TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
March 6, 2017

Present:  Lori Loughlin
Phil Landine
Tom Long
Pam Griffing (left 7:05)
Robert Blozie (joined 7:05)

Absent:  Richard Gobi
Brad Hibbard

Others Present:  Sarah Allen
Jack Tivnan
Diane Vayda
Johanna Swain
Barry Gillogly
Brian Charron
Robert White
Jennifer Goodale

The meeting was called to order by Chair Lori Loughlin at 6:19 p.m.

MINUTES:  Phil Landine made a motion to approve the minutes of March 1, 2017 as presented. Pam Griffing second. Vote 4 to approve the minutes of March 1, 2017 as presented and 1 abstain (Brad Hibbard).

Warrant Article #17 Local Access PEG Grant:  Barry Gillogly was present and explained reasoning for Article #17. He stated the requested change is a formality based upon guidance from the State relative to the accounting of PEG Grants. PEG Access funds are directed to the PEG Access account and not the general account for use on the PEG system. Barry stated the Town receives approximately $18,000 each year. There is currently approximately $3,400 left in the account for this fiscal year. An Equipment Grant is given every five years. There is an inventory list with the Town and its auditor. Barry brought the committee up to date on his current projects.

Review of Articles on the Draft FY2018 Warrant Worksheet

The Selectboard was present to review with our committee the articles on the Draft 2018 Worksheet for the Annual Town Meeting.

Article #29 Replace Fire 2004 Tahoe:  The Fire Department is requesting $60,000 to replace the 2004 Tahoe. Chief Charron said he is looking to replace the Tahoe with a ¾ ton pickup truck with a tow package and four-wheel drive capable of towing the Hazardous Waste Trailer and the Argo Trailer. The Chief explained that the 2004 Tahoe will not pass safety inspection due to significant rusting, holes in the floor of the vehicle, no emergency belts, check engine light on and no emergency brake. The Tahoe has 117,000 miles and its current book value is $2,500. The committee questioned whether the Tahoe should be driven with the number of safety issues brought forward by the
Chief and was concerned of potential liability issues should the vehicle be involved in a traffic accident.

The Chief was unclear on the exact amount needed to purchase an outfitted ¾ ton truck and is awaiting bids on the vehicle.

**Article #31 Storage Space for the Fire Department $30,000:** Interim Fire Chief Brian Charron said the Fire Department needs more storage space. He talked about a temporary shelter with an approximate cost of $16,000 that could be sold if a permanent structure was built in the future. When asked what type of building he would prefer he said a permanent structure would be preferable. The committee agreed that the department needs additional storage space but questioned the idea of expending funds for a temporary structure. The Chief was unable to provide plans or projected costs for a permanent solution to the storage issue. The committee advised more information is needed before supporting a recommendation on this article.

The Chief said the station exhaust system should be installed shortly.

7:05: Pam Griffing left the meeting.
7:05: Robert Blozie joined the meeting.

**Article #18 & 19 Elected v. Appointed Treasurer & Tax Collector:** Two members of the Town Manager Study Committee were present, Robert White and Jennifer Goodale. The Committee commended them for their thorough efforts and outstanding report. The Town Manager Study Committee Report has been posted on the Town website.

Jack Tivnan said these articles will be removed from the warrant as state law requires passage at a town meeting 60 days prior to the ballot vote. He said the question will be on the May ballot and articles will be held for a future town meeting, subject to passage on the ballot. The Selectboard said they support changing the positions from elected to appointed.

Johanna Swain said the Executive Secretary and Town Administrator positions are interchangeable according to state law. General discussion on the positions and job descriptions.

The committee fully supports the recommendations contained in the Town Manager Study Committee report.
Article #2 Compensation: Jack Tivnan said he has received an opinion from Town Council on the issue of compensation. When asked if our committee could get a copy of the opinion he said it is on his home computer and it’s his opinion that he can show us the document but cannot provide us with a copy. The committee asked for the opinion, redacted if necessary, before we can make a recommendation on this article.

Article #10 Revaluation: The committee asked if the Board of Assessors needed an additional $20,000. for FY18. The BOA had previously told this committee that the current funds in the account should be sufficient for the upcoming revaluation. Johanna said she added the $20K because we give them $20K each year. The committee asked that the BOA be contacted to determine actual needs.

