

**Palmer Town Council
Meeting Minutes
June 8, 2015**

1 **1. Roll Call**
2

3 The Palmer Town Council Meeting of Monday, June 8, 2015 was called to order at 6:38 pm.
4 Present were Town Manager Charles Blanchard, Councilors Robert Lavoie, Philip Hebert,
5 Barbara Barry, Jason Polonsky, Mary Salzmann and Donald Blais. Absent was Matthew Lovell.
6

7 **2. Visitors Comments**
8

9 None
10

11 **3. Meeting Minutes**
12

13 *May 5, 2015 - Motion to approve the meeting minutes of May 5, 2015 as amended by D. Blais,*
14 *Seconded by P. Hebert. Motion passed 6-0.*
15

16 *May 18, 2015 - Motion to approve as the meeting minutes of May 18, 2015 as amended by J.*
17 *Polonsky, seconded by M. Salzmann. C. Blanchard provided a breakdown of the Snow and Ice*
18 *deficit funding options. Motion passed 6-0.*
19

20 **4. Old Business**

21 **a. Recreation Building Update**
22

23 Recreation Director Jim Ostrout addressed the Town Council. J. Ostrout provided a
24 breakdown of projected costs for new recreation building at Burleigh Park. He stated that the
25 estimated total amount for constructing the building is \$154,355. J. Ostrout requested that the
26 Town Council postpone a vote to dedicate funds toward the project. He stated that he would
27 like to try to lower the projected building cost before any funds are allocated.
28

29 B. Barry asked if the projected cost would be the full amount of the building project. J. Ostrout
30 stated that the projected amount would be the full amount of construction with no donations
31 included. B. Barry asked if the \$154,355 estimate was if Pathfinder performed the
32 construction. J. Ostrout stated that projection was using Pathfinder for labor.
33

34 C. Blanchard stated that there is currently \$119,000 in the Mohegan Sun Gift acct which
35 could be used toward the construction of the building. C. Blanchard stated that he is
36 concerned that the estimate provided is higher than funding available for the project. He
37 would like the full cost of the project to remain under \$100,000 and there is a lot of planning
38 to do before moving forward.
39

40 J. Ostrout stated that specific questions still need to be answered before construction can
41 begin. B. Barry asked if the building would be on schedule for Pathfinder without the funding
42 allocation. J. Ostrout stated that they would be on the schedule for construction despite the
43 delay in funding allocation. He also stated that he would like to have a town meeting to
44 receive feedback on the proposed building. J. Polonsky stated that he saw this building as a

1 great opportunity for the Town. He also stated that he would like the Recreation department
2 to begin taking down the signs from the carnival. J. Ostrout stated that he is in the process of
3 removing them.

4
5 **b. Vote - Adoption of Chapter 138, Section 33B**
6

7 Ordinance 2015-04, the adoption of Chapter 138, Section 33B of Massachusetts General
8 Law allowing licensees under section twelve to sell beverages between the hours of 10:00
9 am and 12:00 noon on Sundays read by M. Salzmann.

10
11 *Motion to accept the adoption of Chapter 138, Section 33B by D. Blais, seconded by R.*
12 *Lavoie. J. Polonsky stated that any applicants that are interested in the expanded hours must*
13 *submit a letter of interest to the local licensing commission. M. Salzmann asked if the*
14 *adopted legislation affects package stores. J. Polonsky stated that it only effects on-premises*
15 *licenses. Motion passed 6-0.*
16

17 **c. Budget Discussion**
18

19 C. Blanchard provided an explanation of all questions that were brought up during the
20 previous budget discussion. He provided explanations for the funding levels for Munis
21 Training, Tax Collector's Folder Contract and Emergency Management. C. Blanchard stated
22 that the Wage Adjustments were removed from the individual departments. \$10,000 was
23 moved to the Reserve account and some funding was reallocated to the Highway, Cemetery
24 and Park maintenance accounts. C. Blanchard provided a breakdown of the computer
25 maintenance program. He also provided a breakdown of the proposed recreation budget
26 increase. C. Blanchard stated that the Memorial Day increase to compensate for the actual
27 cost of the event over the last few years. C. Blanchard also provided breakdowns of the
28 Hampden County Retirement costs and options to pay off the snow and ice deficit.
29

