BOARD OF SELECTMEN

P.O. Box 372
West Brookfield, Massachusetts 01585

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 4, 2022

PRESENT: Mr. David Pierce; Chairman, Mr. Roland Sickenberger; Vice-Chairman, and Mr. Eric von Bleicken, Clerk

ATTENDEES: See attached list

Called meeting to Order at 6:00 PM

DEPARTMENT HEAD MEETING

The Board of Selectmen called tonight's department head meeting in the hopes of improving communication. Selectboard member, Mr. von Bleicken read from a prepared statement outlining ten steps to improve communication. Several staff members had a few questions which provided an open dialogue for all. Communication was the focus of this evening's meeting and was well attended. All in attendance were hopeful of moving forward in a positive direction.

While members of the Advisory Committee were in attendance, the board discussed the draft letter provided by John Madden for the FY 24 budget season. Mr. Madden was looking for input from both the BOS and Advisory on any potential increases in line items. He (Madden) urged great caution as the town still has such fiscal constraints. Aside from the contractual obligations, a 2% increase on salaries and 2% overall increase on expenses.

Mr. Daley reminded all that salt just went up to $20/ton so 2% is not realistic in today's market. Rebekah Cornell, Chair of the Planning Board advised all that a permitting guidebook would be a helpful tool. All agreed. DLTA funds will be used for this purpose.

After a first fruitful discussion, Mr. von Bleicken thanked all of whom attended, and the board looks forward to holding another meeting in the coming months.

APPOINTMENTS

Motion to appoint Diane Vayda, Betty Frew and Nancy Seremeth to the Senior Center Director Search Committee made by Mr. von Bleicken; seconded: Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous.

Motion to appoint David Pierce, Diane Vayda, Lori Loughlin, Pamela Griffing to the Town Administrator Search Committee made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous.

Motion to appoint Barbara Portal to the Town Administrator Search Committee made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Sickenberger – 2 Yes, 1 No – Mr. Sickenberger

Motion to appoint John Clark (consultant) as Treasurer made by Mr. Sickenberger; second: Mr. von Bleicken – unanimous.

Motion to appoint John Vayda to the Capital Planning Committee made by Mr. Sickenberger; second: Mr. von Bleicken – unanimous.

MASSDOT ROAD PROJECTS – COST ESTIMATES/APPRAISALS

Jim Daley addressed the Board this evening regarding the ongoing Rte. 9 road projects. The Right of Way plans are at 100% completion from the engineer; however, they have not been fully approved by DOT at this point. We cannot secure the services of an appraiser until DOT approves the ROW plans.

Mr. Daley feels that Phase I should be relatively inexpensive. The properties affected are belonged by town, state, and Friends of Rock House Reservation. He estimates around $5K to $10K. Phase II however is far more extensive.

Phase I goes out to bid by December 2023 and construction should begin in the spring of 2024. On Phase II (Pierce Road to Northeast Pizza), Mr. Daley applied for a Small-Town Planning Grant for $200K for surveying and engineering. The Board thanked Mr. Daley for the update.

POLICE STAFFING

Acting Chief Letendre was in attendance this evening to discussing staffing levels. He stated that Ofc. Ryan submitted his letter of resignation as he has accepted a position with the Auburn Police Department. He last day in West Brookfield will be October 15, 2022. Considering that, it currently makes the department two full-time positions short. He is here tonight to ask that the Board consider appointing Matthew Niles as a part-time officer. Mr. Niles is a full-time Firefighter/Paramedic in Ludlow and a part-time police officer in both North Brookfield and Brookfield. In total, he has 16 years' experience in the EMS services. With no objections, the following motion was made: ***Motion to allow Acting Chief Letendre to hire Matthew Niles as a Part-time police officer made by Mr. Sickenberger; second: Mr. von Bleicken – unanimous.***

MINUTES

Motion to approve the Minutes of September 6, 2022, as written made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Pierce – 2 Yes, 1 Abstention (Mr. Sickenberger – absent)
Motion to approve the Minutes of September 20, 2022, as written made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Sickenberger – 2 Yes, 1 Abstention (Mr. Pierce – absent)

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY REPORT/CORRESPONDENCE

1. The office received the resignation of Ofc. Jordan Ryan effective his last day of employment as of October 15, 2022. He has taken a position with the Auburn Police Department and is grateful to the staff and residents of West Brookfield during his time here. - ***As discussed earlier. A note of thanks will be sent to Ofc. Ryan for his time here.***
2. The office received a draft of the FY 24 budget commencement letter from John Madden. He is looking for input from the Board of Selectmen on the matter. ***After a***

discussion with members of the Advisory Committee, outside of any contractual commitments, both salary and expenses will be capped at 2% increase.

3. The office received a request from Acting Chief Letendre to appoint Matthew Niles as Part-time Police Officer. – ***Ofc. Niles was appointed earlier this evening (see Police Staffing)***
4. The office received a request for a Special Use Permit for Lake Wickaboag from the Last Cast Anglers for May 13, 2023. ***Motion to grant the Special Use Permit as requested made by Mr. Sickenberger; second: Mr. von Bleicken – unanimous.***
5. The Knights of Columbus are looking to hold their annual Tootsie Roll Drive at the intersection of Rte. 9, Cottage and Central Streets on Saturday, October 8th and Sunday, October 9th from 9 am to noon. Rain date would be the following weekend (October 15th & 16th). Proceeds from the fundraiser would go to benefit Persons with Developmental Disabilities. – With no objections, the following motion was made: ***Motion to allow the fundraiser as requested made by Mr. von Bleicken; second; Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous.***
6. A resident has requested that the BOS consider placing a "dead end" or "not a through way" on Tucker Road. – ***This matter was discussed. Mr. Morrell, resident, and member of the Planning Board said that one time the then Board of Selectmen voted to abandon the road. This was done only by a vote of the board, not Town Meeting. Mr. Morrell asked that the board fix the road as the town is losing potential development as it is taxable property. Mr. Pierce stated that it is not his job to seek out developers. Mr. Morrell stated that developers have considered the site, however due to the unimproved way, they walk away. Mr. Morrell requested that this be included in the Minutes. No decision was made on this subject this evening.***

TREASURY WARRANTS

Motion to approve and sign Warrant No 23 P 7 and 23 W 7 dated October 6, 2022, in the amounts of $64,639.05 and $65,841.63 respectively made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous.

NEW BUSINESS - NONE

COMMENTS & CONCERS

Ms. Loughlin (AC) stated again that she would like to make sure that the town is expending ARPA funds in a proper manner.

Chief Lapierre presented a fee schedule for consideration. He will send a copy to Mrs. Griffing (AC) via email.

Chief Lapierre also provided an update on the boat. The boat was ordered, which was funded by all donations. They will continue to do fundraising to raise an additional $25K for accessories.

He (Lapierre) also had breakfast with local legislators and discussed funding for a safety complex. With FEMA grants, a community needs to be shovel ready. He addressed the issue with local property owners to whom may donate land. The Town of North Brookfield is also willing to provide engineered drawings at no cost to the town. These plans were plans that they were to use on their new building. The scope of work changed for them and kindly offered them to West Brookfield.

NEXT MEETING DATE: October 18, 2022 – 6 PM

Motion to Adjourn made by Mr. Sickenberger; second: Mr. von Bleicken – unanimous at 7:24 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Acerra
Executive Secretary

Eric von Bleicken, Clerk

10/18/2022
Date Approved