Article #12 Town Road Maintenance: Discussion on making this a Highway Department budget line item rather than an article. Jack Tivnan will speak to Jim Daley for his opinion.

Article #13 & 14 Speed Limit & Safety Zones: Discussion on whether speed limits are a speed or an enforcement issue. The articles will be placed on the warrant for discussion at the ATM.

Article #20 Rollover Water Loan for NB Road: Johanna said that this article requests funding for interest only on the New Braintree Road waterline project. Discussion held on whether we should pay off the loan from funds in the Water Stabilization account rather than interest only. The BOS said the money could come from the Water Stabilization Account. The committee questioned whether the well project contingency funds have been returned to the stabilization account. Johanna will research and get back to the committee.

Article #21 Building Maintenance: The BOS said the requested funds are needed for building maintenance.

Article #23 Repeal Strong Chief’s law: The Committee questioned whether the town had accepted the Fire Department Strong Chief law. The BOS provided the minutes of a Special Town Meeting held on June 4, 1974, which states in part, Article #3: VOTED, unanimously, to accept Chapter 48, Sections 42, 43, 44 of the General Laws which allows the Selectmen to appoint the Chief of the Fire Department and to have the Chief act as
Forest Warden. Diane Vayda stated it was her opinion that the Strong Chief law was most applicable to larger towns. The BOS supports passage of this article.

TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
March 6, 2017

Page 4

Article #24 Prior Years Medical Invoices: This article requests $8100. to fund the payment of medical bills from prior fiscal years. A similar article was defeated at a prior town meeting. According to the BOS the town’s insurance company dropped the ball and refused to pay the bill. The town has since changed insurance providers. The committee suggested someone from the BOS should explain the issue to voters at the ATM.

Article #25 Revolving account for Veterans Agent: Discussion held on the reasons for establishing a revolving account for the Veteran’s Agent and its potential impact on town reimbursements from the state. Sarah Allen spoke in opposition to the article. It was suggested that someone from the BOS speak with the Veteran’s Agent before a recommendation is made on this article.

Article #28 Welcome Road Donation: Johanna questioned whether this article will be ready for the ATM due to family estate questions.

Article #29 Replace Fire 2004 Tahoe: After discussion it was suggested that the town replace the Police Department’s Ford Expedition with a new police cruiser and that the Expedition be transferred to the Fire Department as a replacement for the Tahoe. This provides the Fire Department with a serviceable vehicle with a cost savings more than $20,000. The BOS agreed to take the Tahoe off the road due to the safety issues enumerated by the Fire Chief. Article to be modified by the BOS.

Article #31 Storage for Fire Department: BOS and this Committee agree that further information is required before placing an article before voters. Selectmen will take the article off the warrant.

Article #32: Pave Town Hall Parking Lot: It was agreed that repairing the parking lot in conjunction with the Cottage Street Project made fiscal sense. Discussion held on whether to pave or cover lot with asphalt shavings.

Article 34 Loader Payment: There are four more payments after this one.

Article 35 Green Communities: General discussion held. Sarah Allen asked the Advisory Committee to support this article. Acceptance of the article will bring additional revenue to the town. Lori Loughlin said the Building Inspector was not in favor of the green community plan. Lori also provided information on negative feedback.
she has received from industry builders and contractors. It was suggested that both boards 
meet with the Building Inspector again before making recommendations.

TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
March 6, 2017

Page 5

**Budget #21 Fire:** The Committee discussed it’s concerns with the format of the salary 
section of the Fire Department budget and the manner in which expenditures are being 
reported. BOS and our committee will discuss with Interim Fire Chief when FD budget 
is reviewed.

Johanna Swain said she needs the Advisory Report before the end of March. Lori will get 
it to her.

The committee asked the BOS for a breakdown of Local Receipts. Jack Tivnan will 
provide list.

**Budgets to be reviewed:**

Secretary reported that the Treasurer said she is unavailable to meet with us to discuss her 
FY18 budget request. Jack Tivnan will speak with her tomorrow.

Common Committee asked if they need to meet with us since their request is for level 
funding. Actual FY17 expenditures are approximately 40% less than budget request. 
Secretary will discuss with Common Committee.

On list for March 13, 2017 meeting: Council on Aging, Tax Collector, Fire Department 
and Assessors.

March 20, 2017 meeting: Police Department

Meeting Adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine M. Long