The meeting was called to order by Chair Richard Gobi at 6:15 p.m.

**Agricultural Budget:** Chairman Matt Kozial was present. He stated that the Agricultural Commission has recently been revitalized. On August 12, they will be holding a “Taste of West Brookfield” at Salem Cross Inn with chefs using all products raised in West Brookfield. They want to print a detailed list of farmers and products available and grown in West Brookfield and join the Central Massachusetts Farmers. They will also have booths at the fall Harvest Festival on the common. These activities and the increased workload on their clerk necessitate a request for an increase in their budget. The Agricultural Commission would like an increase in their budget from $500 to $1000. Phil Landine made a motion to increase their budget to $1000 ($500 secretary, $500 expenses). Brad second. Vote was unanimous.

**Accountant #4:** Accountant Marie Arsenault said she tracks the years of regular employees but does not track elected officials. Brad Hibbard stated the Advisory Committee reviewed the step and grade classifications of all town employees and compared them to the requested salaries in the FY16 budget requests. This was done after it was brought to the attention of the Committee that there were inconsistencies in some requested raises. Marie was advised that her grade and step does not match the Wage Classification Schedule. The same is true for Johanna. Marie explained that 18+ year employees receive a 1% longevity stipend that is added to base salary which compounds annually. This causes the salary to fall out of sync with the step and grade schedule. Brad Hibbard said the stipend is not automatic and is supposed to be approved by the Select Board on an annual basis. The Advisory Committee has asked the BOS whether the stipend has been approved for FY16 and has yet to receive an answer. Marie stated she puts in for the stipend every year and this is the way it’s been for years. There was lengthy discussion relative to longevity stipends and the fact that they are generally not added to base salary and compounded. Richard Gobi made a motion to accept budget expenses exclusive of the salary subject to salary clarification by the Select Board. Brad seconded. Vote was unanimous.
Worcester County Retirement #50: Treasurer Teri Roberts was present. Brad Hibbard asked her “How do we know the amount we are paying to Worcester County Retirement is correct?” Teri said it is correct. Brad asked if she had an itemized list of retirees and she replied she didn’t. Brad asked her “How can you say the amount is correct without a list. We’re talking about an annual expenditure in excess of $300,000?” Teri said ‘I know it is correct.” She says she simply gets the number of people and their ages and has not questioned them. After much discussion Teri Roberts agreed to ask Worcester County for a list to verify its accuracy.

Group Insurance #49: Treasurer Teri Roberts was present. Richard Gobi asked if we used any unemployment this year and the answer was no. Brad asked what has been done to lower the cost of health insurance and she said she had taken Fallon out and the cost is lower than what Keith had. Brad Hibbard said that in December the Advisory Committee sent a letter to the Select Board detailing suggested changes which would result in 6-7% savings to the town and our employees. Teri Roberts said she has not heard from the Select Board. Brad stated this shouldn’t be news to her as we had this same discussion at last years’ budget review. She said it was too late for this year and she was not going to do anything herself and must hear from the Select Board. Brad reiterated that we had this discussion last year and no one has taken the initiative to do anything and it sits in a “black hole.” The school employees recently agreed to an increase in their copays and deductibles which resulted in nearly $200,000 in health insurance savings while the Town has done nothing. When asked if there was sufficient funding in her FY16 for health insurance she stated there was and added that the budget was “padded.” Sarah Allen, Selectwoman said she cannot vote on this. Lori Loughlin made a motion to pass over this budget until talking with the Select Board on the status of the health insurance recommendations. Tom Long second. Vote was unanimous.

Treasurer #6: Teri Roberts was present. Phil Landine said he read the audit report and questioned her competence. Teri said she has had no training and is learning as she goes. When questioned she said she has worked as the Assistant Treasurer for 18 years but Keith did all of the banking. When questioned about her lack of training she stated she was scheduled to attend state sponsored training for treasurers last August but did not attend. She stated she would attend this year. Phil Landine said that if he had received this type of report, he would resign. She said she is working on the issues and has had three payoffs in back taxes amounting to $82,725.30. Phil Landine asked what happened to the Assistant Treasurer. She said she had hired one but the Selectmen did not approve. She does have an office person who helps her now, a miscellaneous clerk who has worked in other offices. This individual will work four to six hours a week and she would like to have her work a few more hours when she graduates high school. Brad
Hibbard asks what step and grade and the answer was that her hourly rate is $12.50. The Treasurer’s FY16 budget request includes $14,943 for an Assistant Treasurer which she said she will use to pay a part time clerk. When asked she stated she didn’t need the entire amount and it was agreed to reduce this line item to $10,000. Phil Landine asked “Do you get 1% longevity?” She said yes. There was discussion relative to whether an elected official was entitled to receive a longevity stipend since they are elected every three years. She said Keith got it and he was elected. Tom Long said he does not ever recall an elected official getting a longevity stipend. Brad Hibbard said the Select Board needs to develop a policy for longevity and decide whether longevity stipends are to be given this year before we can finalize our recommendations for the BOS and Town Meeting. Johanna said the Select Board has received our letter on this subject and is working on it. Jack Tivnan said the he is working on the personnel handbook. Sarah said a policy on longevity is not included in the personnel handbook. Tom Long said the Auditor’s Report is an embarrassment to the Town. Brad Hibbard made a motion to approve the budget pending clarification of salary by the Select Board. Lori Loughlin second. Vote was unanimous.

