BOARD OF SELECTMEN

P.O. Box 372
West Brookfield, Massachusetts 01585

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 17, 2022

PRESENT: Mr. David Pierce; Chairman, Mr. Roland Sickenberger; Vice-Chairman and Eric von Bleicken, Clerk
ATTENDEES: Chief Clayton Edwards, Deputy Chief Dan Santos, Captain Rich Lapierre, Rebekah Cornell, Melinda Czub, Sgt. Letendre, Doreen Piechota, Mike Audette, Jim Daley, Ron Garceau, Lori Loughlin and Pam Griffing

Called meeting to Order at 6:00 PM

ASPARAGUS FESTIVAL – REQUESTS FOR FARMER-WINERY LICENSE

Motion to approve the following Special Licenses for the Asparagus Festival on May 21, 2022:
Hardwick Winery, Ragged Hill Cider Company, LLC & Agronomy Farm Vineyard made by Mr. Sickenberger; second: Mr. von Bleicken – unanimous.

REQUEST BY RAGGED HILL CIDER COMPANY FOR A SPECIAL LICENSE UNDER M.G.L. c 138, Section 15F for the 2022 FARMERS MARKET for 2022.

Motion to approve the request of Ragged Hill Cider Company for a Special License as requested and presented made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous.

JAMES DALEY – FY 23 BUDGET DISCUSSION

Mr. Daley addressed the Board again this evening regarding his FY 23 budget. Mr. Pierce stated again that the Advisory Committee did not take away from his salary. They took away his OT line and put $5K into his base salary, which upon retirement will bode far better for him. He also discussed the Tree Warden position. Surrounding towns provide a stipends of anywhere from $3K to $6K for their Wardens. Mr. Pierce suggested a stipend of $2,500. He was agreeable. **Motion to appoint Mr. Daley as Tree Warden with an additional $2,500 for a stipend as of FY 23 made by Mr. Sickenberger; second: Mr. von Bleicken – unanimous.**

Mr. Daley also addressed the Board regarding the vacancy left by Mr. Wildes. The Board asked him to hold off on filling the position as of right now until the budget is complete. Mr. Sickenberger however wants the funding to remain in place. Mr. Daley also reminded the Board of the ever-rising costs of fuel and the needed monies for the Town Road Maintenance article. All are aware. Mr. Daley thanked the Board for their time and consideration.

SPYROCK FARMS, LLC – 198 WEST MAIN STREET

After multiple discussions, and a thorough vetting through counsel, the Board has a Host Community Agreement (HCA) that has been agreed upon by both the town and the principals at Spyrock Farms, LLC. The developer is looking to operate a retail adult marijuana facility at 198 Main Street. With no further discussion, the Board made the following motion*: **Motion to sign the Host Community Agreement only after Spyrock Farms executes the document first in the following amounts: $7,000 for retail, $1,500 for cultivation and $1,500 for manufacturing for a total of $10,000.00 made***

by Mr. Sickenberger; second: Mr. Pierce – unanimous. A fully executed HCA is a requirement in order to obtain a Special Permit.

FIRE DEPARTMENT – FY 23 BUDGET

Chief Edwards, along with Deputy Chief Santos and Captain Lapierre to discuss the FY 23 budget. Chief Edwards specifically wanted guidance on how they would like payroll to be budgeted for. Mr. Sickenberger stated that he should budget an amount for salary and as Strong Chief can allocate it to the firefighters as he sees fit, keeping in mind not to exceed the approved budget amount. The Chief wanted to know what the cap was, and the Board stated they would defer to the Advisory Committee for a recommendation.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE – FY 23 BUDGET DISCUSSION

Ms. Loughlin along with members of the Advisory Committee (AC) were in attendance this evening to discuss the FY 23 budget. As all are aware, money is extremely tight. The AC has and is still looking under every rock to make this budget work. As always, the schools take the lions share and this year is no different. In fact, the number that QRMHS requested is excessive. This increase is due to several special needs students that came into the district. She stated that they will be doing a presentation at the Town Meeting to enlighten the voters as to the town's fiscal status. All members thanked the AC for their diligence that they have shown.

