BOARD OF SELECTMEN

P.O. Box 372
West Brookfield, Massachusetts 01585

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 30, 2021

PRESENT: Mrs. Diane Vayda; Chairman, Mr. David J. Pierce, Vice-Chairman, and Roland Sickenberger, Clerk
ATTENDEES: Chief C.T. O'Donnell, Captain Richard Lapierre and Highway Superintendent James Daley

Called meeting to Order at 6:05 PM

CMRPC – UPDATE ON LOCAL RAPID RECOVERY PLAN (LRRP) & GREEN COMMUNITIES

Mr. McElwee requested to be rescheduled to our next meeting due to illness. Matter tabled.

FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET DISCUSSION

Department Heads from Police, Fire and Highway were in attendance this evening for a preliminary discussion on the FY 23 budget. In light of the ongoing fiscal constraints, the three largest town departments felt a need to provide an overview of the reality of keeping their departments running.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT:

Mr. Daley provided a breakdown of his anticipated costs along with his current costs on a number of key items (sand/salt, fuel, vehicle repairs, etc.). Percentage increases range from 25% all the way to 85%. He is concerned that he will need to cut services if his budget is held at the 2% as directed in the FY 23 Budget Commencement Letter. He also advised that his Chapter 90 money has been level funded for the past several years. Mr. Pierce suggested that he submit a budget that is more realistic.

POLICE DEPARTMENT:

Chief O'Donnell provided a first draft of his budget. His most notable budget change will be when the Local 83A & 83B contracts are resolved. Right now, his draft budget represents a .11% increase. He has two vehicles that have over 100K miles (his cruiser and a line car). The Bridge Academy, which is mandatory also will be an increase. The Board suggested that he include a new cruiser into his budget versus presenting an article at town meeting. He also advised the Board that within the next several years, the town will need to understand that the makeup of the department will need to be changed in order to be in line with staffing protocols. Come 2023 there will no longer be a part-time designation for officers. The town's current population requires 5.5 officers at a minimum. Realistically speaking, he would need an eight-man roster.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Captain Lapierre was in attendance this evening on behalf of Chief Edwards. Call volume is down somewhat this year from the previous. Turn-out gear, which has a 10-year life expectancy is up to date. The air packs (SCBA), which were funded through a grant and are also good for 10 years only have four years remaining before they must be taken out of service. The estimated cost to replace the air packs is in the neighborhood of $150K. In addition, the Board and Advisory has been made aware of the two trucks that are out of service. The cost to replace has increased $70K from last year to over $700K. One of the town's biggest needs, is to address the infrastructure with a safety complex. A discussion took place regarding applying for a grant, securing the services of a grant writer; having a project shovel ready and the funding of plans; either conceptual or engineered. Mrs. Acerra will look into the possibility of utilizing any of the ARPA funds as an allowable expense. Mr. Pierce asked if the truck can be considered under a debt exclusion. The Board will need to discuss further with the financial team as it is a dire situation.

The Board thanked them for attending and will join them when they are to present their budgets to the Advisory Committee.

MINUTES

Motion to approve the Minutes of November 22, 2021 as amended by Mrs. Vayda made by Mr. Sickenberger; second: Mrs. Vayda. 2 Yes, 1 Abstention – Mr. Pierce due to absence.

WARRANTS

Motion to approve and sign Warrant No's. 22 P 11; 22 W 11; 22 11A; and MVX dated December 2, 2021 in the amount of $77,526.85, $104,20.05, $2,498.00 and $991.19 respectively made by Mr. Pierce; second: Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY REPORT/CORRESPONDENCE

1. The Town Clerk's Office has been requested by state election officials that the Board of Selectmen vote to either keep the town as a one precinct town or vote to divide into two. – ***Motion to keep the Town of West Brookfield a one-precinct town made by Mr. Pierce; second: Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous.***
2. The office received notice in accordance with MGL, Chapter 31, Section 40 that an NOI was filed by the West Brookfield Housing Authority for their property located at 29 East Main Street. Information regarding the hearing can be obtained from the Conservation Commission. - ***Noted***
3. As a follow up: should the BOS wish to pursue changing the Town Clerk's position from elected to appointed, an article would need to be placed on the warrant at the February 8th STM. If successful, then the question would need to be included on the ballot for the

May 2022 elections. – ***The Board is in favor of including an article on the warrant for the STM scheduled for February 8, 2022.***

4. CMRPC and the CMMPO are reaching out to all west sub-region communities looking for interested Selectboard members to serve as an Alternate on the committee. The deadline for submission for consideration is December 10th. – ***No members are available at this time.***
5. Tim Morrell re-submitted his name for the open position on the Planning Board. A tentative interim appointment is scheduled for our next meeting on December 14th. – ***Mrs. Acerra will contact the Planning Board to advise them that Mr. Morrell has submitted a letter of interest. The posting will remain until December 3, 2021. A joint meeting will be held on December 14, 2021 in order to do an interim appointment until the next election scheduled in May of 2022.***

NEW BUSINESS - NONE

COMMENTS & CONCERNS – NONE

NEXT MEETING DATE: December 14, 2021 – 6 PM.

Motion to Adjourn made by Mr. Pierce; second: Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous at 7:52 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Acerra

Rebecca Acerra
Executive Secretary

Roland Sickenberger, Clerk

12-14-21

Date Approved