

**Palmer Town Council
Meeting Minutes
April 25, 2016**

1 **1. Roll Call**

2 The Palmer Town Council Meeting of Monday, April 25, 2016 was called to order at 6:30 pm by
3 Barbara Barry. Present were Town Manager Charles Blanchard, Councilors Robert Lavoie, Karl
4 Williams, Philip Hebert, Barbara Barry, Lorinda Baker, Mary Salzmann and Donald Blais.

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6 **2. Visitors Comments**

7 None

8 **3. Old Business**

9 **a. Other Old Business**

10 M. Salzmann asked whether or not the Historical Commission needs space in Town Hall
11 to store some of the town's historical relics. C. Blanchard stated that he would discuss
12 the need for space with the Historical Commission. M. Salzmann asked if there could be
13 an operation line item for the Historical Commission in the FY17 budget. C. Blanchard
14 stated that he would consider adding a funding line item if it was proposed by the
15 Historical Commission.

16 **4. New Business**

17 **a. Appointment to Historical Commission – Barbara O'Donnell**

18 Motion to appoint Barbara O'Donnell to the Historical Commission by P. Hebert,
19 seconded by K. Williams. Motion passed 7-0.

20 **b. Appointment to Council on Aging – Sharon Lemieux**

21 Motion to appoint Sharon Lemieux to the Council on Aging by D. Blais, seconded by L.
22 Baker. Motion passed 7-0.

23 **5. Capital Budget Items**

24 C. Blanchard outlined the recommendations of the Capital Improvement Committee. He noted
25 that the recommendation of the Capital Improvement Committee is to fund the replacement of
26 many of the items recommended for replacement from Free Cash.

27 DPW Director Gerry Skowronek and Finance Director John Kuzmiski addressed the Town
28 Council. G. Skowronek stated that there is a significant cost to maintain the current street
29 sweeper. The DPW has reviewed a number of different models of street sweeper to decide
30 which would be the best fit. He stated that the towns of Ware and Monson have purchased new
31 Elgin Pelican sweepers. G. Skowronek stated that the truck body sweepers do not fit the town's
32 needs. He feels the Elgin Pelican would be best fit.

33 G. Skowronek stated that he received a quote for a new Elgin Pelican sweeper in the amount of
34 \$204,000. The total cost to the town would be \$189,000 with a trade in of the old sweeper. G.

1 Skowronek stated that the old sweeper should be traded due to the high maintenance costs but
2 will need to be repaired to running condition before it could be traded. The purchase of the new
3 sweeper would be from the state bid list. K. Williams asked what the price would be for private
4 service to do street sweeping. G. Skowronek stated no private sweeper company was responsive
5 to the town's request for quotes. He noted that it is important for the town to own its own
6 sweeper for emergency response. P. Hebert asked if it would be worth maintaining two
7 sweepers instead of trading one in. G. Skowronek stated that due to the amount of use the old
8 sweeper has seen, it would not be worth maintaining. He noted that parking lot contractors get
9 more use out of sweepers due to less wear and tear placed on the machines than municipal use.
10 He stated that retaining the current sweeper would just add additional costs to the maintenance
11 budget. Discussion continued on sharing equipment with other towns.

12 G. Skowronek noted that the proposed capital improvement plan included improvements to
13 weatherization of the DPW garage which would help maintain equipment. J. Kuzmiski stated
14 that the Capital Improvement Committee highly recommends purchase of a new street
15 sweeper.

16 G. Skowronek stated that the old mower has seen significant wear and tear. He noted that the
17 hydrostatic drive is currently falling apart and would be a significant cost to fix. The current
18 lawnmower used by the Parks Department is 17 years old. The DPW has received an offer for a
19 \$3,000 trade on the old mower. There currently is a 30 to 45 day lead time on ordering a new
20 mower. B. Barry asked if replacing the hydrostatic drive would extend the life of the mower. C.
21 Blanchard stated that the mower has seen a number of issues unrelated to the hydrostatic drive
22 and is in dire need of replacement.

23 G. Skowronek stated that the Old Mill Pond sidewalk is currently in poor condition. The
24 approximate cost to replace the sidewalk with concrete is \$37,000. G. Skowronek stated that
25 Calcium Chloride has replaced traditional salting method to preserve the concrete sidewalk. C.
26 Blanchard stated that assuming the bid price will be higher than the quoted cost, he estimated
27 cost to be \$45,000 to replace the concrete from the flags to the cafeteria area.

28 C. Blanchard stated that he recommends the following appropriations from Free Cash.
29 \$200,000.00 for the purchase of a new Elgin Pelican Street Sweeper, \$105,000.00 for the
30 purchase of a new 16' Toro Groundsmaster Riding Lawnmower and \$45,000 for replacement of
31 the OMP Sidewalk

32 Motion to Transfer \$350,000.00 from Free Cash for the following purchases; \$200,000.00 for
33 the purchase of a new Elgin Pelican Street Sweeper, \$105,000.00 for the purchase of a new 16'
34 Toro Groundsmaster Riding Lawnmower and \$45,000 for replacement of the OMP Sidewalk by
35 R. Lavoie, seconded by P. Hebert. Motion passed 7-0.