30 B. Barry stated that she did not believe that computers less than 5 years old should be due
31 for replacement. A. Golas provided an explanation of why the listed computers were due for
32 replacement. B. Barry recommended that the building inspector's computer be moved to the
33 DPW to act as the new sign computer.
34

35 Ben Hood, Library Director, stated that he wanted to address the council regarding concerns
36 they had expressed with the collections line expense. B. Hood stated that he would like
37 continued discussion on what the state requirements do to library budget. He felt that full
38 compliance with the collection funding requirement would be step in right direction. He stated
39 that although it may not be possible in FY16, he hopes the town would consider funding
40 collection at higher level in future. He would also like to continue to discuss library's budget in
41 relation to other towns.
42

43 M. Salzmann asked what the interpretation of the library was from the previous budget
44 discussion. B. Hood stated that he felt it was honest discussion on budget and that he feels
45 the library does well to retain quality staff and offers a quality product. P. Hebert asked if a
46 waiver was still needed for the state. B. Hood stated that it is still required. P. Hebert stated
47 that the state should be reevaluating the calculation for the collection requirements. B. Hood
48 stated that he would need communicate more with state regarding the way the collection
49 funding requirement is calculated.

1
2 C. Blanchard stated that despite underfunding the State Library Director's funding
3 requirement for a number of years, the town was not close to decertification. J. Polonsky
4 stated the library is a great asset to town. B. Barry stated that the state does need to look at
5 communities who have requested multiple waivers. She stated that the current formula is
6 unrealistic for our community to meet. C. Blanchard stated that the costs for the Town of
7 Palmer are comparatively much higher than neighboring communities.

8
9 D. Blais stated will vote for library budget as it is proposed. P. Hebert stated that a joint letter
10 through council to the state representatives to reevaluate the collection calculation.

11
12 **d. Vote - FY16 Budget**

13
14 *Motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2016 budget as presented read by M. Salzmann,*
15 *seconded by J. Polonsky. Motion passed 6-0.*

16
17 B. Barry stated that she would like to see updates on fund transfers throughout the fiscal
18 year. She also stated that she would like to know when money is used above and beyond the
19 appropriated amount in each budget.

20
21 C. Blanchard stated that he would like vote on capital plan from the Town Counsel. C.
22 Blanchard gave overview of the proposed FY16 capital plan. An \$87,257 capital plan
23 recommended. The capital plan included updated phone system, Smoke alarms and Fire
24 control panel for schools and new vehicles for the DPW. Discussion continued on how the
25 \$25,000 proposed in the capital improvement plan would impact the 5 year lease purchase
26 agreement. Additional information will be provided on the debt service needed for lease
27 payment and the need for \$25,000 in FY16.

28
29 **e. Revolving Accounts**

30
31 *Motion to reestablish the town's revolving funds as provided for in Massachusetts General*
32 *Laws Chapter 44, Section 53E½ read by M. Salzmann. Motion to approve the*
33 *reestablishment of the revolving accounts made by M. Salzmann, seconded by D. Blais.*
34 *Motion passed 5-0-1 with B. Barry abstaining.*

35
36 **f. DPW Reorganization Plan**

37
38 C. Blanchard stated that the Town Council made it clear that the Cemetery and Park
39 superintendents should not be given supervisory authority making them exempt employees.
40 C. Blanchard provided the updated DPW Reorganization Plan. He noted that the plan should
41 be implemented after July 1, 2015. B. Barry asked if the reorganization plan
42 acknowledgement letter could be signed for implementation during FY16, with no specific
43 date. C. Blanchard stated that would be possible.

