

**Palmer Town Council  
Meeting Minutes  
April 9, 2018**

**1 Call to Order**

2           The Palmer Town Council Meeting of Monday, April 9, 2018 was called to order at 6:30pm by  
3           Town Council President Barbara Barry. Councilors Mary Salzmann, Lorinda Baker, Karl  
4           Williams Robert Lavoie, Matthew Lemieux, and Michelle Sikes were present. Also present was  
5           Town Manager, Charles Blanchard and Executive Assistant, Nicole Parker.

**6 Public Comments**

7           There were none.

**8 Meeting Minutes**

**9 February 12, 2018**

10          Motion was made to approve February 12, 2018 minutes by L.Baker. Seconded by M.Lemieux. Motion  
11          passed (6:0:1) Sikes.

12

**13 New Business**

14

15          C. Blanchard introduces two new department heads: Marlene Johnson (Council on Aging) and Sarah  
16          Szczebk (Community Development Director).

17

18          M. Johnson talked about the nice staff members and senior center facilities, familiarizing herself with the  
19          seniors, many of whom she has known since she has grown up in the area. She stated that she looks  
20          forward to working with staff and seniors, and developing other programs.

21

22          S. Szczebak previously worked in the West Springfield Community Development Office. Learning more  
23          about the “Palmer way” of doing business in the community development office, since each town and city  
24          does things a little differently. L. Baker inquired about S. Szczebk’s intention to be involved with the  
25          Revitalize Three Rivers initiative. S.Szczebak stated that she is familiar with the project and looks  
26          forward to assisting with it.

27

**28 Old Business**

29          Vote on the Photovoltaic Ordinance Amendment

30          Motion to approve amendment by M. Lemieux. Seconded by M. Salzmann. Motion passed (7:0:0).

31

32          First reading on the Voluntary Veteran Emergency Fund

33          Purpose read by R. Lavoie. C. Blanchard stated that the money would have to be appropriated and it  
34          would not be a revolving fund. M. Lemieux inquired about allowing the tax on the actual tax bills or as a  
35          separate mailing. B. Barry clarified that it is not usually a separate mailing.

36

37

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43

Junk Ordinance

C. Blanchard sent the Junk Ordinance to Town Counsel for review. It was stated that some parts need to be fine-tuned, including clarity in definitions, and to use more concise writing. Draft will be sent back to the ordinance committee for further corrections.

**New Business**

Zone Petition Change: Russell Baker; 1701 Park St. Map 3 Lot 1 from HighwayBusiness to Industrial A

A letter sent in by parcel owner Russell Baker, received March 29, 2018 for a zone change petition on the parcel located at 1701 Park St. Map 3 Lot 1 from Highway Business to Industrial A. Motion was made to refer back to the Planning Board for their Public Hearing by L. Baker. Seconded by K. Williams (7:0:0).

Town Manager Goals

Submitted to the council for calendar year 2018, available on the website for the public to review. M. Lemieux said that they were “all pretty straightforward and clear-cut.” Motion was made to accept the goals as written by L. Baker, second by K. Williams. Motion passed (7:0:0).

**Subcommittee Reports**

B. Barry stated that the budget subcommittee will be meeting soon. Any questions and comments on any of the budget items put forth by the Town Manager can be submitted to the subcommittee as soon as possible. The committee hopes to meet within the next two weeks.

**Town Manager Report**

Final cost summary for the Town Hall renovations submitted and reviewed. All of the change orders were completed, anything that happens going forward will be taken care of under the one-year warranty. Items not included in the summary were not a part of the original project including the required replacement of the fire department’s water connection to the sprinkler system. That project will be funded through either the reserve fund or another appropriation. C. Blanchard voiced interest in putting cabinets in the women’s restroom and the staff restroom, and a potential upgrade to the Assessor’s window to make it look more like the Board of Health and Collector’s offices. After all expenditures there was \$98.11 left in the account.

Comcast satisfaction survey is live on the website. It is available on the website, in hard copies at the Town Hall, Library, and Senior Center until May 31. B. Barry asked if there had been any initial meetings with Comcast. C. Blanchard and Bruce Henriques have already met with the representative twice.

