BOARD OF SELECTMEN

P.O. Box 372
West Brookfield, Massachusetts 01585

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES OF JULY 27, 2021

PRESENT: Mrs. Diane Vayda; Chairman, Mr. David J. Pierce, Vice-Chairman, and Roland Sickenberger, Clerk
ATTENDEES: Chief C. Thomas O'Donnell, Sgt. Matthew Letendre, Capt. Richard Lapierre, Melinda Czub, Pam Griffing, Doug Aspinall, Lori Loughlin, and Ronald Garceau

Reconvene in Open Session at 6:03 PM

MINUTES
Motion to approve the Minutes of July 13, 2021 as written made by Mr. Pierce; second: Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY REPORT/CORRESPONDENCE

1. The Town recently received $195,049.85 in ARPA funding and a grant for $5,300 for our Cultural Council. Capt. Lapierre submitted the final report for the FY 21 FF Safety Equipment and was approved by DFS. The town should be receiving $9,527.14 in reimbursement. ***Thank you to all for their efforts on behalf of the town.***
2. The town received a premium credit in the amount of $466.00 on our Year End Auto Endorsement. ***This savings was realized due to the efforts of Capt. Lapierre for his initiative for taking defunct town vehicles/equipment to auction.***
3. The two windows have been ordered for our office and one for the Police Department. The cost is $1,340.22 and will be taken from the Town Hall Maintenance Account. - ***Noted***
4. MassDOT State Aid Reimbursement Project Request – Snow Road Reconstruction (Snow Road from Route 9 to Wickaboag Valley Road) $203,969.00 - ***Motion to approve the request as presented made by Mr. Sickenberger; second: Mrs. Vayda – 2 Yes, 1 Abstention (Mr. Pierce due to conflict)***

CAPTAIN RICHARD LAPIERRE – FIRE DEPARTMENT – FEMA GRANT / GRANT UPDATE(S)
Capt. Lapierre addressed the Board this evening in order to first provide an update on the grant that he wrote for the new tanker/pumper truck. Capt. Lapierre was pleased to announce that his grant submission advanced to Stage II, which is the tech phase; to which only three-thousand communities are in this next round of vetting. That is from a total of eighty-thousand communities from across the country. Due to a delay on the federal side, additional informational may not be available until sometime in September.

FEMA GRANT – FIRE STATION CONSTRUCTION
New Jersey Representative Pascrell recently filed a bill in the amount of one-billion dollars, for a grant program for the rebuild or new construction of a Safety Complex. Captain Lapierre is here this evening in order to gauge the Board's interest in their support for him to pursue this endeavor. This grant would take considerable time and effort and wanted to convey what information he did have to this point. This would be a competitive grant, administered by FEMA. A total of $7.5 million cap is on each project. Capt. Lapierre stated that in light of the Northeast Region being the oldest in the country which houses the oldest buildings, there is a very good chance that

caveat is that at the time of submission, the town must first own the property and the town would be responsible to have engineered plans in hand; basically being "shovel ready". He has done a review of town-owned land and it appears that the only feasible parcel would be 10 Wigwam Road. According to Chief O'Donnell, there was a feasibility study done and at that time, proved to be too expensive due to excessive ledge which could not have been blasted due to the proximity of homes and the elementary school, therefore it would have needed to be drilled which inflated the site costs. In light of the fact this is grant money, that concern is alleviated, leaving only the engineered plans for the town to fund. With that said, all Board members were in agreement to allow Capt. Lapierre to move forward. He will keep the Board informed with any updates and will work with Mrs. Acerra as Procurement Officer under c.30 B.

NEW BUSINESS

Chief O'Donnell said he will be out of town from August 7th – 14th and also from the 19th – 24th. He is also in the process of closing out several of his grants and praised the recent actions of Ofc. Frank Jolin for his efforts during a structure fire. He was able to get the occupants out of the house safely. The Board will send Ofc. Jolin a letter of thanks.

Mr. Sickenberger also requested clarification to see what if anything can be done to "appoint" a Board of Directors for the LWPA. Mr. Pierce advised him that they had previously asked for a letter of indemnification and legal counsel at the time (Atty. Boyle) said that it could be done, however they would need to be under someone's or some department heads' supervision. The Board asked that Mrs. Acerra contact Atty. Connolly to gauge his thoughts on the matter.

APPOINTMENTS

Motion to appoint the individuals as referenced as ***Attachment A*** made by Mr. Sickenberger; second: Mr. Pierce – unanimous.

WARRANTS

Motion to approve and sign Warrant No. 22 P2 and 22 W 2 dated July 29, 2021 in the amount of $82,097.99 and $199,306.69 respectively made by Mr. Sickenberger; second: Mr. Pierce – unanimous.

LORI LOUGHLIN – ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mrs. Loughlin addressed the Board this evening to discuss several areas of concern as we move forward in this new fiscal year. It is everyone's hope that we can have better communication in order to ease the burden of the next budget season going into Town Meeting. She stated that there were numerous delays, creating undue stress and burden on the members. Some of the suggestions were:

- Timeline of submission dates – able to back their schedule into the dates
- Centralize all employee contracts with a wage sheet reflective of salary increases
- Better understanding of the IT budget and budgeting process for both Highway/Fire
- Improve and increase communications by holding additional meetings with the School Committee
- Establish a Capital Plan Committee and work with both the Selectboard and Master Plan Committee
- Draft a joint letter to all departments re: FY 23 Budget/Submission deadlines

The Board also informed Ms. Loughlin that Capt. Lapierre will be pursuing a grant for a fire station/safety complex with the understanding that the town will need to fund the engineering aspect.

FY 21 YEAR END TRANSFERS

Motion to approve the FY 2021 Year End Transfers as presented by the Town Accountant and referenced as ***Attachment B*** made by Mr. Pierce; second: Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous.

NEXT MEETING DATES: August 3, 2021 at 5 PM – Executive Session – Union Negotiations – AFSCME
August 10, 2021 at 6 PM – Regular Session
August 17, 2021 at 6:30 PM – Department Head Meeting

Motion to Adjourn made by Mr. Pierce; second: Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous at 7:50 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Acerra

Rebecca Acerra
Executive Secretary

Roland Sickenberger, Clerk

8/10/21

Date Approved