

**Palmer Town Council  
Meeting Minutes  
February 11, 2019**

1 **Call to Order:**

2 The Palmer Town Council Meeting of Monday, February 11, 2019 was called to order at  
3 6:34PM by Town Council President Barbara Barry. Councilors Lorinda Baker, Mary Salzmann,  
4 Karl Williams, and Robert Lavoie were present. Also present was Town Manager, Charles  
5 Blanchard and Chrissy Florence. Councilors Matthew Lemieux and Michelle Sikes were absent.

6  
7 **Visitor Comments:**

8  
9 There were no visitor comments.

10  
11 **Old Business:**

12  
13 *1) Public Hearing; Comcast Cable Contract:*

14  
15 At 6:36PM, Town Council President Barbara Barry opened the public hearing to discuss the  
16 Comcast Cable Contract.

17  
18 There were no public comments.

19  
20 Eileen Leahy from Comcast was in attendance at the meeting.

21  
22 C. Blanchard outlined the highlights to the Comcast Cable TV License. He stated that Comcast  
23 has agreed to extend cable coverage to the Old Warren / Boston Road area and to Woodlands  
24 Heights. They have also agreed to increase the M-Pact PEG Access/facilities funding from the  
25 \$100,000 that was in the current contract to \$150,000 in the renewal contract, and maintain the  
26 5% annual payment on Gross Annual Revenues to M-Pact for PEG Access purposes. Comcast  
27 will agree to decrease the minimum density requirement for new cable extension from at least  
28 twenty-five (25) dwelling units per aerial mile and thirty-five (35) dwelling units per  
29 underground mile to twenty (20) dwelling units per aerial mile and thirty (30) dwelling units per  
30

31 B. Barry stated she was unable to attend the presentation that Comcast had done and had a few  
32 concerns about the cable extension work not being started until January 1, 2020 and wondered if  
33 there was a side contract in writing acknowledging this agreement.

34  
35 Eileen stated that it is Comcast's intention to begin work on the extension of cable services once  
36 the contract is signed, not January 1, 2020 as is outlined in the contract, but the contract wording  
37 would have to remain as written.

38  
39 Public Hearing was closed at 6:39PM

40

41 Motion was made to R.Lavoie to have C. Blanchard sign the proposed Comcast Cable TV  
42 License. Seconded by K. Williams. Motion passed (5:0)

43  
44

45 II) Angela Panaccione, Conservation Agent; land acquisition near Mass Pike – Appropriation of  
46 Town Share from Free Cash:

47

48 Angela stated that the town received the grant to acquire land located at Lot 14, King’s Brook.

49

50 The total land Acquisition Cost is \$100,000. The grants is for \$70,000.00, and the Town’s  
51 appropriation will be \$30,000 (70% Grant/30% Town). Con Com has already paid the recording  
52 fees of \$175 and Title certification of \$4,500. The land survey will be \$8,000 which is budgeted  
53 to be paid by Grant, but con com is still waiting on official proposal from Don Frydryk. The total  
54 fees for this project is \$112,675, and breaks down as follows \$78,000 Grant/\$30,000 Town  
55 Council/\$4,675 Con Com.

56

57 M. Salzman stated that this is a target area for CPA funding and she believes it was up for vote  
58 two ballots ago.

59

60 Motion was made by L. Baker to appropriate the \$30,000 from free cash for the land acquisition  
61 funds. Seconded by M. Salzman. Motion passed (5:0)

62

63 III) Legion Field Bleachers:

64

65 C. Blanchard opened the discussion by going over the four different options that Gerry  
66 Skowronek, DPW Director had gotten quotes for. Option #1 would be to demolish existing  
67 structure and replace with All-aluminum bleachers and enclosed ADA compliant Press Box with  
68 an estimated cost of \$300,000. Option #2 would be to demolish existing structure and replace  
69 with All-aluminum bleachers. Purchase portable Press Box that would be located next to  
70 bleachers with an estimated cost of \$200,000. Option #3 would be to close off access to the  
71 existing bleachers (or limit access to the School Band only) and purchase desired number of 5  
72 row transportable bleachers (24’ long 68 seat capacity \$5,970 each) with an estimated cost of  
73 \$59,700. Option #4 would be to continue to repair and replace sections of the wood in the  
74 bleachers each year, getting rid of the double stacked seats first, then replacing the most worn  
75 sections with an estimated cost of \$10 - \$15,000 per year.

