BOARD OF SELECTMEN

P.O. Box 372
West Brookfield, Massachusetts 01585

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2024

PRESENT: Mr. Roland Sickenberger; Chair, Mr. Eric von Bleicken; Vice-Chair, and Mr. Ronald San Angelo, Town Administrator
ABSENT: Mr. Brad Merkel, Clerk
ATTENDEES: Catherine Lamica and Tzy Hsu (National Grid)

Called Meeting to Order at 6:00 PM

MINUTES

Motion to approve the Minutes of January 9, 2024, as written made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Sickenberger - unanimous.

MUSEUM LEASE – 27 Front Street

As the successful and sole bidder to the RFP, the Quaboag Historical Society provided all necessary paperwork. There was one question remaining with the insurance, however with most of the paperwork in order (pending final approval from Counsel), the following motion was made:

Motion to approve and sign the lease agreement by and between the Town of West Brookfield and the Quaboag Historical Society as drafted by town counsel contingent upon the final approval regarding the insurance made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous.

POLICE DEPARTMENT – GIFT ACCOUNT

The police department has recently received a donation from a local family on behalf of their loved ones. With no objections the following motion was made:

Motion to accept a gift to the West Brookfield Police Department as a donation and to further authorize the Town Accountant to create a Gift Account in accordance with MGL, Ch44, §53A for the expenditure of said funds made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous.

PROPOSITION 2 ½ OVERRIDE – Discussion

Mr. San Angelo wanted to express his concerns over the time he spent on preparing information on the possible 2 ½ Override. He drafted press releases for both the Board of Selectmen and Advisory Committee. He has also uploaded copies of the FY 25 budget presentation and information on the Override on his Facebook page and the town's website. He stated that this matter will need to be a grass roots effort and not going to take criticism lightly if no one will lend a hand. The members of the board stated that he has their full support.

6:15 PM – PUBLIC HEARING – POLE HEARING – NATIONAL GRID/VERIZON NEW ENGLAND

Tzy Hsu was present this evening on behalf of National Grid. The petition is to install a JO pole on Shea and Madden Roads for service for new construction. The new pole is 14.84 with anchors. The abutters were notified and there was no one in attendance with any opposition. The Highway Superintendent, Jim Daley reviewed the plan and had objections. With no further discussion, the following motion was made:

Motion to approve the request of National Grid/Verizon New England to install one JO Pole (#14-84) with anchors as outlined in petition number 30865601 made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous.

LAKE WICKABOAG SPECIAL USE PERMIT – Vote Expected

Motion to approve the Lake Wickaboag Special Use Permit request for the Wickaboag Sportsman's Club for February 18, 2024, as presented made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous.

SHORT TERM RENTAL BY-LAW

This matter will be discussed at our next meeting on February 6th with members of the Planning Board and CMRPC.

UPCOMING 2024 ELECTIONS

The Town Clerk has requested that the Select Board consider the following:

A. Presidential Primary – March 5th – The Board of Registrars recommended that the hours of "In Person" voting be reduced from the default guidelines of "normal business hours" which is 9 am to 3 pm to 9 am to 12 noon.
B. The Board of Registrars is seeking discussion on the possibility of decreasing polling hours for the 2024 local election on May 7th, and
C. The Votes Act of 2022 dictates that Vote by Mail is the default. The Clerk has asked for consideration to opt out or leave it as is that Vote by Mail is permissible.

After a discussion with the Town Clerk on the above matters, the Board was not inclined to decrease or eliminate any form of means in which to vote.

TREASURY WARRANTS – Vote Expected

Motion to approve and sign the Treasury Warrant No. 24 P 15 and 24 W 15, dated January 25, 2024, in the amounts of $88,157.59 and $122,490.24 respectively made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. San Angelo advised the members that in light of the Governor's budget cuts, the Fire Department Tahoe, which was grant funded has been reduced by $25,000. Mr. San Angelo will be presenting a motion at the next meeting to expend ARPA funds to cover the costs. The vehicle has already been purchased and is in the process of being outfitted.

Next Regular Meeting Date: February 6, 2024 – 6 PM

Motion to Adjourn made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous at 6:54 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Acerra
Executive Asst. to the Town Administrator/
Board of Selectmen

Brad Merkel, Clerk