44
45 *Motion to approve the DPW Reorganization Plan as amended by D. Blais, seconded by P.*
46 *Hebert. Motion passed 6-0 by roll call vote.*

47
48 **5. New Business**

49 **a. Special Legislation - Jim Lynch**

1
2 C. Blanchard explained that a request had been made for the Council to request special
3 legislation to allow Special Police Officers to work past the age of 65. Background information
4 on the liability issues in seeking special legislation was provided to the Town Council from
5 labor counsel. C. Blanchard recommended not to adopt special legislation due to liabilities
6 placed on town. M. Salzmänn stated that the liability to the town was her primary concern. C.
7 Blanchard stated the request which was made to the council was to seek the waiver for full
8 police powers but it does not apply to traffic flagmen, who are not subject to the age of 65
9 restriction.

10
11 *Motion to not seek special legislation to allow special police officers to work past the age of*
12 *65 by J. Polonsky, seconded by R. Lavoie. Motion passed 6-0.*

13
14 **b. PRA Appointment - Jan McCoy**

15
16 Jan McCoy addressed the Town Council regarding her appointment to the Palmer
17 Redevelopment Authority. B. Barry read letter from the PRA approving of her appointment. C.
18 Blanchard gave his recommendation to appoint J. McCoy to the PRA.

19
20 *Motion to approve the appointment of Jan McCoy to the Palmer Redevelopment Authority by*
21 *J. Polonsky, seconded by P. Hebert. Motion passed 6-0.*

22
23 **6. Subcommittee Reports**

24
25 None

26
27 **7. Town Manager's Report**

28
29 C. Blanchard stated that the abandoned building at 1095 Thorndike Street was scheduled for
30 demolition and thanked Board of Health Agent Josh Mathieu and Building Inspector Bonnie
31 Weeks for their assistance on this effort.

32
33 The options for handling the FY15 Snow and Ice expenditure deficit was presented by C.
34 Blanchard. His recommendation was to transfer \$319,487 from free cash to the snow and ice
35 deficit and apply \$100,000 from the FY16 recap toward the deficit.

36
37 *Motion by P. Hebert to transfer \$319,487 from free cash and apply \$100,000 from the FY16 recap*
38 *toward the snow and ice deficit, seconded by J. Polonsky. C. Blanchard explained that the town*
39 *has the option to pay the deficit over next three years but would only be extending existing debt.*
40 *M. Salzmänn asked if the town is appropriating enough in Snow and Ice budget. C. Blanchard*
41 *stated that FY15 was extraordinary year for snow removal impact on the municipal budget and*
42 *normally \$210,000 would be an appropriate funding amount. Motion passed 6-0.*

43
44 C. Blanchard provided an update on the 189 State Street well replacement project. He stated that
45 the extra funding needed to pay for a water treatment system would be funded through the
46 reserve fund.

47
48 **8. Misc. Correspondence**

1 B. Barry acknowledged receipt from the Town of Ware regarding the noise issues at Palmer
2 Motorsports.

3
4 **9. Councilor's Roundtable**

5
6 D. Blais acknowledged the passing of Pat Donovan of Library Board of Trustees. He also thanked
7 all those that attended the Memorial Day parade. He also stated that the Town's Election Day
8 was Tuesday, June 9th and wished good luck to J. Polonsky and M. Lovell.

9
10 R. Lavoie stated that the Lions had a successful pancake breakfast on Memorial Day morning.
11 He also promoted the upcoming Middle School concert and wished good luck to J. Polonsky.

12
13 P. Hebert explained that he was looking out for the wellbeing of the town in his decision to not
14 seek special legislation to allow police officers to work past the age of 65 and wished good luck to
15 J. Polonsky.

16
17 M. Salzmann stated that polls open for the Town Election at 10am on Tuesday, June 9th. She
18 also wished good luck to J. Polonsky.

19
20 J. Polonsky thanked everyone for their support during his time in office. He stated that growing
21 up, he was taught how important community service is. He thanked residents for their support
22 over the last three years and thanked the council and past presidents for their support as well. He
23 thanked the youth sport leagues for working with his and thanked the Town Manager's office for
24 their support. He stated that he has an appreciation for others that give back to their community.

25
26 **10. Adjournment**

27
28 *Motion to Adjourn by D. Blais, seconded by P. Hebert. Motion passed 6-0 at 8:32 pm.*