

**Palmer Town Council
Meeting Minutes
June 13, 2016**

1 **1. Roll Call**

2 The Palmer Town Council Meeting of Monday, June 13, 2016 was called to order at 6:30 pm by
3 Town Council President Barbara Barry. Present were Town Manager Charles Blanchard,
4 Councilors Robert Lavoie, Karl Williams, Philip Hebert, Barbara Barry, Lorinda Baker, Mary
5 Salzmann and Donald Blais. Councilor Phillip Hebert was absent at roll call and arrived at 6:42
6 pm.

7
8 **2. Visitors Comments**

9 None

10 **3. Meeting Minutes**

11 a. March 28, 2016 - Motion to approve the minutes of March 28, 2016 as submitted by D.
12 Blais, seconded by L. Baker. Motion passed 6-0.

13
14 b. April 11, 2016 – Motion to approve the minutes of April 11, 2016 as submitted by D.
15 Blais, seconded by L. Baker. Motion passed 6-0.

16
17 c. April 25, 2016 – Held

18
19 **4. Commendation – Officer David Burns**

20 B. Barry stated that the Town Council decided to recognize Officer David Burns for his actions
21 during a September 29, 2015 incident where he came upon a young female who was choking
22 due to obstructed airway. He rendered aid to the woman and cleared her airway. B. Barry read
23 the commendation and issued it to Ofc. Burns.

24 **5. Old Business**

25
26 a) **6:30 pm – Public Hearing - FY17 Budget Hearing**

27 B. Barry opened the FY17 Budget Hearing at 6:36 pm

28 Elizabeth Buck, addressed the Town Council. She stated that she supported the proposed
29 budget increase for the Library. She stated that the Library has large collection of materials
30 which help both families and businesses.

31 Karen Hoyt of 3180 Foster Street addressed the Town Council. She stated that she is a
32 homeschooling mother and supported the proposed budget increase for the library.

33 Michelle Leigh addressed the Town Council. She stated that she assists a homeschooling
34 group. She stated that she supported the proposed library funding increase.

1 D. Blais thanked those who came to voice their opinion on the budget. He stated that he
2 also supported the library funding increase.

3 M. Salzmann questioned the funding for the Mosquito Control District. She asked how the
4 Town of East Longmeadow funds their mosquito control program. C. Blanchard stated that
5 East Longmeadow appropriates \$54,000 toward their mosquito control program. He stated
6 that the town could look into private service if the mosquito control district does not move
7 forward.

8 M. Salzmann asked how many solar farms have been developed in town. C. Blanchard
9 stated that five solar sites have been developed and the revenue from each is accounted for
10 in the FY17 revenue projection. C. Blanchard outlined how the new growth from solar farms
11 is added to the budget projection. C. Blanchard also stated the town will be receiving funds
12 for lease payments on the landfill solar project.

13 M. Salzmann asked if the proposed labor agreements are built into the FY17 budget. C.
14 Blanchard stated that they are, although agreements have not been reached with all of the
15 bargaining unions. C. Blanchard outlined changes to the budget from the first draft of the
16 proposed budget. He noted that liquid sludge removal funding had been increased within
17 the WWTP budget, however the WWTP overall budget proposal was unchanged.

18 M. Salzmann asked if the Treasurer Consulting Services was still listed in the budget
19 proposal. Finance Director John Kuzmiski stated that when the budget was being developed,
20 there was a concern that additional consulting would be needed to give on-site help to the
21 Treasurer's Office. He stated that the requested funding would be used for Munis training
22 instead.

23 M. Salzmann asked if the Department of Revenue has called the town to inquire about the
24 accounting process for the inspection services. C. Blanchard stated that he feels comfortable
25 town is moving in right direction with their accounting practices regarding inspection
26 services.

27 J. Kuzmiski described his conversation with the DOR regarding the inspection services
28 accounting process. He is still reviewing the accounting process with the DOR and awaiting a
29 response.

30 M. Salzmann asked if budget transfers were in process and if the Town Council would
31 receive a copy of the transfer activity. J. Kuzmiski is working on transfers at this time and a
32 final report showing the FY16 transfers as of June 3rd will be sent to the Town Council this
33 week.

34 B. Barry asked where the \$66,000 which had been allocated to the Veteran's Agent Benefit
35 budget had been reallocated to. C. Blanchard stated that due to a lower projection in
36 Veteran's Benefit Spending, the funding had been reallocated to various department
37 accounts. He noted that part of the funding had been reallocated to fund the Snow and Ice
38 deficit and Mosquito Control District proposal.

1 Library Director Ben Hood addressed the Town Council. He stated that he hoped that the
2 Town Council would accept the recommended budget. B. Hood gave an overview of library
3 services rendered over the past year.

