Town of West Brookfield-TOWN HALL
2 East Main Street – P.O. Box 372
WEST BROOKFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS 01585
(508) 867-1421 Telephone

Board of Selectmen

DATE: 6/27/23

BOARD OF SELECTMEN – Meeting Minutes
TUESDAY, June 27, 2023 – 6:00 PM
Brookfield Town Hall – Upper Conference Room

In Attendance Selectmen Sickenberger, Selectmen von Bleicken, Town Administrator San Angelo, Building Inspector Taylor, and a small number of citizens. Selectmen Merkel was absent due to illness.

1. **Call Meeting to Order in Open Session 6:00 PM.**

2 Pole Hearing for National Grid.
A) Open Pole Hearing
B) Discussion by National Grid
C) Comments from the public

National Grid discussed the location of the poles and that they were old and needed replacement. The new poles will be more efficient and easier for them to do upgrades.

A citizen who owned most of the property where the poles will be located spoke on behalf of the new poles.

Motion made by Selectmen von Bleicken to approve the new poles.
2nd made by Selectmen Sickenberger
Approved 2-0

Close Pole Hearing at 6:10 PM.

2. Motion to adopt the new Building Permit Fees as outlined by the Building Inspector.

The Town Building Inspector Jeff Taylor described the process he used to develop a new building fee schedule. He reviewed fees in Sturbridge, Southbridge, and Brimfield. The goal was to make West Brookfield fees consistent with the fees in other towns. He stated that the fees have not been changed in many years and that we were significantly lower than surrounding communities. He was asked many times why the fees were so low.

Motion made by Selectmen von Bleicken to adopt the new building fees.
2nd made by Selectmen Sickenberger
Approved 2-0

3. Motion to adopt the proclamation Against Racism, Discrimination and Bigotry.

Selectmen von Bleicken explained that the proclamation was taken from York, ME and that he believed that it was a very good policy. Racism, Discrimination, and Bigoty should never be tolerated and that it was a good idea that West Brookfield adopt this proclamation.

Town Administrator San Angelo explained that this proclamation was in effect just supporting federal and state laws and that the town currently was following the directives of the policy. He also believed that was a great idea to make clear to everyone that the town was completely supportive of the policy brought forward by Selectmen von Bleicken.

Motion made by Selectmen von Bleicken to adopt the proclamation.
2nd made by Selectmen Sickenberger
Approved 2-0

4. Motion to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the contract between Bishop & Associates and the Town Titled: Town of West Brookfield Agreement for Real Property Inspections FY 2024. $8,200

Town Administrator San Angelo explained that the funding for the next 3 items have already been adopted at Town Meeting. This allows Bishop and Associates to inspect between 300 and 400 properties each year.

Motion made by Selectmen von Bleicken.
2nd made by Selectmen Sickenberger
Approved 2-0

5. Motion to authorize the Town Administrator to sign a one-year contract between Bishop & Associates and the Town Titled: Town of West Brookfield Real & Personal Property Interim Valuation Agreement FY 2024. $2,000.

Town Administrator San Angelo explained that this was the annual fee for Bishop and Associates to do the administrative work required by the state for assessment purposes.

Motion made by Selectmen von Bleicken.
2nd made by Selectmen Sickenberger
Approved 2-0

6. Motion to authorize the Town Administrator to sign a one-year contract between Bishop & Associates and the Town Titled: Town of West Brookfield Agreement for Valuation of Locally Assessed Utility Companies. $1,500

Town Administrator San Angelo explained that this was for assessment of utility companies in town.

Motion made by Selectmen von Bleicken.
2nd made by Selectmen Sickenberger
Approved 2-0

7. Motion to authorize the Town Administrator to sign a one-year contract between Vadar Systems and the Town of West Brookfield. $8,915.26

Town Administrator San Angelo explained that this was for the annual fee for software that is utilized by the accounting department, the assessor's office, and the tax office.

Motion made by Selectmen von Bleicken.
2nd made by Selectmen Sickenberger
Approved 2-0

8. Motion to authorize the Town Administrator to sign a one-year contract between Northeast IT Systems and the Town of West Brookfield for IT Services. $34,560.

Town Administrator San Angelo explained that this was for the annual fee for the IT Company that provides all IT services for the town. The new increased cost was for new software described as Ransome Ware. This protects the town from being hacked and the data being held hostage. These hackers charge astronomical fees to give towns the information back.

Motion made by Selectmen von Bleicken.
2nd made by Selectmen Sickenberger
Approved 2-0

9. Discussion of Master Plan (Brookfield)

The Chairwoman of the Planning Board Rebekah Cornell explained the various components of the towns Master Plan and asked questions as to the status of some of the goals and objectives. She discussed the matrix in the plan which highlighted the major goals.

