TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
July 11, 2016

Present: Brad Hibbard  Phil Landine  Tom Long  Lori Loughlin  Pam Griffing
Absent: Robert Blozie  Richard Gobi

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

REORGANIZATION: Pam Griffing nominated Lori Loughlin for Chairperson. Tom Long second. Vote unanimous for Lori Loughlin to continue as Chairperson. Phil Landine nominated Brad Hibbard for Vice Chairman. Tom Long second. Vote was unanimous for Brad Hibbard as Vice Chairman.

MINUTES: Tom Long made a motion to approve the minutes of June 6, 2016 as presented. Pam Griffing second. Vote three to approve and two abstained (Brad Hibbard, Phil Landine). Phil Landine made a motion to approve the minutes of June 7, 2016 as presented. Pam Griffing second. Vote four to approve and one abstained (Brad Hibbard). Phil Landine made a motion to approve the minutes of June 16, 2016 as presented. Pam second. Vote was unanimous to approve the minutes of June 16, 2016 as presented. Tom Long made a motion to approve the minutes of June 21, 2016 as presented. Lori Loughlin second. Vote was two to approve and three abstained (Phil Landine, Pam Griffing, Brad Hibbard).

GOALS FOR FY17: Lori asked Brad Hibbard if he would bring the list of last years’ items/goals to our next meeting for discussion and addition as we move forward. Pam Griffing has been working with Marie on a modified form/process for budgeting. She will e-mail a copy of the draft budget form to members for review pending discussion at our next meeting. Lori said the Selectboard will schedule a meeting to discuss the proposed changes to employee health insurance at their next meeting. Lori will have Johanna ask MIAA health insurance representative Jill to send us updated information on the health insurance benefit plans currently in use by area towns for review and discussion at our next meeting.

SCHOOL: Pam Griffing read an unsigned letter sent to Superintendent of Schools Bret Kustigian disapproving of the above minimum contribution to the school budget. The Town of Warren will have their Town meeting on July 21, 2016. Phil Landine said that there signs are out and supporters of the current school committee budget are working are working hard. The School Committee will also meet on July 21, 2016. Once the vote is finalized in Warren, the school committee will have 30 days to decide to vote for, against or amend the school budget. If there is a District Meeting, it would be around the end of
August. Both Boards of Selectmen will meet to discuss hiring moderator for the District Meeting.

6:30: **MEET WITH SELECTBOARD:** Our committee had scheduled to meet with the Selectboard this evening. Select Board member Diane Vayda was in attendance. Jack Tivnan and Sarah Allen were absent. Pam Griffing discussed updates of a new budget process she is working on. She is expanding the expense line to about ten categories in which money can be expended. This will provide more detail in the expense portion of the budget and assist in more accurately tracking expenditures. She has discussed these changes with Marie and is incorporating feedback. Discussed stipend employee changes. Brad Hibbard suggested at some point we meet with the impacted department heads and explain the proposed modifications. Lori Loughlin asked Diane Vayda if she would set up a meeting to discuss the lingering health insurance issue. She also asked if Diane would assist in getting copies of the health insurance benefit packages for adjoining town. Lori asked about the status of the Town Manager study committee. Diane said that Jack is going to post something on the town website to recruit potential candidates. Pam Griffing suggested that criteria be established prior to the posting. Tom Long suggested reaching out to area town managers for their input on the process, specifically mentioning Palmer and Hubbardston.

**MBT ACCOUNT REPORT:** Lori Loughlin read the report of the history of the MBT. In 2009, the Town voted to Establish a Water Stabilization Account with funds received from the MBT settlement. Over the years the money has been used by the water department for various expenses including the development of Well #2 on Leland Road. The Advisory Committee has been questioning the status of the contingency funds for some time since the well project is completed. According to previous discussions with the Water Commissioners there is over $200K remaining in contingencies. The building inspector has reported that the well project is complete and permitting has been completed. These monies need to be voted back to the MBT water stabilization account. There was some discussion relating to moving the Water Department offices to their new building to make space at the Town Hall.

**NORTH MAIN STREET SIDEWALK:** Tim Morrill was asked about the sidewalk in front of the school and if the contractor was responsible for its installation. Tim said state law requires contractors working on sub-divisions in school zones to install sidewalks. Brad asked if the Town has any recourse with the contractor regarding payment for its installation by the Highway Department. Tim said the Planning Board did not make the sidewalk a stipulation when the sub-division was approved and that the Highway Commissioner at the time (not Jim Daley) was in error when he approved the curb cut for
the project. Tim believes the Town does not have the ability to pursue payment with the contractor. (The town approved $15,000 for the installation of the sidewalk at the 2015 annual town meeting and the highway department is currently working on the project.)

Brad Hibbard asked Diane if the Town might consider procuring signs notifying drivers to yield to pedestrians in crosswalks, similar to those placed in the center of crosswalks in area towns. There are many elderly residents of our rest homes who walk on a regular basis. Lori said she will ask Diane to bring it up at a Select Board meeting.

7:00 TREE WARDEN JIM DIMAIO: Jim attended our meeting to notify us of the problem of trees dying due to the current drought. He stated he was not looking for additional funding at this time but that it will be an issue going forward. He offered to provide a tour to Selectboard and Advisory Committee to view the problem. He will prioritize the removal of the most dangerous trees in the cemeteries and those impacted by drought and disease with current funds.

When questioned about the removal of trees by National Grid he stated that one of our police officers recently shut down a tree removal work site for the second time because they did not have a police detail. Jim’s relationship with National Grid has suffered as a result and they have not been back since the second shut down. National Grid has removed over 90 trees at no cost to the town and has saved the town thousands of dollars in tree removal expenses over the past several years. He recently asked Chief O’Donnell to meet with him and representatives of National Grid and the Chief said he would meet sometime in August. Jim stated that the cost of police details has escalated recently and that he will be requesting a separate line item for details in his budgets going forward. Committee members questioned the need for police details in the rural areas of town with minimal traffic. Jim said he would meet with the Chief to discuss the issue further.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS: Tom Long brought up the following items for discussion at a future meeting:

- Discuss the potential for identifying one rubbish removal hauler for the entire town (private customers). There are numerous companies in town and he feels that if we could somehow limit it to a single hauler we could save wear and tear on our roads.
- Discuss the issue of regionalization of fire and rescue squad services.
- Research the feasibility of taxing boats on the town’s lakes.
- Discuss status of time clocks & emergency generator at the town hall and these issues can be resolved in a timely manner.
Lori suggested members make a list of items for future discussion and bring them to the next meeting.

**NEXT MEETING:** The next meeting will be Tuesday, August 2, 2016 at 6:15.

**PROPOSED AGENDA:**

- Pam Griffing will present an initial draft of her new budget proposal
- Lori will ask Johanna to provide warrants & payroll for review at next meeting
- Discuss changing Tax Collector and Treasurer positions from elected to appointed.
- Review & discuss employee health insurance proposal
- Develop prioritized list of goals for upcoming year
- Old/new business

Brad Hibbard made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Pam Griffing second. Meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine M. Long
Secretary