

# **Brookfield Board of Selectmen's Updates**

**August, 2013 - April, 2014**

**prepared by Jennifer Grabowski, Administrative Assistant to the Selectmen**

## **August 6, 2013**

- Appointed Ryan Downing and John Annunziata as full time Police officers to fill the two vacant spots. Ryan was promoted from within and John is new to the department.
- Mark Moore was appointed to the Personnel Board and the CIPC.
- Kermit Eaton, CIPC, talked to the Selectmen about the direction of that committee and upcoming tasks.
- Don Taft presented a revised plan for the police station and asked that a Special Town Meeting be held in early October to address it. No decisions were made.
- Beth Coughlin said the Advisory Committee was willing to do the budget but was looking for some policy direction from Selectmen.
- Reviewed the fees for licenses it grants (common Victualler, auto, liquor, etc) and increased some of the fees. They also approved an increase in commercial fees as requested by the building inspector.
- Set the meeting schedule for upcoming months: Sept. 10 & 23, Oct. 8 & 22, Nov. 5 & 26
- Nick said he thought the town should have a hiring policy in which the Selectmen are more involved in the hiring of employees; Steve suggested Nick call HR and explore that further.
- Nick said he still wants to change the structure of the Assessor's office; Steve asked him to sit with the Advisory Committee and ask their opinion.
- Nick said he thinks the town should look into hiring an outside contractor to run the transfer station. He will look into it further.
- The senior/tax work-off policy was tabled, as not all of the members have had time to review it.
- Nick said he's been performing the road inventory himself on the South side of town and thought the Highway Dept. could take care of the North side. Selectmen rescinded their prior vote to allow the Highway Dept. to hire a person for this job.
- Signed a Road Salt MOU
- Reported the town was granted \$167,439 in Chapter 90 funds.
- Encouraged everyone to call, e-mail or write Sen. Brewer and Rep. Gobi concerning House Bill 1115 (this would allow Chapter 40B – affordable housing – to include mobile homes, group homes, manufactured homes, in-law apartments and qualified first-time homebuyers to be recognized. The town of Brookfield is currently way below it's required 40B level and passage of this bill would alleviate this problem.)

## **August 20, 2013**

- The Internal Finance Discussion was passed over due to lack of participation.
- Accepted the resignations of Bruce Clarke, Cindy Thompson and Herb Chaffee from the CDBG Advisory Committee and Linda Lincoln from the CIPC. Steve Comtois was appointed as the BOS liaison to CIPC. Anyone interested in serving on the CDBG should contact me.
- Decided the last day for article requests to be accepted for the Nov. 1 Special Town Meeting will be Oct. 1. They also discussed changing the set-up of the Annual and Special Town Meetings to a format in which just the budget and "boxed items" in the front of the warrant are voted on at the Annual Town Meeting and all capital requests are decided at a Special Town Meeting in the fall. Comments are encouraged on this – please direct them to me.

- Rescinded a previous vote to allow for the licensing of a septic system to cross Mill St. and said they would vote for it when they got the proper paperwork.
- Nick initiated a discussion about implementing a hiring policy, but in the meantime instituting a hiring freeze until a policy can be put into place. Nothing was voted; Nick is supposed to get some more information and report back.
- Reviewed the current employee absence policy and voted to include that employees shall give the Selectmen a minimum of a one-week written notice if they want to take vacation time (this only applies to certain employees outlined in the policy – see me for more info).
- Discussed the driver histories and decided to run driver histories on all employees covered by the town's insurance policy.
- Reviewed the Senior/Veteran's Tax Work-Off policy and made some changes. They will review (and hopefully approve) the final policy next meeting.
- Changed the Plumbing fee schedule as requested by that inspector
- Signed a letter authorizing Lenard Engineering to submit a grant application on the town's behalf and also signed a letter of intent for an upcoming CDBG-DR.
- Reported the DOT responded back about the hand-removal of the Phragmites – the DOT maintains glyssophates are the way to go. Selectmen decided to support the DOT's plan.
- \*Had a discussion about whether to support the RMV closing in Southbridge. The Selectmen will submit a letter of support to keep it open and I will have a petition in my office (in a day or two) if anyone wants to sign it.

## **September 2013**

- Discussed a newly-drafted CORI policy. They talked about how long records would be stored, where they would be stored, who would do the checks, who CORI checks would be run on and where the money would come from to run the checks. Mr. Thomo said he has been registered to run the checks, but not yet activated and would not begin running checks until the policy is approved.
- Talked about the free Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offered to the Town. More information about this will be distributed to employees shortly.
- Appointed Jenn Grybowski, Bill R. Simpson and Ron Couture to the Mass Preservation Design Selection Committee. The Town received a Mass Preservation grant for design work on the Town Hall – this committee would select a design firm to complete the work.
- Fire Chief Peter Martell has pulled the Fire SUV out of service, as it is no longer functional on a basic level, and it will be used for car accident training.
- It was announced that the Solar facility at the landfill came online Sept. 11 and the Town began banking net metering credits that same day.

## **October 2013**

- •Thanked and commended Tantasqua students and teachers for their work on the electrical systems and roof at the Fire Dept.
- Signed a municipal aggregation amendment, pre-disaster hazard mitigation plan, and a grant from Preservation Mass for the Town Hall.
- Accepted the resignation of Cindy Mundell from the Advisory Committee; appointed Kathleen Bradley as the Sexual Harassment Officer
- Discussed the CORI policy
- Awarded the Road Materials Bids: bituminous concrete to Mass Broken Stone Company and winter sand to Bond Construction
- Changed the deadline for article submissions for the Nov. 22 Special Town Meeting to Nov. 1.

