BOARD OF SELECTMEN

P.O. Box 372
West Brookfield, Massachusetts 01585

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2023

PRESENT: Mr. Eric von Bleicken; Vice-Chair, Mr. Brad Merkel; Clerk and Mr. Ronald San Angelo, Town Administrator
ABSENT: Mr. Roland Sickenberger; Chair
ATTENDEES: Catherine Lamica, Ronald Garceau, Wes Cassavant, and Lori Loughlin

CALL MEETING TO ORDER IN OPEN SESSION

MINUTES
Motion to approve and sign the Minutes of September 12, 2023, as written made by Mr. Merkel; second: Mr. von Bleicken – unanimous.

APPOINTMENTS – Public Safety Complex Committee
Motion to appoint the following individuals to the Public Safety Complex Committee and Zoning Board of Appeals as presented on Attachment A made by Mr. Merkel; second: Mr. von Bleicken – unanimous.

LELAND ROAD WATER PROJECT – Review of contract with Tata & Howard
As a follow up from last week's meeting, the contract for Tata & Howard has been thoroughly vetted by legal counsel and approved by Tata & Howard. With no further discussion, the following motion was made:
Motion to allow the Town Administrator to enter into a contract agreement with Tata & Howard for engineering & design services for the Leland Road Water Project and to further allow the expenditure of ARPA funds in the amount of $140,000 for said contract made by Mr. Merkel; second: Mr. von Bleicken – unanimous.

SURPLUS EQUIPMENT & VEHICLES – Discussion on proposed bylaw amendment
With the recent discussions surrounding town property, namely town vehicles, Mr. San Angelo reviewed our current bylaw, which is rather outdated. He provided the board with a draft for consideration. There is no rush on this and as Ms. Loughlin (Advisory) pointed out, bylaw changes are historically made at the Annual Town Meeting. This matter will be revisited again prior to the ATM in June 2024.

CENTRAL NE EQUINE RESCUE, INC. – General Permit
Motion to approve a General Permit for the Central NE Equine Rescue, Inc. for October 14th from 12 noon to 4 PM made by Mr. Merkel; second: Mr. von Bleicken – unanimous.

QUABOAG HISTORICAL SOCIETY BUILDING – Discussion on value of lease of building.
Considering the recent vote by the board to dispose of the property at 27 Front Street and based on an opinion from counsel, a vote needs to be made in determining the *value of the lease*. With that said, the following motion was made:
Motion to value the lease of the building for the term of the agreement in the amount of $189,387 made by Mr. Merkel; second: Mr. von Bleicken – unanimous.

MEAL BREAKS – Discussion on policy
A discussion took place on the policy of meal breaks. Currently, some employees are working through their lunch and being paid, while others are working through their lunch and staying 30 minutes longer each day . In accordance with MGL, c149, §100, which states in part, ***"no person shall be required to work for more than six hours during a calendar day without an interval of at least thirty minutes for a meal."***
Further, the law allows employees to opt out of an unpaid meal break and work through their lunch, which was confirmed by town counsel. As it is, almost every employee works through their lunch as there is no place for them to go. Mr. San Angelo stated that he would defer to the board on this policy change and stated that there is little to no foot traffic from 4 pm to 4:30 pm. With no objections, the following motion was made:
Motion to allow town employees to opt out of an unpaid meal break and to further allow the Town Administrator to draft an acknowledgement sign off that the employees will sign indicating their choice NOT to have a meal break made by Mr. Merkel; second: Mr. von Bleicken – unanimous.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT
Mr. San Angelo gave a brief recap from last week's report on the website, phone system and catch basins.

TREASURY WARRANTS
Motion to approve and sign Warrant No. 24 P #6 and No. 24 W #6 dated September 21, 2023, in the amounts of $78,379.12 and $153,156.82 respectively made by Mr. Merke; second: Mr. von Bleicken – unanimous.

PUBLIC COMMENTS & CONCERNS – None

NEXT REGULAR MEETING DATE: October 3, 2023 – 6 PM

Motion to Adjourn made by Mr. Mekel; second: Mr. von Bleicken – unanimous at 7:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Brad Merkel, Clerk

10/17/23
Date Approved

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING – SEPTEMBER 19, 2023
AGENDA ITEM #2 – ATTACHMENT A

DEPARTMENT/BOARD/COMMITTEE	NAME	TERM
Public Safety Complex Committee	Chief Nathan Hagglund- Police	Indefinite
	Chief Richard Lapierre, Jr.-Fire	Indefinite
	Brad Merkel- BOS	Indefinite
	Dean Wisniewski-Planning Bd	Indefinite
	David Brown-Capital Planning	Indefinite
	Marc Astrella-Citizen at Large	Indefinite
Zoning Board of Appeals	George Hibbard	Expires: June 30, 2026
	Richard Aldermen	Expires: June 30, 2025
	Kevin Dorman	Expires: June 30, 2024
	Gary Simeone-Alternate	Expires: June 30, 2024
	William Mansfield-Alternate	Expires: June 30, 2024