

**Palmer Town Council  
Meeting Minutes  
December 5, 2016**

1 **1. Call to Order**

2 The Palmer Town Council Meeting of Monday, December 5, 2016 was called to order at 6:30 pm  
3 by Town Council President Barbara Barry. Present were Town Manager Charles Blanchard,  
4 Councilors Robert Lavoie, Lorinda Baker, Karl Williams, Barbara Barry, Philip Hebert, Mary  
5 Salzmann and Matthew Lemieux.  
6

7 **2. Visitors Comments**

8 None

9 **3. Meeting Minutes**

10 a) **September 6, 2016 – Held**

11  
12 b) **September 12, 2016 - Held**  
13

14 **4. Old Business**

15 a) **2nd Reading - Loan Authorization 2017-01 –Town Hall Renovation Project**

16 Loan Authorization 2017-01, authorizing the borrowing of \$875,000 for the renovation  
17 of the Town Administration Building was read by R. Lavoie.  
18

19 b) **6:35pm Public Hearing - Loan Authorization 2017-01 –Town Hall Renovation Project**

20 The public hearing on Loan Authorization 2017-01, authorizing the borrowing of  
21 \$875,000 for the renovation of the Town Administration Building was opened by B.  
22 Barry at 6:36pm.  
23

24 Doug Farmer of the Journal Register asked if any state funds would be used in this  
25 project. B. Barry stated that no state funds would be used for this project. It would be  
26 fully funded through the operational budget.  
27

28 The public hearing was closed by B. Barry at 6:36 pm.  
29

30 c) **Vote - Loan Authorization 2017-01 –Town Hall Renovation Project**

31 Motion to approve Loan Authorization 2017-01 authorizing the borrowing of \$875,000  
32 for the renovation of the Town Administration Building by P. Hebert, seconded by K.  
33 Williams. Motion passed 7-0 by Roll Call vote. M. Lemieux – Yes, K. Williams – Yes, P.  
34 Hebert – Yes, L. Baker – Yes, R. Lavoie – Yes, M. Salzmann – Yes, B. Barry – Yes.  
35

36 C. Blanchard noted that the successful bidder was the company W.J. Mountford.  
37  
38  
39

1           **d)     Town Manager Goal Update**

2           C. Blanchard provided an update on his goals to the Town Council. <sup>1</sup>

3  
4           **e)     Any Other Old Business**

5           None

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7   **5.   New Business**

8           **a)     Town Manager Evaluation Form**

9           B. Barry stated that the Town Manager Evaluations should be complete for the January  
10          Meeting. B. Barry stated that councilors should ask questions of employees and  
11          department managers to evaluate the day to day operations of the Town. Evaluations  
12          from each councilor would need to be given to B. Barry before December 20<sup>th</sup>. B. Barry  
13          requested that comments be included with scores.

14  
15          **b)     Any Other New Business**

16          M. Salzmann stated that she is concerned by the comment in the DPW report that there  
17          is a need for a Scum Concentrator in the WWTP for an estimated cost of \$300,000. C.  
18          Blanchard stated that there would be a review of the request as part of the Capital  
19          Improvement Program budget and would make a determination how to proceed after  
20          the evaluation.

21  
22          M. Salzmann asked that the Zoning Enforcement Officer canvas the Town and retrieve  
23          illegal signs which are posted throughout Town.

24  
25   **6.   Subcommittee Reports**

26          Ordinance Committee – R. Lavoie stated that the Ordinance Subcommittee voted to not make any  
27          changes to the current Snow Removal Ordinance. He stated that they considered revisions to the  
28          fee structure, however, any recommendations on changes to the Ordinance are being taken under  
29          advisement. R. Lavoie stated that the Committee did not believe the current Snow Removal  
30          Ordinance was egregious as compared to other towns.

31          C. Blanchard stated that he would provide updated information on the enforcement of the Snow  
32          Removal Ordinance. B. Barry asked if the Ordinance Committee researched how other towns  
33          handled areas outside of the downtown with long stretches of frontage. R. Lavoie stated that other  
34          towns handle snow removal enforcement on a case by case basis.

