TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
May 21, 2015

Present: Brad Hibbard
Phil Landine
Tom Long
Richard Gobi

Absent: Lori Loughlin
Kevin Paquette

The meeting was called to order by Chair Richard Gobi at 7:16 p.m.

Budget #26 Hazardous Waste: Brian Charron was present to discuss the Hazardous Waste Budget. He said he would like to get a metal Conex box to store hazmat and miscellaneous supplies. The container needs to be dry and tight to protect its contents. The cost for a 20’ unit is approximately $2000 – 2500. Richard Gobi said that the Advisory Committee would keep this in mind for next year. Phil Landine suggested he contact CSX to see if they would donate one to the Fire Department.

Training line item: This item was questioned and Brian said this funding is used for tuition only to attend classes.

When asked if he filed insurance claims to recoup expenses at hazmat events he responded he did but there have been no insurance claims filed this year. Brad Hibbard noted the department has not spent much of its expense budget and asked if he expects money to come back to the Town this year. Brian stated he will use any excess funds to replenish his supplies at the end of the year. Brad Hibbard made a motion to approve the budget. Phil Landine second. Vote was unanimous to approve the budget as presented.

Budget #21 Fire Department: Chief Paul Lupacchino was present to discuss his budget. Firefighters Brian Charron, Bob Benson, Joe Landry and Dan Santos were also present. It was also noted that the Fire Department has close to half of its budget unexpended with just two months remaining in the fiscal year. Chief Lupacchino says he never “pads” his budget and waits until the end of the year to replenish his inventory when prices are lower. Brad asked about biweekly payroll warrants and the Chief stated he does this on a monthly basis and that firemen receive checks just three times a year. The firefighters prefer payment this way rather than bi-weekly and believe it is more efficient, saving on the clerical expense of cutting bi-weekly checks for small amounts. The Chief presented a copy of a monthly payroll sheet for the committee to review. Phil Landine cautioned the Chief on the ethics of submitting payroll warrants for family members.

Line item Unallocated Payroll – increase $3000: The Chief was questioned about his request for an additional $3000 in this line as accountant records indicate there is a substantial amount of funds available in his salary account. The Chief stated firefighters last payroll payment was processed in November. As of this date he is just over $1000.
short in his payroll account with two months to go. He will shift monies among his expenses lines to cover the shortage this year. As a result of this year’s shortfall he is asking for a $3000 increase in his unallocated payroll.

*Line item Inspections on Trucks, pumps, ladders, hoses – increase $4000:* The Chief said he currently conducts inspections and required testing of hoses and equipment in house utilizing his training budget and firefighter training time. Paul is working to get a company to do these inspections and certifications. He stated conducting inspections in house is dangerous to his firefighters and puts additional stress on the engine pumps. He further stated all of the local fire departments utilize an outside firm to conduct the inspections and certifications. The cost of hiring a private company is approximately $4000 and he is hoping to get area towns to do them together at a common location to save money in the future.

*Line item Equipment repairs - increase $1,000:* The Chief said the cost of maintenance is increasing and he provided a list equipment repairs that need to be done. He said the department has expended close to $7000 to date for maintenance.

*Line Item Recruitment and Retention - $15,000:* The Chief has presented this program to the Advisory Committee and Select Board in the past in an attempt to get a retirement program for firefighters. He believes this will help with recruiting and retaining personnel. General discussion held. Paul presented a spread sheet and explained how the point system works and is asking that the town fund it with $15,000 per year. He stated at some point the program will become self-sustaining. Committee members said while they did not disagree in concept with the program there is much more work necessary to bring this program before the voters. Brad said the program should be reviewed by an actuary and there are legal issues that need to be explored. Phil Landine was concerned that the Town might not be able to fund the program year after year and questioned what would happen in lean years. The Committee believes that implementing a program such as this should require a vote by residents as it would be necessary to provide annual funding for years to come. Tom Long asked if the Town want to establish a retirement for firefighters and is the Select Board okay with this. Paul said that for the past five years the Select Board has asked him to do this. The Advisory Committee recommended he bring this before the Select Board for review and further guidance. It was agreed that the $15,000 request would be removed from the FY16 budget request.
Brad Hibbard made a motion to approve the Fire Department Budget (less $15,000 from Recruitment and Retention line) of $114,513.83. Phil Landine second. Vote was unanimous to approve the Fire Department Budget of $114,513.83.

MINUTES: Brad Hibbard made a motion to approve the minutes of May 7, 2015. Tom Long second. Vote was unanimous to approve the minutes of May 7, 2015 as presented.

Brad Hibbard made a motion to approve the minutes of May 11, 2015. Phil Landine second. Vote was unanimous to approve the minutes of May 11, 2015 as presented.

Brad Hibbard made a motion to approve the minutes of May 14, 2015. Phil Landine second. Vote was unanimous to approve the minutes of May 14, 2015 as presented.

The committee held general discussion on the presentation of the omnibus budget at town meeting and are awaiting word back from Town Council. Richard Gobi said he will work on putting together a handout and presentation for voters at the Town meeting.

Tom Long made a motion to adjourn. Brad Hibbard second. Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine M. Long
Secretary