

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES OF MAY 19, 2015
SHEPARD MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

PRESENT: Robert E. Lavash Sr, Chairman, Dario F. Nardi Vice-Chairman, James A. Gagner Jr., Clerk

ATTENDEES: See list (attached)

Chairman Lavash called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance in the Selectmen's Meeting Room in the Shepard Municipal Building.

Chairman Lavash announced that tonight's meeting was being both video and audio taped and requested anyone in the audience to disclose if they are recording tonight's meeting.

Mr. Lavash also announced that the Board had re-organized at a prior meeting, with Mr. Nardi as Vice-Chairman and Mr. Gagner as clerk.

MINUTES

Motion to approve the minutes of April 7th April 14th and April 21, 2015 as so written, made by Mr. Nardi; second: Mr. Lavash – 1 abstention.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Nardi stated he has been approached by residents concerned about the tax rate increase. He estimates a possible increase of about \$1.39 + .29 due to school over minimum contribution and last year's \$100K put towards the rate. He feels there are still questions to be answered, some following West Brookfield's ATM on June 2nd which could impact things. There will be some sort of increase regardless.

COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Resident Ms. Lorraine Whitney addressed the Board with her concerns following Town Meeting. She suggested the Board consider changing the date of the Annual Town meeting to a later date to allow the residents the opportunity review all the town reports and budgets– especially the school district. She voiced her disappointment at the School District for not providing a hard copy of their budget; noting that to make it available only “online” is unconscionable given they have a \$650K administration budget. She recounts that in 1966 the kids had double sessions in the day until a school could be built. Residents have been asked to give substantially to build the new school(s) to the detriment of roads and street lights around Town. In response to a comment made at Town meeting, she is not “ashamed” in fact she is proud to have been able to support the school for many years, however she feels there should be parity/balance between the school district and Town in supporting needs of the residents. There is no apathy on her part, or for most present that evening as the vote only passed by 8 votes. The school budget is top heavy in administration and efforts should be made to control costs.

Mr. Nardi concurred and felt the School Committee should be unbiased and be both advocate for the Town as well as the School district in controlling the budget, which for the following year already calls for a 3% increase in salaries. The District should make a better effort in putting forth timely numbers and reports to give all the opportunity to make informed choices. Ms. Whitney remarked that there are no more kids graduating today than in the 80's, which was done without school choice. Dr. Kustigian resides out of Town in Charlton, where she believes the tax rate is under \$14.00, again where is the parity?

In conclusion, there was brief discussion on some Town challenges such as the libraries; two fire departments; regionalizing of police dispatch. It is expected that the state will reach a point where they will not support independent “services” where regionalization is more effective.

CORRESPONDENCE

1. Correspondence from MIIA advising the town is awarded an additional \$13,052.00 in participation credits. Noted
2. A notice from Patrick Swain, Veteran’s Agent that due to a change in his regular work hours, he will now hold office hours for Veterans’ Services on Monday’s from 2PM to 4PM. He is also available by appointment. Noted
3. Memo from Capital Planning Committee remind all departments that requests are due by Monday September 7, 2015. Noted
4. With sadness, Palmira Poulin submitted her letter of resignation from the Cultural Council. Noted
5. Correspondence from the Mass. Association of Assessing Officers advising the Town that Mary-Lou Coache has received her MAA Designation. Prepare letter of Congratulations.
6. A memo from William Scanlan regarding the possible energy savings program with a street light conversion program. Graybar is willing to perform a financial analysis to determine the amount of savings. Noted
7. Reminder-The Memorial Day Parade will be held on Sunday, May 24, 2015 beginning at 1PM at St. Paul’s Cemetery. Anyone with questions may contact the Veteran’s Agent, Patrick Swain at 436-5701 ext 103. Noted

COMINS POND USE AGREEMENT – *vote to approve/sign*

Motion to approve and sign the agreement, made by Mr. Nardi; second: Mr. Gagner – unanimous.

PVPC – TOWN OWNER AGREEMENT – *vote to approve/sign*

Motion to approve and sign the agreement, made by Mr. Nardi; second: Mr. Gagner – unanimous.

EM REQUEST/COMM. OF MASS CONTRACTOR AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY LISTING (*approve/Chair to sign*)

Motion to approve and sign the agreement, made by Mr. Nardi; second: Mr. Gagner – unanimous.

~~Proposed Easement by NGrid @ 2310 Main St. W. Warren – *discussion* NOT NEEDED~~

RATIFY: SIGNING CHAPTER 90 PROJECT REQUEST FOR RESURFACING & DRAINAGE BRIMFIELD RD.

Motion to approve and sign request, made by Mr. Nardi; second: Mr. Lavash – 1 abstention.

TREASURY WARRANT(S) AND INVOICES

Motion to accept warrant # 92 (payroll) #93 (vendor) dated May 11, 2015 in the amounts of \$41,116.50; \$74,581.35 respectively was made by Mr. Nardi; Second: Mr. Gagner – unanimous

Motion to accept warrant #94 (ambulance payroll) dated May 11, 2015 in the amount of \$370.00 made by Mr. Nardi; Second: Mr. Lavash – 1 abstention

Motion to accept warrant # 95 (payroll) and #96 (vendor) dated May 18, 2015 in the amounts of \$41,411.50 and \$243,019.71 respectively was made by Mr. Nardi; Second: Mr. Gagner – unanimous

OTHER BUSINESS

Announcement – Memorial Day Parade – Sunday May 24, 2015

Board will hold STM on May 28, 2015 @ 7PM at QRHigh School to vote on one article for funding needed to put in water/sewer lines in the MassDOT downtown improvement project. It is important for all to come out to vote.

Mr. Gagner expressed his thank you to the Veteran's Council for their efforts in putting together the upcoming parade.

Mr. Lavash reported that repairs to the Town Hall portico has been completed; waiting on report from architect and final inspection for removal of the barriers.

Mr. Lavash announced he would like to hold office hours on Wednesdays from 5-7PM for interested residents with concerns; he will meet one on one with them.

Mr. Nardi announced letter of concern regarding the Highway department has been issued and placed on file in the office.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

Next scheduled meeting: May 26, 2015 @ 7:00 PM

Motion to Adjourn made by Mr. Nardi; Second: Mr. Gagner – unanimous at 7:28 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorena Prokop
Administrative Secretary

James A. Gagner Jr., Clerk