

**Palmer Town Council  
Meeting Minutes  
May 23, 2016**

1       **1. Roll Call**

2       The Palmer Town Council Meeting of Monday, May 23, 2016 was called to order at 6:30 pm by  
3       Barbara Barry. Present were Town Manager Charles Blanchard, Councilors Robert Lavoie, Philip  
4       Hebert, Barbara Barry, Lorinda Baker, Mary Salzmann and Donald Blais. Absent was Councilor  
5       Karl Williams  
6

7       **2. Visitors Comments**

8       School Business Manager Brad Brothers and Superintendent Patricia Gardner addressed the  
9       Town Council regarding the Old Mill Pond carpeting replacement. B. Brothers presented pictures  
10      of the new carpeting along with proposal for carpeting the remainder of the building. He  
11      recommends funding the carpet replacement through Free Cash over a two year period. He  
12      requested \$150,000 to replace the Pre-kindergarten & Kindergarten wing as well as the 1<sup>st</sup> grade  
13      wing in the summer of 2017. B. Brothers noted that no moisture mitigation is needed for the  
14      product that was used in the sample classroom. P. Hebert asked if the school would obtain a  
15      quote on doing the whole school in one year. C. Blanchard noted that there may be a time  
16      constraint on trying to do the entire school. He also noted that allocating \$150,000 to this  
17      project may be more beneficial than his proposal to move free cash into stabilization. P. Gardner  
18      noted that they would like to show that they do have a plan going forward on replacing the  
19      carpets. B. Brothers noted that moving 5th grade to OMP will make replacing the carpet during  
20      the summer of 2016 impossible. B. Barry asked about the maintenance of the new carpet and  
21      noted that spills should be addressed by the maintenance staff immediately. B. Brothers stated  
22      that they have taken additional precautions to maintain the carpets.

23      B. Brothers stated that he would like to join the town in revising the schools chart of accounts.  
24      He stated that he would like to have the ability to run end of year reports on Munis in  
25      conjunction with the Town rather than use the current Fundware system. M. Salzmann asked if  
26      the school is willing to commit the time to consolidate chart of accounts. C. Blanchard stated  
27      that consolidating the chart of accounts was endorsed by the Auditor. His recommendation is to  
28      commit \$40,000 from Free Cash to begin the process of revising the chart of account.

29      B. Barry asked about the status of the Municipal Medicaid reimbursement. She stated that she  
30      feels that the amount of funds the town is projecting to recover is low. B. Brothers stated that  
31      they estimated recovering \$70,000 in municipal Medicaid reimbursement funds. B. Barry asked  
32      if the schools qualified for circuit breaker reimbursement. B. Brothers stated that the schools did  
33      not meet the threshold.

34      B. Barry stated she received a call from a coach that there was an issue at fields. She asked the  
35      individual if field form was filled out, which it had not been. She stated that there should be  
36      more communication to the coaches so they understand the process for filing complaints  
37      regarding the condition of the fields.

1 3. New Business

2 a. Election Warrant – June 14, 2016 Town Election

3 Motion to sign the election Warrant for the June 14, 2016 Town Election by L. Baker,  
4 seconded by D. Blais. Motion passed 6-0.

5 b. Zone Change

6 An overview of the proposed zone change to change eight contiguous parcels on Park  
7 Street from General Business to Highway Business was given by B. Barry

8 Motion to refer the zone change petition to the Planning Board for recommendation  
9 was made by D. Blais, seconded by P. Hebert. Motion passed 6-0.

10 c. CPO Designation

11 C. Blanchard gave an overview of the form which is required by the Inspector General's  
12 Office to designate a Chief Procurement Officer. Motion to authorize B. Barry to sign the  
13 Inspector General form designating C. Blanchard Chief Procurement Officer by D. Blais,  
14 seconded by L. Baker. Motion passed 6-0.

15 d. Other New Business

16 M. Salzmann asked if there is a schedule to begin crosswalk painting. DPW Director  
17 Gerry Skowronek stated that painting would begin in the next week. Discussion on  
18 crosswalk maintenance.