76

77 M. Salzman inquired about the mobile aluminum bleachers meeting ADA compliance and if the  
78 press box would be at ground level. She also wanted to know if G.Skowronek was successful in  
79 reaching out the school to inquire about information on attendance.

80

81 G.Skowronek stated that he has reached out several times and has not been able to obtain an  
82 answer from the school about attendance. He stated that he went to a couple games and felt they  
83 were pretty well attended and about half the current bleachers were full. He also said that the  
84 band alone takes up the first portion of the bleachers. G.Skowronek also stated that if the Council  
85 chose the portable option, they would need to be moved around different seasons and the bottom

86 row of those bleachers would be level with the players backs as opposed to elevated similar to  
87 the current ones.

88 K. Williams stated that the old school building (Converse) has a lot of pending changes and  
89 going with something cheaper may be the best option in his opinion. R. Lavoie agreed that the  
90 Council needed to consider all the possible changes when considering which option to move  
91 forward with.

92

93 L. Baker was concerned with only allowing access to the band, because that does not alleviate  
94 the safety concerns that are trying to be resolved.

95

96 B. Barry pointed out that currently the youth leagues do not have access to use the fields and that  
97 maybe that should be an option that the town explored. M. Salzmann agreed with that.

98

99 G.Skowronek explained that the reason why the younger sports teams did not use the field was  
100 because of the number of additional lines that would be required for the town to paint on the  
101 field. He explained that the field already has different lines of varying colors and lengths to  
102 accommodate all the different high school sports teams that currently play on the field. He feels  
103 that adding more lines would be confusing to the players, referees and spectators. The field also  
104 experiences a lot of wear and tear.

105

106 C. Blanchard reiterated that the Town Council needs to decide how much money they really  
107 want to put into this project and whether the council is willing to appropriate the funds from Free  
108 Cash. Once the Council narrows down on a preference, it will make it easier to have more  
109 concrete proposals.

110

111 B. Barry stated that given the fact that the item is not on the agenda she didn't feel as though  
112 moving forward with a vote tonight was an appropriate course of action. It will be put on for vote  
113 next month after an answer is obtained from the school.

114

115 IV) Police Chief John Janulewicz:

116 Body Camera Update:

117

118 Chief Janulewicz stated that the Police Department took part in a 3 month trial program where 2  
119 officers who work the 4PM to 12AM shift wore the cameras.

120

121 Lieutenant Burns oversaw the entire program and presented two different purchasing options for  
122 the council to review. The first option over 5 years would cost \$144,825.00 and includes camera  
123 updates at the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year, whereas the second option would cost \$100,425.00 and there is no  
124 camera replacement, they would be covered under the 1 year warranty, but then would need to be  
125 replaced on an individual basis if they became inoperable. Both packages include 30 cameras, all  
126 the licenses necessary to operate them, 3,000 gigs of storage, and individual charging stations.

127

128 K. Williams wanted to know if the cameras would last 5 years if they went with the second  
129 option? While B.Barry wanted to know why the force would need 30 cameras?

130

131 Lieutenant Burns did feel that they cameras would last the five years because the company that  
132 makes them is the same company as the Tasers that the department currently uses and some of  
133 those items have not be replaced in 10 years. They currently have 20 fulltime officers and have  
134 the capacity to have 10 part time officers.

135  
136 Both L. Baker and B. Barry wanted to know if there were any legal or state requirements with  
137 regard to storage of the data, and how this compared with other states.

138  
139 Lieutenant Burns said that they overestimated the capacity in the estimate to ensure that all  
140 requirements would be met.

141  
142 Chief stated that this program has a lot of benefits which include increased safety for both the  
143 public and the community, it can help with investigations being able to look at a scene from  
144 different angles, it's a great training tool, and would also help investigate any complaints. Chief  
145 also stated that the policies that would be enacted regarding the use of these cameras would be  
146 developed according to national policies.

147  
148 L. Baker wanted to know when the cameras get turned on.

149  
150 Lieutenant Burns explained that the cameras have a pre-recorded setting that records for 30  
151 seconds automatically but that the officers can turn them on and off at their discretion due to  
152 policies, procedures or best practices to ensure that things like HIPPA are not violated.

153  
154 B. Barry wanted to know how the officers felt about the potential use of the cameras and if there  
155 was a way to get an estimate of what year 6 would cost?

156  
157 Chief stated that some of the officers were in favor and some officers may need to adjust to the  
158 idea.

