Town of West Brookfield - Road Commissioners/BOS
Minutes of Meeting - Regular Session – October 29, 2008

LOCATION: Town Hall - Lower Level Conference Room TIME: 10:00AM
PRESENT: Barry Nadon, Jr., Tom Long, David Eisenthal, Johanna Barry, Executive Secretary, Highway Superintendent Jason Benoit and members of press.

Call To Order: 10:05AM - The meeting was called to order by Barry at 10:05am.

Road Maintenance/Road Reconstruction Accounts – Balances & Funding:
The Commission noted the balances in the following accounts: Road Reconstruction $0, Town Road Maintenance $128,680.01 and General Highway Expenses $61,110.55. The Commission also noted that an additional $179,507 was approved at the recent STM in Chapter 90 Money. Supt. Benoit stated that he believed that he would need a Transfer into his General Highway Expense Account before the end of the fiscal year. Supt. Benoit stated that he has spent approximately $250,000 on John Gilbert Road.

Status of Building Expansion Project/Status of Tight Tank:
Supt. Benoit stated that he is the process of installing a heating system and also a fire suppression system; at an estimated cost of $17,000. The Highway will receive a free gas line in conjunction with the recently approved Easement between Nationalgrid and the BOS. The highway facility will now be supported by both oil and gas for heat. Supt. Benoit explained to the Commissioners that a pre-cast tight tank structure is no longer acceptable and that a double wall fiberglass tank with leak protection must be utilized. Supt. Benoit further stated that the fiberglass tank would cost between $10,000 - $15,000; as compared with under $5,000 as previously thought. Another dilemma expressed by the Supt. is that there is a two (2) month waiting period to obtain a tank. The Supt. stated that he would be putting off the tank installation until the Spring. The Commissioners asked the Supt. when he would be in a position to host an open house so that the residents could view the facility. The Supt. stated that he was considering a possible open house for White Christmas, but was not certain if the department would be prepared; if not in the Spring.

Ragged Hill Road – Beaver Problem:
(Roger Slobody, William Leslie, Don Ela and Gordon DeWolf were present.) Mr. Slobody asked the Road Commissioners to consider taking action to preserve Ragged Hill Road from damage being done from the beavers on Mr. Ela’s property. Mr. Slobody stated that from time to time water runs over Ragged Hill Road due to the beaver dam and water levels. He further stated that someone could hydro-plane; which could result in serious injuries. He stated his concerns about the water freezing during the upcoming winter months. Mr. Ela stated that the problem appeared to be under control with his lowering of the pond levels with the newly installed “draw down” mechanism. Mr. Slobody stated that it was alleviating the problem initially, but without due diligence had not been working in recent days. Mr. Long stated that he believed Mr. Ela was harboring a nuisance and was wasting the Town’s time and money. The Commissioners stated that they could not address the “beaver issue” but were concerned about the condition and safety of the roadway. Mr. Eisenthal motioned to instruct the Highway Supt. to address the hydro-planing issue to the best of his ability and for him to attend the next Board of Health meeting along with the Road Commissioners. Second Mr. Long. The Commissioners voted unanimously.

Henrichon’s Complaint Letter – Sand Issue Lyons Road:
Supt. Benoit stated that he met with Mr. Henrichon and resolved the problem by installing rip-rap. Supt. Benoit stated that Mr. Henrichon was completely satisfied with the resolution.

