BOARD OF SELECTMEN

P.O. Box 372
West Brookfield, Massachusetts 01585

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 28, 2021

PRESENT: Mrs. Diane Vayda; Chairman, Mr. David J. Pierce, Vice-Chairman, and Roland Sickenberger, Clerk
ATTENDEES: Chief C. Thomas O'Donnell, Mr. Jacob Gorham and Ms. Amy Dugas
Called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM

CHIEF C. THOMAS O'DONNELL
Chief O'Donnell addressed the Board this evening in order to provide several updates. The first being that due to the Police Reform Act, he will need to spend an additional $1,250.00 on software. In speaking with area departments, this particular software is the recommended program. The cost ($1,250) includes licenses for all eight (8) officers. He anticipates having the funds in his budget to cover this unexpected expenditure, however wanted the Board to be aware in the event he should run short in his current budget cycle.

Ofc. Kara Hartung will be starting the Bridge Academy, which again is another change in the manner in which the Commonwealth views Law Enforcement Officers. The Bridge Academy requires part-time officers to attend classes that once completed, will no longer distinguish between part and full-time officers. The class begins October 1, 2021 and the cost is being split with the Town of Petersham as she is a part-time officer in their community as well. She must complete $199^{1/2}$ hours in order to retain her police powers. The class, much of which is online, must be completed by June 30, 2022. He wanted to also make sure the Board is aware that he will incur labor costs. Both Ofc. Melendez and Jolin will be in the class the following year.

Ofc. Jordan Ryan will be graduating from the full-time police academy on October 4th at 2 PM at Mechanics Hall in Worcester. Jordan is second in his class and serves as Class President. Chief O'Donnell will be attending. Congratulations to Jordan!

Based on the current recommendations of the CDC, this year's Halloween is expected to be held as normal with door-to-door trick-or-treating being allowed which will be held on Sunday, October 31, 2021 from 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM.

ANEVRY – JACOB GORHAM
Mr. Gorham was in attendance this evening to provide an update on his company's status and to address some concerns expressed by the Board. He stated that his company is currently undergoing a restructuring and will be called Cooperative Partners, LLC once completed. The company is a combination of affiliated partners and freelancers. Through the reconstructioning plan, he has brought in additional staff and provided handouts to each member as a synopsis of the restructuring plan and services under the new LLC. After a brief overview, the Board said they would review the packet as it is rather in depth.

With regard to the concerns, Mr. Gorham has been working with Select member Sickenberger as he has a firm knowledge in IT. With that, Mr. Sickenberger asked that he not install/add any hardware at will and some of the recent issues the building and offices have experienced were due to that very issue. He (Sickenberger) feels that he treats the network like his own and not the towns. He (Sickenberger) stated that practice is to stop immediately. Text messages and or emails during the night is not an acceptable means of notification. The other area of concern

is accessing the building and offices during non-business hours and using his flashlight on his cell phone while in the offices. This poses a safety issue and is unprofessional. Mr. Gorham admitted that he does go into offices at all hours, however will certainly stop that practice moving forward. Mrs. Vayda asked about the Cable Access equipment and if that was submitted as part of the insurance claim due to the lightning strike. He stated it wasn't, as it was hard to determine when the damage occurred. Mr. Gorham asked if the Board is continuing his contract and Mr. Sickenberger stated that for the time being, yes.

Mr. Gorham stated that he will continue to monitor and do backups as necessary. He thanked the Board for their time this evening.

AMY DUGAS – QUABOAG HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Ms. Dugas was before the Board this evening to once again discuss the Quaboag Historical Society (Museum). In year's past, the town had a lease with QHS which has been expired since 2017. At a previous discussion on the matter, the building is in need of repairs and in order for them to apply for grant funding, the town would need to enter into a long-term lease (99 years). This was presented to legal counsel for their opinion and they advised against such a term. Another option was for the town to convey the property to the QHS with the caveat of the property returning to the town in the event the QHS should dissolve. This action would require a town meeting vote. The Board asked Mrs. Acerra to contact legal counsel to see exactly why a long-term lease is not beneficial to the town. All members were agreeable to a five (5) year lease however Ms. Dugas asked that the Board to table this article, which was originally scheduled for the STM, until she has further information. All were in agreement.

