TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

THURSDAY, December 19th, 2024 – 5:00 PM

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

MINUTES

PRESENT: Roland Sickenberger, Chair; Eric von Bleicken, Vice Chair; Brad Merkel, Clerk; Beth Gobeille, Exec. Asst. to TA/BOS; Interim TA, Chief Nathan Hagglund; Chief Lapierre (Fire); Gary Simeone and Bill Mansfield/Assessors; Matthew Schlegel (new police officer); Craig Charron, Police officer; Eric McMurray and Ashley Jedny, Mill Town Public Health; Paul Lapenas, Cable Advisory Committee; Jim Daley, Highway; Bob Haveles, Architectural Insights.

GUESTS: Matthew Schlegel's family; Tashena Marie, resident.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER IN OPEN SESSION

5:00pm: Motion to open the meeting

MINUTES OF December 10th BOS MEETING FOR APPROVAL -
Motion to approve and sign the Minutes of December 10th, 2024 made by Mr. Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel – 3 yes, unanimous.

2025 HOLIDAY SCHEDULE FOR APPROVAL –
Motion to approve the 2025 West Brookfield Holiday Schedule as presented made by Mr. Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel – 3 yes, unanimous.

INTERIM TOWN ADMINISTRATOR CHIEF HAGGLUND – REQUEST FOR ½ DAY 12/24 AND 12/31.
Combined Motion to allow the employees of Town of West Brookfield to leave early both days 12/24 Christmas Eve and 12/31 New Years Eve at 12pm noon made by Mr. Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel – 3 yes, unanimous.

JUNIPER STREET LIGHT RESIDENT REQUEST –
Resident, Ms. Kelsei Leblanc from 67 Juniper Street asked the Select Board office if the Town would install a streetlight on a their road, which is a private road, as the road gets very dark at night. Ms. Gobeille told her she would request this to the Select Board on her behalf. Ms. Leblanc indicated that she would like to install a light herself if the Town would not. Mr. Daley/Highway indicated that if the Town installed a light on a private road, this would set a precedence for other private roads. The Select Board agreed that it would not install a light on a private road. Ms. Gobeille to contact Ms. Leblanc and let her know.

KETTLE & PINE Common Victualler License - Ms. Gobeille indicated that this is not needed for Food Truck – agenda item removed.

ARPA FUNDS RESCINDED/REALLOCATED -

Motion to rescind $1662.56 from the already allocated amount of $6500 for the Catch Basins project for West Brookfield Elementary School made by Roland Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel – 3 yes, unanimous.

Motion to rescind $596.20 from the already allocated amount of $24,679.59 for the purchase of the Emergency Management Fire Department Command Vehicle made by Roland Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel – 3 yes, unanimous.

Motion to rescind all $3520 from the already allocated amount of $9220 for the purchase of Voting Machines for the Town made by Roland Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel – 3 yes, unanimous.

Motion to allocate $1300 from ARPA funds available toward the costs of hiring a moving company to move filing cabinets/office equipment and furniture in and out of the Town Clerk's office while carpet tiles are being installed made by Roland Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel – 3 yes, unanimous.

Motion to allocate $5000 from ARPA funds available toward the purchase of a new energy efficient heating and cooling system for the Highway Department office space made by Roland Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel – 3 yes, unanimous.

Motion to allocate $384.31 from ARPA funds available toward the installation of lighting in Town Hall in the 3rd floor level made by Roland Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel – 3 yes, unanimous.

Mr. Daley explained the type of work, which will take place in the Highway Dept. offices. They are renovating the office, taking down paneling, taking out a wall and opening up they space. He indicated that the windows will be replaced with new ones and the $5000 was needed for a new heating/cooling system for the space. Their current inadequate heating/cooling situation including an old air conditioner and baseboard heating was in dire need of being upgraded.

TOWN CLERK JOB DESCRIPTION –

Chief Hagglund indicated that this job description was produced by the Collins Center and would need to be approved by the Select Board. Mr. Sickenberger asked if the Town Clerk really had to be a Justice of the Peace or a Notary. Mr. von Bleicken indicated that there is no formal training needed to be either a Justice of the Peace. Mr. Merkel added the requirements to be a Notary. Both items were determined to be included in the job description as many Town Clerk hold these positions as well.

Motion to accept the Town Clerk job description as presented made by Mr. Sickenberger. Second by Mr. Merkel – 3 yes, unanimous.

INTERIM TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT –

TA Contract - Chief Hagglund indicated that he was working with Petrini's Law about the Town Administrator contract and was expecting to get it back tomorrow.

Fire Dept – Have received 2 quotes for the work to be done in the Fire Station. Expecting 2 more.

Pickleball – The Pickleball group would like to hold Pickleball in the Great Hall on Fridays from 9am – 11am.

Toilet/Great Hall – Toilet is still out of commission. We are waiting for Pioneer Valley Engineering for a missing part (ADA approved gasket).

Snow removal/Parking lot – Volunteers in Town Hall have been helping out. Highway Dept. has a skeleton crew. All parties are in agreement that we should let Paul M., current Town Hall janitor do this as this was something he was already taking care of. Paul is part of the Union, so this is a Union opinion. Chief Hagglund said they do not feel this is an issue, but added that we should amend the job description for Paul's role. Adding, if he were to be paid for snow removal/salting it could come out of Snow & Ice budget, which is more/hour than current role. Fire Chief and Police shoveling as well. This could be a liability. We will make sure to add snow/salt to next year's budget.

Mr. Daley added that salting and snow removal for buildings has always been done by the janitors. He continued that he has only 2 part timers, but could use 2 or 3 more.

Chief Hagglund suggested that perhaps we need to look at combining efforts on janitorial services for the buildings for Town Hall, Senior Center, Library, who all need help.

Mr. Sickenberger asked if we needed to amend the job description. Chief Hagglund responded that we could add snow removal to the hours. The Union was ok with updating the description or adding a side letter to reflect this.

Mr. Daley mentioned that sidewalk plows are usually used the day following a storm and the streets are plowed.

Chief Hagglund stated that we need to find a place to pay this from – it will not be a lot of money and this will not cost a lot to the Town's budget.

Mr. Daley added that he has good guys in his Department, he's just short-staffed.

OTHER BUSINESS –

Mr. von Bleicken mentioned that he was talking to Mr. David Brown about the Tree Hearing meeting for the Coy Hill Solar project. Mr. Brown would like to speak with the Select Board before that meeting on January 27th. Mr. Daley added that they will go through alternatives for moving the trees at this meeting and that he had gone out with National Grid's arborist and discussed which trees they could prune instead of removing.

Mr. Merkel asked if they would also be able to take down the tree in front of George's restaurant, as it's the same berry tree. Mr. Daley mentioned that we should speak with Louise/Historical Commission and ask for guidance on these trees. She said that they were an invasive tree. Mr. Daley added that we would have stumps there, but could possibly grind down, add concrete and make it flat. The berry trees had been trimmed many times in the past and have grown back fast. Suggested that we could have an agenda item at another meeting for what to plant in their place.

Mr. Merkel added that we will need 4 people for the Fire Civilian Traffic unit and that Warren just changed theirs.

Mr. von Bleicken stated that the next BOS Regular Meeting Date is January 7th, 2025 at 6PM.

5:50PM – ***Motion to Adjourn made by Mr. Merkel. Second by Mr. Sickenberger – 3 yes, unanimous.***

Beth Cooley 12/30/24 9:21 AM — 1/7/25

Authorized Party for the BOS Date/Time — Clerk Date/Time