BOARD OF SELECTMEN

P.O. Box 372
West Brookfield, Massachusetts 01585

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TUESDAY, JULY 25, 2023 – 6:00 PM

PRESENT: Mr. Roland Sickenberger; Chairman, Mr. Eric von Bleicken; Vice-Chairman, Mr. Brad Merkel, Clerk and Mr. Ronald San Angelo; Town Administrator

CALL MEETING TO ORDER IN OPEN SESSION AT 6 PM

The Board agreed to take an item out of order:

1. Presentation of a Citizens Award for Edward O'Donnell (Fire Chief and State Rep. Donald Berthiaume).
   Resident Ed O'Donnell was recognized this evening for his heroic efforts on the evening of July 24, 2023. That evening, Mr. O'Donnell was instrumental in the life saving or serious life-threatening injuries that could have occurred to a toddler. He received citations from State Representative Donald Berthiaume, Chief Lapierre and the Board of Selectmen.

2. Opened the Public Hearing at 6:08 PM in accordance with the provisions of MGL, c138, §15, to consider the application for a Transfer of License to Shri Sai Ram, LLC d/b/a Main Street Liquors, located at 11 East Main Street with a Manager of Record as Abshishek Gupta – Vote Expected
   After a discussion with Atty. Perlman who was in attendance this evening on behalf of his client; Shri Sai Ram, LLC, and with no opposition from the public to the application, the following motion was made:
   Motion to close the public hearing at 6:12 pm and to further approve the application for a Transfer of License to Shri Sai Ram, LLC d/b/a Main Street Liquors with a Manager of Record as Abshishek Gupta as requested made by Mr. Sickenberger; seconded: Mr. von Bleicken – unanimous. (All proper notices and paperwork were in order)

3. Quaboag Rehabilitation & Skilled Care Center – Request for a One Day Pour License for an invitation only event to be held on Wednesday, July 26, 2023, from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM – Vote Expected.
   After an explanation by the Executive Assistant, and with no further discussion the following motion was made:
   Motion to approve the request for a One-Day Pour License for an invitation only event to be held on Wednesday, July 26, 2023, from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM as requested made by Mr. von Bleicken; seconded: Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous.

4. Use of decommissioned Chief of Police Vehicle:
   Mr. San Angelo provided a summary into his request to the Board of Selectmen. This topic generated a fair amount of discussion from members of the Advisory Committee and the general public. Mr. San Angelo stated that the vehicle in question (decommissioned police cruiser) which has approximately 175K miles on it only has a trade-in value of $1,000.00. He went on to say that in his experience, most Town Administrators do have a town issued vehicle for their use to conduct town business. He also highlighted his many night meetings that he is required to stay for. Having a vehicle would give him the ability to leave and return for the meetings. The vehicle would be here during the day

for any employee that would need it for town business. Members of the Advisory Committee urged the Selectboard to table the issue for this evening until there is more information in order to weigh the pros and cons.

Motion to table this matter until additional information is provided made by Mr. von Bleicken; second Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous.

5. Chief Hagglund – Memorandum of Understanding between the Town of West Brookfield and NEPBA Local 83A, modifying the Collective Bargaining Agreement for FY 2023-2025 – Vote Expected

Mr. San Angelo explained that the MOU which was presented by the Chief and in agreement with the Local 83A, is only to clarify the intent of the contract. With no further discussion and no opposition expressed the following motion was made:

Motion to approve and sign the Memorandum of Understanding between the Town of West Brookfield and the NEPBA Local 83A, modifying the Collective Bargaining Agreement for FY 2023-2025 as requested made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous.

6. Chief Lapierre – Discussion on the following:

   a. Detail Account allowing FF's to be compensated for details – possible vote.

Chief Lapierre discussed his request to be able to charge a fee for details. This matter has been an issue in the past. Currently, most firefighters are paid in the range of $15 to $18 dollars per hour. He doesn't have anyone who will take time off from their regular jobs to work a detail at this rate. He provided a summary of fee schedules from surrounding towns for guidance as well as his recommendations for his department. After a discussion, the following motion was made:

Motion to approve the detail rate for firefighters at $50/hour plus a 10% administrative fee and 1 ½ times that rate for weekends & holidays as outlined made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous.

b. Approval and Appointment of a Municipal Hearings Officer (Nancy Talbot) – Possible Vote – ***Done at prior meeting – no action taken.***

c. Proposed Fireworks – discussion

The Chief asked that the Board that they consider to begin discussions on the possibility of fireworks at the conclusion of the bonfire next year. Several businesses have approached him with offers to donate towards the expense. Police Chief Hagglund did expressed concern with staffing issues within his department. After a discussion, all were in favor of making efforts in pre-planning this evening. Chief Lapierre will keep the board up to date.

