

Palmer Town Council

Meeting Minutes

June 12th, 2023-amended.

Call to Order:

The Palmer Town Council Meeting of Monday, June 12th, 2023, was called to order at 6:32 pm by Town Council Vice President Jessica Sizer. Councilors, Robert Lavoie, Matthew Lemieux, Philip Hebert, and Karl Williams were present. Also present were Town Manager Ryan McNutt and Executive Assistant Marlene Ottomaniello.

Visitor Comments

Robert Singleton – Gives his history and background as a Disabled Army Veteran. Would like the Town Council to consider using Converse Middle School to serve 4000 Veterans in the area. Asked for it use 3 days a week to hand out food, clothing, and other basic needs items. A flyer from the Massachusetts Military Support Foundation was given to council members to provide them with further information.

Steve Kosmider- St. Would like a status update on Converse Middle School. Asked what is useable at the school. If there have been any use studies completed.

Minutes

April 10th, 2023. - Motion by K. Williams, 2nd by R. Lavoie Vote: 5-0-0

May 8th, 2023, asked to be amended. - Motion by M. Lemieux, 2nd by R. Lavoie Vote: 5-0-0

No Old Business

New Business

Eric Duda Pathfinder Superintendent– Asked for Town Council's Vote of support to acquire the former Country Bank, 191 Sykes Street. Pathfinder School received 2 grants *for new programs and adult education* to use through September 2024. Discussed the various uses and potential of the building if Pathfinder were to acquire it.

Vote of Support to approve Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School District to acquire through purchase or donation the property located at 191 Sykes Street Palmer MA, currently owned by Country Bank for Savings.

Motion to Approve by M. Lemieux 2nd by J. Sizer 4-0-1. 2 absent- B. Barry & M. Caci. Councilor R. Lavoie Abstained, *due to being the* on school committee at Pathfinder.

Appointment – Chris Reim, to Palmer Cultural Council term to 2026

Motion by M. Lemieux, 2nd by K. Williams Vote: 5-0-0 (2 absent- B. Barry & M. Caci)

Appointment – Daniel Belanger, Palmer Board of Health term to 2026

Motion by R. Lavoie, 2nd by K. Williams Vote: 5-0-0 (2 absent- B. Barry & M. Caci)

Department Head Reports

Recreation – Andrew St. George

Topics - May 2023 Update. Wednesday night Concert Series at Depot Park through June. Hryniewicz Park Grand Opening plans. Community Chess Tournament. New MyRec Software/Online Interactions -has the capability to process registrations so that people can pay with cash, check or credit card online.

Discussion: R. McNutt – Received bid results for work to be completed at Depot Park. Announces that Andrew St. George is now the Scheduling Coordinator for all youth sports groups.

Town Council, R. McNutt & A. St. George – Andrews new role does not take over youth sports organizations, if one were loose entire board of directors then Andrew as the Recreation Director would keep it running until the board can be re-established. Create a uniform policy of fees for rental of fields, parks and Converse; include youth vs adult use. The recreational budget should become self-funded along with the use of Cultural Council Grants for concerts and events. In the process of forming a Recreation Group or Committee to help run programs and various other activities.

Conservation – Heidi Mannarino

Topics - Opportunity to acquire a 13.3-acre parcel of land along the Chicopee River that would connect Palmer with the Red Bridge State Park. Andrew St. George and Heidi Mannarino prepared and played a short video explaining description of land and why the Town of Palmer should invest. By purchasing Parcel ID# 16-43 L43 on Barker St. it would prevent development on the land while sharing beautiful natural areas with residents and providing recreational opportunities. Asking price of \$100,000 with Town Council approval conservation can pursue the L.A.N.D grant allowing for 70% reimbursement.

Discussion: Town Council, R. McNutt, A. St. George & H. Mannarino – Obtaining this parcel would make it part of Palmer and not State owned. Creates better accessibility for Palmer residents to access Red Bridge State Park. Parking and future needs if parcel was town owned. Review of current trails and surrounding properties.

Motion to support the pursuant of a L.A.N.D Grant for Parcel L43 Off Barker St. Three Rivers by M. Lemieux 2nd by K. Williams vote: 5-0-0 (2 absent- B. Barry & M. Caci)

Request for Amendment to Zoning – Additional Cannabis Retail -*refer to Planning Board*

Discussion: Town Council and R. Mcnutt – Current ordinance caps the number of retail licenses. Discussions with attorneys and other towns on wording of ordinance. Process from start to finish to open and operate a Retail Cannabis reviewed. Current ordnance states the maximum number of marijuana retailers in the Town of Palmer shall be limited to three at any one time. Also states the planning board cannot restrict the number of special permits. Palmer now has 4 potential Cannabis Retail shops looking to operate.

Motion to refer this ordinance change to the subcommittee on ordinances by J. Sizer 2nd by M. Lemieux vote: 5-0-0 (2 absent- B. Barry & M. Caci)

Motion to Amend Town of Palmer Special Speed Regulation No. 918-A

Discussion: Town Council and R. Mcnutt – Change the speed limit in one very particular location, Liberty Plaza Thorndike Street. Rescind the portion of the speed regulation that is 40mph by replacing the existing sign with “End Speed Zone” and remove the 40mph sign south of the intersection with High St.

Motion to amend Special Speed Regulation NO. 918-A by M. Lemieux 2nd by K. Williams vote: 5-0-0 (2 absent- B. Barry & M. Caci)

Resolution NO.: 2023-28

Purpose: To approve the use of ARPA funds for Church Street Bridge construction administration and oversight in the amount of \$254,800.

Motion: To transfer \$254,800 from CLFRF Fund 24123021 to Church Street Bridge account 3049109 for construction administration and oversight

Motion by R. Lavoie, 2nd by M. Lemieux Vote: 5-0-0 (2 absent- B. Barry & M. Caci)

Discussion: Whole project combination of ARPA Funds and Stabilization, approaching deadline to use ARPA Funds. Coordination efforts with Project Managers, Engineers, National Grid and Eversource.

Resolution NO.: 2023-29

Purpose: To approve the use of Free Cash to pay for a prior year obligation – FY 2020 Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District membership fee in the amount of \$5000.

Motion: To transfer \$5000 from Free Cash to the Mosquito Control account 015102-53001 to pay the FY 2020 Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District membership fee.

Discussion: Accountants crossed checked and ensured checks not cashed and FY20 fee never paid.

Motion by R. Lavoie, 2nd by P. Hebert Vote: 5-0-0 (2 absent- B. Barry & M. Caci)

Other New Business

Councilor P. Hebert would like parking at Burleigh Park to be reviewed. Suggests No Parking Signs next to speed/guard rails and placement of hardpack on opposite side.

No Subcommittee Reports

Town Managers Report

R. McNutt reads report to the Town Council

Discussion: Condolences on behalf of the Town to Jeffrey Turner and Carolyn Baldyga on their mother's passing. Also, to the family of Charles Ksieniewicz (former town attorney), Charles passed away on April 24th.

Bondsville Water Park Splash pad is open. The concrete pads poured for electronic signs to prevent wear and tear on lawn and tires. Senior Center is not closing, check out the center for all the upcoming events they are sponsoring.

No Misc. Correspondence

Councilor's Roundtable

The Town Council would like to remind people to vote on June 13th, polls open from 10-8 at Devine Mercy and Saint Thomas.

Motion to adjourn meeting at 8:27pm by J. Sizer, seconded by R. Lavoie Vote 5-0-0.