

**Palmer Town Council  
Meeting Minutes  
November 7, 2016**

1 **1. Call to Order**

2 The Palmer Town Council Meeting of Monday, November 7, 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, Karl Williams, Barbara Barry, Lorinda Baker, Mary Salzmann and  
5 Matthew Lemieux. Philip Hebert was not present for the Call to Order but entered the meeting  
6 at 6:47pm  
7

8 **2. Visitors Comments**

9 Robert Haveles of the Palmer Events Planning Committee invited residents to attend the 300th  
10 Anniversary Gala on November 19th at Steaming Tender. Tickets for the event are available at  
11 Palmer Historical and Cultural Center.

12 **3. Meeting Minutes**

13 a) **August 8, 2016**

14 *Motion to approve the minutes of August 8, 2016 as amended by M. Lemieux, seconded*  
15 *by L. Baker. Motion passed 6-0-1 with R. Lavoie abstaining.*  
16

17 **4. Old Business**

18 a) **Loan Authorization Amendment – Increase Borrowing Limit for Town Hall Renovation**  
19 **Project**

20 B. Barry stated that the Council will address this Loan Authorization as a new borrowing  
21 rather than an amendment to the previously approved Loan Authorization.

22 C. Blanchard stated that the bids that the town received on the Town hall renovation  
23 project exceeded the original loan authorization of \$560,000. The total bid price from  
24 the apparent low bidder, W. J. Mountford, was \$715,000.00. C. Blanchard  
25 recommended increasing the loan authorization for the Town Hall Renovation Project to  
26 \$875,000 to cover the base bid, alternates and 15% contingency, along with other minor  
27 improvements which may be considered as part of the project. C. Blanchard stated that  
28 \$117,000 would be available in debt service due to retiring debt which could be  
29 dedicated to the project's debt service. C. Blanchard stated that \$115,000 per year could  
30 be used from lease payment from the landfill solar project as well as an additional  
31 \$125,000 one-time payment from the Landfill Solar Project for becoming the co-  
32 applicant on the DEP Permit. C. Blanchard stated that the loan would be a seven year  
33 borrowing which wouldn't have a significant impact on budget. He stated that free cash  
34 could be used to pay down the debt if the Town Council decided to pay it off sooner. C.  
35 Blanchard stated that the Town Council could vote on the loan authorization the night  
36 of the public hearing.

1 M. Lemieux asked if there were any other capital projects that the funds could be used  
2 for. C. Blanchard stated that the Town Hall renovation was the highest rated capital  
3 project. C. Blanchard explained that the temporary repairs to the Main Street Three  
4 Rivers Bridge would be paid from Chapter 90 funds to keep the bridge open to two lanes  
5 until Federal or State funding would be available to assist in funding the full  
6 replacement or repair the bridge. Discussion continued on the need to renovate the  
7 Town Hall.

8 M. Salzmann stated that she does not like the prospect of relying on the solar projects  
9 for funding the Town Hall Renovation Project. C. Blanchard stated that funding for the  
10 project could still fit within the operational budget without relying on the solar project  
11 funds and that additional funds from the solar projects would only make the project  
12 more affordable. C. Blanchard recommended rescinding Loan Authorization 2016-02  
13 and voting for a new loan authorization to cover the full estimated renovation costs.

14 *Loan Authorization 2017-01 authorizing the borrowing of \$875,000 for the renovation of*  
15 *the Town Administration Building was read by B. Barry.*

16 *Motion to rescind Loan Authorization 2016-02 which authorized the borrowing of*  
17 *\$560,000 for the Renovation of the Town Administration Building was made by P.*  
18 *Hebert, seconded by L. Baker. Motion passed 7-0.*

19 The public hearing and vote on Loan Authorization 2017-01 was set for December 5,  
20 2016 at 6:30pm.

21 P. Hebert asked how soon the loan could be paid off if the Town used the funds from  
22 the solar project to pay down on the loan. Discussion continued on the proposed  
23 amortization schedule for paying off the proposed debt.

24 **b) Complete Streets Policy**

25 G. Skowronek gave an overview of MassDOT's Complete Streets Policy Program and the  
26 proposed policy presented to the Town Council for their consideration. G. Skowronek  
27 stated that the proposed policy had been reviewed by the Planning Board. He noted  
28 that once the policy is supported by the Town Council, the policy must be approved by  
29 MassDOT. G. Skowronek stated that adopting a Complete Streets Policy will help  
30 leverage funds to improve connectivity of all modes of transportation within the town.  
31 He stated that the Mass-in-Motion Committee is in the process of doing an inventory of  
32 sidewalks throughout town which would be incorporated into the policy.

33 G. Skowronek stated that the Town can apply for up to \$50,000 in engineering and  
34 \$400,000 in construction funding through the Complete Streets Program. He stated that  
35 he is looking for approval from the Town Council to move forward with the review  
36 process. C. Blanchard noted that MassDOT is using the Complete Streets Policy program  
37 as an incentive program and that the requirements of the policy are not associated with  
38 Chapter 90 funding.

