TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD

BOARD OF SELECTMEN /- TUESDAY, September 3rd, 2024 – 6:00 PM

West Brookfield Town Hall Conf. Room, 2 East Main Street, West Brookfield.

MINUTES

PRESENT: Mr. von Bleicken, Vice Chair; Mr. Merkel, Clerk; Mr. San Angelo, Town Administrator; Ms. Gobeille, Exec. Secretary to TA/BOS (virtual); Lori Loughlin, Chair (Advisory); Cami Lamica, Vice-Chair (Advisory); Dave Brown (CPC); Chief Lapierre (Fire); Chief Hagglund (Police); Sergeant Letendre; Officer Charron.
GUESTS: Dan McCall (WB Rescue Squad); Ben Ash; Ken Collette; Charles Reardon; Joshua Gagnon; Carol Anderson; Chris Petrini/Petrini Law.
ABSENT: Mr. Sickenberger, Chair.

6:02PM CALLED MEETING TO ORDER IN OPEN SESSION

MINUTES OF AUGUST 20th, 2024 EMERGENCY MEETING and AUGUST 20th 2024 REGULAR MEETING FOR APPROVAL.

Motion to approve and sign the Minutes of August 20th, 2024 Emergency meeting by Mr. Merkel. Seconded by Mr. von Bleicken – 2 yes.

Motion to approve and sign the Minutes of August 20th, 2024 Regular meeting by Mr. Merkel. Seconded by Mr. von Bleicken – 2 yes.

DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION: WEST BROOKFIELD RESCUE SQUAD CONTRACT FOR SIGNATURE.
Mr. San Angelo explained that the West Brookfield Rescue Squad provide the quality of services we want. One 1 vendor responded to the RFP. This gives us stability in the budget process. Dan McCall/WB Rescue Squad said This is a good step forward for the town. We provide the highest level of service and sustain good service for the Town. It takes a community effort to make a positive step forward.

Motion to vote to approve the West Brookfield Rescue Squad contract and allowing the Town Administrator to sign on their behalf by Mr. Merkel. Seconded by Mr. von Bleicken – 2 yes.

DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION: VOTE EXPECTED – DISCUSSION ON UTILIZING CURRENT POLICE BUDGET TO INCLUDE ADDITIONAL FULL-TIME OFFICER.
Mr. San Angelo states that Chief Hagglund will explain why we lost 2 full time officers and 1 part time one, morale issues, working too many hours. With the current staff levels, officers are forced to complete forced OT. He explains the costs for new officers: It costs $225,371 to train 3 new officers in FY23/24. He also explained that some officers don't take the Healthcare Plan, which is $13,874.32/family. An individual plan fee is $5,289.04. Chief Hagglund also explained that he may need money to supplement the fee for clothing for the new officers. He'd may need $3000, possibly received from ARPA funds. Also, ammunition costs have gone up, but he could absorb most of the costs in his current budget. With the current officers leaving there are issues of sick time buyout (if the employee has completed 5 years of employment) and vacation time buyout and it may cost $14,000.
Chief Hagglund further explained that if he loses any more officers, we are beyond critical. His current officers are helping to recruit additional officers for West Brookfield. He is looking for an additional officer (7th), who will be a Flex officer, covering shifts when needed and needs this vote tonight to meet the law. He is also targeting veteran officers as he will be able to keep them longer due to Health & Wellness, Education and the creation of Community Policing.

Motion to vote to approve the addition of the 7th police officer by Mr. Merkel. Seconded by Mr. von Bleicken – 2 yes.

DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION: VOTE EXPECTED. $2600 OF OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS, CHRIS HERRON TO SPEAK AT QUABOAG REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL.

Motion to approve using $2600 of Opioid Settlement Funds received to have Chris Herron to speak at Quaboag Regional High School by Mr. Merkel. Seconded by Mr. von Bleicken – 2 yes

Mr. San Angelo commented that when he worked for the Town of Southbridge they had Chris Herron speak at the High School. He said Mr. Herron has a great effect on the kids. This is scheduled for December 11th at 12pm.

DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION: CHIEF LAPIERRE TO DISCUSS FUNDING OF REPLACEMENT FIRE TRUCK.

Chief Lapierre explains that Fire truck #1 had smoke coming out of it. They put it in for a service and discovered that it has a crack in the engine. If they repair it, the labor alone will be $5000. Engine cost? Not sure. There is a Fire truck replacement fund, which has $138,000 in it. Also, he is looking to applying for FEMA grants. 2 trucks are at Highway now. Each year the Town has to match 5% of whatever grant they get. A new truck/bare bones will cost $700,000. Trucks have to fit into the Fire House and kitted out bespoke for the town's specific needs. Options are lease payments – they can be pushed off too. 2 trucks are currently parked at Highway, but they aren't operational.

David Brown/CPC suggests that we get that truck back into service, buy new or find an acceptable grant proposal. ARPA Funds?

Mr. San Angelo commented that the Town Hall needs to be sorted out and unfortunately, there are too many things, which need to pay money towards. *This discussion re: the need for a new truck will be moved to the next BOS meeting, September 17th.

DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION: VOTE EXPECTED - $6800 OF ARPA FUNDS TO PURCHASE 20 LOCKERS FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT.

Motion to vote to approve spending $6800 of ARPA funds to purchase 20 lockers for the Fire Department by Mr. Merkel. Seconded by Mr. von Bleicken – 2 yes.

DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION: VOTE EXPECTED – TOWN PROFILE FOR MARY AICARDI/COLLINS CENTER.

Item moved to 9/17 meeting.

Motion to close Open Meeting by Mr. Merkel. Seconded by Mr. von Bleicken – 2 yes.

Motion to go into Executive Session to conduct contract negotiations with respect to collective bargaining and that the Chair declare that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the body. The Select Board may return to regular session to discuss and vote on the topics involving numbers 1-5 below.

1. Pursuant to G.L. c.30A, s.21(a)(7) to comply with, or act under the authority of, the Public Records Law, G.L. c. 4, s. 7(26) and Suffolk Construction v. DCAM, 449 Mass. 444 (2007) (discuss privileged communications with Town Counsel and attorney work product regarding AFSCME Local 1364 (Highway/Clerical Union) re sick time accrual.

2. Pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, s. 21(a)(2) to conduct collective bargaining sessions, including hearing on a grievance filed by AFSCME Local 1364 (Highway/Clerical Union) re sick time accrual.

3. Pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, s.21 (a)(2) to conduct collective bargaining sessions with New England Police Benevolent Association (NEPBA, Police Union), including hearings on two grievances filed by NEPBA re sick time accrual.

4. Pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, s.21 (a)(2) to vote on the agreement with the West Brookfield Firefighters Union.

5. Discussion/Possible Action: Chief Hagglund to discuss deployment of personnel.

7:20pm - Move to Executive Session. Roll call vote. Mr. Merkel, aye. Mr. von Bleicken, aye. Motion passes.

8:50pm – Motion to open the BOS Regular Open meeting again, by Mr. Merkel. Seconded by Mr. von Bleicken – 2 yes. Roll call vote. Mr. Merkel, aye. Mr. von Bleicken, aye. Motion passes.

Mr. San Angelo indicated that we went into the Executive Session to discuss the Collective Bargaining Agreements.

12. Discussion/Possible Action: Fire CBA disclosure announcement.
Motion to adopt West Brookfield Firefighter's AFSCME Council 93-AFL-CIO Union as written in the Collective Bargaining Agreement by Mr. Merkel. Seconded by Mr. von Bleicken – 2 yes.

Motion to approve the Firefighter's contract as written in the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Town of West Brookfield and the West Brookfield Firefighters AFSCME Council 93 AFL-CIO by Mr. Merkel. Seconded by Mr. von Bleicken – 2 yes.

8:59PM Motion to adjourn meeting by Mr. Merkel. Seconded by Mr. von Bleicken – 2 yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Gobeille 9/12/24

Beth Gobeille Date
Exec. Asst. to the Board of Selectmen

Eric von Bleicken

9/17/24

obo Board of Selectmen Date