TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
August 11, 2015

Present:  Lori Loughlin
Brad Hibbard
Phil Landine
Robert Blozie
Tom Long
Richard Gobi

The meeting was called to order by Chair Richard Gobi at 6:15 p.m.

MINUTES: Robert Blozie made a motion to accept the minutes of July 21, 2015. Brad Hibbard second. Vote was unanimous to accept the minutes of July 21, 2015 as presented. Lori Loughlin made a motion to accept the minutes of August 4, 2015. Brad Hibbard second. Vote was unanimous to accept the minutes of August 4, 2015 as presented.

REVIEW OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SELECT BOARD.

Lori Loughlin said she went over the following list of Advisory Committee Recommendations discussed in past meetings with Selectwoman.

1. Research a Change in Town Charter toward establishing a Town Manager position. Diane said we need to establish a committee.
2. Review and modify inspection and permit fee schedules. This has been completed.
5. Program Town Hall copy machine so that all authorized persons have their own individualized pass code. Completed per secretary.
7. Establishing a local meals tax. Dead issue.
8. Establish Grant Writer position. Select Board established a Regionalization Study Committee but there are only two members left.
9. Convert Town Treasurer and Tax Collection positions from elected to appointed. Town meeting vote failed and must wait two years before bringing before voters.
10. Expand scope of Town’s Annual Audit to include a review of its general accounting practices. Discussed. Follow-up audit is scheduled for August 2015.
11. Establish Job Descriptions for all Town Employees. In progress.
14. Develop a Capital Spending Plan to address future capital needs. Need to do.
15. Continue to research plans for future public safety complex should funding become available. No funding.
16. Evaluate Health Insurance Options for Town employees. Bring up at next meeting.
17. Revise Employee Time Sheets & Distribution Process. Time Clocks have been implemented in Town Hall as of August 3, 2015 per secretary. In progress for other employees.

The Advisory Committee will address above list of recommendations with the Select Board at a future meeting.

Richard Gobi said accounting issues need to be addressed. General discussion held. It appears there are still problems with the reconciliation of accounts between the treasurer and accountant. It was agreed that this is a priority issue for the Town that needs to be addressed immediately.

Discussion held regarding a general lack of accountability within the Town Hall which led to a discussion on researching the need for establishing a Town Manager or Administrator position. Town government has grown to the degree where it is difficult for a part time Select Board to manage on a daily basis. Bob Blozie questioned why the Executive Secretary can’t be empowered to manage town offices in the absence of the Select Board and suggested a review of her job description. More study needed in this area.

Committee members also reported receiving numerous complaints from tax payers who were forced (due to closed offices) to make numerous trips to the Town Hall in order to conduct normal business, i.e. paying taxes, water bills, etc. It was suggested that the Select Board review and modify town office business hours to better serve our residents. Are the business hours of our offices consistent with those of neighboring towns?

The accountant was in her office and we asked her to come in. Richard Gobi talked about Scanlon’s audit report and reconciling and the accountant agreed there still were problems. It was reported that the Treasurer’s husband has been working on the trust funds. Committee members questioned whether his access to town records is
appropriate. The accountant said she is concerned about reconciling accounts in order to
get free cash certified in a timely manner this year. When questioned, she stated the
town’s accounts have not been reconciled since March 2014. Marie said she needs to
close and balance accounts before the auditors can come back to certify free cash. Tom
Long said it is a reflection on your performance if you cannot reconcile with the
Treasurer in a timely manner.

Brad Hibbard suggested we ask the Select Board to have the auditor conduct an audit
asap to determine the progress made on resolving the discrepancies reported in the last
audit report and management letter, and to have him return a second time when the town
is prepared to have its free cash certified. It is imperative that these issues be resolved
immediately. The accountant agreed with the recommendation.

Brad Hibbard made a motion to have secretary write a letter to Select Board asking that
the Advisory Committee be placed on the agenda for the next meeting to (1) discuss
progress made by the Town Treasurer and Accountant on resolving the issues reported in
the 06/30/14 Financial Audit and the accompanying Management Letter and, (2)
recommending that the Select Board contact the auditor asking that he conduct an audit
within two weeks, subject to his availability, to evaluate progress made by the Town
Treasurer and Accountant in resolving the issues identified in the 06/30/14 audit and
accompanying management letter, and further, that the results of his examination be
reported at a public meeting immediately following their release. Lori Loughlin second.
Vote was unanimous.

Kevin Paquette resigned from the Advisory Committee effective immediately per e-mail
sent 08/10/15 to secretary. Richard Gobi made a motion to accept Kevin’s resignation
with regret. Lori Loughlin second. Vote unanimous. Secretary to notify Town
Clerk/Select Board.

Planning Board has asked if at least one Advisory Board member could attend the Public
Hearing on the Wellfield amendment on Monday, September 14, 2015 at 7 p.m. in the
lower level meeting room of the Town Hall. Richard Gobi and Tom Long will attend.

Pam Griffing, 15 Griffing Road expressed an interest in joining the Advisory Committee
and attended our meeting tonight. She asked several questions about duties and
responsibilities of an Advisory Committee member and provided committee members
with her qualifications which includes a strong background in finance. Ms. Griffing is a
CPA. At the conclusion of discussions she expressed an interest in appointment. Lori
Loughlin made a motion to appoint Pam Griffing to the Advisory Committee. Tom Long
second. Vote was unanimous to appoint Pam Griffing to the Advisory Committee to fill Kevin Paquette’s position. Secretary to inform Select Board of appointment.

Lori Loughlin made a motion to adjourn the meeting Tom Long second. The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine M. Long
Secretary