7. Treasurer/Collector – Town Administrator to discuss current/proposed salary – Discussion/Possible Vote

Numerous attempts have been made at filling this position, however due to the salary range provided, the town has been unsuccessful to date. This is a highly sought after position in many communities, which pay a much higher rate than what the town has advertised for thus far. In light of that, Mr. San Angelo requested that the Board consider once again raising the salary rate to $80K to $95K to see if we can obtain qualified individuals for the position. With a full understanding of the difficulties in filling the position, the following motion was made:

Motion to raise the salary range for the Treasurer/Collector position to $80-$95K made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Merkel – unanimous.

8. Recreation committee – discussion on possible beach fees/block party/lifeguards/water skiing

Doreen Piechota was in attendance this evening to discuss several items that the Rec Committee is working on.

   a. Lifeguards – the ability to fill this position has been an ongoing issue since COVID. In addition, the low wage has also hindered the town's ability to fill the positions. Mrs. Piechota is looking to set up the structure for

one lifeguard and one monitor. It is too late in the season to do so for this year but planning for next. This is also a discussion to have with the Advisory Committee as well.

b. Beach fees – this matter was tabled for further discussion; however, it was noted that many non-residents have been using the town beach and perhaps looking into limiting the number of permits to non-residents could be charged a fee should be considered.

c. Block Party – the Committee has requested permission to hold a block party on September 16 on the common for residents only. They are looking to hold a chicken BBQ ($20/pp) as well as other activities. Mr. San Angelo cautioned them that they cannot collect money as they are a town board. – All were in favor

d. Water Skiing – They are working with LWPA and the Boat Club on an event; again, with vendors/food, etc.

9. Community Advisory Committee for Public Access Television – discussion with the Town Administrator on the possible formation of a committee and the recommendation of potential committee members – Possible Vote
A discussion was held as to the importance of having an active Cable Committee. We currently have $105K in the line item, however we need Town Meeting approval to expend the funds. In addition, the town's current contract with Charter Communications (the town's cable service) is set to expire in December of this year. In order to re-negotiate a new contract with them, there are only a few specialized attorneys that deal with this sort of issue. The first step in the process is to establish a committee then appoint members. With a full understanding by the board and with no further discussion, the following motion was made:
Motion to establish a Community Advisory Committee for Public Access Television made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Merkel – unanimous.

10. Appointments – Possible Votes: as presented on Attachment A
In an effort to update the many board/committee appointments, Ms. Acerra along with the Town Clerk have begun the process of updating the appointment book. With no further discussion and with no opposition to, the following motion was made:
Motion to appoint the individuals as outlined in Attachment A as noted made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Merkel – unanimous.

11. Contracts to be renewed/approved:
    a. Scanlon & Associates– FY22 Audit – Vote Expected
    Motion to approve and sign the contract for Scanlan & Associates for the FY 22 Audit as presented made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Merkel – unanimous.
    b. Northeast IT – Scope of Work Change due to reclassification of users – Vote Expected
    Motion to approve and sign the revised monthly service plan due to the reclassification of users for a new monthly cost of $3,030.00 for FY 2024 made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Merkel – unanimous.
    c. MassDOT Project #612779 (Phase III) – Vote Expected
    Motion to approve and sign the Municipal Project Agreement (Municipally-Funded Design) by and between the Massachusetts Department of Transportation and the Town of West Brookfield for Phase III – Project #612779 made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Merkel – unanimous.
    d. Professional Consultation & Design Services for Construction – Vote Expected
    Motion to approve and sign the Agreement by and between the Town of West Brookfield and CHA Consulting, Inc. for professional consultation & design services for construction the preliminary design for Phase III for the Route 9 project.

12. Letter of Exemption for MJ Haesche for work performed in accordance with MGL, c268A providing a letter to Town Clerk as disclosure. MJ Haesche served on a Survey Board at the request of the Building Inspector and with the

approval of the Board of Selectmen to review and provide her assessment of the building at 14 Freight House Road as she holds a stamp (architectural). However, she also is a member of the Board of Health and without an exemption from the board and disclosure from Ms. Haesche to the Town Clerk, her bill cannot be paid. Therefore, the following motion was made:

Motion to approve an exemption for MH Haesche for work performed on 14 Freight House Road in accordance with MGL, c268A and to further provide the Town Clerk with such disclosure made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Merkel – unanimous.

