TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
September 14, 2011

Present:  Al Collings  Mike Frew, Selectman
          Tom Schnare  Mark Long, Selectman
          Phil Landine  Johanna Barry, Executive Secretary
          Roy Roberts  Jim Daley, Highway Superintendent
          Richard Gobi (late)  Paul D. Guertin, P.E., Coler & Colantonio, Inc.
          Diane Vayda  Barry Gillogly, Director Local Access Television

The meeting was called to order by Chair Al Collings at 6:32 p.m.

Minutes: Phil Landine made a motion to accept the minutes of August 24, 2011. Diane Vayda second. Al Collings asked if we had voted on the pagers and the answer was no. Al Collings said we will have more talk with Paul Lupacchino about the pagers and retirement program. Voted 5-0 to approve the minutes of August 24, 2011 as presented.

Review Free Cash Estimate: Marie was absent. Al Collings commented that we will need to have $150,000.00 to carry forward and that we should not spend down to zero.

Dues & Meeting Expense: Tom Schnare made a motion to pay $152.00 for dues to the Mass. Association of Finance Committees. Roy Roberts second. Vote 5-0 to approve $152.00 for dues. Al Collings said the Annual Finance Committee meeting was on October 15, 2011 and invited members to attend. He will attend again this year. Phil Landine made a motion to approve the fees for the meeting. Diana Vayda second. Voted 5-0 to approve.

Review Route 9 Highway Project Proposal: Highway Superintendent Jim Daley and Paul D. Guertin, P.E., Coler & Colantonio, Inc., were present to discuss the project. Al Collings asked Jim Daley to address the needs and problem areas. Jim Daley said there have been a lot of accidents, water sheets across the road, ices up and this is a dangerous stretch of road. It will take three years to get the project going. The engineering costs are $340,308.00, which the Town is responsible for and the project will cost 4.3 million paid for with State money. Al Collings asked what part of Route 9 will be done and the answer was from Pierce Road to the Ware line. From Pierce Road to Northeast Pizza could be another project. Jim Daley said there would be new drainage and the road widened. Paul Guertin said there would be some straightening but probably not a lot. Phil Landine asked about trees that overhang the road and Paul Guertin said some will be cut. Jim Daley said there would be very few easement problems as the Town owns a lot of the area. Al Collings asked what are the risks of getting 4.3 million. Paul Guertin said that after plans have been prepared and completed, he has never had one dropped but no on can guarantee this. $126,000.00 is needed to get 25% design scheduled to go for review and public hearing. The second phase would be on the following physical year. Jim Daley said the Chapter 90 money has been committed for the next year to Wigwam
Road. He will be finishing the second phase this year and the third phase next year. Mike Frew was concerned. In May at the Annual Town Meeting, the Town voted money for road projects and he wants to make sure that this money is used for those roads and not for this project. Al Collings said there was no money in the Highway Budget for this project and the only other option would be the stabilization fund. Al Collings said we could put this on the warrant for the voters, which would need a 2/3 vote to take out of stabilization and do in phases. Tom Schnare asked does it have to be on the Annual Town Meeting or can we do this at a Special. Johanna Barry said it could be done either way. The consensus of the Committee is to move forward. Diane Vayda said if the Town approves, can we put this on the list right away. Jim Daley said it is already on the list. Tom Schnare asked who will put together a presentation for Town Meeting and Phil Landine said the Selectmen should do it. Mike Frew said it will be done. Al Collings asked if this project will be an additional burden for the Highway Superintendent and Paul Guertin said Mass Highway will put the project out to bid and will have a Clerk of the Works.

WBTV Revolving Account Request: Barry Gillogly Director, WBTV Local Access Television was present. He stated the server for the station was several years old and is causing problems. It locks up and he has to come to the Town Hall to reboot it. He feels that in a few years it will fail. A new one is $10,000.00. Presently he sells some DVDs and has in the past sold ads but discontinued this due to the economy. He felt if he could put the money from sales in a revolving account then he could save to purchase a server. Tom Schnare asked how many ads were running and the answer was about 12-16. He receives $5,000.00 from Charter each year and he uses this to maintain equipment and purchase supplies. Al Collings suggested a line item for his budget for the amount he collects and give him that amount. Jack Tivnan talked to Johanna Barry and said the contract with Charter will be up in 2013 and we could ask them to purchase the server but then the cable bill would go up for the townspeople. Jack said he personally favored putting the server on the warrant when one was needed. Johanna Barry said a revolving account has to be spent each year and he could not save for a server with it. The Town will meet with Charter for a contract and Johanna asked him to get a list of needed equipment. He said he would like to be part of that discussion.

Policy on Employee Stipends: The committee reviewed policy on employee stipends. Diane Vayda asked who decides and the answer was an employee is recommended by his department head and then selectmen. Johanna Barry said this was written by an outside firm. It has been used twice in 16 years and is nice to have in case we need it. Al Collings said it was written as being very broad and recommended the Personnel Board look at it and rewrite.
Elected Officials Compensation: A table was presented of elected West Brookfield officials’ comparison salaries from FY06 through FY12 and a benchmark worksheet for area towns. Al Collings said the Board of Health a few years ago had asked for a $200.00 increase in salaries and this year the Water Department asked for $50.00 increase. Al Collings suggested an increase of 10% for elected officials for next year.

Special Town Meeting Warrant: Discussed an article for police vests and Al Collings recommended using funds in existing budget. Johanna Barry will tell Chief O’Donnell. Discussed article for $6,000.00 for pagers for the Fire Department. Tom Schnare wants to see where the law says the pagers are mandated. Will talk to Paul Lupacchino. Johanna Barry said the final warrant date is September 20, 2011.

West Brookfield Financial Policies: Al Collings said to read to see if something needs to be edited. Johanna Barry said the Department of Revenue has just come out and they will have recommendations.

WBES Projects Status: Al Collings talked with Bret Kustigian who said not everything is up and running but a good chunk was. Mike Frew said he was told by a School Committee member that all was up and running. Bret Kustigian said that Steve Bachelder, computer tech person, had given his 30-day notice to leave. Bret said he did not have another position but was going to be an independent contractor. Bret said the heating equipment was installed but that the gas connection from the street to the school had not been completed. He stated that if this was not done soon a gas tank outside of the school would be installed as a temporary measure to heat the school. There is a $50,000.00 savings on the project and Al Collings recommended turning this back to the Town. Mike Frew asked how much oil was in the tank and what happened to the oil. Al Collings said there was a savings of $6,000.00 a month from the solar panels. He was unsure whether this amount included all three schools.

Phil Landine made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Roy Roberts second. Voted 6-0 to adjourn the meeting at 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine M. Long
Secretary