TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
April 16, 2015

Present: Kevin Paquette
Brad Hibbard
Phil Landine
Lori Loughlin
Tom Long
Richard Gobi

The meeting was called to order by Chair Richard Gobi at 6:22 p.m.

MINUTES: Kevin Paquette made a motion to approve the minutes of April 6-7, 2015 with a correction on Page 4 to change the word deductibles to copayments. Phil Landine second. Vote was unanimous to approve the minutes of April 6-7, 2015 with the above correction.

REQUEST FOR TRANSFER FROM RESERVE FUND:

1. $213.00 Selectmen’s Expense- Pay Lagrant Electric for Highway Invoice 8795 to install data line for time clock. Kevin Paquette made a motion to approve. Phil Landine second. Vote was unanimous to approve the transfer for $213.00.
2. Lake Wickaboag Dam Maintenance- $300.00 for dam repairs. Tabled for more information.

BUDGET REVIEW:

Budget #7 Tax Collector: Teri Barrett presented a list of expenditures to date. The tax collector’s budget has increased 1.44% and this is due to postage for an increasing number of motor vehicle bills being sent out. She presented a list of Unpaid Taxes from 2009 through present. Total unpaid taxes without 2015 are $312,577.49. She said there will be real estate tax takings in the next couple of weeks. When asked how long after do we see activity, the answer was usually a week when people come in and begin to make payments but most get turned over to Tax Title and once this happens it is out of her hands. Motor Vehicle taxes are turned over to the deputy collector. She said the online payment is going well and shows increased usage. Brad Hibbard made a motion to approve the tax collector budget. Tom Long second. Vote was unanimous to approve the budget as presented.

Budget #17 Computer Technology: Committee members Lynn Tivnan and Teri Barrett were present. A list of expenditures to date was presented. General discussion held whether to put cost of service agreements and/or computer expenses into department budgets. While it would give a truer figure to a department budget, with the salary/expense budget it is possible the money could be used elsewhere. If kept in the
Computer Tech budget and not used, it would go back to the general fund. The Tech Committee is looking into getting a “bundle price” to upgrade all the computers to Windows 7, looking into purchasing surplus equipment and access through the cloud. When asked about inventory, Teri said the inventory list is kept in the Selectmen’s office and anything she has purchased she keeps track of herself. Brad Hibbard asked why the Vadar License was an article on the fall town meeting warrant and not taken out of her budget and Teri did not know why it was done that way. She said that she has $14,000 left in her budget and may be able to turn back $10,000. Teri said that the town’s current computers are operating on Windows XP and need to be replaced. Brad suggested that if she needed to buy computers and there is money left in the FY15 budget, why not buy them now. The committee concurred with the recommendation and Teri said she would try to purchase them before the end of the fiscal year. Tom Long made a motion to approve the budget as presented. Brad Hibbard second. Vote was unanimous to approve the computer technology budget as presented.

Budget #42 Recreation: Teri Barrett presented a list of expenditures to date. Brad Hibbard asked her if there would be any more expenses this year and the answer was that there would be bills for trash and porta potty. She estimates that $5,000 will be returned to the general fund. Discussion held about the expense of lifeguards and the actual usage of the Town Beach. Teri said there was no data available and that some days it was busy and other days it was not. Phil Landine said we spend a lot of money on the beach and would it be better spent somewhere else where more kids might benefit. Lori Loughlin asked how many people are on the Committee. Teri said besides herself there is Steve Gogas, Gerry Czub and two residents have applied. Teri Barrett said applications for a director are due on the 20th and the Recreation Committee will meet on the 21st. Phil Landine suggested the Elementary School Principal would be a good director and Brad Hibbard said it would make sense to have her involved in some manner in that she is familiar with the children and activities for their age group, if she was interested. Kevin Paquette made a motion to table the budget until the new Recreation Committee had reviewed the budget/programs. Tom Long second. Vote was unanimous to wait for input from the new committee.

The Advisory Committee said we need to keep in contact with the school and have Bret Kustigian come back to talk to us.

The meeting will be recessed until Tuesday, April 21, 2015 at 6:15 p.m.  
6:30 p.m.: Council on Aging  
7:00 p.m.: Johanna Swain’s Budgets  
7:30 p.m.: Town Clerk, Election, Board of Health, Landfill
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We will meet again on Thursday, April 23, 2015 at 6:15 p.m.
6:30 p.m.: Assessors
7:00 p.m.: Water Department

Kevin Paquette made a motion to recess the meeting to Tuesday, April 21, 2015 at 6:15 p.m. Tom Long second. Vote was unanimous at 8:10 p.m. to recess the meeting to April 21, 2015 at 6:15 p.m.

April 21, 2015
6:15 p.m.

Present: Richard Gobi
Kevin Paquette
Tom Long
Lori Loughlin
Phil Landine

Absent: Brad Hibbard

The Advisory Committee meeting reconvened and was called to order by Chair Richard Gobi at 6:19 p.m.

