday, February 24th for their 13th Anniversary Party; Mr. Heller so moved; Mr. Thomo seconded; so voted. It was also noted that the Selectmen were invited to attend.

## 5. PERMISSION FOR MASS DASH 2013

Chairman Comtois asked the Police Chief if he had any objections and he indicated that he had already been contacted by the management of Mass Dash and he had no objections. Mr. Heller moved to authorize the Mass Dash to go through Brookfield; Mr. Thomo seconded; so voted.

## 6. ANNOUNCEMENT OF RADIO GRANT FOR FIRE & POLICE

Fire Chief, Peter Martell, was present at the meeting and he explained that this grant was for radio equipment that the Police and Fire Departments would use and would eliminate the need for them to carry two radios. The radios are portable that include the option of allowing the emergency/safety officials to communicate with like officials in neighboring communities.

## 7. REQUEST FROM CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING COMMITTEE (CIPC) TO HOLD A DEPARTMENT HEAD MEETING

Mr. Donald Taft came to the Selectmen, representing the CIPC, and requested that they hold a Department Head meeting so the CIPC could present the Capital Plan. He explained that they would need about 45 minutes for their presentation. The Selectmen agreed upon posting the meeting for Tuesday, February 12th at 9:30 am in the Banquet Room. The Board will hold a meeting in their office the same day, beginning at 8:30 am. The primary purpose of this meeting is to discuss the FY Proposed Budget and Articles for the Annual Town Meeting.

## 8. NEW BRIDGE OVER QUABOAG RIVER ON ROUTE 148 – STATUS/UPDATE AND LETTER FROM CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The final letter from the Conservation Commission objecting to the method of mitigation of a particular unwanted plan from the property next to the Brookfield Cemetery had been received and discussed at the Board's January 22nd meeting. Ms. Neylon asked for this to be discussed again and some kind of clear direction as to what the Board wanted done with the letter. Mr. Heller said that he supports the position of the Conservation Commission and suggested that the Board forward the letter to MassDOT. He volunteered to write a cover letter. The Board accepted his offer.

## 9. REVIEW OF WINTER PARKING BAN POLICY

Chairman Comtois indicated that several comments were made individually to the Selectmen and a few letters were received since the revised policy was adopted at the last meeting and people are confused what is meant by the "2 hours prior to snowfall and 4 hours after" part of the revised policy. Police Chief Blanchard explained that the previous policy had "no teeth" for enforcement in hours other than the 11 pm to 6 am as quoted in the policy and that was why he and the Highway Superintendent had asked for the change. He explained that it was not his intent or the Highway Superintendent's to be unreasonable; that they were using common sense in the enforcement. For example, if there was a storm and there were cars at one of the churches, they would now tow them and neither would they tow someone who was parked at a business for a few minutes.

Mr. Comtois entertained a motion to return to the original policy of no parking between 11:00 pm and 6:00 am but keep the $25 fee and to have the Police Chief and the Highway Superintendent return to the Board with a revision for the February 19, 2013 meeting; Mr. Heller so moved; Mr. Thomo seconded; so voted.

## 10. DISPOSITION OF SURPLUS PROPERTY AT FORMER LAKESIDE CAMPGROUNDS

Only one Department, the Board of Health, had responded to the e-mail to the departments asking if there was anything at the former Lakeside Campgrounds that they would like for their department. The Board of Health requested the log cabin for their use at the Transfer Station. Mr. Comtois entertained a motion to allow the Board of Health to work with the Highway Department to move the building to the Transfer Station and to authorize the Transfer of the building to the Board of Health; Mr. Heller so moved; Mr. Thomo seconded; so voted.

The Board discussed methods of disposal of what was left at this property. Chief Martell suggested that the board hold a sealed bid auction rather than a formal auction. In this case, it would be advertised that the property would be open for

review on a specific day/time and that those interested would submit a sealed bid on each object that they wanted to buy. This method would eliminate the need for a professional auctioneer.

Mr. Comtois suggested that Mr. Bruce Clarke, Mr. Herbert Chaffee, and Chief Martell combine their talents to create an inventory with an estimated value of what is at the site. No action was taken.

Ms. Neylon will check into the rules of bidding for the February 19th meeting.

The Board discussed getting rid of the metal first; perhaps having the Highway Department take it directly to the scrap metal dealer so that the cost of the middleman will be retained by the Town. No action was taken.

Mr. Comtois entertained a motion to declare surplus everything at the site of the former Lakeside Campgrounds except the log cabin which was already transferred to the Board of Health and except for the former Recreation Center, the Pool and the Pool House; Mr. Heller so moved; Mr. Thomo seconded; so voted.

