

**Palmer Town Council
Meeting Minutes
December 9, 2019**

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I Call to Order

The Palmer Town Council Meeting of Monday, December 9, 2019 was called to order at 6:30PM by Town Council Vice President Lorinda Baker, Jessica Sizer, Karl Williams, Matthew Lemieux and Robert Lavoie and Michelle Sikes were present. Council President Barbara Barry was absent. Also present was Town Manager, Ryan McNutt and Executive Assistant, Nicole Parker.

II Old Business

Vote Ordinance 2020-01 Public Nuisances and Problem Properties

The purpose and intent of this Ordinance is to eliminate nuisances affecting buildings and real property in the Town. Nuisances, such as dilapidated buildings, buildings or real estate covered with graffiti, buildings open to the weather or vagrants, real estate with overgrowth of vegetation, debris, trash, and stagnant pools of water, and vacant or abandoned buildings, cause and contribute to blight within neighborhoods and commercial areas of the Town and may adversely affect the property values for adjacent and surrounding property.

Motion was made to Vote the Ordinance into the Town of Palmer Code of Ordinances by J.,Sizer. Seconded by K>Williams. Motion passed (6:0)

III New Business

Age friendly Senior Services

Heather Jolicouer of Greater Springfield Senior Services and Marlene Johnson was present to discuss age friendly best practices. She distributed a

A data report consisting of older adults in Massachusetts. She stated the importance of being part of a change in understanding and engaging older people in the community. She stated that Massachusetts was the second state in the nation to become age friendly in 2017.

The Baker Administration is introducing a Community Compact for age friendly senior services. She stated that Marlene Johnson, Council on Aging Director, will present more information as it becomes available.

Town Charter Commission Recommendations

Recommendations were sent to the Council regarding changes to the current charter. Questions were sent to R.McNutt by B.Barry. All other Councilors should send their requests to R.McNutt by 12/23/2019 so answers can be researched before the January meeting.

December 2019 Town Manager Report (Attached)

35 **IV Adjournment**

36 Motion was made to adjourn at 6:50PM by M.Lemieux. Seconded by L.Baker. Motion
37 passed (6:0)

38

39 **Re: Town Manager's Report – December 9, 2019**

40 Holiday months and first major winter storm have kept us busy. All Departments have submitted
41 their draft budgets. The financial team is still receiving budget numbers from the Commonwealth
42 and we are starting to schedule individual meetings with each Department to go over their drafts.

43 New Business in Town: Enisde salt rooms had their grand opening on December 2nd. Located at
44 1372 Main Street in Palmer. The event was very well attended despite the inclement weather.

45 Other items: The four Towns of Palmer, Munson, Ware and Warren have been working together
46 on siting, designing and constructing a Regional Animal Control Facility. The site that was
47 chosen was where The Town of Warren has offered a potentially suitable site located at 87
48 Brimfield Road next to and South West of their current DPW Facility. During the past the year
49 this collaborative effort has been coordinated though its Regional Committee, comprised of
50 Town Managers and Administrators from participating Towns, (including the cooperation of
51 Animal Control Officers and local police). State Grants from the Division of Local Services for
52 \$67,000 and \$133,000 are with Palmer as the lead Community. Warren will be the eventual
53 facility location as the "host" community. The project is currently awaiting a Ware Town
54 Meeting vote, or we will have to reevaluate the project excluding the Town of Ware. Next
55 Regional Committee meeting is December 13th.

56 Palmer's FY19 Green Community Annual Report was submitted to DOER on December 5, 2019

57 I also have been meeting with neighboring communities and all our various internal agencies to
58 explore the possibility of a regional public safety communications dispatch.

59 My office is currently in discussions with four prospective cannabis cultivation and retail
60 companies. As soon as a company successfully makes it through the planning process I will have
61 additional updates.

62 Charter Review Commission has met and crafted proposed recommendations to clean up
63 language in the Town's Charter. These will be presented at the December Council Meeting.

64 Health Department since the passing of the Body works and Body Art regulations on September
65 23, 2019 they have started reaching out to the (12) practitioners in town to advise them of the
66 regulations and have begun working with them to become compliant.

67 The board had the public hearing for **Abandoned, Foreclosed and Foreclosing Properties**
68 **regulations** on November 18, 2019. The regulations were voted in unanimously and go into
69 effect January 1, 2020.

70 **Vinny's Pizza:** the asbestos survey was completed by Top Notch and the results are in. There
71 is asbestos in 3 areas. The site survey was completed on November 11, 2019 by Sherman &
72 Frydryk. We have received one bid so far for the demolition of the building. More information
73 will be forth coming once we receive a few more bids.

74 LED street lighting project has resumed. Arden will be installing fuses on all lights and re-wiring
75 390 lights in the Depot Village/downtown areas. The project is expected to be complete by Jan
76 2020.

77 The Town has contracted with Tanko Lighting to manage all future streetlight maintenance.
78 Lighting outages/issues can be reported via a 24-hour call center and/or by filling out a survey.
79 Both will be accessible on the town's website.