1 B. Barry wanted to know if there was going to be the opportunity for the Town Council to be involved  
2 with the renewal. Contract does not need to be renewed until the end of the year. Nothing is being agreed  
3 on at this point. Working on making sure there was a clear understanding of which properties are not  
4 covered, and trying to make progress on those areas.

5

6 Land court hearing held the previous week on a complaint filed by the building inspector Bonnie Weeks  
7 against the Palmer Motorsport Park for noncompliance with the noise levels defined in the site plan. The  
8 Track will be allowed to open this season, but on the condition that they satisfactorily meet the noise  
9 levels in the testing conducted at the first high noise event. Judge's detailed statement forwarded to the  
10 Council.

11 Follow-up in regard to one of the Town Manager's goals, to get more information on what the department  
12 heads are doing, N. Parker sent out the minutes for the Department Head meetings. The Building  
13 Department has some regular data that is always kept. Handed out the most recent activity done by the  
14 Building Department to the Council.

15 Updated report from the DPW by Gerry Skowronek, on the wading pool. B. Barry wanted the Town  
16 Council to be up to date on the information so they are able to make an informed decision. G. Skowronek  
17 talked with the Board of Health, getting the regulations, being concerned most specifically with work  
18 over 30% of the value means full compliance, including ADA accessible. He needs to get together with  
19 the Assessor and try and assess a value on the pool. ADA accessible would mean adding a ramp or a lift,  
20 and showers which will be expensive. Discussion about the amount of use of the wading pool, and if there  
21 is a value to keeping the pool open or maybe eventually replacing it with a splash pad. B. Barry expressed  
22 to C. Blanchard that she wants him to get more information for next meeting so they can make a decision  
23 on whether they are moving forward or if it is too cost prohibitive. Placed as an agenda topic for the next  
24 meeting. There was also discussion about the use of the old tennis courts as an ice skating rink.

25 G. Skrownek next talked about the three prices for the emergency repair of the bridge. Lowest bid came  
26 back from Northern Construction for around \$10,000, compared to the two other quotes of \$12,500 and  
27 \$14,000. Chapter 90 request completed that day and the environmental paperwork would be hand-  
28 delivered to Northampton the next day. Those costs would just be for the repair. A meeting with Tighe  
29 and Bond will be needed to get a better financial scope of the project. The \$10,000 repair would be for a  
30 hole about three feet in diameter that the DPW has tried to patch and fix over the winter, but only lasts  
31 two – three weeks. Ch. 90 funding remaining is currently at about \$600,000. Discussion about the length  
32 of time that will be needed to fix the bridges. L. Baker asked why there is less Ch. 90 funding available  
33 this year than last year. G. Skrownek responded that it has to do with the formula. Five qualified bidders  
34 approved for the emergency construction. A better update will be presented at the next meeting.

35 B. Barry talked about general road repairs that need to be addressed, and wants an update on what is  
36 being done for the Three Rivers bridge, which needs repair by 2021. C. Blanchard said that nothing has  
37 changed in the overall timeframe of that project. B. Barry requested that C. Blanchard get up to date  
38 information for the bridge for the next meeting.

### 39 **Miscellaneous Correspondence**

40 B. Barry got an email about the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual charity fundraiser for Palmer Domestic Violence Task Force  
41 on Thursday, May 3 from 11am – 8pm at the Steaming Tender, which they will receive 20% of the  
42 proceeds.

1 M. Lemieux: Earth Day Town-wide cleanup on April 22 from 9am-12pm organized on the We Love  
2 Palmer Facebook page and there are volunteers needed in all of the villages, which is different from the  
3 organized Pick Up Palmer Day.

4 R. Lavoie thanked Big Y for their support for the Veterans Outreach event on March 28, where  
5 counseling and sign-ups for benefits. There were over 200 veterans believed to have touched base with at  
6 the event, and there are more efforts to collaborate with Big Y stores in the area to do these events in the  
7 future.

8 **Town Council Roundtable**

9 There were no comments.

10 **7:20PM Adjournment**

11 **Motion was made to adjourn by L.Baker. Seconded by R.Lavoie. Motion passed (7:0:0)**

12