## 11. DRAFT CHARGE FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE FUTURE OF FORMER LAKESIDE CAMPGROUND

This matter was tabled after Mr. Comtois said he wanted to discuss it in Executive Session at 6:00 pm on February 19th. Mr. Ronald Couture will be invited to the meeting.

## 12. SAW MILL POND DAM PROJECT – STATUS/UPDATE ETC.

No action necessary at this time.

## 13. UPDATE/STATUS OF POLICY RE: VOLUNTEERS & CLASS D LICENSES – N. THOMO

This matter was passed over because Mr. Thomo said that he did not have a report from Town Counsel yet but expected to have something in time for the February 19, 2013 agenda.

## 14. UPDATE/STATUS OF ON REQUEST FOR DRIVING RECORDS & CORI CHECKS – N. THOMO

This was passed over for the same reason as number 13 above.

## 15. CONTINUE DISCUSSION OF NEW VETERAN'S TAX WORK OFF PROGRAM – N. THOMO

Mr. Thomo reported that he had talked with the Veteran's Agent, Bryan Griffing, who was very much in favor of this program and volunteered to administer the veteran part, if funded by the voters. Mr. Thomo will continue his research and this will come back to a future agenda.

## 16. DISCUSSION: MEDICAL MARIJUANA – R. THOMO

This was passed over to a future meeting as it was learned that the Planning Board will be discussing this at their meeting scheduled for Wednesday, February 6th. Both Mr. Comtois and Mr. Thomo attended a seminar on this subject when they attended the MMA Annual Meeting last month.

## 17. FY 2014 BUDGET & ATM ARTICLES REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION (POLICE; CEMETERY COMMISSIONERS)

Police Budget:
Police Chief Michael Blanchard came to explain his request for an additional full-time patrol officer for the evening shift. He said this need was something that had been his stated goal since he first came to Brookfield and that it was needed for safety reasons and because of the workload. If the position was funded, he would have two officers on the evening shift and they would both be full-time and academy trained. He has a report from the FBI that indicates that an average of 2.8 officers are needed for every 1,000 of residents; this means that Brookfield should have 8 or 9 but has only 4. He explained that the part-time officers fill in when a full-time officer takes time off for vacation, sick, etc. Chief Blanchard further explained that neighboring communities of West and North Brookfield, with similar populations, already have two officers on the evening shift and each department has six full-time officers. Chief Blanchard has requested $38,213 for this purpose.

Mr. Heller said that he knows that the Chief has always been very careful with his budgets and he supports his request "if for no other reason than the safety of the officer on duty". All other line items of the police budget were level-funded from the current fiscal year. The matter of the addition of a new full-time officer was postponed.

Article for Annual Town Meeting (ATM):
Chief Blanchard said that he had re-submitted the article for a new vehicle that he had submitted for the fall Special Town meeting (STM). The article included transferring the vehicle to be replaced to the Fire Department. He said that he had originally intended at this time to replace the vehicle that he drives but will postpone that for a year (fy15) and is asking instead to replace the SUV.

Cemetery Commissioner's Budget:
Mr. Arthur Jay, Chair of the Cemetery Commission, and Mr. Peter Masuzzo, member of the Commission, attended the meeting at the request of the Selectmen to answer questions about one line item in their proposed budget. The Cemetery Improvements Account had been reduced by the Advisory Committee (AC) to zero from their requested $1,500 in budget year FY13. The AC had asked the Commissioners to agree to this to help balance the budget but assured them that this would be reinstated in FY14. The Commissioners said that after they agreed to the reduction, they saw other departmental budgets voted increases. Mr. Jay and Mr. Masuzzo asked for the Board to support this reinstatement. They said that the Cemetery is a viable landmark for the community and they need the money to help maintain and improve it.

Mr. Comtois entertained a motion to approve the Cemetery Commissioner's budget as submitted; Mr. Heller so moved; Mr. Thomo seconded; so voted. The Commissioner expressed their appreciation to the Board.

Article & Budget Review:
The Selectmen agreed to meet on Tuesday, February 12th at 8:30 am to continue their review of the budget. They would like to see the Animal Control Officer, Library Director (or Library Trustee) and someone from the Cultural Council.

Fire Department Budget:
Since the Fire Chief was present at the meeting the Board decided to ask him about the $700 increase total in two line items of his budget. Since he wasn't expecting these questions, he said that he expected that the increases were due to inflation. He would check and get back to the Board. He reminded the Board that as the Department's equipment gets older, there is more need for replacement, etc.

Mr. Comtois entertained a motion to approve the Fire Department budget as level funded; Mr. Thomo so moved; Mr. Comtois seconded; so voted with Mr. Heller voting nay.

Fire Department Roof:
Mr. Comtois said that he is still working with the Tantasqua Regional High School and they still plan to replace the fire department's roof in the spring. $10,000 has been set aside for materials and Mr. Comtois expects this will be sufficient.

