TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 2024, 6:00PM

PRESENT: Mr. Roland Sickenberger, Chair; Mr. Eric von Bleicken, Vice-Chair; Mr. Brad Merkel, Clerk; Beth Gobeille, Executive Assistant BOS/Town Administrator
ABSENT: Mr. Ronald San Angelo, Town Administrator
ATTENDEES: Ron Garceau, Advisory; Michael Drolet, Recreation; Wes Slobody, citizen (owner of Chapter 61A land)

Called Meeting to Order in Open session at 6:00 PM

MINUTES
Motion to approve the Minutes of April 2, 2024, as written made by Mr. von Bleicken. Second Mr. Merkel – unanimous.

COVID BONUSES – Arpa Funds to pay for Employees of Senior Center who worked through Covid and did not receive bonuses prior: Betty Frew, Sue Raymond, Dariusz Kurando. Total amount + $1440.75. Mr. Sickenberger commented that this request is Out of Date. Discussion confirming the rate of bonus/hour and amounts seemed within reason. With no further discussion the following motion was made:
Motion to approve the spending of $1440.75 of ARPA Funds to pay the employees of the Senior Center who did not receive bonuses for working through Covid as written by Mr. von Bleicken. Second by Mr. Merkel – unanimous.

APPOINTMENTS – INSPECTOR OF ANIMALS/ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER
Discussion – regarding her already being sworn into this role. Disclosed that Ms. Shattuck will vacate this role June 30th, 2024 and current Asst. Katrina will be brought into the Inspector of Animals/Animal Control Officer position from July 1, 2024. With no further discussion the following motion was made:
Motion to appoint LEAH SHATTUCK as Inspector of Animals and Animal Control Officer with immediate effect until June 30, 2024 by Mr. von Bleicken. Second by Mr. Merkel – uninamous.

EAGLE HILL ROWING RACE -
Rebecca Miller/Eagle Hill School emailed BOS re: holding a rowing race with Lenox Hill School on May 4th, the same day as a fishing derby on Wickaboag. All information from Ms. Miller was complete in email re: the times they would be on Wickaboag and there would be no confliction with fishing derby. She also will coordinate with Dan McCall and Fire Chief, so they know numbers of how many will be on the water and their safety plan. With no further discussion the following motion was made:
Motion to approve a Special Use Permit for Eagle Hill School to hold their rowing race with Lenox Hill School on May 4th by Mr. Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel – unanimous.

PROPOSITION 2 ½ OVERRIDE -
Mr. Sickenberger asked Mr. Garceau his opinion on 2 1/2 override. Speaking as a private citizen, Mr. Garceau stated that he did not believe that it would pass. He felt that the tax burden is in question for residents and we should make sure that the public is educated on what will happen if 2 ½ override does not pass. Mr. Sickenberger added that there would be a special work program for Seniors to be implemented, which could benefit those on a fixed income. Mr. Garceau added that stabilization is up and that there is a lack of critical staff in town; i.e, currently only one full time police officer

on duty. Mr. Sickenberger added that act of supporting the 2 ½ override will help "raise the tax limit" and "not to create taxes." He also said the vote will be by ballot and Mr. Merkel added that the voting would be by using clickers. Mr. Garceau went into further details regarding a study by the Town of Millbury by a gentleman on the town of Dudley and how not voting for a 2 ½ Override in their town affected them over the years. They saw how services were cut year by year until the town eventually supported the 2 ½ override. Mr. Garceau said he would send Mr. Sickenberger the article as it would be useful to prepare for educating the public of West Brookfield on how voting yes or no could possibly affect the Town. A 2 ½ Override meeting is going to be held the following night, Wednesday, April 17th at the Senior Center at 6:00PM, where Mr. Garceau, Mr. von Bleicken and Mr. Sickenberger are planning to attend.

TREASURY WARRANTS

Motion to approve and sign the Treasury Warrant No. 24 P 21 and 24 W 21, dated April 13, 2024, in the amounts of $80,636.24 and $114,022 respectively made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Merkel – unanimous.

DISCUSSION – Mr. Slobody attended the BOS meeting re: an upcoming Chapter 61A procedure re: 7 acres of land on Long Hill Road, which is intended for sale to a couple from Attleboro. Mr. Slobody indicated that as per the Chapter 61A rules, the Town of West Boylston will have first option to purchase the land. This has tabled for a future meeting after documents have been received into the Board of Selectmen's office for Mr. Slobody's intent to sell. He is currently in discussions with the Town Assessors.

MOTION TO ADJOURN TO ENTER INTO THE EXECUTIVE SESSION at 6:42pm.

1. **Motion to enter into Executive Session in accordance with M.G.L. c.30A, §21 – "To discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual. "**

Mr. Drolet, member of Recreation is in attendance for this meeting. Mr. Drolet explained that there was a lot of negativity regarding the Town's reaction to the changes in the Town Beach and that all of the members of the Recreation Committee (other than himself) have now resigned. Mr. Drolet then explained the steps that the Recreation Committee took when initially contacting the Conservation Committee to carry out the restoration work on the beach as planned. He stated that on August 21, 2023 at a meeting with the Conservation Committee Mr. Lussier from the Conservation Committee indicated that he would sort out the permits he needed and to not worry. After 8 months or so, Mr. Drolet assumed that the permits had been in place and started to carry out the planned work on the Town Beach, bringing back the beach to the level it should be at, based on how it was done years ago. He also indicated after he moved the sand on the beach and the Town was alerted to this fact, the Recreation Dept. was told that the work he completed for the Beach would in fact cost the Town thousands of dollars to fix. Mr. Sickenberger clarified that straw bales had to be put down by DPW along the beach front to keep the water from washing away more of the beach and that the bales used were in fact earmarked for another DPW job, so the Town would have to purchase additional bales for the other planned job. Mr. Sickenberger reiterated to Mr. Drolet that he and the Board fully appreciated the hard work that he carried out at the Town Beach and that there was simply miscommunication between the Conservation Committee and Recreation Committee regarding the permits. Mr. Drolet added that he also bought (with his own money) a beach comber from Cape Cod to help improve the Town Beach further, although he was informed that according to a bylaw, as the beach is within 100' of the shoreline, the beach

technically needs to be combed by hand. Mr. Merkel and Mr. von Bleicher reiterated again that they fully appreciated all the work done at the Town Beach and it was poor communication. All parties agreed to work together, moving forward to get the permits done and to then take care of the beach. Mr. Drolet let the board know of other intended improvements to the beach, which would happen after the permits are in place, like adding nautical rope, to rope off sections in the parking lot. All agreed to wait until the permits are in place before any further improvements at the Town Beach are carried out.

Motion to Adjourn made by Mr. von Bleicken; second: Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous at 6:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Gobeille
Executive Asst. to the Town Administrator/
Board of Selectmen

Heather E. Fraugh
Town Clerk
5/9/2024 3:00pm
Date Time