NORTHEAST IT – RATIFY AGREEMENT

Motion to ratify the agreement for services for Northeast IT in the amount of $2,500.00 made by Mr. Pierce; second: Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous. (This agreement is for an assessment of the town's IT Infrastructure in order to apply for grant funding through the Community Compact)

APPOINTMENTS

Motion to appoint Heather Gough and Melanie Waugh to the White Christmas Committee and Timothy Morrell to the Stormwater Authority as the Citizen-at-Large made by Mr. Pierce; second; Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous.

COVID-19 UPDATES

Some communities and state agencies have mandated the COVID-19 vaccine for their employees. The Town of West Brookfield is not mandating employees receive the vaccine. Most employees however are vaccinated at this point.

FY 2023 BUDGET

Financial Consultant, John Madden provided a draft memo to the Board for their review, which provides guidance to all departments on the upcoming FY 23 budget season and submission requirements/deadlines. After a review by the Board, several edits and deletions were made. Mrs. Acerra will provide a draft to the Board for their approval and then send to Mr. Madden to be included with the budget spreadsheets.

MINUTES

Motion to approve the Minutes of September 8, 2021 including an attendance sheet (joint meeting with Conservation) as written made by Mr. Pierce; second: Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous

WARRANTS & INVOICES

Motion to approve Warrant # 22 W 5 dated September 9, 2021 in the amount of $106,782.27 and the refunds in the amount of $1,640.62 made by Mr. Pierce; second: Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous

Motion to approve Warrant # 22 P 6, #22 W 6, & #22 W 6-Conservation, dated September 23, 2021 in the amounts of $74,829.18, $815,838.47 & $303.00 respectively made by Mr. Pierce; second; Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous
Motion to approve the Debt Final BAN Payment with a post date of June 30, 2021 in the amount of $330,07.64 made by Mr. Pierce; second; Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY REPORT/CORRESPONDENCE

- The office received a revised Letter of Resignation which now reflects a *Notice of Retirement* from Gregg Waterman from the Highway Department. The Town Clerk, Tax/Treasury Office and Town Accountant have been advised of the change. - ***Noted***
- The office received a request from the White Christmas Committee requesting permission to hold a White Christmas event on Sunday, December 5th in the Great Hall. This would be an all-day event. - ***Approved***
- The Historical Commission is looking for a time when we can take a few moments to review the exterior of the building for necessary repairs to begin. – ***A date/time next week will be scheduled***
- The office received letters from Sgt. Letendre and Ofc. Charron requesting that the Board consider hazard pay for the current employees of the West Brookfield Police Dept. Payment could be potentially paid through the American Rescue Plan of 2021. – ***The Board stated that they are willing to discuss this matter further. Monies could possibly be paid from the CARES ACT***
- Ms. Rainy Walsh who resides on Foster Hill Road stopped by the office with a concern now that the bridge on Foster Hill is now complete. She stated that cars are traveling at excessive speeds and has requested that a speed limit sign be erected. – ***The Board is not in opposition, however the office will consult with the Chief of Police prior to any final decisions.***
- The office received an inquiry from the Advisory Committee looking for guidance on a potential appointment and possible conflict. – ***Under the law, only a member or potential member can contact the Ethics Commission regarding an opinion. It must be the individuals own request.***
- Tuesday, November 16th has been tentatively earmarked for a STM. An email was sent out informing all departments of the possible meeting. In the email, it is noted that this meeting should be used for strictly housekeeping items and/or unanticipated matters or possible by-law amendments. – ***After a discussion, the Board chose Tuesday, December 7th for the date of the STM. All departments will be notified.***
- Our 2nd Department Head Meeting was held today. The Town Accountant presented information on grants, submission of payables and department turnovers. ***Attendance was less than stellar; however, for those who did attend highlights their commitment and dedication to the town and our residents.***

NEXT MEETING DATE: **Wednesday, October 6, 2021 at 5 PM (Executive Session followed by Open Session)**

Motion to Adjourn made by Mr. Sickenberger; second: Mrs. Vayda – unanimous at 8:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Acerra
Executive Secretary

Roland Sickenberger, Clerk

10/18/21
Date Approved