

**Palmer Town Council
Meeting Minutes
July 13, 2015**

1. Roll Call

The Palmer Town Council Meeting of Monday, July 13, 2015 was called to order at 6:30 pm. Present were Town Manager Charles Blanchard, Councilors Robert Lavoie, Philip Hebert, Barbara Barry, Lorinda Baker, Mary Salzman and Donald Blais. Councilor Karl Williams was absent at roll call but entered at 6:32 pm.

2. Visitors Comments

Mike Magiera of 4 Bowden St., Palmer addressed the council. He stated that winter sand in the Bowden St area was becoming a safety concern for the residents. He asked that the town expedite the street sweeping in that area. B. Barry stated that the original schedule was for street sweeping to be completed by the end of June. She stated that multiple breakdowns of the sweeper have contributed to the delay and the town expects all roads to be done by end of July.

3. Meeting Minutes

June 8, 2015 - *Motion to approve the minutes of June 8, 2015 as amended by D. Blais, seconded by R. Lavoie. Motion passed 5-0-2 with K. Williams and L. Baker abstaining.*

4. Old Business

a. FY16 Capital Improvement Plan

B. Barry stated that the council had some questions at last meeting regarding the \$25,000 toward debt service on a new dump truck and the maintenance cart. Finance Director John Kuzmiski addressed the council regarding the proposed FY16 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). J. Kuzmiski outlined the CIP's proposals and development process. He stated that all items brought forward as part of the plan are desperately needed by each department.

R. Lavoie questioned why the committee did not recommend replacing the smoke detectors at Converse Middle School (CMS). Facilities Director Steve Muniec, stated that the cost for full replacement of the smoke detectors at Converse Middle School would be astronomical and there is no guarantee that CMS will still be open in two years due to decreasing enrollment. D. Blais asked what the average life of the smoke detection system is. S. Muniec stated that the smoke detectors should be replaced every 10 years, however the current system is 25 years old. He stated that the system is still inspected every 2 years.

D. Blais asked for additional information on the proposed phone system. The phone system proposal was described by J. Kuzmiski and C. Blanchard. K. Williams asked if it will be more expensive to lease rather than to own than outright purchase the proposed dump truck and maintenance cart. J. Kuzmiski stated that there would be the additional

cost of interest, but insufficient funds are currently available to outright purchase both vehicles. M. Salzmann asked if the \$25,000 could go back into the Capital Stabilization account if it is not being earmarked for FY16 payments. J. Kuzmiski stated that the funds could go toward an additional purchase or be retained for another fiscal year.

J. Kuzmiski gave an overview of the status of the CIP account. B. Barry stated that she believes that purchasing the dump truck with a Bond Anticipation Note (BAN) would be less expensive option for the town to pursue. She proposed to purchase the maintenance cart outright as well. B. Barry stated that the town council would need specific language from bond counsel to appropriate funding as a BAN to purchase truck.

B. Barry asked if the DPW vehicles being proposed as part of the CIP are most the needed by the department. Acting DPW Director Rudy Pisarczyk stated that all the vehicles being proposed are desperately needed. B. Barry asked how many years the town typically runs a street sweeper. R. Pisarczyk stated that street sweepers typically last almost 20 years. Barry stated that the town should be looking at purchasing a second street sweeper to augment the operations of the current sweeper. C. Blanchard stated the the estimated cost would be \$200,000 for a second sweeper which would cost \$45,000 per year if it was purchased through a lease purchase. B. Barry asked if an additional mower is needed for the parks department. C. Blanchard explained that the Parks department purchased a new mower from the additional funds appropriated in the FY16 operating budget.

Motion to approve \$67,750 for the purchase of smoke detectors for Palmer High School and Old Mill Pond Schools as well as a new Fire Control Panel for Palmer High School from the Capital Stabilization Fund by M. Salzmann, seconded by D. Blais. Motion passed 7-0.