19

20 4. Budget Discussion

21 a. Capital Budget

22 C. Blanchard noted that a hard copy of the capital budget had been provided to the Town  
23 Council for review. Finance Director John Kuzmiski addressed Town Council regarding the capital  
24 budget. He gave an overview of the capital improvement planning (CIP) process. The CIP  
25 recommendations include \$13,500 for Tasers for the Police Dept, \$32,000 for a DPW pickup  
26 truck, \$22,100 for a Cemetery Dept. backhoe, \$14,000 for garage doors in the DPW and \$20,000  
27 for cafeteria tables at Palmer High School.

28 B. Barry asked about the sidewalk replacement costs at Old Mill Pond School. J. Kuzmiski noted  
29 that the cost presented in the Capital Improvement Plan is based on old figures and has been  
30 funded through free cash. He stated that there is \$1,709,576 remaining in free cash. D. Blais  
31 asked if wireless internet in the schools would be funded in the FY17 CIP. J. Kuzmiski noted that  
32 the schools presented wireless internet as a future expense. He stated that replacement of the  
33 cafeteria tables are the priority for FY17.

34 L. Baker asked about the proposal to replace the bleachers at Legion Field. J. Kuzmiski stated  
35 that the committee will hope to recommend their replacement in next year's CIP, but did not  
36 fall in the FY17 budget. G. Skowronek noted that there would be a high cost to demolish and  
37 replace the existing bleachers. They would need to get an estimate on how many people a new  
38 set of bleachers should accommodate. The DPW will continue to research options for replacing  
39 the bleachers. B. Barry recommended increasing the PHS Cafeteria Table Replacement amount

1 to \$4,000. B. Barry noted that perpetual care fund usage to fund a portion of the Backhoe  
2 replacement at the cemetery should be voted on by the Town Council. The CIP will be voted in  
3 conjunction with the FY17 operational budget.

4 B. Barry asked what the current amount owed to tax title is. C. Blanchard stated that the  
5 outstanding balance is \$103,867.47. There is currently a balance of \$159,520.18 remaining in  
6 the tax title accounts. C. Blanchard noted that there have been high cost properties which have  
7 required the town's use of the recap to raise funds for tax title purposes. B. Barry stated that the  
8 costs should be presented as part of the budget process. B. Barry stated that the town should be  
9 paying the attorney as costs are accrued. Discussion continued on the town raising the funds  
10 through the recap process for tax title.

11 B. Barry asked if On-site Professional Technical Assistance was necessary as part of the  
12 Treasurer's budget. J. Kuzmiski noted that the on-site human resource was not necessary, but  
13 recommended additional Munis trainings in lieu of reducing the budgeted amount. B. Barry  
14 asked about the additional information requested regarding the tree replacement program for  
15 the Cemetery Division. G. Skowronek stated that most of cost is used for tree removal rather  
16 than replacement.

17 B. Barry asked if the auditor had provided an opinion on the use of revolving funds. J. Kuzmiski  
18 gave the response from Town Auditor Tom Scanlon who stated he is not opposed to town's  
19 approach to the way they handle revolving funds. B. Barry stated that in a discussion with the  
20 Department of Revenue, they indicated 100% of revenue should be placed into the general fund  
21 and appropriated as part of the general budget.

22 C. Blanchard stated he had received an email regarding the status of the proposed mosquito  
23 control district. He stated that only 3 communities have committed to program so far. If they did  
24 move forward, \$31,775 would be committed for the Town's assessment. The Board of Health is  
25 working to assess the true level of commitment from other communities involved. He stated  
26 that if Holyoke commits to the program, then the anticipated cost would drop to \$21,205 per  
27 year. If all of the communities in the proposed district commit to the program, then \$17,000  
28 would be the annual appropriation. B. Barry asked that the town contact East Longmeadow to  
29 see what price they receive for mosquito control.

30 **5. Other Business**

31 C. Blanchard noted that there would be a Memorial Day Event at the PHCC on May 29th

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

33 *Motion to enter Executive Session as per Chapter 39, Sec. 23B (3) Contract Negotiations and*  
34 *adjourn therefrom by D. Blais, seconded by L. Baker. Motion passed 6-0 by roll call vote at 7:51*  
35 *pm. D. Blais – Yes, L. Baker – Yes, P. Hebert – Yes, R. Lavoie – Yes, M. Salzmann – Yes, B. Barry –*  
36 *Yes.*

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