Local Access #47: Barry Gilloghly was present. Phil Landine said we need to connect with Warren to be able to watch Town Meetings, sports and other events at the Middle/High School. Barry said he has made some progress in the last few days. He said Warren wants us to pay for their people to operate the cameras. Brad suggested that he work out an arrangement with the Warren Cable Committee whereby the two towns share the responsibility of filming events to be broadcast in both towns. The equipment needed to connect the West Brookfield (Charter) and Warren (Comcast) systems is internet protocol equipment. Barry said it would cost around $8,000 when he last priced it. He does not know what the school can contribute. He is currently working on an educational channel at the elementary school but said it is possible to make the connection with Warren if he manages his expense budget. Marie provided the current amount of money in his accounts. Phil Landine said you work for the Select Board and as a committee we’d like the connection to be a priority. The Select Board agreed that it should be prioritized. Barry said the Town Meeting will be televised this year. Phil said the last time we met you indicated you had equipment at home. Is it signed out? Barry said he has two camera kits and an editing station at his home and would provide whatever inventory sign out the town would like. Johanna will follow up with Barry on the inventory sign out. Lori Loughlin made a motion to approve the budget. Phil Landine second. Vote was unanimous.
7:20: Joint meeting with Select Board: Phil Landine said there is a legal question on the school vote at Warren Town Meeting.

Warrant Articles:

Article #3: Compensation paid to elected Town Officers: Passed over until clarification of stipends and step/grade classifications is received from Select Board.
Article #5: Quaboag Principal and Interest: Approved.
Article #6: Revolving Cemetery: Approved.
Article #7: Revolving Stormwater: Approved.
Article #8: Revolving Tree Warden: Approved.
Article #9: Employ Water Commissioners: Approved.
Article #10: Revaluation $20,000: Approved.
Article #11: Reserve Fund $50,000: Approved.
Article #12: Purchase Police Cruisers $75,000: Approved.
Article #13: Chapter 90 Supplemental $60,000: Approved.
Article #14: Town Road Maintenance $50,000: Approved.
Article #15: Ground Speed Control Highway $24,000: Approved.
Article #16: Water Line New Braintree Road $38,000 free cash, 136,000 borrowed. Need more information. Have Board of Health and Water Department meet asap to work out details and provide us with information on Tuesday. There is concern that residents will have questions on this article at town meeting and we want to insure their questions can be answered before placing article before the voters.
Article #17: Adopt Layout School Street, E Main St: Approved.
Article #18: Tax Agreements Solar: Approved.
Article #19: Groundwater Protection District Zone II: Richard Gobi discussed business exclusions within the zone. Approved.
Article #20: School Override: Pass over pending discussion at next Tuesday’s meeting.
Article #21: Sidewalk North Main Street: No recommendation. This is a petition article and it was decided to let voters make the decision.
Article #22: Intake control valves on Engine 1 - $10,000: BOS to amend article to have money taken out of Fire Stabilization: Approved.
Article #23: Vehicle exhaust vent for fire station - $40,000: BOS to amend article to have money taken out of Fire Stabilization: Hold for more information. Previous estimate was approximately $20,000. Johanna said Paul came back with a new quote.

Tax Collector Budget #7: Selectwoman Sarah Allen recommended $5,720.00 increase in Tax Collector Clerk hours which would give her a clerk for 15 hours a week to assist. Jack Tivnan said the Tax Collector is behind all the time. Discussion regarding the Audit
report which indicated she did a “lousy job.” Richard Gobi said last year when asked she said she did not want help. Tom Long asked is this person going to work alone when the Tax Collector is out and is she going to be bonded. Brad Hibbard suggested giving the Tax Collector assistance for a finite amount of time, maybe 6 months, and have her report to the BOS monthly on her progress. Phil Landine said the bottom line that is up to the Select Board to address this serious issue.

5 Foster Hill Road: Richard Gobi said the Town cannot legally take down this building. It needs to be taken to court and all efforts exhausted in getting owner to take responsibility.

Retirement Fund: Richard Gobi said the Town should probably think about putting money to pay for retirement in a Special Fund based upon information contained in the Auditor’s Report.

There will be a joint meeting of the Advisory Committee and Select Board on Tuesday, May 19, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. to discuss overall budget. Johanna will verify school figures from Cami.

Lori Loughlin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Brad Hibbard second. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine M. Long
Secretary