80 **Department of Public Works & Conservation**

81 First snowstorm on 12/1-12/3. Total was near 20" over the three days

82 2 older trucks broke down causing some delays. Will find out cost of repairs.

83 FY2020 Winter Operations Budget: \$300,000. We have expended \$83,403 so far with \$216,595
84 remaining. Some of the expenses were pre-purchase of materials (salt).

85 Working with Chris Smith to get the electrical straighten out for the Christmas decorations in
86 Depot Village. We will continue to work with the DPW to get all the areas ready for holiday
87 lighting in the downtown on Saturday December 7th.

88 **MS4 Storm water requirements** Storm water expenses are becoming higher then what we have
89 budgeted. GIS mapping and tracking the condition for each manhole, catch basin, stream, culvert
90 in the MS4 area of Palmer which is about ¾ of the town, inspecting outfalls along with sampling
91 and testing the storm water outfalls will require new employees that concentrate only on storm
92 water. Our existing manpower barely keeps up with the street sweeping and catch basin cleaning
93 required in the new MS4 permit which now requires the town to dispose of the material from
94 catch basins and street sweeping to a landfill. There are communities that have created their own
95 storm water agency that requires a fee to be paid for by all residents, and businesses. We will
96 need to take a serious look at funding by either the annual budget or creating a storm water utility
97 to pay for everything the EPA & MADEP is requiring in Palmer's storm water permit. The Asset
98 management Grant that we applied for will cover some of this work. Approximately (20)
99 communities in MA have created storm water enterprise funds with a residential/commercial fee
100 structure.

101 Conservation Assistant Sarah Fortune received a Certificate of Achievement from MACC for
102 having successfully completed the eight (8) unit MACC Fundamentals for Conservation
103 Commissioners Training Courses.

104

105 Conservation issued Order of Conditions DEP #256-0342 to MA Department of Fish & Game
106 for activities associated with the demolition of and legal off-site disposal of C&D waste and bulk
107 asbestos waste resulting from the demolition of single family homes, cottages and accessory

108 structures along the eastern shoreline of Forest Lake in Palmer, MA. The demolition work is
109 proposed within the 100-foot Buffer Zone to Forest Lake, and the locally protected 50-foot
110 vegetated buffer strip to BVW.

111
112 Conservation issued an Emergency Permit to CSX for the full removal of a Beaver Dam on
113 Calkins Brook.

114
115 Angela Panaccione has been nominated for 2020 MA Association of Conservation
116 Commissioner's Conservation Agent of the Year Award

117 **Palmer Police Department**

118 New Officer - Manager received a request for a full-time officer appointment to be made,
119 replacing an officer who left for another PD. Our candidate is currently in the combined
120 Worcester PD / National Guard police academy and is scheduled to graduate in January.

121 Two Student Officers, Tyler Bigda and Ella Sinigur, graduated the MPTC academy on
122 November 8 and are currently in the field training program for the next several weeks.

123 Officer Kenneth Baer has been assigned as the new School Resource Officer for Palmer Public
124 Schools.

125 PD is in the discussion phase of joining Ludlow PD, Chicopee PD and the HC Sheriff's
126 Department in forming a regional Special Response Team. If approved to move forward, one
127 Palmer officer would be assigned to the team.

128 **Community Development**

129 *CDBG Grant Administration*

130 Paperwork was submitted to comply with the requirements of the grant start-up process. It is
131 expected that we will receive clearance from DHCD on December 16th to be able to start
132 spending grant monies.

133 *Domestic Violence Task Force*

134 The Palmer Domestic Violence Task Force Manager job has been posted. Resumes will be
135 reviewed and candidates interviewed in late December. It is hoped that the position will be filled
136 and the new manager will start in January.

137 **Palmer Public Library**

138 Winter Programming:

139 Tuesday December 3 @ 6:30 we had J.R. Greene present his 2020 Quabbin Calendar
140 Program

141 Wednesday December 4 @ 6:00 we had another meeting of the ASL club

142 Thursday December 9 @ 5:00 Young Adult Book Club

143 Tuesday December 10 @ 6:00 we will be hosting Angela and the Community Garden
144 Meeting

145 Wednesday December 11 @ 5:00 & 6:30 our Annual Gingerbread House Workshop
146 Crafternoons Gift Tag & Gift Bag Workshop @ 2:00 and Coffee and Coloring @ 6:00pm

147 Thursday December 12 @ 4:30 Teen Art Workshop

148 Friday December 13 starting @ 10:20 Teen Advisory Board Free Gift Wrapping

149 Saturday December 14th @ 10:00 Scholastic Chess Tournament

150

151 The Library is moving forward with website update, currently discussing logo design. We hope
152 to have the new website up and running by early 2020. This will be the first website design
153 update in over 15 years, and will be ADA compliant.

154 Respectfully,

155 Ryan McNutt
156 Town Manager

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