4 The public hearing on the FY17 Budget was closed at 7:10 pm by B. Barry

5 **b) Town Ordinance Recodification**

6 C. Blanchard noted that under the requirements of the Town Charter, the Town Council
7 would need to vote to reissue the code. B. Barry asked if the removal of ordinances should
8 go through the public hearing process. C. Blanchard stated that he would check with legal
9 counsel, however, he believes that the vote to authorize the changes to the Town Charter
10 based on the recommendation of the study committee would suffice. Discussion continued
11 on the proper procedure to remove ordinances from the Town Charter.

12 *Motion to accept and approve the recommendations of the Ordinance Recodification*
13 *Committee and reissue the Town Code by P. Hebert, seconded by D. Blais. Motion passed 7-0*

14 **c) Bergeron Land Donation - Authorization for Acceptance**

15 B. Barry gave an overview of the title issues with the acceptance of the Bergeron property
16 off of Old Warren Road. She stated that legal counsel has recommended approving the
17 donation of the property to the Town of Palmer.

18 *Motion to authorize signing of the deed transferring the property owned by Darlene*
19 *Bergeron-Burns, Lot 2, Kings Brook, to the Town of Palmer by M. Salzmann, seconded by R.*
20 *Lavoie. The motion passed 7-0.*

21 **6. New Business**

22
23 **a) Community Preservation Act Presentation (CPA)**

24 D. Blais recused himself from the Town Council discussion and joined the Open Space
25 Committee to present the CPA proposal to the Town Council. Conservation Agent Angela
26 Panaccione stated that the Open Space and Recreation committee is requesting that the
27 CPA be placed on November 8th presidential ballot. A. Panaccione gave an overview of the
28 CPA and projects that it could fund.

29 A. Panaccione stated that the CPA proposal would ask for a 1.5% surcharge on property
30 taxes with a \$100,000 residential exemption and a low/moderate income exemption for
31 seniors. She noted the state provides matching funds to encourage communities to adopt
32 the CPA. She stated that the CPA could generate approximately \$157,000 per year in funds
33 based on a 25% funding match from the state. A. Panaccione stated that the CPA funds
34 would need to be used 10% toward community housing, 10% toward historic preservation
35 and 10% toward recreation. The remaining funds could go toward any of those categories.
36 She stated that a CPA committee would need to be established. Their task would be to make
37 recommendations on how the funding would be spent. The Town Council would be final
38 authority on the awarding of CPA funds. A. Panaccione gave an overview of how housing

1 funds could be used. She noted that the average contribution toward the CPA would be
2 \$22.00 per year based on the median home value.

3 Community Development Director Alice Davey noted that funds allocated in the historical
4 use category would only need to be historically significant to the town and not on the
5 historical register. P. Hebert asked if there were federal regulations on the construction
6 process of projects using CPA funds. A. Panaccione noted that the construction process for
7 projects funded by CPA would be no different than other public new construction projects
8 and would need to follow procurement laws. She also noted that all CPA construction
9 projects must be ADA compliant. A. Panaccione stated that any land acquired by CPA cannot
10 be built on and must be maintained for passive recreation use. B. Barry gave an overview of
11 how CPA funds are acquired from the state. B. Barry noted that she supported the CPA. D.
12 Blais stated that some cities, including Springfield and Boston are looking to adopt the CPA
13 which would reduce the pool of funding available from the state. A. Panaccione noted that
14 state grant applications ask if a community has adopted CPA to add points toward their
15 grant application.

16 L. Baker asked how information will be disseminated regarding the CPA. A. Panaccione
17 stated that the Open Space and Recreation Committee has four meetings scheduled to
18 answer questions regarding the CPA. D. Blais stated that the Open Space and Recreation
19 Committee would have a booth at Celebrate Palmer to distribute information. A. Panaccione
20 stated that a Town Wide Mailer would be sent out. Information would be available on the
21 Town website as well.

22 B. Barry noted that the first reading to adopt the CPA ordinance would be on the agenda of
23 the next budget meeting.

24 *Motion to proceed with the public hearing process to adopt the CPA with a one and one half*
25 *percent Surcharge and a \$100,000 residential exemption and a low/moderate income*
26 *exemption for seniors by B. Barry, seconded by L. Baker. Motion passed 5-2 with P. Hebert*
27 *and R. Lavoie against.*

28 **b) John King Marker Relocation**

29 C. Blanchard gave an overview of the John King marker relocation proposal. C. Blanchard
30 stated that the proposal was to move the John King marker from the intersection of Stone
31 Street and South Main Street to the former Olmstead Park on the Steaming Tender
32 property. Robin Lamothe, Owner of the Steaming Tender Restaurant and resident Nelson
33 Pease were present to support the John King marker relocation. C. Blanchard noted that a
34 deed would need to be drafted to give an easement to the marker if it were to be relocated
35 to private property.

