TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

TUESDAY, December 10, 2024 – 6:00 PM

West Brookfield Town Hall, 2 East Main Street, Conf. Room (1st floor).

MINUTES

PRESENT: Roland Sickenberger, Vice-Chair; Eric von Bleicken, Chair; Brad Merkel, Clerk; Beth Gobeille, Exec. Asst. to TA/BOS; Interim TA, Chief Nathan Hagglund; Gary Simeone, Assessors; Bill Mansfield, Chairman of Assessors; Matt Schlegel (new Police officer); Craig Charron, Police Officer; Heather Gough, Town Clerk; Paul Lapenas, CAC.

GUESTS: Matt Schlegel's family; Erin McMurray and Ashley Jedny, Mill Town Public Health; Bob Haveles, Architectural Insights; Tashena Holmes, resident and son; Theresa Cofske, new West Brookfield TA.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER IN OPEN SESSION

6:01: Motion to open the meeting

MINUTES OF November 26th BOS MEETING FOR APPROVAL -

Motion to approve and sign the Minutes of November 26th, 2024 made by Mr. Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel – unanimous.

APPOINTMENT OF NEW POLICE OFFICER –

Motion to appoint Officer Matthew Schlegel as a Full time Officer/Constable with the Town of West Brookfield as of December 10, 2024 made by Mr. Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel – unanimous.

Chief Hagglund commented that this will bring the amount of officers up to 6. Matthew Schlegel has law enforcement in his extended family. He was honored for saving someone and received the Team Excellence award from AG's office. He will make an excellent addition to the Team and his family are here to support him this evening. Heather Gough, Town Clerk, was on site to swear in Officer/Constable Matthew Schlegel.

SETTING THE TAX RATE FOR YEAR 2025 – Bill Mansfield explained that the new single tax rate for commercial and residential is $10.78.

Motion to accept the new tax single rate for commercial and residential for 2025 at $10.78.

MILL TOWN PUBLIC HEALTH NALOXBOXES – Erin and Ashley from Mill Town Public Health explained about the components of the NaloxBoxes, which are to be installed in Town buildings. Mill Town has a shared services agreement currently with Palmer and Ludlow. They're currently working speaking with Warren and West Brookfield. Each NaloxBox includes a rescue mask, directions on how to use them and to rescue someone. Mr. von Bleicken said he is on board with this program.

Motion to approve Mill Town Public Health to install NaloxBoxes in West Brookfield's Town Hall, Library and Senior Center made by Mr. Merkel. Second by Mr. Sickenberger – 2 yes (not unanimous, Mr. von Bleicken aye, Mr. Merkel aye, Mr. Sickenberger nay. 2 to 1, motion carries).

Ms. McMurray (Mill Town) explained that we should have them in the New Year. She will contact Chief Hagglund to coordinate the installation of the boxes. She also added that they are able to produce a report of collected data to the Town, which will include what has been taken from the boxes and also including the amount of reversed overdoses.

WILLIAM R. KING REVOCABLE TRUST –

Motion to approve the release of the Trustee from the William King Revocable Trust and designate the Interim Town Administrator, Nathan Hagglund to sign the release on behalf of the Town made by Mr. Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel – unanimous.

BID AWARD FOR TOWN HALL EXTERIOR WORK – Mr. Haveles indicated that the bid award contract of constructions includes details of the work and is in draft form, as once it is printed, it cannot be altered. He will make sure the details are complete and will view the roof of the Town Hall, look at the slate, etc. for any new issues. Chief Hagglund indicated that the Police Dept. has drones, which may be used to view the top of Town Hall if needed. Mr. Sickenberger asked what the amount of the bid award was. Mr. Haveles indicated, $158,000.

Motion to approve the Bid Award to LaRochelle Construction for the Exterior Repairs and Door Replacements to the Town Hall and to allow Interim Town Administrator, Nathan Hagglund to sign the Agreement on behalf of the Town made by Mr. Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel - unanimous.

ADDING FUNDS TO ALLOCATION OF ARPA FUNDS FOR TOWN CLERK'S CARPETS –

Motion to approve the allocation of $287.12 from ARPA funds to the already allocated amount of $2500 for the purchase and installation of carpet tiles for the Town Clerk's office made by Mr. Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel – unanimous.

