BOARD OF SELECTMEN

P.O. Box 372
West Brookfield, Massachusetts 01585

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 18, 2022

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

ATTENDEES: Lester Paquette, Benny Benson, Dave Tebo, Jason Krukas, Rene Berthiaume, Brad Slater, Tom Long, Bob Bliss, Mike & Betsy Kocks

Called meeting to Order at 6:00 PM

AMERICAN LEGIION POST #244

Members of Post #244 were in attendance this evening to discuss the 2023 Memorial Day Parade. This year (2022) there was no truly organized parade with the town fully participating. There has been a clear disconnect over the last few years, some due to COVID, but looking to the future, both sides are eager to work together to make it happen. In 2019, the last parade, the cost was more than $2,500. The cost associated with putting on a parade as they have in the past cannot be accomplished without financial support from the town. Money allocated in the FY 23 budget for Memorial Day/Fourth of July Expenses is capped at $1,500 (reduced the last several years due to fiscal constraints). The Board suggested that "A Friends of" be formed. Members of the Legion were not totally on board with this as they stated that they all have full plates. The office will research what it entails to form a "Friends of" group and go from there. Mr. Pierce did state that the best the town could do is $1,500. They will attend our next meeting for an update which is set for November 1, 2022.

UPDATE WITH WATER DEPARTMENT – LELAND ROAD PROJECT

Mr. Paquette and Mr. Benson were in attendance looking for an update. Town Counsel and McClure Engineering have a phone conference scheduled for tomorrow (10/19/22) at 1 PM, "unless anything comes up on her side" (Kara Laporte – McClure Engineering). Repeated requests for detailed invoices have been made to no avail. This is putting the project on hold. After a discussion, Mr. Paquette said he would reach out to McClure to get the necessary documentation to move the project forward. Mr. Benson stated that McClure Engineering is the problem and have been from the start.

FIRE CHIEF LAPIEERRE – CONTRACT – TABLED UNTIL NEXT MEETING

NEW EMPLOYEE/PRE-EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS

The current by-law requires that new employees undergo a pre-employment physical. The budget for FY 23 is capped at $5,000. There has been an unusually high number of turnovers with employees. The office is currently holding several seasonal plow drivers offer letters due to concerns of deficit spending. There have been four firefighter physicals since July 1st, which are more extensive and costly due to the nature of the position. The office is waiting on what has been expended thus far at Harrington Comup-Care. Once we have that figure the next step will be to either meet with Advisory to ask for additional

funds to cover the remainder of the fiscal year or manage with what we have. Mrs. Acerra is on the Advisory Committee's agenda for November 1st to discuss.

MINUTES

Motion to approve the Minutes of October 4, 2022, and October 11, 2022, as written made by Mr. Sickenberger; second: Mr. von Bleicken – unanimous.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY REPORT/CORRESPONDENCE

1. The office received a request from the Tax Collector requesting a review/signature on the new rates for MIIA Health Benefits for calendar year 2023. – With no objection, the following motion was made: ***Motion to approve the calendar year 2023 MIIA Health Benefits rates as presented made by Mr. Sickenberger; second: Mr. von Bleicken – unanimous.***
2. The office received an inventory of the town's historical and cultural sites and objects around town. This is in response to the town's 20117 Master Plan. Copies are included for your review. – ***Noted with thanks***
3. The office received a request for a Special Use Permit for Lake Wickaboag from Gofishdan, LLC for May 21, 2023. – With no objections, the following motion was made: ***Motion to approve the request for a Special Use Permit for May 21, 2023, as requested made by Mr. Sickenberger; second: Mr. von Bleicken – unanimous.***
4. The Fire Chief is looking for an update on his proposed fee increase that was discussed at the 9/20/22 meeting. – ***The office will check to see if the Chief provided the information to Advisory as they requested at the last meeting. The matter will be tabled until further information is provided.***

TREASURY WARRANTS

Motion to approve and sign Warrant No 23 P 8 and 23 W 8 dated October 20, 2022, in the amounts of $66,572.41 and $86,161.36 respectively made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. von Bleicken stated that the Police Chief Search Committee will be meeting Thursday to finalize the interview questions. The committee is down to 9 finalists and expect to present the final three finalists to the Board of Selectmen for consideration.

COMMENTS & CONCERS

The Board reviewed the grievance submitted by a member of the AFSCME bargaining unit. The grievance outlines the request to return to providing paychecks in hand. During the COVID-19 pandemic, when the building was shut down, paychecks were mailed directly from Harpers Payroll Company to the employee. Many times, the checks were not received until Friday, Saturday and even on some occasions Monday. Considering that, the following motion was made: ***Motion to return to the pre-COVID practice of distributing paychecks out in hand made by Mr. Sickenberger; second: Mr. von Bleicken – unanimous.***

NEXT MEETING DATE: November 1, 2022 – 6 PM

Motion to Adjourn made by Mr. Sickenberger; second: Mr. von Bleicken – unanimous at 7:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Acerra

Rebecca Acerra
Executive Secretary

Eric von Bleicken, Clerk

11/01/2022
Date Approved