Motion to approve \$19,507 for the purchase of a new telephone system, \$9,000 for the purchase of a new cutter head for the trackless roadside mower and \$26,570 for the purchase of a Park Department Maintenance Cart from the Capital Stabilization Fund by D. Blais, seconded by R. Lavoie. Motion passed 7-0

The approval of the BAN would need to be approved through the proper Loan Authorization adoption procedure.

b. Ordinance Review Committee

C. Blanchard gave an overview of Ordinance review requirements as defined in the Town Charter. He stated that the Town Council must appoint two members of council and the Town Manager to serve on the Ordinance Review Committee. He stated that the committee has one year to recodify all ordinances of the town. C. Blanchard and Executive Assistant Andrew Golas will review the current ordinances and bring the information forward to the committee. The town council went forward with the appointment of two members to the Ordinance Review Committee.

The appointments to the Ordinance Review Committee were done by ballot. M. Salzmann, L. Baker, R. Lavoie, D. Blais and K. Williams. The ballots were totaled by M. Salzmann.

K. Williams votes M. Salzmann and L. Baker; R. Lavoie votes M. Salzmann and D. Blais; B. Barry votes L. Baker and M. Salzmann; L. Baker votes L. Baker and R. Lavoie; P. Hebert votes K. Williams and L. Baker; M. Salzmann votes R. Lavoie and L. Baker; D. Blais votes R. Lavoie and D. Blais.

L. Baker is nominated to the Ordinance Review Committee during the initial election with five votes. R. Lavoie and M. Salzmann tied with three votes each. A second round of voting was conducted between R. Lavoie and M. Salzmann.

K. Williams votes M. Salzmann; B. Barry votes M. Salzmann; P. Hebert votes R. Lavoie; L. Baker votes R. Lavoie; M. Salzmann votes M. Salzmann; R. Lavoie votes M. Salzmann; D. Blais votes M. Salzmann.

M. Salzmann is nominated to the Ordinance Review Committee 5-2.

5. New Business

a. Fire Sprinkler Local Option Law Proposal - Mass General Law Chapter 148, Sec. 26 H&I

Palmer District 1 Fire Chief, Alan Roy and Building Inspector Bonnie Weeks addressed council regarding the proposed adoption of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 148 Section 26 H & I. A. Roy presented a video clip from the multi-unit apartment fire on Pleasant St from February 2015. A. Roy stated that a side by side video was sent to each councilor showing the differences in sprinklered units versus non-sprinklered units.

Chief A. Roy gave an overview of local option MGL Chapter 148, Section 26H which would require all boarding and rooming houses to install sprinkler systems within 5 years of adoption of the ordinance. He stated that this regulation is important in multi-unit apartments because of the uncertainty of what each neighbor is doing. A. Roy stated that of the three registered boarding houses, two would need to be retrofitted for sprinkler systems.

Chief A. Roy stated that the Palmer Water Department currently has no fee for sprinkler entrance fee. The fee for the Three Rivers Water District is \$2,300 for a six inch service and \$3,000 for an eight inch service. He also stated that there is currently no fee for the Thorndike water district and no information was available for the Bondsville Water District. The cost to install a sprinkler system would be between \$3,000 to \$5,000 per unit.

Chief A. Roy stated that there have been three fatalities in the last few years which could have been prevented with the presence of sprinkler systems. M. Salzmann asked if there are any municipal buildings without sprinkler systems. A. Roy stated that the schools are not fully sprinklered, except for the stage area because their construction predates the current sprinkler building code.

Chief A. Roy provided an overview of MGL Chapter 148, Section 26I which would require all homes with four or more units to install sprinkler systems during major reconstruction.

P. Hebert asked why fraternity houses and rest homes are excluded from the provisions of Section 26I. A. Roy stated the group homes were excluded based on court ruling. The others are regulated at the state level. R. Lavoie asked if homeowners would see a reduction in their insurance premiums if a sprinkler system were installed. A. Roy stated that there would be a reduction in insurance cost for the homeowner but that amount would be based on the insurance company.

B. Barry asked how many houses in town had four units or more. Building Inspector Bonnie Weeks stated that the installation of a sprinkler was only required if major reconstruction was performed. She stated that the apartment complex on Pleasant St which had been gutted by fire would require a sprinkler system when it is renovated, depending on the type of renovation.