Mr. Sickenberger asked if it was the same contactor used, who quoted previously for the job. Ms. Gobeille indicated that it was not the same. We are going with John's Paint, but their quote is higher, so we needed to allocate additional funds for this job.

REALLOCATION OF ARPA FUNDS – CHANGING WORDING ON FUNDS ALLOCATED TO CABLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Motion to change the wording of the already allocated amount of $7500 of ARPA funds to be used by the CAC on 10/15/2014 to have all $7500 of ARPA funds to be used toward costs to renew the Spectrum Charter Communications contract made by Mr. Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel – unanimous.

Mr. Lapenas indicated that CAC had a quote from KPLaw and their rate is $365/hour. He is currently working with another firm, whose rates are $220/hour, significantly less, but as we do not know how long it will take to renew the contract this is the reason why we are allocating all the $7500 of ARPA funds already allocated to contract negotiations. He added that usually the Charter contract renewal negotiations start 3 years prior to their end.

Mr. Sickenberger asked if CAC wanted to also start up the studio once PEG monies are available. Mr. Lapenas indicated that in June, the Town can ask that PEG monies be released to CAC. Mr. Sickenberger then asked if Mr. Lapenas was sure he really wanted all the $7500 to be put toward legal costs rather than help with the Wi-Fi access.

CHARTER/SPECTRUM TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LICENSE FOR TOWN WITH CHARTER COMMUNICATIONS –
Motion to accept and have Interim Town Administrator Chief Hagglund sign the Terms of Engagement for the Cable TV License renewal with Charter Communications for the Town made by Mr. Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel – unanimous.
Chief Hagglund indicated that we are holding this contract with KPLaw to negotiate the Spectrum Charter Contract until we decide who to go with either KP Law or Bill Solomon.

RESIGNATION OF STORMWATER SECRETARY –
Motion to accept the resignation from the Stormwater Secretary made by Mr. Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel – unanimous.

APPOINTMENT OF HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT-
Motion to appoint Anne Garwood-Hampp as the Highway Administrative Assistant for the term: October 24, 2024 to June 30, 2025 made by Mr. Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel – unanimous.

APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM TOWN ADMINISTRATOR AS RECORDS ACCESS OFFICER-
Motion to appoint Chief Nathan Haggland as Records Access Officer from December 10th, 2024 until a new Town Administrator is appointed made by Mr. Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel – unanimous.

APPOINTMENT OF LISA MARIE BERTHEL AS A MEMBER OF COUNCIL ON AGING-
Motion to appoint Lisa Marie Berthel as a member of Council on Aging for the term December 10, 2024 to June 30, 2025 made by Mr. Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel – unanimous.

MOTION FOR SPECIAL ELECTION TO BE HELD 1/14/2025 –
Motion to approve special election ballot "Shall the Town of West Brookfield be allowed to exempt from the provisions of G.L. c.59, §21C, so-called Proposition 2 ½, the amounts required to pay the bond issued to fund the purchase of a Fire/Pumping Engine made by Mr. Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel – unanimous.
Chief Hagglund indicated that he had been working through the legal wording to be on the ballot, which was required 35 days prior to the election date by the Town Clerk's office.

SPECIAL ELECTION HOURS –
Motion to vote to keep the voting hours of Special Elections to 8am - 8pm made by Mr. Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel - unanimous.
Mr. von Bleicken stated that the Town Clerk's office asked if the hours could be reduced, but he felt that we should keep to the same hours as usual for the residents to vote.

ANNUAL LICENSE RENEWALS –
Motion to approve the Annual ABCC License renewals and the Annual Town License Renewals below. Town renewals are conditional on passing annual inspections by the Fire Chief and Building Inspector made by Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel – unanimous.
Ms. Gobeille stated that in 2025 she would like to break the fees up, which are currently bulked together.

ANNUAL licenses:

APPLICANT	ABCC	1st License	2nd License
Adams—Coney Frew Post dba American Legion Post #244	Club - All Alcoholic Beverages	Raffle License	Common Victualler
Salem Cross Inn	Hotel/Innkeeper – All Alcohol Beverages		Common Victualler
Country Corner Citgo Inc. dba Country Corner	Package Store – Wine & Malts		
Jayvisat Corp dba The Spirit Shoppe	Package Store – All Alcoholic Beverages		
Shri Sai Ram LLC dba Main Street Liquors	Package Store – All Alcoholic Beverages		
Hitchcock Tavern Inc. dba Hitchcock Tavern	Restaurant – All Alcoholic Beverages		Common Victualler
Jenz Inc. dba Northeast Pizza	Restaurant – Wine and Malts		Common Victualler

BERRY TREE IN FRONT OF TOWN HALL-

Motion to remove the berry trees in front of Town Hall made by Mr. Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel – unanimous.

