TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
February 15, 2012

Present:  Al Collings  Johanna Barry, Executive Secretary
           Tom Long  Mark Long, Selectman
           Phil Landine  Mike Frew Selectman
           Roy Roberts  Barry Nadon, Jr., Selectman (late)
           Jack Tivnan  Lester Paquette, Water Commissioner
           Bob Benson, Water Commissioner
           Barry Nadon, Sr., Water Commissioner
           Jim Dimaio, Tree Warden
           Jim Daley, Highway Superintendent

The meeting was called to order by Chair Al Collings at 6:30 p.m.

Minutes:  Jack Tivnan made a motion to accept the minutes of February 8, 2012.  Roy Roberts second.  Vote 5-1 abstain (Phil Landine) to approve the minutes as presented.  Jack Tivnan made a motion to approve the minutes of February 13, 2012.  Tom Long second.  Voted 4-1 abstain (Phil Landine) to approve the minutes as presented.

Review Fiscal Year 2013 Revenue Estimates:  Collings said we are $294,000 short when compared to the requested budgets.  Some Articles are moved to the fall Town Meeting.  The School Foundation is what it is at $2,368,159; added 5% to transportation and for additional requests Al has put in a zero.  We have not seen an estimate for the Library roof and could this come out of Town Building Maintenance.  We have $89,433.17 in free cash that we could use in May but that does not leave any free cash for the fall meeting.  Jack Tivnan said that Marie Arsenault suggested we put an article on the warrant for short term borrowing for Chapter 90.

Review Department Budget Requests:

#33 Highway Department:  Highway Superintendent Jim Daley was present to discuss his budget.  The Selectmen gave him and Mark O’Donnell increases.  Jim Daley said that Mark O’Donnell was due a step increase and got an additional step.  Al Collings asked did his responsibilities change and the answer was yes that the mechanic was doing more in house work and restoring the trucks.  As for himself, he has been out looking for grants, going to meetings as well as his usual duties.  Al Collings said we have asked all departments to go after grants and others are doing this.  Mike Frew said that he and Mark Long have only dealt with Jim Daley.  As far as underachievers, he is not one of them.  He has gone out and gotten grants and this was not done before.  Jim Daley said that my position has been paid the same as it will be now.  Tom Long said grants are not available every year, they come and go.  Jack Tivnan said that when they hired Jim Daley they underestimated his background and the ability to do the job.  Jack does not feel bad about giving him a raise but we are “broke.”  The trend is that we cannot continue to give
raises to people. Jim Daley talked about the school raises given last year and the Advisory Committee said they have no say in that. Al Collings said the other issue is that how many other like situations around the Town Hall are there. Jim Daley said that when the economy increases, people will make choices. Al Collings asked Jim if he could self-finance the raises within his budget and the answer was no. There will be more increases in the budget with the cost of gas and underfunded equipment maintenance. Mike Frew said there was unanimous support of the Board of Selectmen and he thinks if it were brought to the floor at Town Meeting, the people would support the raises. Mike Frew said you have asked him to cut his budget and he has said he cannot. Jim Daley said he is trying to work to do some regionalization with cleaning basins, line painting, and supplies and sharing equipment. He has applied for a regional grant. Jim Daley went over each budget item. Al Collings said that next year we may be looking for a debt exclusion. We cannot use up all of our stabilization. Jack Tivnan stated we are getting less money back than years ago. Jim Daley said the Road Commissioners are working on a List of Roads and will have this ready for Town Meeting. Jack Tivnan said he supported Jim Daley’s raise. Jim Daley said his raise only amounted to $1.28 an hour.

#52 Drop Off Center: Highway Superintendent said they are taking in more money for scrap metal and receiving payment for oil. Lester Paquette asked is FEMA going to help out and the answer was they will pay 75% but we may not get it for a year or two. We will not receive money for residents brush at the Drop Off Center.

#51 Water Department: Water Commissioners Lester Paquette, Bob Benson and Barry Nadon, Sr. were present to discuss the Water Department Budget. Lester Paquette said that energy costs are up because we now have to pay for energy costs. The contract ends 12/2012 and will negotiate price. If Route 9 Solar goes in, we may be able to buy energy cheaper. Chemical costs continue to rise. Jack Tivnan asked about the well project. Lester Paquette said next month it will go out to bid and then a year later begin work. The project was held up by DEP but now the well field has been approved. Lester Paquette gave an overview of the well project with a preliminary plan. Johanna Barry asked if there were any plans to extend lines for more users and the answer was not at the moment. Barry Nadon, Jr. asked when was the last time you looked into it. I asked when I built my house and now there are a lot more houses on Snow Road and Wickaboag Valley Road. The Water Department asked Barry to get everyone together. Tom Long asked how many users are there and the answer was 950. How many homes are there in town. Al Collings thought about 2400. Tom Long asked for a history of rate increases and the answer was three out of the last five years the rates have been increased. Are your rates comparable to other
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Towns and the answer was yes. Jack Tivnan asked are you going to replace pipe on the School Street. Lester Paquette said they would like to if it is part of the construction project as the pipe is 100 years old. The money has been paid for the engineering and the rest is a grant. Water Department will have to pay for putting in the line.

#30 Tree Warden: Jim Dimaio, Tree Warden, was present to discuss his budget. Al Collings said the tree expense was $25,000.00 this year and last year and do you need it all. Jim Dimaio said he met with Jim Daley on Monday and want to reduce the tree expense to $20,000.00. Jack Tivnan asked about the removal of trees on the List of Roads and Jim Dimaio said that was in Jim Daley’s budget. Al Collings asked what a normal line item would be and the answer was $10-15,000 would be reasonable. Jim Dimaio said there is a lot of interest in a tree planting program and he will put $1,000 towards this as well as donations.

#31 Insect Pest Control: Budget level funded.

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

Next meeting will be March 7, 2012 at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine M. Long
Secretary