

**Palmer Town Council
Meeting Minutes
July 10, 2017**

1 **1. Call to Order**

2 The Palmer Town Council Meeting of Monday, July 10, 2017 was called to order at 6:30 pm by
3 Town Council President Barbara Barry. Present were Town Manager Charles Blanchard,
4 Councilors Lorinda Baker, Barbara Barry, Mary Salzmann, Robert Lavoie, Karl Williams and
5 Matthew Lemieux. Absent was Councilor Michelle Sikes.

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7 **2. Visitors Comments**

8 William Byrnes came in to discuss a Public Safety concern regarding the intersection by Endelson
9 Playground, asking why the solar-powered crosswalk warning signs have not been installed. C.
10 Blanchard said the signs are in and will be installed in the next few weeks. W. Byrnes suggested
11 having a cruiser sit by the playground.

12 L. Baker noted that she picked up trash in the playground and expressed concern about the
13 amount of alcohol bottles in park, as well as vandalism that occurred.

14 B. Barry noted that she would like to see security cameras for this playground.

15 Paul Bernard – Requested that a bigger sign be posted showing regulations of Endelson Park.
16

17 **3. Meeting Minutes**

18 **a) May 15, 2017**

19 *Motion to approve the minutes of May 15, 2017 as amended by M. Lemieux, seconded*
20 *by L. Baker. Motion passed 6-0.*

21 **b) May 30, 2017**

22 *Motion to approve the minutes of May 30, 2017 as amended by L. Baker, seconded by*
23 *M. Lemieux. Motion passed 6-0.*

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25 **(c) June 19, 2017**

26 *Motion to approve the minutes of June 19, 2017 as amended by L. Baker, seconded by K.*
27 *Williams. Motion passed 5-0-1 (R. Lavoie abstained).*

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29 **(d) June 26, 2017**

30 *Motion to approve the minutes of June 26, 2017 as submitted by L. Baker, seconded by*
31 *K. Williams. Motion passed 6-0.*

32 **4. Old Business**

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34 **a) Vote - Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Large Scale Ground Mounted Solar**
35 **Photovoltaic Installations**

36 *Motion to approve by M. Lemieux, seconded by K. Williams. Motion passed 6-0.*
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38 **b) 2nd Reading - False Alarm Ordinance**

39 The Second Reading was done by R. Lavoie.

40 The Public Hearing will be held at the August 14, 2017 Town Council Meeting.

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c) WWTP Scum Concentrator

G. Skowronek addressed the Council. B. Barry noted that cost for engineering is \$76,000 and the estimated cost for the replacement project is \$300,000 to \$400,000. G. Skowronek outlined the treatment process and the need for the scum concentrator.

M. Salzmann asked if the only proposal for engineering was from Tighe & Bond. G. Skowronek said yes, but they have been the Town’s consultant since original design. C. Blanchard gave an outline of the engineering services to be provided by Tighe & Bond.

G. Skowronek reported that the scum concentrator has been down since May and the removal of the scum has had to be supplemented by the use of Vactor truck. He noted that the Vactor has been used a lot recently due to staffing issues at DPW and the inability to use clam shell truck.

B. Barry noted her concern about using sewer surplus funds for large capital costs. She said she is concerned that increases in the surplus were due to one-time revenue.

G. Skowronek noted the next large project would be the replacement of syphon on Thorndike Street. He noted that they try to keep the sewer rate increases low since that has been a priority for the Town Council. B. Barry stated that she would like to see incremental increases in the sewer rate for future Capital projects. M. Lemieux asked where Palmer rates are in comparison to surrounding communities – G. Skowronek said we were in the lower 25th percentile of communities.

M. Salzmann stated she would like to see a reasonable increase in the sewer rate. K. Williams asked how the sewer surplus was generated. G. Skowronek explained that unused funds go into the sewer surplus.

Motion to transfer \$76,500 from the sewer fund balance to scum concentrator engineering by M. Salzmann, seconded by L. Baker. Motion passed 6-0.

B. Barry asked for information on what contributed to the surplus in each year to show if there were one-time issues that increased the fund balance.

d) Budget Discussion – Accountant’s Stipend

B. Barry noted that she did not believe there is any section of M.G.L. that addresses an accountant being paid a stipend. C. Blanchard stated that while there is no legislative authority regarding a stipend for Certification, several communities do give a stipend to accountants.

B. Barry noted that at one point the town gave the stipend to a prior accountant, and that since this had been the practice it should be continued.