1 *Motion to support the passage of a Complete Streets Policy pending review by MassDOT*  
2 *by M. Salzmann, seconded by R. Lavoie. K. Williams noted that the sidewalk*  
3 *replacements are needed throughout town. Motion passed 6-1 with P. Hebert against.*  
4

5 **c) Any Other Old Business**

6 None

7 **5. New Business**

8 **a) Gail Farnsworth French -- Financial Fitness Club**

9 Gail Farnsworth French of the Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation  
10 (QVDC) addressed the Town Council regarding the new Financial Fitness Program  
11 offered by the QVDC. She stated that the program will begin in January and will be  
12 hosted by the Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce. Its purpose is to assist low-income  
13 residents who work in Palmer and small business owners to put money aside for one  
14 specific goal: education, a reliable, fuel-efficient car, a store or apartment rental, or  
15 technology or equipment for a small business. For every dollar that is saved in the  
16 program, QVDC will match savings 1:1 up to a capped amount. The saved funds used  
17 for the program must be earned income and cannot benefit income. G.F. French stated  
18 she is currently looking for people who are interested in participating in the program.

19 **b) 6:45 pm – FY2017 Tax Classification Hearing**

20 The FY2017 Tax Classification was opened by B. Barry at 6:59 pm. Principal Assessor  
21 Robert Leroux addressed the Town Council. He stated that the revaluation takes place  
22 every five years and that new values would be reflected in the FY17 tax rate. R. Leroux  
23 gave overview of the classification options. R. Leroux presented a comparison of  
24 residential values and rates from FY16 to FY17. He stated that the FY17 rate would be  
25 \$20.07, pending Department of Revenue certification. R. Leroux gave an overview of  
26 impacts of adopting a split tax rate. He also gave an overview of the Open Space  
27 Discount, Residential Discount and Commercial Exemption options. R. Leroux noted that  
28 the recommendation of the Board of Assessors is to adopt a single tax rate and not  
29 adopt the Open Space Discount, Residential Discount or Commercial Exemption.

30 P. Hebert asked how the change in values affects the tax rate. R. Leroux stated that an  
31 increase in values can reduce the rate. P. Hebert asked if an increase in the tax rate was  
32 necessary. B. Barry stated that the FY17 budget which was passed is the basis for setting  
33 the tax rate.

34 *Motion to adopt a single tax rate in FY2017 by L. Baker, seconded by M. Lemieux.*  
35 *Motion passed 7-0.*

36 *Motion to not adopt the Open Space Discount in FY2017 by P. Hebert, seconded by K.*  
37 *Williams. Motion passed 7-0.*

38 *Motion to not adopt the Residential Discount by M. Lemieux, seconded by L. Baker.*  
39 *Motion passed 7-0.*

1 *Motion to not adopt the Small Commercial Exemption by R. Lavoie, seconded by L.*  
2 *Baker. Motion passed 7-0.*

3  
4 **c) Permanent Police Chief Appointment – John Janulewicz**

5 C. Blanchard stated that the firm Public Safety Consultants, LLC was hired to do the  
6 Police Chief’s Assessment Center. C. Blanchard gave the criteria by which the Police  
7 Chief candidates were assessed.

8 Upon the recommendation of the Police Chief’s Assessment Center, C. Blanchard  
9 requested that Interim Police Chief John Janulewicz be appointed to the position of  
10 Permanent Police Chief effective November 6, 2016.

11 *Motion to appoint John Janulewicz to the position of Permanent Police Chief by L. Baker,*  
12 *seconded by K. Williams.*

13 B. Barry stated that J. Janulewicz has done a great job in his time as Interim Chief and  
14 looks forward to appointing him to role of permanent Police Chief. M. Salzmann  
15 congratulated J. Janulewicz on receiving the recommendation to be appointed  
16 permanent Police Chief. L. Baker stated that she would like to see the Coffee with a Cop  
17 Program continue under his tenure.

18 *The motion to appoint John Janulewicz to the position of Permanent Police Chief passed*  
19 *7-0.*

20 Chief J. Janulewicz thanked those who helped him through his interim chief period and  
21 through the assessment process to become Police Chief. He thanked the Town Council  
22 for the opportunity to serve the Town of Palmer as Chief.

23 B. Barry stated that she has been in discussion with J. Janulewicz over the need for a  
24 new radar board. The current radar board must be affixed to a cruiser and cannot track  
25 speed trends.

26 *Motion to appropriate \$4,600 from the Town Council Discretionary Fund for the*  
27 *purchase of a new radar board by B. Barry, seconded by P. Hebert.*

28 L. Baker asked if one sign board would be sufficient. J. Janulewicz stated that the new  
29 portable radar boards are light weight and can be fixed to utility poles. The newer  
30 boards gather data which inform police where there may be an issue with speeding to  
31 give them insight as to where to place a police officer. P. Hebert stated his concern  
32 regarding speeding around town. B. Barry stated that when people are concerned about  
33 issues, they should report them to the police and not just post them to social media.