B. Barry asked if the council moves forward with this proposal, how the town would work with the two buildings which would be required to install sprinkler systems under MGL Chapter 148, Section 26H. She stated that boarding and rooming house owners should be made aware that these regulations are in the works. P. Hebert stated that it should be made clear that single family and two family houses are not affected by this proposal.

C. Blanchard asked if notification of the public hearing to the property owners of the boarding and rooming houses would be sufficient notice. P. Hebert asked if the rest home on Shearer St is currently sprinklered. A. Roy and B. Weeks were unsure if the property is currently sprinklered. B. Barry asked which section of law the Pleasant Street apartment complex would be required to install a sprinkler system. B. Weeks stated that the requirement to install sprinklers would be under MGL Chapter 148, Section 26I. She stated that the local option laws fill in some cracks of the current building code. The council agreed unanimously by consensus to move forward with the ordinance adoption process.

b. Review of Council Rules

B. Barry stated that she would like each counselor to review the current council rules and present their revisions for the next meeting.

c. Town Council Subcommittee Appointments

B. Barry asked that a copy of the current standing subcommittees be sent out to the councilors. She asked each councilor to request which committees they would like to serve on. Appointments to each subcommittee will be assigned at the next meeting.

d. Discussion Regarding Tablets

C. Blanchard gave an overview of the proposal to purchase tablets for each councilor to replace their current meeting packets. The consensus of council was to move forward with this proposal.

6. Subcommittee reports

D. Blais stated that the Superintendent Search Committee is continuing the process of finding a permanent superintendent.

7. Town Manager's Report

C. Blanchard provided a report from Tighe & Bond outlining sewer costs for all towns in Massachusetts. He noted that the current sewer costs for Palmer are significantly under the median cost throughout the state.

C. Blanchard stated that he and Interim Chief Janulewicz met with parties working on economic development in Three Rivers to discuss how the police can be more proactive with public safety issues and concerns in the area. He also stated that the 189 State Street Well project has been completed and the required water treatment system options have been presented to the MassDEP for their review.

C. Blanchard provided an update on the street sweeping schedule to the Town Council. B. Barry asked that an updated schedule be posted on website. B. Barry also asked for an update on the Sergeant Assessment Center. C. Blanchard stated that the assessment center had been selected and they are currently working on approval from civil service and are planning to move forward in September.

8. Misc. Correspondence

B. Barry noted that the Palmer Recreation Department had provided a notice regarding its summer concert series. L. Baker asked if there were additional avenues to advertise for the concerts.

9. Councilor Roundtable

D. Blais welcomed L. Baker and K. Williams to the council. He also congratulated the Planning and Economic Development Department on receiving the Green Community Grant for weatherization upgrades at the school and WWTP. He also acknowledged correspondence he had with another community regarding their recovery from a natural disaster.

L. Baker stated that her contact information was incorrect on the contact sheet provided to the council.

R. Lavoie stated that the Divine Mercy Parish Polish Picnic would be held Sunday, July 26th at 11:00am.

10. Reorganization

C. Blanchard stated that he would accept nominations for Town Council President. *Motion by M. Salzmann to nominate B. Barry for president, seconded by P. Hebert. B. Barry accepted the nomination. Nominations were closed. The lone vote for Town Council President to elect B. Barry was cast by M. Salzmann.*

B. Barry stated that she would accept nominations for Town Council Vice-President. *Motion by B. Barry to nominate M. Salzmann as Town Council Vice-President, seconded by D. Blais. M. Salzmann accepted the nomination. The lone vote for Town Council Vice-President to elect M. Salzmann was cast by B. Barry.*

B. Barry stated that she would accept nominations for Town Council Clerk. *Motion by D. Blais to nominate R. Lavoie as Town Council Clerk, seconded by M. Salzmann. R. Lavoie accepted the nomination. The lone vote for Town Council Clerk to elect R. Lavoie was cast by B. Barry.*

11. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by R. Lavoie seconded by K. Williams. Motion passed 7-0.