TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
February 6, 2018

Present: Lori Loughlin Philip Landine, Selectboard
Brad Hibbard
Tom Long
Pam Griffing
Dan Bigda
Doug Aspinall
Roland Sickenberger

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

The Masterjohn family was present seeking advice on a burial issue. Lori Loughlin put them in contact with the Cemetery Commission which was meeting this evening across the hall.

MINUTES: Dan Bigda made a motion to approve the minutes of January 23, 2018 as presented. Roland Sickenberger second. Vote 5 to approve the minutes of January 23, 2018 as presented with one abstention (Brad Hibbard).

FIRE DEPARTMENT: Interim Chief Paul Foster was present. Advisory Committee members introduced themselves. Chief Foster said that he has applied for a $600,000 grant for a new engine with 5% matching funds ($26,000) by the Town. This would replace engine 2 and would double as a rescue truck. It could take up to two years to receive the grant, if successful, and another year to build the truck. He raised the issue that a new truck built to today’s standards would not fit in the current station and the town would need to consider where to garage the new engine. It was noted that last evening the Police Department, Selectboard and Advisory Committee member, Tom Long met with the Fire Department to discuss the need for a Public Safety Complex. An informal group of representatives from the police and fire departments was formed to research sites and past studies. Brad Hibbard asked if there was a fall back plan in the event the engine preceded the construction of a public safety complex. Brad Hibbard suggested the Advisory Committee consider meeting at the Fire Department after the budget season to view the station and get information on their current and future needs. The Chief also mentioned that engine 1 broke down about a month ago and is in for repairs. Chief Foster made arrangements to borrow a replacement for engine 1 from the Springfield Fire Department while repairs are made to engine 1. Dan Bigda asked about regionalization. Chief Foster provided his opinions on regionalization and said management could be regionalized but to maintain good response time there is still the need for each town to have their own apparatus. Regional training, purchases, grants and the sharing a fire inspector are items that could benefit through regionalization. The Chief is currently completing work on the FY19 budget and will pursue this issue in the future.
Chief Foster also stated he is in the process of cleaning up the parking area next to the fire department. He hopes to have Jim Daley pave the parking area this summer.

The Chief provided the committee with an early draft copy of his proposed budget which tracks closely with the FY18 budget. Pam Griffing provided the Chief with guidance on the budgeting process and forms. The Chief will meet with the Selectboard to finalize his budget prior to scheduling with the Advisory Committee.

Pam asked Selectman Phil Landine if he would have Johanna forward her a copy of the electronic file of the budget forms that were forwarded to departments, so she could reconcile them with the Advisory Committee data. Phil will have Johanna call Pam on Friday.

Phil Landine advised the board that the town’s free cash has not yet been certified. He is hopeful it will be done shortly. The committee will await the receipt of free cash figures before going forward with departmental budget meetings.

The Selectboard has selected a firm to conduct the forensic audit. Phil explained this will be an approximate 60-day process. Phil informed the committee that the preliminary proposed school budget is approximately in need of an additional one million dollars above minimum, district wide. Our committee is scheduled to meet with the School and Warren representatives on Thursday February 8, 2018 at 6:30 in the QRMS Library. This meeting has been posted by Secretary Long.

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT:** Lori passed out copies of the report for members to review. After a brief discussion with minor changes to the report Brad Hibbard made a motion to accept the report as amended. Roland Sickenberger seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to accept the Advisory Committee Report as amended. The report was forwarded to Johanna for inclusion in the Town Warrant and Annual Report.

**BUDGETS:** Budget discussions were placed on hold pending receipt of final certification of free cash.

**OLD/NEW BUSINESS: Solar Fields** - Doug Aspinall and Dan Bigda have been doing some research on the decommissioning solar panel fields. A leaflet was handed out that currently reports the cost of decommissioning fields at approximately $100,000 per acre. It is their opinion the Town should require a decommissioning bond when issuing
solar permits to insure the Town is not held responsible for removal in the future should
the field owner default or go out of business. There is also the potential for an additional
revenue stream to the town based upon their research and discussions with other towns.
Dan stated that some towns have established energy commissions to oversee the
permitting, construction and operation of these fields. Pam Griffing suggested the town
form a committee to investigate this issue further. Brad Hibbard noted the recent Master
Plan report recommends the town review its zoning plans. He suggested that, if possible,
the town suspend the permitting of additional solar fields until a thorough review of the
issue is undertaken. The Zoning Board of Appeals is currently in charge of reviewing and
issuing permits for solar fields. Phil Landine stated he would put representatives of the
Advisory Committee and the Zoning Board of Appeals on the agenda for their next
meeting at 6:30pm on February 13, 2018, to further discuss this issue. Dan Bigda and
Doug Aspinall will put together a presentation on the potential issues and risks associated
with solar fields.

Brad Hibbard made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Pam Griffing second. Meeting was
adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine M. Long
Secretary