35          B. Barry asked that the Snow Removal Ordinance be on the January agenda for discussion. She  
36          requested information on if the Police Department is writing warnings for failure to remove snow. P.  
37          Hebert stated that he did not agree with the Snow Removal Ordinance itself and felt that the Town  
38          should be responsible for all snow removal in the public way.

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<sup>1</sup> A copy of the Town Manager Goals Update attached (Attachment A).

1 R. Lavoie presented information regarding the proposed False Alarm Ordinance. He gave  
2 information on surrounding town ordinances on False Alarm Ordinances. He noted that the  
3 community with an ordinance that would be a useful model for Palmer would be the Town of Barre.  
4 He noted that only three businesses stood out as having a high rate of false alarms. M. Lemieux  
5 asked if R. Lavoie had talked to the Town of Monson about their False Alarm Ordinance. R. Lavoie  
6 said he spoke with them. They generally didn't see an increase in alarm calls after they passed the  
7 ordinance. C. Blanchard noted that the Town Council had previously reviewed a False Alarm  
8 Ordinance which was not voted on. He recommended reviewing the Town of Leicester's False Alarm  
9 Ordinance. B. Barry stated that a False Alarm Ordinance is important to deter habitual false alarms  
10 around town.

## 11 **7. Town Manager's Report**

12 C. Blanchard stated that the Main Street Three Rivers Bridge had been closed to one lane. C.  
13 Blanchard gave an overview of where the town is with repairs. He stated that MassDOT mandated  
14 travel be restricted to only between beams 3 and 6 of the bridge. The Town has been issued a  
15 Chapter 85 permit from MassDOT to begin work on repairs to the bridge. The repairs would allow  
16 the Town to re-open the bridge to two lanes. The contract for repairing the bridge will be awarded  
17 within the next week. The cribbing work will begin after the contract is awarded and should take a  
18 week to complete. C. Blanchard stated that he hoped the work would be completed the by early  
19 January. C. Blanchard addressed concerns with traffic lights on the bridge. He stated that due to  
20 proximity to the intersection and rail crossing, the engineering and permitting of temporary traffic  
21 lights on the one-way bridge would take longer than the work to reopen the bridge to two lanes. He  
22 stated that the estimated cost of the cribbing work would be \$220,000, with another \$90,000 in  
23 engineering costs.

24 C. Blanchard stated that the ratification vote of the Collective Bargaining Agreement for the  
25 Administrative and DPW Union was set for Thursday, December 8th.

26 C. Blanchard provided an update on his 2016 Town Manager goals.

27 P. Hebert asked if there is a weight limit on the Main Street Three Rivers Bridge. C. Blanchard stated  
28 that the bridge is rated for the posted weight on each end. P. Hebert stated that the new  
29 configuration put in to deter wrong way traffic is difficult for a box truck to navigate.

## 30 **8. Misc. Correspondence**

31 None

## 32 **9. Councilor's Roundtable**

33 R. Lavoie stated that there will be a Blood Bank at Palmer High School on December 6th until 2pm.  
34 He also stated that there would be a Memorial Service at Fire Service Group for Pearl Harbor  
35 Remembrance Day.

36 M. Salzmann thanked Veterans Agent Troy Brin for putting together the Memorial Day Ceremony.  
37 She stated thanked B. Barry for her assistance in moving the bridge up the state's priority list

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1 K. Williams stated that he enjoyed the John King Homestead Marker rededication ceremony.

2 M. Lemieux thanked everyone involved in putting together the Christmas on the Common event.

3 L. Baker noted the Annual Tree and Wreath Festival being held at the Palmer Historical and Cultural  
4 Center.

5 P. Hebert noted that there is no way to dispute EZ pass transactions under the new all electric tolling  
6 system.

7 **10. Executive Session as per Chapter 39, Sec. 23B (3) Contract Negotiations**

8 Motion to enter Executive Session as per Chapter 39, Sec. 23B (3) Contract Negotiations, and  
9 adjourn therefrom Lorinda Mary 7-0 by roll call vote. M. Lemieux – Yes, K. Williams – Yes, P. Hebert  
10 – Yes, L. Baker – Yes, R. Lavoie – Yes, M. Salzmänn – Yes, B. Barry – Yes. At 7:20pm.