13. Above & Beyond – Discussion with Select Board member Mr. Eric von Bleicken.
    Mr. von Bleicken requested that the Board consider recognizing employees/volunteers of the town from time to time in an effort to highlight their work and dedication to the community. All were in favor in doing so every 4 months or so. With that said, the following motion was made:
    Motion to highlight Mr. James Daley, Highway Superintendent as our first employee to go Above & Beyond made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Merkel – unanimous.

14. Resignation of Water Commissioner – Vote to accept and discussion on filling vacancy.
    Motion to accept the resignation of Barry Nadon with regrets and to send a thank you letter to him for his many years of service made by Mr. Sickenberger; second: Mr. von Bleicken – unanimous.

15. Town Administrators Report – discussion re: employee lunch break – possible vote.
    A brief discussion took place regarding the employee's lunch break as outlined in the personnel bylaws. Currently some employees are taking unpaid 30-minute breaks, while others are not. This is a matter that will have to be looked at, however will be tabled for further discussion.

    Mr. San Angelo gave an update on the Ring Central phone system. He is looking into other vendors on that and is awaiting a quote for the repairs to the stairs at the town hall as well as website vendors.

    He also stated that the website committee (Co-chaired with Ms. Acerra and Chief Hagglund) is well underway with the current vendor and several different options. It is the committees hope to have a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen in August.

16. Meeting Minutes of June 27th and July 13th for approval – Vote Expected
    Motion to approve the Minutes of June 27, 2023, and July 13, 2023, as written made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Sickenberger – 2 Yes, 1 Abstention (Mr. Merkel due to absence)

17. Treasury Warrants for approval – Vote Expected
    Motion to approve and sign Warrant # 23 W 27 dated June 30, 2023, and 24 P 1, and 24 W 1 dated July 13, 2023, in the amounts of $169,134.26, $43,150.08, and $40,238.25 respectively made by Mr. Merkel; second: Mr. von Bleicken – unanimous.

18. Comments & Concerns
    Dave Brown, being a member of both the Grant Committee and Capital Planning Committee stopped by to speak briefly about the role of each board and how it will work moving forward considering a Town Administrator has now been hired. Mr. San Angelo stated that he will work in conjunction with both boards and will develop clear roles/guidelines for a unified outcome.

19. Next Regular Meeting Date: August 8, 2023 – 6 PM - Noted.

20. Adjourn – Motion to Adjourn made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Merkel – unanimous at 9:10 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Acerra
Executive Assistant to the Town Administrator/
Board of Selectmen

Brad Merkel, Clerk
8/8/23

DEPARTMENT/BOARD/COMMITTEE	NAME	TERM
ASST. ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER	KATHERINE KLEIN	UNITL JUNE 30, 2024
INTERIUM ZONING ENFORCEMENT OFFICER	G. THOMAS SCHNAIRE	UNTIL JUNE 30, 2024
HISTORICAL COMMISSION	RACHEL GULEN	UNTIL JUNE 30, 2024
RECREATON COMMITTEE	JENNIFA STYLES MICHAEL DROLET LISA BARDO-BARNES	ALL UNTIL: JUNE 30, 2024
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE	PAUL LAPENAS MICHAEL FREW	UNTIL JUNE 30, 2024 UNTIL JUNE 30, 2024
COUNCIL ON AGING	NANCY SEREMETH-CHAIR	UNTIL JUNE 30, 2026
	IRENE WHITE – VICE-CHAIR	UNTIL JUNE 30, 2026
	BETTY BLISS- CLERK	UNTIL JUNE 30, 2026
	NANCY ARSENAULT	UNTIL JUNE 30, 2025
	BEVERLY CASSAVANT	UNTIL JUNE 30, 2025
	BARBARA SMITH	UNTIL JUNE 30, 2024
POLICE DEPARTMENT	JESSE BERARD	UNTIL JUNE 30, 2024
	SERENITY ALLEN	UNTIL JUNE 30, 2024
TOWN CLERK – ELECTION WORKERS	DORA HENRICHON	UNTIL JUNE 30, 2024
	DEBRA A. KORMAN	UNTIL JUNE 30, 2024
	ELIZABETH MARY KOZIK	UNTIL JUNE 30, 2024
	CHRISTINE M. LONG	UNTIL JUNE 30, 2024
	THOMAS F. MEADE	UNTIL JUNE 30, 2024
	KATHLEEN ANN PRATT	UNTIL JUNE 30, 2024
	DIANE S. VAYDA	UNTIL JUNE 30, 2024