Private Storage on Town Property/Access To Drop Off Center:
Chairman Nadon asked Supt. Benoit why a private contractor was allowed to store gravel at the Drop Off Center for approximately one (1) year. Supt. Benoit responded “For the contractor’s convenience.” Chairman Nadon stated that he did not approve of this practice. Mr. William King, Wickaboag Valley Road, stated that the contractor in question did not submit an invoice to the Town for the digging of the foundation for the highway facility expansion project and by allowing him to store material is just “one hand washing the other”. Mr. Long stated that “trading” is not condoned by the Town Auditors. Chairman Nadon stated that he received complaints that the contractor in question was removing material from the Drop Off Center after 9:00 pm and they questioned if the material was being stolen. Mr. Eisenthal stated that perception leads to public confidence or lack thereof. After some discussion, Mr. Eisenthal motioned to instruct the Superintendent that contractors wishing to store equipment or materials, not incidental to work being done directly for the Town, be pre-approved on a case by case basis by the Road Commissioners/BOS. Second Mr. Long. The Commissioners voted unanimously. The Commissioners questioned the security of the Drop Off Center. Supt. Benoit stated he feels confident that the facility is secure and that he did have to change the locks once previously in the past. The Commissioners stated that after hours operations should be limited/eliminated if possible.
Ridge Road – Driveway Problem (Laviolette Property):
Chairman Nadon asked Supt. Benoit if he had looked at the driveway issue at the Laviolette property. Supt. Benoit stated that he had offered to cut and patch the top of their driveway. He further stated that Ms. Laviolette refused a patch job and wanted the whole driveway replaced. Chairman Nadon stated that he got the impression from Ms. Laviolette that the highway had offered to place patch over the existing condition of the driveway. Chairman Nadon asked Supt. Benoit to cut and replace the top of the driveway before this winter if at all possible. Supt. Benoit stated that he would put it on his “to do” list.

Workers Comp Accident:
The Commissioners questioned the Supt. about the labeling on the winch involved in a recent workers compensation claim for the Town. The Supt. stated that the winch cable was drawn completely out and wound backwards (in reverse) creating the issue. After some discussion it was felt that the winch company was not at fault, but that more detailed labeling should be created by the Supt. and be installed on the winch.

Cell Phone:
The Board informed the Supt. that they would be adopting a policy for Town issued cell phones. Employees going over their allocated minutes would need to reimburse the Town or verify the additional calls were business related. The Board stated that it was their intention to keep the Supt.’s phone in the current telephone plan; for cost effectiveness.

Disposal of Wood Cut by Highway:
The Commissioners stated that wood not claimed by abutters should be hauled by the Highway Department to the Drop Off Center for storage and eventually for auction.

Tree – Charmil Drive:
After some discussion, Mr. Long motioned to request Mr. & Mrs. Para execute an Indemnification Agreement prior to having the Highway limb/trim the tree in front of their home. Noting that the Town would remain responsible for any negligent acts. Second Mr. Eisenthal. The Commissioners voted unanimously.

Residents of White Birch – Request for Road Repair:
Several residents of White Birch petitioned the Commissioners to consider gravel and grading White Birch. Supt. Benoit stated that he would create an estimate for the Commissioners. Supt. Benoit further stated that the work would most likely be accomplished in the Spring. Mr. William King asked the Board what private roads were slated for work. The Commissioners provided Mr. King with a list and stated that the list is also available on the Town’s Website.

Nationalgrid Easement:
Mr. Eisenthal motioned to approve a Gas Easement for Nationalgrid, as submitted. Second Mr. Long. The Board voted unanimously.

Appointment:
Mr. Long motioned to appoint Diane Oliver, at the request of the Planning Board, as the Planning Board’s Representative to the Stormwater Authority. Second Mr. Eisenthal. The Board voted unanimously.

GAF Settlement:
Mr. Long motioned to accept GAF’s Settlement of $31,000 cash. Second Mr. Eisenthal. The Board voted unanimously.

The Board spoke briefly with the ACO about fencing to be installed at McMullen’s on Lake Street. The Selectmen agreed to post a regular meeting for Monday, November 10, 2008.

Handicapped Parking at Library:
(Lisa Careau, Librarian present.) The Board discussed issues with the loss of parking due to the recent movement of the handicapped parking by the Library on Cottage Street. Chairman Nadon stated that local officials can set the distance from the edge of a driveway or curb cut to a parking space; noting the industry standard to be 3’. Ms. Careau stated that the handicapped parking itself had to be 13’. The Board went outside with the Supt. and Library Director to view the area and devise a resolution. The Commissioners directed the Supt. to re-mark the parking spaces as agreed in an effort to gain additional parking without sacrificing safety.

The Board adjourned at approximately 12:03pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman   Vice Chairman   Clerk