- Decided to continue with the HR Counsel-on-Call service offered by Town Counsel.
- Reviewed information about a public hearing in Boston Oct. 22 regarding House Bill 1115, which contemplates making mobile home parks and others count toward the Town's affordable housing quotas.
- Discussed the effect a casino in Palmer would have on Brookfield and decided to find out more information about having Brookfield designated a "surrounding community" in order to receive mitigation funds from the gaming taxes.

## **January, 2014**

- Held a morning meeting with certain Town officials regarding financial matters
- Signed a Tolling Agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers
- Signed a contract with Austin Design Inc. for them to perform a conditions assessment and universal accessibility for the Brookfield Town Hall
- Decided to go out to bid for general insurance
- Discussed holiday hours for Town employees
- Decided to pursue a grant for a feasibility study for a thermal heating project
- Decided not to institute rules for the ponds
- Granted common victuallers licenses to Tip Top Country Store and Brookfield Congregational Church
- Signed an electricity supply contract with Hampshire Power to lower the Town's rates
- Discussed hiring an appraiser for special legislation in regards to the Quaboag River Bridge project, specifically the transfer of a piece of property
- Directed Jenn to begin the implementation of Broadband in Town buildings
- Approved new CORI and employee tobacco policies
- Made an appeal for volunteers from different committees to serve on a Master Plan Implementation Committee
- Discussed the Town's IT needs in regards to software expiring
- Reviewed the Tax Collector's job description
- Decided Ms. Lincoln would write the Selectmen's portion of the Annual Town Report.
- Reminder: Annual Town Reports from all boards, committees and offices are due MONDAY, FEB. 3.

## **March 18, 2014**

- Heard from Chris Ryan, from Central Mass Regional Planning Commission, about all of the great programs they have going on for municipalities.
- Heard from Rebecca Krause, from the Community Software Consortium, about the upgrades to their system (which the Town uses) and what's ahead for their software offerings.
- Heard from new Treasurer Sandy Kady, who updated the BOS on the status of several items in her office.
- Decided to hire VADAR (a software system the Town's financial team uses) to come out and train staff on how to integrate the system into their offices.
- Talked about mailboxes again, but didn't decide on anything.
- Voted to let the Highway Department deficit spend \$16,000 on their snow and ice account. Awarded the bid for the printing of the Annual Town Report to Country Press.
- Decided to perform employee evaluations using a rubric from the past, and also decided instead of dividing up employees they would do the evaluations all together in a meeting.

- Decided to come up with a policy regarding Town employees and officials using Town Counsel. Set the Annual Town Meeting date for June 6, 2014 at 7 p.m.
- Set up the first meeting of the Police Station Building Committee for March 24 at 6 p.m.
- Signed the nearly \$180,000 FEMA grant to raise up on and put drainage in Mill St.
- Accepted the resignation of the Municipal Custodian and decided to put an ad out for the job.
- Took no action on a request to proclaim June 26, 2014 Sir, Dr. Yoshiro NakaMatsu Day.
- Took no action on a request to proclaim April 8, 2014 Equal Pay Day.
- Decided to investigate further the municipal aggregation program.
- Decided to support a grant initiative to study energy-efficient, green heating and cooling options for the Town Hall, Fire/EMS and new Police Station.
- Approved a request for a “beano” fundraiser at the Rod & Gun Club for Tantasqua Youth Football & Cheer.
- Participated in a moment of silence for Dorothea Moran, the Town’s oldest resident, who passed away recently.

## **April 15 Meeting**

- Gave an update on the Quaboag River Bridge project – the bid for the project has been awarded and the notice to proceed to the contractor was given last week.
- The project should begin soon.
- Discussed tree removal on scenic roads.
- Interviewed three candidates for Custodian, and hired Delmar Twistol, who will begin April 24.
- Opened the Annual and Special Town Meeting Warrants. No articles were placed, although some requests were discussed.
- Signed the election warrant.
- Discussed municipal aggregation (for electricity supply).
- Decided to schedule an executive session to discuss cable negotiations.
- Decided to send a proposed anti-harassment policy to Town Counsel for review.
- Asked Jenn to coordinate a municipal energy audit.
- Authorized Bill Simpson Sr. to perform maintenance on the gazebo. They also heard his request to allow him to fix his stone wall.
- Signed three Chapter 90 road repair requests.
- Accepted the Tree Warden’s resignation.
- Decided to take advantage of procurement opportunities for things like heating oil, boiler maintenance, etc. through CMRPC.
- Discussed removing the portico over the Town Hall’s front entrance. If anyone has any issues with the portico’s removal, they are asked to contact the Selectmen.

## **April 29, 2014**

- Heard an update from a representative of the Police Station Building Committee. Decided to ask the students of Tantasqua to draft a site plan for the Town Hall, Fire/EMS and Police properties.
- Did performance evaluations on two more employees.
- Placed several articles on the Annual and Special Town warrants. (If you submitted an article, I will be sending an update later about if it was placed or not.)
- Proclaimed Brookfield a Purple Heart Town.
- Appointed a new Tree Warden – James Mulhern.

- Discussed a curb cut request.
- Decided to continue reviewing a pre-disaster mitigation grant opportunity.
- Heard an update regarding converting Town phone lines to Voice Over IP service.
- Acknowledged several items of correspondence, all of which are on file in the Selectmen's office.
- Discussed who would attend an awards ceremony in Boston for Preservation Award given to the Town for the Brookfield Cemetery Arch and Gate rehabilitation project.
- Made an appeal for residents to serve on the Cable Negotiations Committee. If you are interested, please see Jenn.
- Signed a notice of intent for the Mill St. construction project.
- Signed paperwork related to a pothole grant and Chapter 90 requests.
- Discussed a Municipal Performance Management Program and decided not to attend due to the cost (\$1,000).