36 B. Barry noted that no vote would be taken at this meeting, however all information
37 presented would be taken under advisement.

38 Nelson Pease addressed the Town Council regarding the relocation proposal. He stated that
39 all historical evidence shows that the marker should be located near the train station, and

1 not its current location on Stone Street. He stated that he supports the proposal for the
2 marker to be moved.

3 Robin Lamothe stated that the land where the marker would be relocated to is the former
4 Olmstead Park. She stated that they purchased the former Olmstead Park to help improve
5 the town and highlight the architecture of the area. She stated that her goal is to build
6 Palmer as a tourist destination. She noted that Palmer was one of first towns in the country
7 to develop a train park.

8 c) Hazard Mitigation Plan – 5 Year Update

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10 Shawn Rairigh of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission addressed the Town Council to
11 provide an overview of the five year update to the town’s hazard mitigation plan. S. Rairigh
12 showed the primary hazards identified by the plan and the action items in the 2010 Hazard
13 Mitigation Plan that are either ongoing or completed. He noted that after the plan is
14 approved by both FEMA and MEMA, the Town Council will need to formally vote to adopt
15 the revised plan.

16 D. Blais asked if events that took place over the last five years were taken into consideration
17 when the plan was revised. S. Rairigh noted that all significant events were taken in
18 consideration when updating the plan.

19 d) Lawrence Street Zone Change Request

20 B. Barry acknowledged the letter from Clayton Lizak requesting a zone change for multiple
21 lots on Lawrence Street, specifically Map 65, Lot 9, Units 58, 59, 60, 62, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68 &
22 69 from Suburban Residential to Highway Business zoning.

23 *Motion to refer the proposed zone change on Lawrence Street to the Planning Board by D.*
24 *Blais, seconded by K. Williams. Motion passed 7-0.*

25 **7. Subcommittee Reports**

26 300th Anniversary Committee - L. Baker stated that the 300th Anniversary Committee held a
27 BBQ to celebrate the opening of the Endleson Park on June 11th, however, rain had limited the
28 participation in the event. The next 300th Anniversary Committee event will be an Ice Cream
29 Social July 14th at Hryniewicz Park.

30 **8. Town Manager’s Report**

31 C. Blanchard requested that the Town Council consider appropriating \$150,000 from Free Cash
32 to replace the carpeting in approximately half of the classrooms at Old Mill Pond School during
33 the summer of 2017. He also requested \$40,000 from Free Cash to create a new Chart of
34 Accounts for July 1, 2017. He stated that the cost is based on a quote of \$24,225 for the work
35 needed to be done by MUNIS, and \$15,775 from a consultant who would assist the Town and
36 the School with the transition. C. Blanchard requested \$25,000 from Free Cash for consulting
37 services to study the adaptive re-use options and to seek grants for conversion of Converse
38 Middle School to senior affordable housing, a Community Center and the Council on Aging.

1 B. Barry asked if the funding for the carpet replacement would be the same if it were done over
2 one or two years. C. Blanchard stated that the project would still need to go out to bid, however
3 the quoted cost was under \$300,000. An economy of scale may slightly reduce the cost.

4 B. Barry asked if a copy of the proposal for the upgrade to the Munis chart of accounts could be
5 forwarded to the Town Council for review.

6 B. Barry stated that she is concerned that considering a reuse of the school before the School
7 Committee agrees to move forward with closing the school would be premature. C. Blanchard
8 stated that the \$25,000 would go toward identifying the adaptive reuse potential for the school
9 in the event they decide to move forward with closing the school rather than waiting until the
10 school is already closed. He noted that identifying and obtaining grants and adaptive reuse
11 opportunities can take years. Discussion continued on what would be involved in identifying the
12 adaptive reuse of Converse Middle School.

13 The proposals were taken under advisement until the next Town Council Meeting.

14 9. Misc. Correspondence

15 None

16 10. Councilor's Roundtable

17 R. Lavoie reminded everyone that the Town Election is Tuesday, June 14th.

18 P. Hebert asked if all pavement had been done as part of the Thorndike Water Project. DPW
19 Director Gerry Skowronek stated that it had been completed. P. Hebert asked when the berm
20 on High Street would be completed. G. Skowronek stated that there are a number of punch list
21 items which would still need to be addressed. He noted that revitalization of the Thorndike
22 Common would be part of the punch list.

23 L. Baker asked if there was an estimate on when painting of the crosswalks would be done. G.
24 Skowronek stated that no bids for line painting had been received by the town, however, they
25 are still considering hiring an outside contractor to paint crosswalks.

26 D. Blais thanked everyone for their support during his time in office.

27 11. Adjournment of Formal Session

28 Motion to adjourn by P. Hebert, seconded by K. Williams. Motion passed 7-0 at 8:30pm.