BOARD OF SELECTMEN

P.O. Box 372
West Brookfield, Massachusetts 01585

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 7, 2023

PRESENT: Mr. Roland Sickenberger; Vice-Chairman and Mr. Eric von Bleicken; Clerk
ABSENT: Mr. David Pierce; Chairman
ATTENDEES: Lester Paquette, Barry Nadon, Kathy Landry, Heather Gough, Steve Piechota, Dan McCall, Mike Maciag, Mark Howard, Barry Nadon Jr., Chief Lapierre, Kara Laporte, Chris McClure

Opened the Meeting at 6 PM

INTERIM TOWN CLERK

SHREDDING: Ms. Gough stated that there is an abundance of papers that can be shredded. Also, other offices are also interested in using this service. Ms. Gough provided a couple of options and quotes. She said that in light of the years and years of documents that are piled up, she would need the shredder on site for several months in order for her to have a chance to go through all of them. She also stated that prior to her retirement, and upon his appointment as Fire Chief, Chief Lapierre had sent the previous Town Clerk an email advising her that the storage room (where the documents are kept) is a violation of the Fire Code. To date, nothing has been done. Chief Lapierre was in attendance and he confirmed this as well. The board will review the quotes Ms. Gough provided.

CYBER SECURITY: Ms. Gough advised the board that the state has been trying for some time how to get in touch with the previous town clerk, to no avail. West Brookfield is the only town in the area that does not have the security, which the state provides free of charge. She is going to meet with NEIT as they will need to be involved as our IT Management provider.

DOCUMENTS: Ms. Gough also raised concerns over what she described as missing documents. There are no up to date digital copies of the either the zoning or general bylaws. She spoke with an attorney from the AG's Office at the recent Clerk's Meeting and she suggested that the town contact our legal counsel.

FACEBOOK: Ms. Gough asked if she could start a Facebook page for informational purposes only. With no objections, the following motion was made: ***Motion to allow Ms. Gough a Facebook page for informational purposes only made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous.***

WATER DEPARTMENT/McCLURE ENGINEERING

At a previous meeting of the Selectmen, the board signed a contract, which was written by counsel and then sent to the Water Commissioners for their signatures in order for the town to pay the outstanding invoices. Ms. Landry stated that the only issue is the wording "in an amount not to exceed $196,000.00 which was what was voted on at town meeting. She stated that the cost of the project has since increased. After a discussion, the board made the following motion: ***Motion to rescind the contract as***

written and have town counsel create a new contract with wording that pays only the outstanding invoices made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous.

A further discussion will need to happen to discuss the remainder of the project.

6:30 PM – POLE HEARING FOR NATIONAL GRID/VERIZON NEW ENGLAND WHO IS REQUESTING PERMISSION TO LOCATE POLES, WIRE, AND FIXTURES, INCLUDING THE NECESSARY SUSTAINING AND PROTECTING FIXTURS, ALONG AN DACROSS THE FOLLOWING WAY:

SNOW ROAD – approximately 90 feet of the centerline of the intersection of Snow Road and continuing approximately 150 ft. in a northeast direction to feed a new customer building a house at 65 Snow Road.

A representative from National Grid was in attendance along with the property owner and an abutter. All abutter notifications were made accordingly. With a brief summary of the work to be completed, no objections were voiced. With that, the following motion was made: Motion to close the hearing and grant the petition as presented made by Mr. Sickenberger; second: Mr. von Bleicken – unanimous.

DAN McCALL – WEST BROOKFIELD RESCUE SQUAD (WBRS)

As President of the WBRS, Mr. McCall was before the board again this evening to continue the discussion regarding the town entering into an agreement with WBRS and to further allocate funds at town meeting for the service they provide.

According to Mr. McCall, a town comparable to our size pays approximately $120K a year towards 911 services. He is asking for $60K this year and to increase in the coming years. Currently, alone they cannot sustain themselves. He asked what dollar value does the town want to put on the residents. Mr. Sickenberger stated that he is not in favor of the $60K amount but was thinking around the $10K mark. He also has no objection to entering into an agreement, however that would need to be vetted by counsel again. He (Sickenberger) suggested that he contact the Advisory Committee and be placed on one of their upcoming agendas. As it is now, the WBRS has gaps in coverage, which puts the residents at further risk.

Mr. McCall will contact Advisory in order to schedule a meeting with them.

WATER DEPARTMENT – TEMPORARY HIRES

The Water Department needed filling positions for approximately 8 weeks due to staffing shortage. Water Superintendent, Wes Cassavant provided three individuals with varying degrees of licenses. This was done without the Personnel Board's knowledge. With the understanding that it is critical to have the proper individuals in place, the following motion was made: Motion to allow the temporary hiring of three individuals at a rate of pay of $30/hour retro to their first day with all the necessary paperwork required made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY REPORT/CORRESPONDENCE

1. The Historical Commission advises that 2023 marks the 175Th anniversary of the establishment of West Brookfield as a town. They will be having a commemorative item and notation at the Asparagus Festival to celebrate. More information to follow. - ***Noted***
2. Correspondence was received from AFSCME regarding the ARPA Funds for essential workers. They are looking for an update. – ***Mr. Sickenberger stated that he will follow up on this matter***

TREASURY WARRANTS & INVOICES

Motion to approve and sign Warrant No 23 P 16 and 23 W 16 dated February 9, 2023 in the amounts of $72,646.26 and $67,106.07 respectively made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Pierce – unanimous.

MINUTES

Motion to approve and sign the Minutes of February 6, 2023 as written made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous

NEW BUSINESS

Chief Lapierre discussed his fee schedule that he'd like to implement. This was originally discussed at the September 20, 2022, meeting and copies were provided to both BOS and Advisory. To date, there has been no feedback from Advisory, so he is asking that the BOS consider adopting the new schedule. With no objections, the following motion was made: Motion to approve the new fee schedule for Fire Inspections effective March 1, 2023 made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous.

COMMENTS & CONCERNS - NONE

Motion to Adjourn made by Mr. Sickenberger; second: Mr. von Bleicken – unanimous at 7:50 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Acerra

Rebecca Acerra
Executive Secretary

Eric von Bleicken, Clerk
2/21/23
Date Approved