36 **6. General Budget Discussion**

37 The Town Council reviewed the answers to budget question revisions provided to the Council by
38 C. Blanchard. B. Barry stated that she feels Medicaid estimated cost is low. J. Kuzmiski stated
39 that there is no indication that the number should be significantly higher. J. Kuzmiski noted that
40 the Medicaid reimbursement had not been pursued for 2 or 3 years by the School Department.

1 B. Barry stated that she is concerned over reducing the Central Purchasing Fuel line item to
2 \$200,000. A. Golas noted that there had been significant surpluses in the fuel expense budget
3 over past few years and budgets had not compensated for switch to natural gas in the Town
4 Hall. C. Blanchard stated that they would reevaluate whether funds should be restored to the
5 Central Purchasing Fuel line.

6 B. Barry asked about the status of the Tax Title expenses and the amount that the town
7 currently owes. C. Blanchard noted that the current amount presented to the Town Council only
8 represents the amount owed to the Tax Title Attorney on one property. B. Barry stated that the
9 money to be raised for tax title expenses should only be raised through either the general
10 budget or the recap, not from both sources. She stated that she does not want to be in the
11 situation where the town cannot move on tax title properties due to amount owed to the tax
12 title attorney. C. Blanchard stated that he would provide comprehensive summary of the
13 amount owed to the Tax Title Attorney to this point.

14 B. Barry stated that she was concerned about the proposal to bring in an outside consultant to
15 assist the Treasurer's Office. J. Kuzmiski stated that the ability to have access to an outside
16 consultant has been beneficial for the Treasurer's Office. He stated that the budgeted figure also
17 goes toward Affordable Care Act required mailings. He stated that he hoped to continue Munis
18 on-site training for treasurer's functions. J. Kuzmiski stated that the original plan for Munis
19 trainings was to offset training on years that do not have actuarial study and use the surplus
20 funds for that purpose. He explained that the funding covers both the cost pay for trainings and
21 travel expense for the trainer.

22 B. Barry asked for an explanation of the tree replacement program. G. Skowronek stated that
23 the tree replacement budget would be used for the removal of some trees and replacement
24 with more ornamental trees. The account should be renamed the tree maintenance account.

25 B. Barry questioned the use of the Cemetery Contract Account. G. Skowronek noted that the
26 account is used to purchase fertilizer for the cemetery division.

27 B. Barry questioned the amount noted in the WWTP Debt Reserve Fund and why it was a
28 negative number. G. Skowronek noted that since the bond for the SRF project will not be issued
29 until FY17. The amount funded in FY16 will be encumbered to pay toward the debt and interest
30 when the bond is issued in FY17. Ultimately it was determined that this number was inserted
31 into the budget in error.

32 B. Barry questioned the process which the town funds the inspector fees using Revolving Funds.
33 C. Blanchard stated that he is awaiting guidance from Auditor Tom Scanlon on the issue.

34 J. Kuzmiski presented the proposal for revising the town's Chart of Accounts. J. Kuzmiski noted
35 the local opportunity cost projected in the budget monetize the amount of time he would
36 dedicate to revise the Chart of Accounts based on his salary. He stated that it would not mean
37 extra pay for himself, but rather time taken away from other tasks under his purview. J. Kuzmiski
38 stated that the school would be on board to revise their chart of accounts concurrently. He
39 stated that the local opportunity cost would equal 120 hours of time from the Accountant and
40 School Business Manager. J. Kuzmiski stated that the goal of the revision would be to align the

1 chart of account with UMAS system. J. Kuzmiski stated that the school payroll is done on Munis,
2 however, all School Accounts Payable accounts are tracked on Fundware. He did note that not
3 including the schools in the revision of chart of accounts would reduce the cost.

4 B. Barry asked if the snow and ice budget should be increased. C. Blanchard stated that it was
5 funded adequately.

6 P. Hebert asked if the Police physical fitness incentive is part of the union agreement. C.
7 Blanchard noted that it is a negotiated incentive in the police union contract.

8 L. Baker asked why the Medicaid reimbursement is contracted through an outside vendor. J.
9 Kuzmiski stated that the reimbursement has not been pursued since there was turnover at the
10 Special Education Director position. C. Blanchard stated that the Town receives the money from
11 the Medicaid reimbursement so the cost for LPEVC to process the application is funded by the
12 town.

13 **7. Adjournment**

14 Motion to Adjourn by P. Hebert, seconded by L. Baker. Motion passed 7-0 at 8:10pm