34 *The motion to appropriate \$4,600 from the Town Council Discretionary Fund for the*  
35 *purchase of a new speed sign board passed 7-0.*

36 **c) Purple Heart Town Proclamation**

37 The Purple Heart Town Proclamation was read by R. Lavoie.

1 *Motion to sign the Purple Heart Town Proclamation was made by K. Williams, seconded*  
2 *by L. Baker.*

3 B. Barry stated that Palmer Resident William Byrnes had reached out to Senator Anne  
4 Gobi which helped get proclamation into motion. B. Barry stated that the Purple Heart  
5 Town Proclamation will be read at the Veteran’s Day Ceremony. Veteran’s Agent T. Brin  
6 thanked those who supported the passage of the Purple Heart Town Proclamation.

7 *Motion to sign the Purple Heart Town Proclamation passed 7-0.*

8 **d) Vote – PILOT Agreement w/ Beaumont Palmer LLC**

9 C. Blanchard gave an overview of the Beaumont Palmer LLC Solar proposal. The  
10 proposed project for would be for a 0.5 MW A/C rated solar field located at 100 Ware  
11 Street with a total annual payment of seven thousand seven hundred fifty dollars based  
12 on the 0.5 MW AC-rated nameplate capacity B. Barry asked if there could be any impact  
13 on the PILOT Agreements based on a pending appellate court decision. She stated that a  
14 case ruled solar pilots could be exempt from personal property.

15 *Motion to authorize the Town Council President to sign a Payment in Lieu of Personal*  
16 *Property Tax agreement with Beaumont Palmer, LLC for the period of twenty years,*  
17 *commencing with the initial August 1st Quarterly payment date in fiscal tax year 2017*  
18 *from the Completion Date of the installation of a ground-mounted photovoltaic power*  
19 *plant with an expected AC-rated nameplate capacity of approximately 0.5 megawatts to*  
20 *the end of the fiscal year, and ending with fiscal year 2037, at a rate of fifteen thousand*  
21 *five hundred dollars per megawatt capacity, or a total annual payment of seven*  
22 *thousand seven hundred fifty dollars based on the 0.5 MW AC-rated nameplate capacity.*  
23 *Such annual payment shall be adjusted by an annual tax escalator equal to 1.5% per*  
24 *annum beginning on the first anniversary of the Completion Date by P. Hebert, seconded*  
25 *by M. Lemieux. Motion passed 7-0.*

26 **e) Any Other New Business**

27 P. Hebert stated that he attended meeting with residents of Thorndike regarding the  
28 Thorndike Park. He noted that new basketball hoops have been installed at courts by  
29 the DPW. He thanked the DPW for moving forward with replacing the hoops. P. Hebert  
30 stated that at the meeting, the residents asked that motion lights be installed to deter  
31 drug use at the park and asked for additional lights so the park could be utilized at night.  
32 G. Skowronek stated that costs would need to be evaluated before new lights would be  
33 installed.

34 B. Barry stated that other communities are currently looking at placing a moratorium on  
35 recreational marijuana facilities until regulations are released by the state. C. Blanchard  
36 stated that Town Planner Linda Leduc is currently looking into the possibility of adopting  
37 a moratorium.

38 **6. Subcommittee Reports**

1 Ordinance Subcommittee – R. Lavoie stated the committee would be meeting soon to discuss  
2 the proposed False Alarm Ordinance and changes to the Snow Removal Ordinance.

3

4 **7. Town Manager’s Report**

5 C. Blanchard stated that an inspection of the Three Rivers Main Street Bridge will be conducted  
6 by Tighe and Bond on Tuesday, November 8th. The bridge will be closed to one lane during the  
7 inspection. C. Blanchard stated that the Veterans Day Remembrance Ceremony will be in Three  
8 Rivers on Friday, November 19<sup>th</sup>. C. Blanchard stated that the John King Homestead Marker will  
9 be unveiled at 1:00 pm at the Olmstead Grotto off Depot Street. Following that the PHCC and  
10 the 300<sup>th</sup> Committee are sponsoring a 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala at the Steaming Tender  
11 Restaurant from 6:00 to 10:00 pm. C. Blanchard reminded everyone that the presidential  
12 election is Tuesday, November 8th.

13 **8. Misc. Correspondence**

14 R. Lavoie stated that there would be a Veteran’s Day celebration on Thursday, November 10th  
15 at the High School. He also stated that there would be a Community Service Day on November  
16 19th with the Cub Scouts.

17 B. Barry stated that the Palmer Domestic Violence Task Force is looking for donations for  
18 families in need.

19 L. Baker stated that the Three Rivers Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary is conducting a Keep  
20 Warm drive to gather coats for local families.

21 M. Salzmann acknowledged the DPW monthly report and thanked G. Skowronek for providing a  
22 report on the activity of the DPW.

23 **9. Councilor’s Roundtable**

24 M. Lemieux thanked the Sons of Amvets for hosting the Three Rivers Halloween Parade. He also  
25 thanked the Three Rivers Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary for their pancake breakfast and the  
26 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee for their Pig Roast.

27 B. Barry acknowledged all of the positive comments she had received on the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
28 Parade.

29 **10. Adjournment of Formal Session**

30 *Motion to adjourn from formal session by P. Hebert, seconded by K. Williams. Motion passed 7-0*  
31 *at 8:30 pm.*