TOWN TREASURER – VACANCY

Due to the resignation of the Town Treasurer, Mr. Sickenberger will be taking the lead on this matter in order to fill this position.

REBEKAH CORNELL – OPEN MEETING LAW COMPLAINT

Ms. Cornell is in attendance this evening to follow up on her email in which she stated she intended to file an OML complaint against an elected official. Considering the facts, it is clear that this matter is not within the Selectmen's jurisdiction. Ms. Cornell did ask if the Selectmen could provide her with a current version of the town's zoning by-laws. Mr. Pierce stated he would check into it.

MINUTES

Motion to approve the Minute of March 29, 2022, as written made by Mr. Pierce; second: Mr. Sickenberger – 2 Yes, 1 Abstention

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY REPORT/CORRESPONDENCE

1. The owners of the Copper Lantern stopped into the office with a concern over hydrant flushing. They provided a sample of the water which was rather discolored as a result of the flushing. This alone is not so much an issue however they expressed concern that it was done during Flea Market week and their guests were upset. The owners have asked if the week could be changed so not to interfere with this week. The Water Department stated it is up to the BOS to decide. ***Further discussion will need to take place on this matter.***
2. The office received notice that Brian Wilde (Highway Department) submitted his resignation (verbal) effective Friday, May 20th. I've asked for a notice in writing to be submitted to our office.- ***Noted***
3. The office received notice from the Town Clerk that following the annual town elections the following positions remain vacant:
    - Common Committee – Two Seats
    - Housing Authority – Two Seats

To that, the Housing Authority submitted a letter of recommendation for the following:

- Eric von Bleicken
- Thomas Sanderson

With no objections, the following motion was made: ***Motion to appoint Eric von Bleicken and Thomas Sanderson to the Housing Authority made by Mr. Sickenberger; second: Mr. Pierce – 2 Yes, 1 Abstention- (Mr. von Bleicken)***

4. I corresponded with Rep. Berthiaume's Office today and provided information on the proposed water project. There is another portion of the federal infrastructure bill in committee and worth pursing - ***Noted***
5. A resident asked if they could purchase flowers for the planters in front of town hall. They are asking if the expense would be reimbursed. – ***Although thoughtful, this is not an allowable expense***
6. McClure Engineering provided an addendum to counsel which includes the SCADA. The addendum came in at a cost $230K. - ***Noted***

WARRANTS & INVOICES

Motion to approve and sign Warrant No 22 W 21 dated April 21, 2022, in the amount of $85,197.60 made by Mr. Sickenberger; second: Mr. von Bleicken – unanimous.
Motion to approve and sign Warrant No's 22 P 22 & 22 W 22 dated May 5, 2022, in the amounts of $93,840.82 and $76,512.54 respectively made by Mr. Sickenberger; second: Mr. von Bleicken – unanimous.
Motion to approve and sign Warrant No's 22 P 23 & 22 W 23 dated May 19, 2022, in the amounts of $ 88,538.56 & $758,870.24 respectively made by Mr. Sickenberger; second: Mr. von Bleicken – unanimous.
Motion to approve and sign MV Refund for FY 22 dated April 21, 2022, in the amount of $1,796.86 made by Mr. Sickenberger; second: Mr. von Bleicken – unanimous.

COMMENTS & CONCERNS

Matt Koziol requested that the Board consider lifting the "30 Minute" parking on Maple Street between the hours of 7 AM to 7 PM in order to accommodate vendors and visitors for the Asparagus Festival scheduled for May 21st. With no objection and the town's willingness to get everyone together post COVID, the Board was in favor. The residents on Maple Street will be notified in writing.

Next Meeting Date: May 31, 2022 – 6 PM

Motion to Adjourn made by Mr. Sickenberger; second: Mr. von Bleicken – unanimous at 7:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Acerra

Rebecca Acerra
Executive Secretary

Eric von Bleicken, Clerk

7-12-22

Date Approved