159  
160 C. Blanchard pointed out to the Council that they would need to consider whether or not the  
161 Council feels it is worth the investment for this to become a budget item in the future. To put this  
162 expenditure into perspective, he pointed out, that it is the approximate cost of one new police  
163 cruiser.

164  
165 Chief felt that the cruisers were more important.

166  
167 Citizen Police Academy Update:

168  
169 Chief Janulewicz announced that the police department would once again be hosting the citizen  
170 police academy from April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019 to May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019. There will be 5 sessions that run  
171 approximately 2 to 2.5 hours starting at 6PM. In order to participate you must be 18 years old but  
172 they would consider younger than 18 years old with parent consent. The topics that will be  
173 covered in this session are policing now vs then, constitutional law, DRE, marijuana law, patrol  
174 procedures/use of force, K-9 procedure and law, motor vehicle law, SRO/active shooter, juvenile  
175 law, and the courts. These topics may change slightly depending upon the officers input. Chief

176 said that the officers are very excited to be involved in this program and that an advertisement  
177 for it will be on Facebook and in the journal.

178  
179 B. Barry wanted to know how many people would be able to take part in the program.

180  
181 Chief stated that the last time they ran the program 20 people enrolled, but they could have more  
182 than that this because of the new meeting room at the station.

183  
184 B. Barry, L. Baker and M. Salzmann all agreed that this would be a great opportunity and they  
185 look forward to hearing updates on the program as it unfolds.

186  
187 V) Town Manager Annual Review:

188  
189 The Town Council has decided to move this discussion to the March meeting.

190  
191 VI) Any Other Old Business:

192  
193 There was no other old business

194  
195 **New Business:**

196  
197 I) Sarah Szczebak, Rail Committee; UMass proposal on Palmer Passenger Rail Stop:

198  
199 Sarah Szczebak has solicited a proposal from Dr. John Mullins of the UMass Center  
200 for Economic Development (CED) for consultant services related to a future East –  
201 West passenger Rail Stop in palmer. The proposal consists of three phases:  
202 Phase One – “Making the Case”, Phase Two – Planning Study, Phase Three – Implementation  
203 Plan. The request that comes before you tonight in for **Phase One** only at a not to exceed  
204 cost of \$18,000.00. A copy of Dr. Mullen’s letter proposal dated January 18, 2019 was e-mailed  
205 to all of the council members.

206  
207 R.Lavoie asked if it was worth it to get 3 proposals for comparison before deciding to go with  
208 UMass.

209  
210 L. Baker asked if this was a project the council would really want students to be working on?

211  
212 C. Blanchard explained that UMass is not working as a private consultant and that it would not  
213 be an apples to apples comparison. He recommended that the council consider the limited time  
214 frame available before the proposal needs to go to the state and the expertise and credibility  
215 UMass has to offer us.

216  
217 S. Szczebak stated that it would not be a student working on the project but rather Dr. Mullins,  
218 his staff and a PHD student.

219 B. Barry asked Sarah why Dr. Mullins was their choice.

220

221 S.Szczebak explained that she graduated from Umass, Dr. Mullins has extensive background in  
222 this type of work, the reputation of the school and the fact that towns are able to get the same  
223 amount of work at a much lower cost.

224  
225 Motion was made by R. Lavoie to appropriate the requested funds. Seconded by K. Williams.  
226 Motion passed (5:0)

227  
228 II) Town Manager Search Discussion:

229  
230 C. Blanchard has proposed the following outline for the Town Manager Search:

231 Prepare Community & Position Profile and Advertise – March 15th

232 Cover Letters and Résumés, in confidence, due by 5:00 PM on April 15th

233 Initial interviews begin after that and conclude by May 1st

234 Final interviews to be completed by May 15th

235 Selection of new Town Manager, negotiation of Contract

236 Start work the week of June 24, 2019

237  
238 B. Barry was wondering how the other council member feel about doing an internal search or if  
239 they should hire an outside consulting firm? If they decide to go with an outside firm, the  
240 committee would need to interview them and chose one to work with as soon as possible. In the  
241 past the town council has done their own search, but currently there are a lot of vacancies in  
242 town close to ours and there are not a lot of people looking for jobs in this field.

243  
244 R. Lavoie and L. Baker both stated that they felt an outside firm was advisable. R. Lavoie also  
245 stated that he was worried about how much time they had to complete the process.

246  
247 M. Salzman is torn between the two options and would like a community profile.