The Town Administrator explained that Selectmen Merkel saw the Town of Brookfield as they were beginning the process of developing a Master Plan and thought it was a great idea to discuss it her in West Brookfield. The Town of West Brookfield essentially did the same thing as Brookfield but did it several years ago. We are in the implementation stage where Brookfield is just starting to update their plan. The Planning Chair is happy to work with the Board of Selectmen to both keep them informed and work with them to achieve the goals and objectives of our plan.

10. Motion to reappoint John Healy as Constable.

The Town Administrator explained that he had asked for reappointment and that he had been constable for several years.

Motion made by Selectmen von Bleicken.
2nd made by Selectmen Sickenberger
Approved 2-0

11. Motion to appoint Camie Lamica as a member of the Advisory Committee for a one- year term beginning July 1, 2023.

The Town Administrator explained that Camie was recommended by the Advisory Committee and had a solid background in accounting. He believed she would be a very good appointment to the committee. The Chairwoman of the Advisory Commission Lori Loughlin came in and supported this appointment. Camie was in the room and was happy to be appointed.

Motion made by Selectmen von Bleicken.
2nd made by Selectmen Sickenberger
Approved 2-0

12. Motion to approve the union contract between the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Council 93 Local 1364 and the Town of West Brookfield dated July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2024.

The Town Administrator explained that this was essentially adopting the contract that was agreed to two years ago. This combined the old contract with the agreed to Memorandum of Understanding.

Motion made by Selectmen von Bleicken.
2nd made by Selectmen Sickenberger
Approved 2-0

13. Motion to approve a Memorandum of Understanding Between the Town of West Brookfield and AFSCME Council 93 Local 1364.

The Town Administrator explained that this was an agreement that dealt with vacation time and personal days to make it easier to understand. This allows employees to take accrued time after 6 months instead of a year. If they quit before accruing the full week or personal time a employee would have the amount of the overpayment taken back from the town in their last paycheck.

The 2nd Memorandum of Understanding dealt with Bonus Pay. It effectively ratified the agreement that the Town made to give Bonus Pay to employees who worked through Covid. The agreement requires the union to drop the Unfair Labor Charge against the town.

Motion made by Selectmen von Bleicken.
2nd made by Selectmen Sickenberger
Approved 2-0

14. Motion to approve contract between Rebecca Acerra and the Town of West Brookfield beginning July 1, 2023, for a term of 3 years.

The Town Administrator explained that this contract was already approved by the board but needed some minor clarifications regarding vacation time and changing the title of the position in a number of places in the contract.

Motion made by Selectmen von Bleicken.
2nd made by Selectmen Sickenberger
Approved 2-0

15. Motion to approve a renewal of a Class 3 License for Kenneth Chobot.

The Town Administrator explained that this was a simple renewal of a Class 3 License for disposing of old motor vehicles.

Motion made by Selectmen von Bleicken.
2nd made by Selectmen Sickenberger
Approved 2-0

The Town Administrator asked that the board vote to add another item to the agenda dealing with the removal of old equipment that has little or no value. This included old, outdated computers, printers, copiers, Covid supplies and other materials that are just stored in rooms.

Motion to add the item to the agenda made by Selectmen von Bleicken.
2nd made by Selectmen Sickenberger
Approved 2-0

15 B. Motion made to allow the Town Administrator to dispose of old equipment that has little or no value. This included old, outdated computers, printers, copiers, Covid supplies and other materials that are just stored in rooms.

Motion made by Selectmen von Bleicken.
2nd made by Selectmen Sickenberger
Approved 2-0

The Town Administrator asked that the board vote to add another item to the agenda dealing with the appointment of Nancy J. Talbot as Hearing Officer for the Town of West Brookfield.

Motion to add the item to the agenda made by Selectmen von Bleicken.
2nd made by Selectmen Sickenberger
Approved 2-0

15 C. Motion to appoint Nancy j. Talbot as a Hearing Officer for the Town of West Brookfield.

c

16. Town Administrator Report

The Town Administrator explained that he was working on changes at Town Hall and that everyone seemed to be more supportive of moving the conference room to upstirs. He also explained that he was going to be working on some safety issues such as carpeting for the Town Clerks office and repairs to the Town Hall interior steps that are falling apart. He explained that the cost of making these repairs were significantly lower than a potential lawsuit if someone got hurt.

17. Warrants & Invoices

The Board of Selectmen voted to approve the Warrants & Invoices.

Motion made by Selectmen von Bleicken.
2nd made by Selectmen Sickenberger
Approved 2-0

18. New Business

None.

19. Public Comments & Concerns

None.

20. Next Regular Meeting Date: July 11, 2023, at 6:00 PM.

21. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn at 7:35 PM.

Motion made by Selectmen von Bleicken.
2nd made by Selectmen Sickenberger
Approved 2-0

Signature of Town Clerk_____

Date_____

Time_____

Approved 7/25/23