## 18. COMPARISON OF BLACKBOARD CONNECT WITH RED ZONE – K. KARRMANN

Chief Martell who is also the Deputy Director of the Brookfield Emergency Management Agency (BEMA) said that Mr. Karrmann was sick and couldn't attend the meeting. He would attempt to answer the Board's questions about the

two emergency notification programs but couldn't find anything on the internet about Red Zone. Since Mr. Thomo and Mr. Comtois had learned about this program when they attended the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) Annual Meeting in Boston recently, one of them will forward the contact information to Chief Martell. The salesman from the new program claimed that his was "better and cheaper".

Chief Martell said that Blackboard Connect was very inexpensive and was currently in use by at least Spencer and Milford and East Brookfield is considering it. He said that the program "went live" in Brookfield about two years ago and is still being "fine tuned" but has worked well. He wondered if the Town would "lose something" in a conversion.

**19. DISCUSSION: GETTING QUOTES RE: GENERAL INSURANCE**

The Selectmen had asked Ms. Neylon to check into getting quotes on the Town's general insurance. She reported that she had learned that she doesn't have to go out to bid, merely submit copies of the "deck sheets" to various insurance agencies. She will attempt to get at least three bids including from the current agent.

*Correspondence:*

**20. THANK YOU LETTER TO PVPC FROM O'CONNELL'S**

Chairman Comtois summarized a letter written by Mr. & Mrs. Peter O'Connell that complimented Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and their contractor for some excellent work on a grant-funded project done at their neighbor's property recently. The O'Connell's appreciated the quality of the work and the considerations given to the property abutters. (Copy of letter is attached)

**21. PROPOSED LEGISLATION (H1902; H1899) - NON-RESIDENT VOKE EDUCATION TRANSPORTATION**

Mr. Comtois said that he had spoken with Ms. Deb Boyd at Tantasqua Regional School District who had originally been opposed to this legislation but told him that she was now in favor and recommended that the Selectmen also support it.. Representatives Gobi and Smola support the bills.

Mr. Comtois entertained a motion to support both HD1902 and HD1899 and to so notify our Senator and Representative; Mr. Heller so moved; Mr. Thomo seconded; so voted (copy of explanations of these House bills is attached).

*Other:*

## 22. ANNUAL FORM 500 (COMPLAINT/OUTAGE REPORT) FOR 2012 FROM CHARTER COMMUNICATIONS

A report was received from Charter Communications indicating that no complaints had been received. The report is on file in the Selectmen's office.

## 23. SCHEDULE FOR LEGISLATIVE BREAKFASTS

The MMA's schedule for Legislative Breakfasts was received. The Selectmen will each check to see if they can attend any and pre-register if they can attend (copy of the schedule is attached).

## 24. TOWN EMPLOYEE SPEEDING

Mr. Thomo said that he had witnessed a Town employee speeding on Allen Road. Mr. Comtois suggested that he speak with the Administrative Assistant about setting up an Executive Session.

## 25. COMPUTER PROGRAM VADAR:

Mr. Comtois wondered how the Board wanted to proceed with introducing this program to all relevant financial departments. He will research further, get a quote and bring the matter to the February 19th meeting.

## 26. MUNICIPAL FACILITIES PLANNING COMMITTEE (MFPC)

Mr. Comtois asked to add "non-binding referendum for the Annual Town Election Ballot" to the agenda for the Tuesday morning meeting. He said this per the request of the MFPC. There were no objections. He also said that the Architectural Department of Tantasqua Regional School District had completed their design of the Town Hall and were scheduled to be give a presentation at the Board's February 19th meeting.

## 27. MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Ms. Neylon explained that she had made some progress in finding out how the Master Plan should be implemented. She suggested that the Board begin to advertise that they would be setting up a Master Plan Implementation Committee and that persons interested should let the Board know. Mr. Heller said that due to quorum-related problems with a small committee he suggested the committee have a minimum of five members. The Board wondered how other towns implemented their Master Plan.

## 28. PERMISSION TO USE THE BANQUET ROOM

Ms. Neylon said that she had received a request from the Water Commissioners to use the Banquet room on two Thursday mornings (February 14 and 21) for classes. Mr. Heller moved to allow the use; Mr. Thomo seconded; so voted.

## 29. PERAMBULATING TOWN BORDERS

Mr. Thomo said that Mr. Daniel Leahy (Chair of the Planning Board and the Board of Health) is a surveyor and he has volunteered to assist Mr. Thomo in the perambulation and marking of the borders. They will document their work with photographs, etc.

## ADJOURNMENT:

At 9:35 pm, Mr. Comtois entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Thomo so moved; Mr. Comtois seconded; so voted.

Respectfully submitted

Donna L. Neylon, Administrative Assistant

Approved: March 19, 2013