TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
March 14, 2018

Present:  Lori Loughlin  Selectboard:  Deb Provenacher
Brad Hibbard  Phil Landine
Tom Long     Diana Vayda
Pam Griffing
Dan Bigda
Doug Aspinall
Roland Sickenberger

The meeting was called to order by Chair Lori Loughlin at 6:15 P.M.

MINUTES:  Pam Griffing made a motion to approve the minutes of February 26, 2018 as presented.  Brad Hibbard second.  Vote was unanimous with one abstention (Doug Aspinall) to approve the minutes of February 26, 2018 as presented.

Pam Griffing made a motion to approve the minutes of March 5, 2018 as presented.  Brad Hibbard second.  Vote was unanimous with two abstentions (Dan Bigda, Roland Sickenberger) as presented.

The Advisory Committee asked the following committees to meet with us tonight:  Tree Warden #30, Common Committee #42, Cemetery Committee #36, Bandstand Committee and Amy Dugas Farmers Market and Asparagus Festival coordinator.

Present were:  Tree Warden - Jim DiMaio
Common Committee - Rayne Petruzzi, Leanne Pierce
Recreation Committee - Lori Piazzo
Cemetery - Mike Seery, Clerk, Don Swekler, Mark Astrella members
Bandstand Committee- None
Asparagus Festival & Farmers Market Coordinator - Amy Dugas

Lori Loughlin told the group our committee wanted to meet collectively with representatives of those who utilize the common in order to facilitate further coordination in addressing the financial needs of the common property. Rayne Petruzzi addressed the need to upgrade the primary electrical service that is used by the Asparagus Festival, Farmer's Market, White Christmas and others.

She has been talking with the electrical inspector and he is in the process of contacting Tantasqua Regional High School to have their vocational students take this on as a project under his supervision. If successful, the town would only be responsible for the purchase of materials. Rayne is confident the Common Committee will have sufficient funds from their budget and through donations to fund the project. She explained the Select Board recently approved the establishment of a donation account to be used for
funding common projects. Rayne addressed the need for additional tree work. The committee spoke with Jim DiMaio regarding prioritizing his funding toward public safety concerns with the trees on the common and center of town area. Jim said his budget has increased specifically to deal with trees in the cemeteries and that he still has work to do in those areas. The Cemetery Committee said they had no problem with Jim pushing that work back and prioritizing the common needs. Jim will work with the Common Committee to address their needs. He currently has $8-10,000 left in his FY18 budget. There was discussion regarding past recommendations Jim has made regarding tree removal on the common, particularly a spruce tree in the area of the fountain that was damaged several years ago in the ice storm. Phil Landine said that if trees are a hazard, the decision to remove them should rest with the Tree Warden. Jim was advised if additional FY19 funds are necessary after reviewing the common needs, to come back to the Advisory Committee.

Although no one from the Bandstand Committee could attend, they submitted a list of requested bandstand repairs. Rayne was provided a copy of the letter and will coordinate with the Bandstand Committee.

The committee recommends funding the Common Committee #46, Tree Warden #30 and Insect and Pest Control #31 budgets as submitted.

Cemetery Budget #36: The Cemetery Committee provided information on their budget request. Their projected FY19 funding offset (funds received from burials) is $7890 less than last year due to an increased number of cremations vs. burials. The committee also requested funding to purchase a new mower for the cemetery at an approximate cost of $10,000. After discussion, the cemetery committee agreed to split the cost of the mower by using funds from their perpetual care interest account. The Advisory Committee asked the cemetery to get competitive bids for the mower and get back to us. The Advisory Committee recommends funding the Cemetery budget as submitted with the understanding that ½ of the cost of the mower be added to their equipment line upon submission of a final cost.

Recreation #42: Lori Piazzo went over the budget line by line. Salaries were down due to a proposed reduction in staffing. She addressed concerns regarding the unfinished work on the skating rink at the common. The committee will be hiring a new vendor to complete the work prior to the Asparagus Festival and they have added additional funding to their budget to pay for the installation of the rink and lighting next fall. After discussion the Recreation Committee recommended removing their request for funding for adult sports fees ($800) and town beach block party ($500). There was discussion
regarding trash and port-a-potty costs. Lori will speak with Johanna regarding the issue in an attempt to lower costs. Lori also asked how the Recreation Committee might establish a donation account and was referred to the Selectboard for information. The Advisory Committee recommends funding the recreation budget as amended.

**SCHOOL:** Lori has been in contact with the school and provided members with a copy of the most recent budget handbook. The above minimum funding request for West Brookfield has dropped to $338,433. Our committee is awaiting the certification of our free cash and final state funding figures as there is a potential for additional state aid. Doug Aspenall asked Lori if she could get a copy of the current bus contract for review. Lori will request it through the School Committee.

The committee discussed the ongoing issue of fair compensation for all committee/department clerks and secretaries. The Selectboard is working on the issue.

Pam Griffing has questions regarding the integration of the accounting system used by our board and the town accountant, as well as real time “read only” access for our committee. Lori suggested she reach out to Johanna.

Dan Bigda provided information on solar field decommissioning costs and the need for the Town to protect itself from potential future liability.

**BUDGETS:** Budgets to come before the Committee were discussed.

Next meeting will be Tuesday, March 20, 2018 at 6:15 p.m. Secretary will ask the Police Department and Executive Secretary Johanna Swain to attend to discuss the budgets they submitted.

Future meeting were scheduled for April 2, 2018 and April 3, 2018. Secretary will ask remainder of departments to attend one of the meetings to go over their budgets.

Dan Bigda made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Pam Griffing second. Meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine M. Long
Secretary