# TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD

## BOARD OF SELECTMEN

**TUESDAY, October 29th, 2024 – 6:00 PM**

**West Brookfield Town Hall, 2 East Main Street, Great Hall (2nd floor).**

MINUTES

PRESENT: Roland Sickenberger, Chair; Eric von Bleicken, Vice Chair; Beth Gobeille, Exec. Asst. to TA/BOS; Brad Merkel, Clerk (from 7:01pm)

GUESTS: Lori Loughlin, Advisory/Resident; Michelle Durkee, VSO applicant; Keith Fontaine, Electrical Inspector; friend of Michelle Durkee; Heather Gough, Town Clerk (via phone)

ABSENT: Ron San Angelo, Town Administrator

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER IN OPEN SESSION**

***6:10: Motion to open the meeting***

MINUTES OF October 1st (updated), October 1st Executive Session and October 15th BOS MEETINGS FOR APPROVAL.

***Motion to approve and sign the Minutes of October 1st (updated), October 1st Executive Session and October 15th, 2024 made by Mr. von Bleicken. Second by Mr. Sickenberger – 2 yes.***

ELLEN MOORE'S RESIGNATION, APPOINTMENT OF MICHELLE DURKEE AS VSO FOR WEST BROOKFIELD:

***Motion to accept the resignation of Ellen Moore as VSO for the Town of West Brookfield made by Mr. von Bleicken. Second by Mr. Sickenberger – 2 yes.***

***Motion to appoint Michelle Durkee as the VSO for the Town of West Brookfield made by Mr. von Bleicken. Second by Mr. Sickenberger – 2 yes.***

Ms. Durkee spoke about having the privilege to be recommended by Ellen Moore for the role and was very happy to be selected to interview and ultimately to be offered this position. She is excited to work for the Town of West Brookfield. She currently is the VSO for the towns of Lunenberg, Templeton and Warren.

KEITH FONTAINE/PAYMENT FOR COY HILL SOLAR PROJECT. – Mr. Fontaine explains that funds were approved at STM in June 2024. As the job was not done, he did not submit his invoice on a warrant to the Town. This should have been done in the last fiscal year. Mr. Fontaine explained that he has spoken with Ron and he suggested that he enter the fee to be paid out of Supplemental Budget at the next STM, Spring 2025 before Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Sickenberger asked Ms. Gobeille to contact John Madden to ask if we would be able to get this on the STM for Fall 2024.

Mr. Fontaine asked if the Long Hill Road solar project had been approved. There was no knowledge if this project had been going forward. He also mentioned that he is waiting to sign off on the Boston Rd. Solar project, but wanted to make sure that each committee/department involved had completed their approvals for this project. Mr. Fontaine asked Ms. Gobeille to notify him when the next meetings were for the Planning Board/Tree Hearings for the Coy Hill Rd. Solar Project.

NEW FIRE TRUCK: Unfortunately, Chief Lapierre had a structure fire call, so was unable to attend this meeting.

SPECIAL ELECTION DATE (6) AND VOTE BY MAIL (7) -
Ms. Gough attended this discussion via phone. She indicated that she would need to receive the exact wording of the ballot question 35 days prior to the Special Election. We discussed the differences in having the Special Election this year vs. next year. If we were to hold the Special Election this year it would require a Public Hearing to be held 45 days prior to the meeting or sending out ballots to all those who request them, which is currently about 900. This would also cost around $1000. If we wait until the new year, we would not have to mail out the ballots, which would save us time/money. Mr. Sickenberger added that no one would want to attend a Special Election in December. Mr. Sickenberger and Mr. von Bleicken tried to look up the new emissions, which will come into effect in 2025 and may affect the purchase price of the new Fire Truck. It was decided that the Special Election would take place in January.

***Motion to set the Special Election date as Tuesday, January 14th, 2025 made by Mr. von Bleicken. Second by Mr. Sickenberger – 2 yes.***

STORAGE CONTRACT / VALLEY GREEN SHREDDING – Mr. Wartel/Valley Green was unable to attend last night's meeting. Ms. Gobeille explained that the documents pertaining to Valley Green Shredding were their standard master agreement ("Contract") for Records Management and would give the town guidance as to what prices their services may be going forward in the new year. Ms. Gobeille added that Valley Green has not charged us yet for retrieving and storing documents and that we are waiting to apply for a Community Compact Grant in early January 2025.

MOU FOR FLEX OFFICER POSITION, POLICE DEPARTMENT INCLUDING LATERAL TRANSFER PRORATING VACATION ON TIME – Chief Hagglund explained that we used this person to cover vacation time and other open shifts. After Sept. 21st 2024 probationary employees will get pro-rated vacation time. This helps being able to attract quality personnel and retain new officers. He added that Officer Perrault is an excellent example of someone who was able to get pro-rated vacation right away. Chief Hagglund was asked if he still had a part time officer. He said that he did and would like to retain this individual, even with a 7th officer. Additionally, Chief Hagglund indicated that he stated that shifts would need to be spilled out in the contract and he is open to bid out the flex officer position. All agreed that the MOU was acceptable.

***Motion to approve the MOU for the Flex Officer Position for the Police Department including the Lateral Transfer of pro-rating vacation time by Mr. von Bleicken. Second by Mr. Sickenberger and Mr. Merkel – 3 yes.***

ARCHITECTURAL INSIGHTS SERVICES AND FEES PROPOSAL- Issues with the contract for Architectural Insights have not been resolved. Ms. Gobeille stated that Mr. San Angelo was going to speak with Mr. Haveles as the

Town's legal counsel, Petrini and Associates state that the template contract should not change. Mr. San Angelo will be following up with this, so it is resolved prior to his departure from the Town.

TREASURY WARRANTS

***Motion to approve and sign the Treasury Warrants as presented made by Mr. von Bleicken. Seconded by Mr. Merkel – 2 yes.***

OTHER BUSINESS – Ms. Gobeille brought up the idea of having Planet Aid recycle bins at various locations in the Town to fund the ADA porta potties needed for the Town Common (idea from Lynn O'Shea/Rotary). The Rotary has successfully funded items in other Towns by doing this. The Select Board are not so keen on seeing these items around the Town.

COMMENTS & CONCERNS – Mr. Sickenberger mentioned that he had met with the Common Committee. He stated that the Common Committee asked Mr. DeMaio, former Tree Warden to view the tree White Christmas had purchased to plant on the Town Common. He felt that it was not a good specimen. Mr. Sickenberger also mentioned that there is a tree on the Common by the War Memorial, which is diseased and needs to come down. He also added that the meeting did not have anyone from the White Christmas committee in attendance. The Common Committee would like a Xmas tree by the War Memorial, that way they would have one Xmas tree on either end of the Common. When the older/larger tree eventually needs to come down, they still will have a Xmas tree on the Common.

Next BOS Regular Meeting Date: November 12th, 2024 – 6PM.

7:22pm – ***Motion to adjourn meeting made by Mr. von Bleicken. Second by Mr. Merkel – 2 yes.***

11/12/2024 1:05 PM

Authorized Party for the BOS Date/Time

11/13/24 @ 6:04 P.M.

Clerk Date/Time