BOARD OF SELECTMEN

P.O. Box 372
West Brookfield, Massachusetts 01585

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 31, 2023

PRESENT: Mr. David Pierce; Chairman and Mr. Eric von Bleicken; Clerk
ABSENT: Mr. Roland Sickenberger; Vice-Chairman
ATTENDEES: Paul Lapenas

Opened the Meeting at 6 PM

PINNING OF CHIEF NATHAN HAGGLUND

The Board was met with a full house this evening with family and friends of Nathan Hagglund in order to watch his official pinning ceremony as Chief of Police for the town of West Brookfield.

It was clear by the attendance that Chief Hagglund was the right choice for the town and he is extremely grateful for the opportunity to serve the residents of West Brookfield. He thanked the Board, staff, Retired Chief O'Donnell and all the folks along the way that provided him with this opportunity. His wife pinned Nathan which was concluded with a round of applause.

INTERIM TOWN CLERK
WAGES:

Heather Gough addressed the Board this evening to discuss wages and elections (early voting). With regard to wages, she is still submitting her payroll for the same hourly rate as when hired as Assistant Town Clerk. Since being appointed interim, she has more than doubled her hours and feels that she should be entitled to the remainder of the FY 23 allocated budget for the position. She has had to correct so many things that are either wrong or illegal and it is never ending. The board has no issues with having her compensated at the allocated amount for FY 23. She (Gough) has also asked the board to consider increasing her wages by including the elections line. That discussion will need to be had with Advisory as well. ***Motion to pay Heather Gough the remainder of the FY 23 allocated salary of the Town Clerk retroactive to January 1, 2023, made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Pierce – unanimous.***

Also, it was explained to her that her workers are to be paid holiday pay. These are positions that are 6 hours each at most. A memo will be sent to clarify the holiday pay and also the wage pay.

EARLY VOTING:

In light of the complete disarray in the office, Ms. Gough has asked that the town opt out of early voting. There is a process that needs to be followed so the Board has asked Ms. Acerra to contact counsel for an opinion. Also, prior to Ms. Allen's retirement, the Fire Chief sent her an email outlining the fire code violations in the archive room. Nothing was done about the situation. Ms. Gough would like to have a follow up discussion on the possibility of engaging with a shredding company.

FY24 WAGE CLASSIFICATION

The Acting Treasurer has asked that the Board review and approve the FY 24 wage classification as presented. With no objections, the following motion was made:

Motion to approve the FY 24 wage classification as presented by the Acting Treasurer made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Pierce – unanimous.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY REPORT/CORRESPONDENCE

1. The office received the resignation of Ruifan Zhang as the Town Treasurer effective January 31, 2023. - ***Noted***
2. The office received a request Eagle Hill School to hold their regatta on Saturday, May 6, 2023, from 12 noon to 4 PM. – ***Motion to approve request as submitted made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Pierce – unanimous.***
3. The office received a request from the Historical Commission to re-appointment Louise Garwood to a three-year term. - ***Motion to approve request as submitted made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Pierce – unanimous.***
4. Correspondence from the Historical Commission marking the 25th year that their commission has received charitable contributions from the J. Irving and Jane England Charitable Trust. – ***Noted with thanks***
5. After several correspondence from Bret Sherry from Mass Dept. of Fish and Game regarding a Special Use Permit for the lake, he provided the attached agreement that clarifies the parameters on which a Use Permit can be granted. He is asking for the BOS to reconsider the request as presented. – ***Motion to grant the Special Use permit as requested made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Pierce – unanimous.***
6. Follow up to my email on January 26th regarding the "volunteers" for the shelter. Does the board have any further position on this matter? – ***No physical, however, must be CORI'd and trained.***
7. The office received the quote from Slims & Berthiaume for the septic repair at the Senior Center. ***The Board approved the work to be done in the amount of $4,350.00.***
8. Follow up on the email sent on January 19th re: WRRB Cola increase - ***TABLED.***

TREASURY WARRANTS & INVOICES

Motion to approve and sign Warrant No 23 P 14 and 23 W 14 dated January 12, 2023 in the amounts of $71,889.35 and $169,799.87 respectively made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Pierce – unanimous.

Motion to approve and sign Warrant No 23 P 15 and 23 W 15 dated January 26, 2023 in the amounts of $72,970.51 and $829,169.10 respectively made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Pierce – unanimous.

MINUTES

Motion to approve and sign the Minutes of November 21, 2022, November 29, 2022, December 6, 2022, and December 19, 2022 as written made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Pierce – unanimous

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. von Bleicken stated that he would like to schedule another department head meeting in the near future. This will be discussed at an upcoming meeting.

COMMENTS & CONCERNS - NONE

Motion to Adjourn made by Mr. Pierce; second: Mr. von Bleicken – unanimous at 7:14 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Acerra

Rebecca Acerra
Executive Secretary

Eric von Bleicken, Clerk

2-7-23

Date Approved