

**Palmer Town Council
Meeting Minutes
February 6, 2017**

1 **1. Call to Order**

2 The Palmer Town Council Meeting of Monday, February 6, 2017 was called to order at 6:30 pm
3 by Town Council President Barbara Barry. Present were Councilors Robert Lavoie, Lorinda Baker,
4 Barbara Barry, Mary Salzmann and Matthew Lemieux. Councilors Philip Hebert and Karl Williams
5 were absent.

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7 **2. General Community Discussion**

8 B. Barry stated that since the Town Council had been formed, she has heard complaints there is
9 no venue for the public comment. She noted that there is visitors comment period at each Town
10 Council meeting.

11 William Byrnes of 41 South High Street, Bondsville stated that he is concerned that the FY17
12 Budget shows a decrease for the Veterans Agent.

13 B. Barry that reduction in Veterans on the benefit rolls results in lower budget for Chapter 115
14 benefits which is adjusted each year. B. Byrnes asked what the budget based on. B. Barry stated
15 that the Budget is based on the Veterans Agent Department Budget request. The town if
16 obligated to fund all Chapter 115 benefits that are processed. B. Barry noted that the town
17 received a 75% reimbursement for all Chapter 115 Benefits paid to unemployed veterans. C.
18 Blanchard outlined the Chapter 115 projections for the next Fiscal Year.

19 W. Byrnes stated that there should be more recognition of the Town's Purple Heart designation.
20 B. Barry stated that will be outreaching to community to gather list of Purple Heart recipients.

21 Mike Minney of 14 French Drive stated that French Drive is the worst street in town. He stated
22 that is it covered with hundreds of pot holes. He also stated that there is no street sign. B. Barry
23 explained that if the road has not been accepted by the Town, the Town cannot reconstruct the
24 road, they can only perform temporary patching. A road must be built to the town's
25 specifications before it would be accepted.

26 Joyce Lynch and William Sprenkle, Jr. of 25 Diane Street stated that they have exhausted all
27 efforts to clean the property at 21 Diane Street which has reduced the value of their property.
28 They stated that they have continually asked for town to enforce the issue. B. Barry explained
29 that enforcement procedures can take a long time to reach compliance since the town must
30 work through the courts to clean properties.

31 Bonnie Rathbone of 20 Brown Street stated that she is concerned about blight around town. She
32 would like a five year plan from the Town Council. B. Rathbone stated that there are dangerous
33 cracks in the sidewalks around Brown Street. She also noted that some crosswalks are not
34 painted in the downtown area.

35

1 Kara Noonan-Pear of 35 Longview Street asked about the potential closing of Converse Middle
2 School. She stated that she would like a decision made quickly on what to do with school. She
3 also asked not to decrease the school budget. B. Barry stated that the town would develop a
4 reuse strategy if the School Committee decided to move forward with the closure of CMS. M.
5 Salzman noted that funding the school budget is a top priority for the Town Council and would
6 not cut the budget on the basis of closing a school. She encouraged residents to attend the
7 School's public information meeting on the potential closure of CMS at Palmer High School on
8 Thursday, February 9th at 6:30pm.

9 Mike Switlowski of 3008 East Street stated that he would like to know each Town Councilor's
10 Top Five Priority list is and what would be needed from the community to achieve it. L. Baker
11 stated that her priorities are the Revitalization of Three Rivers and the need to attract business
12 to Palmer. M. Salzman stated her priority is to establish a plan for blighted areas around town.
13 B. Barry stated that her priority is improving the appearance of the community and attempting
14 to find short term fixes to help address long term problems. She also stated that she would like
15 to address issues with the athletic fields.

16 Raymond Sikes of 118R State Street stated his concern with the poor condition of the
17 bathrooms at Laviolette Field and the poor condition of fields.

18 B. Barry stated that the town needs to develop a plan to reinvest in the fields which may result
19 in a season where a field may be rendered off limits to play.

20 Sandra Noonan of 18 King Street asked where money being spent and what the plan of the town
21 is moving forward.

22 Paul Wisnewski of 2126 Main Street stated that he feels the problems with the town stem from
23 a high rental population and low rate of owner occupied buildings

24 Ann Miller of 27 Bowden Street requested that the Town Council fund the development of a
25 plan for a future rail stop in Palmer.

26 Bob Dupuis of 322 Flynt Street stated that there are too many abandoned properties in town
27 which drives away people from wanting to invest in the town.

28 Dan Pare stated that he would like to see a modernization of the town, including consolidation
29 of the water and fire districts. He also stated that the town should look at regionalization of the
30 schools with neighboring school districts.

31 Patricia Hogan of 1 Emelda Street stated that she feels the entrenched village identity hurts the
32 overall development of Palmer.

33 Richard Opper of 31 Smith Street asked if there are there tax incentives for Main Street business
34 and grants for housing redevelopment. He also stated his concern with used needles found
35 around town parks and sidewalks.

36 Beth Zelazo of 2058 Old Warren Road asked what the town did with the results of the
37 Recreation Survey, and asked what the status was of the proposed pavilion at Burleigh Park.

1 An Anonymous resident asked if the town had passed the CPA if it would have helped fund
2 some of the issues identified with recreation and blighted housing

3 B. Barry asked the attendees of the meeting how often they would like to see an open forum
4 held. The consensus of the attendees was that the meetings should be held quarterly.

5 Tim White of 10 Country Lane stated his support for the Regional Animal Agreement. He stated
6 that the Animal Control Office is in need of a better shelter. C. Blanchard noted that the town is
7 pursuing a Local Technical Assistance grant for the regional animal control to pursue developing
8 a new animal shelter.

9 Marion Kozlik of 3140 South Main Street asked why Christmas decorations are not done in all of
10 the villages. It was noted that Christmas Decorations are typically funded through non-profit
11 organizations such as local Chambers of Commerce.

12 Bob Dupuis stated that he does not recommend closing Converse Middle School in an effort to
13 save money.

14 Billy Byrnes stated that the Town Should develop a policy or ordinance to fine blighted
15 properties.