TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
February 9, 2016  

Present: Brad Hibbard  
Phil Landine  
Tom Long  
Lori Loughlin  
Pam Griffing  
Robert Blozie  

Absent: Richard Gobi  

The meeting was called to order by Chair Lori Loughlin at 6:16 p.m.

MINUTES: Robert Blozie made a motion to approve the minutes of January 12, 2016. Pam Griffing second. Unanimous vote to approve the minutes of January 12, 2016 as presented.

AUDIT & MANAGEMENT LETTER: Reviewed and general discussion held. The management report identifies the same financial accounting discrepancies involving the tax collector, treasurer and accountant as it has reported for at least the past three years. Our auditor identified one of the most concerning problems as the failed reconciliation of accounts. He is also concerned about the continuing failure of the tax collector to process over $27,700 in refunds due to tax payers dating back to 2007. Lori is concerned that issues still linger and potential negative impact on the future financial condition of the Town. Pam Griffing reviewed the audit report and expressed concern over some of its content. She will follow-up with the auditor and report back to our committee.

Robert Blozie suggested we make the taxpayers aware of fiscal inefficiencies through attendance at Selectmen’s meetings as he feels many residents watch the meetings on cable television. He questioned “How do we make them accountable and how do we alert the public.” Tom Long explained our recommendation that the Town convert the tax collector and treasurer positions from elected to appointed positions but the Town did not support it at the polls. Lori said it was to be a monthly task for the tax collector, treasurer and accountant to meet with the Selectmen but that hasn’t occurred as evidenced at a recent meeting of the Selectboard where the treasurer would not stay for the meeting and the tax collector did not attend.

General discussion held on financial issues previously presented to the Selectboard with little or no progress, some included in the Division of Local Services Financial Review conducted at the request of the Town several years ago. Lori Loughlin said the one issue that she would like to push forward is the formation of a committee to research the potential for establishing a Town Manager, with the possibly of sharing with another town if financing was a concern. This has been recommended to the BOS in the past with no action. The committee agreed to gather information and approach the BOS asking that
an article be placed on the Annual Town Meeting to see if the voters are in favor of moving in that direction.

General discussion held on the establishment of a personnel board separate from the Selectboard.

Brad Hibbard questioned the status of the Water Department Well Project contingency fund and the New Braintree Road Water Line Project, i.e. cost of the proposed project and funding sources. Jack Tivnan is the BOS liaison to the project and has been asked to provide our committee with updates relating to financial issues. Phil Landine stated he has seen surveyors working on New Braintree Road.

**GREEN COMMUNITY INITIATIVE:** Tim Morrell, Planning Board Member could not come to our meeting tonight. We will ask him to attend a future meeting.

**MEALS TAX:** The Selectboard discussed this at their last meeting and will support a warrant article for the annual Town Meeting. There are 12 businesses that would be subject to collecting the tax.

**SCHOOL:** Lori will be talking to the school this week relative to the status of the upcoming fiscal year budget. She will ask them to attend our meeting on February 24, 2016.

**BUDGETS:** Lori handed out department budgets that have been submitted to this date. She has asked that each member review them and bring to each meeting. Phil Landine asked why the recently settled union raises were not reflected in the budget. Lori will ask Johanna.

Our next meeting will be Wednesday, February 24, 2016 at 6:15 p.m.

Robert Blozie made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Brad Hibbard second. The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine M. Long
Secretary