TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
December 8, 2010

Present:     Al Collings   Bret Kustigian, Superintendent of Schools
            Tom Schnare   Joe Scanlon, QRHS Finance Director
            Phil Landine   Edward Jodoin, Energy/Facilities Manager
            Roy Roberts   Steve Bachelder, Technology Coordinator
            Jack Tivnan   Marie Arsenault, Accountant
            Diane Vayda   Keith Arsenault, Treasurer
            Nicole Vongratsamy   Johanna Barry, Executive Secretary
            Tom O’Donnell, Police Chief
            Paul Lupacchino, Fire Chief

The meeting was called to order by Chair Al Collings at 6:32 p.m.

Minutes: Jack Tivnan made a motion to approve the minutes of November 17, 2010. Roy Roberts second. Voted 6 to approve as presented and 1 abstain. Jack Tivnan made a motion to release the executive session minutes of November 10, 2010. Roy Roberts second. Voted 7-0 to release minutes.

Special Town Meeting Warrant: Al Collings received a phone call from Cynthia Henshaw, East Quabbin Land Trust, stating that they were withdrawing the article asking the Town to vote to purchase the McRevey Property Conservation Restriction.

Quabbin School Capital Budget Project List: Al Collings stated that this meeting was a continuation of information gathering and review of projects. He asked if the School was funded a million dollars, what projects would be chosen. Bret Kustigian presented pictures of the solar project in progress at West Brookfield Elementary School and QRHS. He suggested a tour on December 15, 2010 at 1 p.m. beginning at the grammar school and then the high school.

Steve Bachelder, Technology Coordinator, presented a report of Quaboag Regional School District Technology Changes since August 2010. Changes are being made to sync the two networks to provide compatibility between the two buildings which will increase efficiency. The servers have been replaced. Tom Schnare asked what was the cost of the servers and where did the money come from. The answer was that it cost $24,000 to replace both and the money came from school choice funds and savings from other areas. Questions were answered about firewalls, wireless, e-mail capture, upgrades. Al Collings asked if we spent $600,000.00 on technology how long is the system good for. Steve Bachelder said they are purchasing “state of the art” and should stay in place for the next ten to 15 years.
Edward Jodoin, Energy/Facilities Manager talked about upgrade pressure natural gas, install dual burners, replace hot water heater and upgrade BAS system at Quaboag and connect high pressure natural gas, replace two boilers, replace hot water heater and install BAS system at West Brookfield Elementary School. The cost of Quaboag upgrades would be $115,000.00 and WBES would be $345,000.00. He outlined the current problems with the existing equipment and suggested a tour of the facilities on December 15, 2010 at 1 p.m. beginning at WBES. Edward Jodoin presented a chart of District Oil Usage 2009 Comparing to Gas Consumption. He stated the most savings would be to change from oil to gas and this is projected to be $59,733.00 on fuel and $20,000.00 savings on maintenance. When asked what would happen to savings, Bret Kustigian stated it could be used for teachers, programs, et cetera.

Bret Kustigian discussed new flooring throughout the entire school excluding the gym at the WBES. He supplied a sample of vinyl cushion tufted textile (VCTT). Phil Landine asked when the present rugs are removed what will need to be done to prepare the floors for the VCTT. The answer was that if mold was present it would have to be removed and this was not a difficult process.

**Police & Fire Department Space Options:** Fire Chief Paul Lupacchino and Police Chief Tom O’Donnell were present with an armload of files of previous studies for a Safety Complex dating back to 1994. Tom O’Donnell felt the project had been “studied to death.” He now utilizes 1100 square feet of space in the town hall and felt the police department needed 4-5,000 square feet if it was a stand alone structure. It was felt that if a structure for a combination of fire, police and rescue were built 16-17,000 square feet would be adequate. Fire department would need more space than police. Tom O’Donnell felt that the safety complex should be in a location that was easy to find and close to the center of town. Paul Lupacchino said now that he is fire chief and spends a lot of time in the station more people are coming in. The question was asked about increased crime and needing a lockup facility. Tom O’Donnell said that crime was pretty flat and that the volume of calls were for service and this could increase due to population aging. He said a lockup was not required until you had over 5,000 residents.

Jack Tivnan asked about ten acres on Wigwam Road. A new facility could be built here. Discussed utilizing present fire station and properties owned on Cottage Street. It was felt that this would not be adequate due to inadequate parking. Phil Landine said someone should approach the Kulas family. If this property could be acquired, then building on Cottage Street would be an option. Phil Landine also suggested looking at P & S Pizza as well. Paul Lupacchino said if this were available a drive thru operation could be constructed. Jack Tivnan will ask the Kulas family about their property and Johanna will talk to P & S Pizza about selling. Johanna Barry said that we have some
consultant money available (not more than $5,000.00) that could be used. A consultant will tell us if the property would work and the cost of the project. Al Collings asked when discussion for a consultant could be held. Johanna said she will put it on the agenda for Tuesday, December 14, 2010 Selectmen’s’ meeting.

**Financing Capital Budget Items:** Keith Arsenault, Treasurer, was present to discuss and answer questions. He said that MGL Chapter 44, 78 lists projects that you can borrow money for. You can get a five-year plan where you can draw funds over time or all at once. Bond anticipation short term fund is available where you spend down within two years. If after two years, the penalty is that it is no longer tax exempt. A five-year construction loan for a five million dollar bond would cost $30-35,000.00 to process. There are also short term USDA loans, which the Water Department has utilized. His advice was to do short term loans (5-years). He felt that now would be a good time to borrow because interest rates are down. Keith presented an old chart entitled “West Brookfield School Debt.” It showed the progression of payments and in 2013 $400,018.00 will be returned to the taxpayers. Keith said this is an appropriate time to fund capital expenditures with this money. How does this happen? First we must educate the voters that to lower the tax rate with this money will not amount to only a few dollars each. It will need a ballot vote. He explained the reason we are getting this money is that we made the full bond payment the first year. Keith explained to Bret Kustigian that the Town had a School Stabilization fund and put money in it to pay the school debt so that the tax rate would remain consistent. Discussed borrowing money until the School money is available. Keith said he would need to know what time of year the money would be available to plan this. Keith presented a draft for total liability for future and current benefits that is 2.5 million dollars non-funded liability. He does not have a proposal as yet. Maybe the auditors would have some input. The School was asked how they are dealing with this issue and they replied that they have done nothing about this to date.

The next Advisory Committee meeting will be January 12, 2011.

Jack Tivnan made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Nicole Vongratsamy second. The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine M. Long
Secretary