Chief Hagglund indicated that the trees were thought to have been Zabek trees. He spoke with Bill Jankins, "town historian" and the Tree Warden, Jim Daley about the tree significance and that tie to Mr. Zabek seems to be unfounded. He has also spoken with Highway and said there is difficulty plowing the street in front of Town Hall with cruisers on them. He also mentioned that the Town has a Tree Committee, and the Tree Warden is on that Committee. The berry trees are not part of a memorial to Mr. Zabek, the 1st fulltime police officer in West Brookfield. Chief Hagglund would like to honor Mr. Zabek. He added that the berries are a nuisance to police cars parked there and he would like to complete a beautification project in the future.

TREASURY WARRANTS –

Motion to approve and sign the Treasury Warrants as presented made by Mr. Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel – unanimous.

INTERIM TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT –

1. Snowplowing Town Hall parking lot - Chief Hagglund explained that Highway would like police cars moved so they can plow the lot. He checked with the Library and Police can use their lot if they are not open.
2. Firehouse – Collecting 3 quotes. The last company to quote was in there last night.
3. Video recording of Town meetings – We can pay last year's bill as an old bill. Will need to find a place to pay these bills in the future.
4. Pickleball – Ed Kurr has asked if he can run Pickleball games in the Great Hall Fridays from 1-3pm as the Town Hall is not open. Chief Hagglund asked the Select Board if they had any issues with them operating on a Friday and they did not.
5. Toilet by Great Hall – This has been rebuilt. The sink is waiting for an ADA gasket to make it compliant.

6. Body Warn Camera Grant – Chief Hagglund applied for this grant. They were not able to apply for the first round of grants. With this grant they will get charging stations which will allow them to charge cameras in their cars with new batteries for the cameras.
7. Fire Truck – Greenwood is putting pressure on Chief Lapierre to commit to purchasing the truck. Asked to sign on behalf of the Town. The contract will hold the truck for WB and is contingent on the vote passing at the Special Election in January. If it does not, other Towns will be able to purchase it.
   Motion to allow the Interim Town Administrator to sign the Fire/Pumping Engine contract with Greenwood made by Mr. Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel – unanimous.
   Chief Hagglund added that the contract can be cancelled with no cost to the Town of West Brookfield.

OTHER BUSINESS –
Mr. von Bleicken asked the other members of the Select Board if they would accept signing a letter to the Office of Head Start's OHS Grant Review Team in Washington D.C. supporting the Worcester Community Action Council Head Start and Early Head Start Program.
Motion to sign the letter to the Office of Head Start's OHS Grant Review Team supporting the Worcester Community Action Council Head Start and Early Head Start Program made by Mr. Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel – unanimous.

Motion for the Select Board to enter into Executive Session G.L.c.30A, §21 (a)(2), to conduct contract negotiations with Theresa Cofske. The Chair has determined that an open session would have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body. The Select Board will reconvene in open session following Executive Session.

8:35pm –
Motion to Re-open the meeting in Open Session made by Mr. Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel – unanimous.

Motion- I move to ratify the contract as discussed in Executive Session pending final legal review made by Mr. Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel – unanimous.

Mr. von Bleicken asked if we needed the place holder meeting on December 23rd, 2024. It was determined that the Select Board could hold a regular meeting on December 19th, 2024 at 5pm.

Mr. Sickenberger asked Ms. Gobeille to let Melinda/Advisory know that he will be representing the Select Board at Monday, December 16th's Advisory meeting.

8:40pm –
Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Mr. Merkel. Second by Mr. Sickenberger – unanimous.

Mr. von Bleicken stated that there will be a short BOS Regular Meeting on December 19th, 2024 at 5PM.

8:50PM – ***Motion to Adjourn made by Mr. Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel.***

12/19/24

Authorized Party for the BOS Date/Time

12/19/24

Clerk Date/Time