Budget #38 Council on Aging: Director Cindy Norden was present to discuss her budget. She says she gives back money every year. She gets grants and donations to help defray the cost of the Center. She is getting a new copier this year and the money has already been raised. When asked if she needed a new computer, she said the last time the Town had given her a computer was in 1992 and since then she has been able to fund computers with donations. The Senior Center is open five days a week and Meals on Wheels is back in West Brookfield. Tom Long made a motion to approve the budget. Lori Loughlin second. Vote was unanimous to approve the Council on Aging budget as presented.

REQUEST FOR TRANSFER FROM THE RESERVE FUND: Lake Wickaboag Dam Maintenance $300. Al Collings and Dave Healey were present. Dave Healey noted deterioration of the flash boards when closing the dam. Luke Wright, Ware River Power, Inc. rehabbed the dam about 15 years ago. He does the routine inspections and has not charged the Town for these. It will cost $6,700 to repair the dam and it was agreed to split the cost between FY15 and FY16. Kevin Paquette made a motion to approve the Request for Transfer from the Reserve Fund. Phil Landine second. Vote was unanimous to approve the request in the amount of $300.
Lake Wickaboag Dredging Project: Al Collings said filing information for the Environmental Bond Bill is due July 1st. The Secretary of Environmental Affairs has to approve the funding. Discussed deposit site. Al Collings said the landfill would work and they are talking to Arthur Maskell about 50 acres off Madden Road, which was a gravel pit. They are doing soil testing now. If positive, then would do a comparative to see which is the best site. DEP says unused cells at the landfill can be used. Al said 350,000 cubic yards will be dredged and can be pumped and piped to either location.

Budget #2 Selectmen: Johanna Swain was present to answer questions. Budget is up 4.2%. Increases in line item expenses were Conferences, Dam Maintenance and Educational Benefits. Phil Landine suggested changing line item Meetings to Conferences. Kevin Paquette made a motion to approve the Selectmen’s Budget. Phil Landine seconded. Vote was unanimous to approve the Selectmen’s Budget as presented.

Budget #8 Legal Expense: Johanna Swain presented a Monthly Financial Report FY2015 of legal expenses. Balance to date is -$5,269.28 with three months left. Phil Landine asked who has access to town counsel and the answer was that everyone must go through the Selectmen. The Board of Health and Water Department has a budget for legal expenses. The Legal Budget was $24,000 for FY2015 and have requested $49,000 for FY2016. Johanna Swain said she could send updates whenever you want and will e-mail a list of expenses for the past three years. Kevin Paquette made a motion to approve the budget. Phil Landine seconded. Vote was 4 to approve as presented and 1 not to approve (Richard Gobi).

Budget #14 Town Hall: Johanna Swain was present. Town Hall Fuel is down from $11,500 to $8,990 due to change over from oil to gas heat. Phil Landine asked if gas could be pre-bought. Johanna will call the gas company and ask. Phil said the Centrex Telephone system is old and should we be looking at a newer system. Johanna will talk to Verizon. Phil Landine made a motion to approve the Town Hall budget. Tom Long second. Vote was unanimous to approve the Town Hall Budget as presented.

Budget #15: General Insurance: Johanna Swain said that the insurance people came in to talk to the Selectmen. The budget shows an increase of 5% over last year. All claims must come through the Selectmen’s office. Tom Long made a motion to approve the General Insurance Budget. Kevin Paquette second. Vote was unanimous to approve the General Insurance Budget as presented.
National Grid & Constellation New Energy: Johanna is tracking credits and will e-mail report.

Time clocks: Advisory Committee asked Johanna for an update. Johanna, Marie and Sarah have loaded employees into the system but Harpers has not put them in their system. Johanna will follow up. The Selectmen have adopted a policy but are in the process of drafting a policy specifically written for emergency work at home.

Generator: Johanna said there were a lot of questions when it was put out to bid. Selectmen wanted John Shepherd to get her more information. Johanna will follow up.

Audit: Johanna said the audit report should be in next week and she will get a copy for the Advisory Committee.

Old Business: Recreation: Richard Gobi looked up the law for beaches that are open to the general public. They must have a sign stating the dates and times of opening and closing, the name of the operator (Town), the permit number and a phone number. There was no requirement for a lifeguard.

School: Lori Loughlin reported that she was not able to make contact with Bret Kustigian.

Schedule: Secretary will see if the Water Department and Assessors are coming to the meeting on Thursday, April 23, 2015.

Schedule a meeting for Monday, April 27, 2015 at 6:15 p.m. Ask Sarah Allen to be present to discuss Town Clerk, Elections, Board of Health and Landfill and ask Barry Gillogly to discuss Local Access.

Kevin Paquette made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Tom Long second. Meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine M. Long
Secretary