1 **e) Budget Discussion – Stormwater Management**

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3 C. Blanchard stated that this is a big potential cost for communities. He cited new costs
4 for additional testing and sampling for illicit discharge detection. There is \$39,345 in the
5 budget for Stormwater costs. C. Blanchard noted that the new regulations have the
6 potential for significant increases in Stormwater costs and that many communities have
7 implemented or are looking at a fee structure and enterprise fund for Stormwater costs.
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9 C. Blanchard outlined what the town has done to prepare for implementation of MS4
10 permit.
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12 B. Barry asked about communities using molasses on roads to cut down the amount of
13 sand used on roadways. G. Skowronek noted that they looked at some alternatives but
14 have not moved forward with any one alternative. He noted that sweeping will be done
15 around sensitive areas rather than main streets under new permit.
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17 **f) Discussion - Inspector Fee Structure**

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19 C. Blanchard referenced the summary information provided by B. Weeks regarding fees
20 for inspectors. She noted that they mirrored the fee schedule of Northampton, while
21 those of Amherst and Greenfield are nearly three times higher.
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23 B. Weeks noted that M.G.L limits use of fees to the cost of doing the inspections plus
24 the overhead cost of department doing the inspection. B. Barry asked for the number of
25 hours it takes to conduct an inspection. B. Weeks noted that some fees are higher and
26 lower but balance off over time. B. Barry stated that there needs to be some
27 justification of the rate. C. Blanchard noted that based on information given by B.
28 Weeks, the fee would be about \$84 per hour. Discussion continued on the inspection
29 fees. M. Lemieux asked what 25% of town fee goes to, C. Blanchard stated it goes to
30 support the salaries and administration costs of the Building Department.
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32 **g) Discussion - Laviolette Field Bathroom Renovation**

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34 C. Blanchard noted that the town is going out to bid for this project due to the
35 discrepancy in price proposals received. L. Baker asked about security. G. Skowronek
36 noted that they are looking into security cameras and bringing in a vendor to review
37 alternatives.
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39 **h) Discussion – Town Council Community Forum**

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41 None
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43 **i) Discussion - Converse Middle School Reuse**

44 C. Blanchard stated that he has no additional information on a consultant to assist with
45 the re-use plans, but noted the school Administration has agreed to take over
46 scheduling of the Community use of Converse Middle School for FY18.
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1 **j) Discussion - Town Hall Renovation Project**

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3 C. Blanchard noted the proposal presented for replacement of the council desk for
4 approx. \$14K. Noted that other option would be to wait and go through Pathfinder. M.
5 Salzmann asked to try to get a price from York Street Industries. The Council agreed to
6 go forward with a new desk using the lowest responsible bidder.
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8 **k) Any Other Old Business**

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10 None
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12 **5. New Business**

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14 **B) Town Council Subcommittee Discussion**

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16 B. Barry asked that the Councilors review the list of subcommittees and let her know by
17 August 1st if they have any preferences.
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19 **b) Security Camera Discussion**

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21 B. Barry stated that she would like to invest in security cameras to protect town's
22 investments and asked C. Blanchard to get cost proposals for camera systems for the
23 September meeting.
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25 **c) Any Other New Business**

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27 L. Baker requested that Hryniewicz Park be mowed prior to the community concerts.
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29 **B. Subcommittee Reports**

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31 None
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33 **8. Town Manager's Report**

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35 C. Blanchard requested that he be appointed to the Local Licensing Authority. *Motion to appoint*
36 *C. Blanchard to fill out A. Golas' term on the Local Licensing Authority by L. Baker, seconded by R.*
37 *Lavoie. Motion passed 6-0.*
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39 **9. Misc. Correspondence**

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41 B. Barry said she received an e-mail from the Conservation Commission requesting to meet with
42 the Town Council regarding the Town Manager's decision on funding the Conservation Agent's
43 position. The Chair was informed that the matter was not under the purview of the Town
44 Council.
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1 **10. Councilor’s Roundtable**

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3 M. Lemieux thanked John Sasur for cutting down trees on Main Street in Three Rivers.
4 L. Baker reminded everyone of concerts on common in Three Rivers, and Friday night free bands
5 at Pulaski Park.
6 R. Lavoie reminded everyone about the Divine Mercy polish picnic on July 23rd.
7 B. Barry asked C. Blanchard to look into getting pricing for sandwich boards to place notices of
8 public events around town.
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10 **11. Reorganization**

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12 C. Blanchard accepted nominations for Town Council President. R. Lavoie nominated B. Barry,
13 seconded by L. Baker. Vote in favor cast by Clerk R. Lavoie.
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15 C. Blanchard accepted nominations for Town Council Vice President. B. Barry nominated M.
16 Salzmann, second by M. Lemieux. Vote in favor cast by Clerk R. Lavoie.
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18 C. Blanchard accepted nominations for Clerk. K. Williams nominated R. Lavoie, seconded by
19 B. Barry. Vote in favor cast by B. Barry.

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21 C. Blanchard noted that he would be on vacation from July 12th through July 21st and DPW
22 Director Gerry Skowronek would be the Acting Town Manager.
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24 **12. Adjournment of Formal Session**

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26 Motion to adjourn by K. Williams, seconded by L. Baker. *Motion passed 6-0.*
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