248  
249 C. Blanchard stated that he will contact 2 or 3 outside firms to check their availability and have  
250 them come in on February 20, 2019 at 6:30PM for the town council member to interview them.

251  
252 III) Resolution to confirm membership in Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District:

253  
254 C. Blanchard opened this section of the meeting by reading the resolution which included a  
255 request for \$5,000.00 to have the town of Palmer join the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control  
256 District. He stated that this was something the town has been working on becoming a part of  
257 since 2017 and the council had already discussed becoming a part of the district previously.

258  
259 Chrissy Florence from the Board of Health was in attendance to give an outline of the services  
260 that the town would be getting if they signed the resolution. The buy in amount of \$5,000.00  
261 provides the town with trapping, monitoring, testing, mapping, larvaciding, and identifying catch  
262 basins. There is also the opportunity to buy additional services in an a la carte style.

263  
264 B. Barry stated that she would like to see a cap placed on the a la carte services to make sure that  
265 it does not become too expensive.

266 Motion was made by L. Baker to join the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District. Seconded by  
267 R. Lavoie. Motion passed (5:0)

268

269 IV) Discuss Town Council's priorities for new Recreation Director:

270

271 Jeff Stanhope, the new Recreation Director attended the meeting. He presented the Council with  
272 an outline of some of the work he has done and his ideas on areas that could be focused on. The  
273 outline included a RecDesk Website, Social Media/Public Outreach, Coordination with Town  
274 Youth Sports (Liaison & Attend Board Meetings), Outdoor Recreation, Indoor Recreation,  
275 Entertainment, and Recreational Grants.

276

277 M. Salzman had some concerns about making sure any events would be ADA accessible.  
278 PHCC does not have access but the Interactive School House and Pulaski Park would be places  
279 to consider.

280

281 L. Baker suggested that Jeff should reach out to Dave Olivera about concerts since this is  
282 something Dave does over at Pulaski Park already and would be a good idea to coordinate efforts  
283 on.

284

285 B. Barry stated that not everyone has Facebook, and Jeff should make sure he uses the shoppers  
286 guide and the Ware radio channel to advertise any public events. She also stated that including  
287 fixing the pavilion at Burleigh Park, a dog park and forming adult leagues would be beneficial.

288

289 **Sub-Committee Reports:**

290

291 Rail Steering Committee:

292 Lorinda Baker and Scarlett Lamothe wrote a survey that was given to the junior and seniors at  
293 Palmer High School. So far they have received over 100 responses all with very positive  
294 comments about how a rail stop would influence their choices in the future. The survey has also  
295 been given to other local high schools to gather more information about the potential impact of a  
296 rail stop.

297

298 **Town Manager Report:**

299

300 Re: Town Manager's Report – February 11, 2019

301 1. We are finalizing the RFQ for a Developer for the CMS Senior Affordable Housing and  
302 Community Center conversion. The plan is to advertise the RFQ on March 12th, responses from  
303 Developers would be due on April 30th and the goal for the selection of a Developer would be  
304 June 28, 2019.

305

306 2. We are close to completing our review of the General Code Editorial and Legal Analysis for  
307 the Ordinances, policies and Code of the Town of Palmer. The projected timeline for the  
308 remainder of the project is: Final draft to Town – August, 2019, Review of draft completed –  
309 October, 2019, Publication of Code, including indexing and posting of eCode 360 on website –  
310 December, 2019

311

312 3. The Municipal Vulnerability Workshop that was held at the Police Station on Friday,  
313 February 1st was a tremendous success. Priorities were established which will be included  
314 in the final report on the Grant.

315

316 **Misc. Correspondence:**

317

318 B. Barry reviewed the correspondence she has received. These items included the PVPC 2020-  
319 2024 transportation improvement program, a letter from Comcast about the international  
320 package, a second letter from Comcast about a video service issue in the community and an  
321 invitation from Pathfinder to attend their budget meeting on Wednesday March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at  
322 7PM.

323

324 **Councilor roundtable:**

325

326 K. Williams stated that he enjoyed going to Boston for the seminar. He found it both  
327 knowledgeable and fun.

328

329

330 Roll Call Vote to enter into Executive Session and adjourn therefrom. B.Barry, yes. M.  
331 Salzmann, yes. R. Lavoie, yes. K.Williams, yes. L.Baker, yes.

332 **Executive Session per MGL C30a §21:**

333 To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may  
334 have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair  
335 so declares; Palmer Police Union Contract Negotiations.

336

337

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