TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
January 23, 2018

Present: Dan Bigda
Roland Sickenberger
Tom Long
Doug Aspinall
Lori Loughlin
Pam Griffing

Absent: Brad Hibbard

Assistant Town Clerk Christine M. Long swore in new members, Doug Aspinall and Roland Sickenberger.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Lori Loughlin at 6:15 p.m. in the Library.

MINUTES: Dan Bigda made a motion to approve the minutes of December 28, 2017 as presented. Pam Griffing second. Vote 4 to approve 2 abstain (Doug Aspinall, Roland Sickenberger) the minutes of December 28, 2017 as presented.

Lori Loughlin said the Fire Department would like to meet with the Advisory Committee to discuss a new truck and Fire Department Complex. Lori would like members to think about what questions they would like to ask them. Discussed regionalization. Lori will have them come to our next meeting.

DRAFT LETTER-ANNUAL TOWN REPORT: Lori Loughlin met with Pam Griffing to draft a letter for the Annual Town Report. A copy of this was passed out to members and said they would like everyone to come up with ideas. General discussion held. Pam Griffing will work on the letter and include the Master Plan goals.

Lori updated new members on the process of the budget system. Pam explained her new budget program and that the biggest budgets did the best job. We will now be able to see the actual monies spent the previous year and not what was budgeted. Pam also explained her internet Google App and give information to the new members on how to access it. She has put everything related to the Advisory Committee on this site such as budgets, minutes, calendar of events, etcetera.

Lori asked if anyone had any preference for meeting nights. Our next meeting will be Tuesday, February 6, 2018 and again on Monday, February 26, 2018.

7:15: Board of Selectboard members Phil Landine and Diane Vayda and Executive Secretary Johanna Swain joined our meeting. Lori Loughlin introduced the new Advisory Committee members to the Selectboard.
Diane Vayda said the Department of Revenue did an assessment of the Town and they have sent some information. The excise tax is up-to-date. The Selectboard has spoken to two firms to do a forensic audit and has an estimate of $15,000 and more if there is a court issue. The Selectboard would like to have the Advisory Committee on board. Phil Landine said it is the Board’s intention if anything comes out that they will pursue it. Phil Landine said free cash has not yet been certified. Discussed tax collector appointed versus elected vote at election. Someone can still run for the position of tax collector. If passes at election, there will be an immediate need to appoint a tax collector. Baystate Municipal Accounting’s contract ends in May. Lori Loughlin made a motion to support a forensic audit. Tom Long second. Vote was unanimous to support a forensic audit.

Lori Loughlin asked the Selectboard where are we on the Town Manager. Diane said they have not been able to work on it yet. They have been working with Baystate Municipal to get reports and balances. COLA will be 2% this year. They are still working on the Personnel Handbook. Lori asked about elected officials receiving raises. Some put in for one and others do not. Phil Landine said this needs to be standardized and the time to do this is when going over budgets. He suggested an amount per hour and not per meeting for clerks. The Fire Chief is doing well and he has put records on Quickbooks. Phil Landine said it is time for monies for Articles that have not been spent for a period of time be put back into the general fund. Going forward, Articles should be written so that the money must be spent by a specific date. Johanna Swain talked about putting solar panels on the dump. This would have to be placed on the Town Warrant for a vote. Dan Bigda talked about how the solar panels could leak hazardous material into the ground.

Dan Bigda made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Roland Sickenberger second. Meeting was adjourned at 8 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine M. Long
Secretary