

1 **Palmer Town Council**

2 **Town Council Meeting Minutes**

3 Monday, June 9, 2014

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5 **1. Roll Call**

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7 The Palmer Town Council Meeting of Monday, June 9, 2014 was called to order at 6:30 pm.  
8 Present were Town Manager Charles Blanchard, Phil Hebert, Jason Polonsky, Barbara Barry,  
9 Matt Lovell, Donald Blais and Andrew Golas recording minutes. Paul Burns and Mary Salzmann  
10 were not present for roll call but P. Burns joined the meeting at 6:35 pm and M. Salzmann joined  
11 at 6:33 pm.

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13 **2. Consent of the Agenda Order**

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15 Motion to accept the agenda as submitted by J. Polonsky, seconded by D. Blais. Motion passed 5-  
16 0.

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18 **3. Meeting Minutes**

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20 May 19, 2014 – Motion to accept the minutes of May 19, 2014 as amended by J. Polonsky,  
21 seconded by M. Lovell. Motion passed 7-0.

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23 **4. Visitors Comments (for items not on the agenda)**

24  
25 None

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27 **5. New Business**

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29 **1. Senator Brewer Grant Presentation**

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31 Senator Stephen Brewer presented a check in the amount of \$40,000 to the Better Parks  
32 for Palmer committee for the renovation of Endleson Park and \$25,000 to the Yellow  
33 House for its ongoing community education programs. Senator Brewer thanked the  
34 community for their support during his tenure as senator.

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36 **2. Common Backyards Funding Transfer**

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38 Motion to waive the full reading of the Common Backyards Funding Transfer by P.  
39 Burns, seconded by J. Polonsky. Motion passed 7-0

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41 Motion to file and accept grants with and from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts,  
42 Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs for the Our Common Backyards  
43 Program for improvements to Eager Park by J. Polonsky, seconded by P. Burns. Motion  
44 passed 7-0.

45  
46 Motion to transfer \$17,050 from the Endleson Playground Construction Fund and  
47 \$1,350.00 from Certified Free Cash to the Eager Playground Construction Fund by P.  
48 Burns, seconded by D. Blais. Motion passed 7-0.  
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**3. Sherwood Lumber Easement**

Motion to grant an easement to the Palmer Redevelopment Authority, for rail purposes in, upon and across a cul-de-sac at the end of Third Street, in the Palmer Industrial Park, on a parcel of land as shown on a plan entitled “Easement Plan Third Street in the Town of Palmer, Massachusetts Prepared for Prime Distribution Services, LLC,” dated June 4, 2014, as may be amended, and to authorize the Town Manager to negotiate the terms and provisions of said easement, as may be in the best interest of the Town, and to execute, on behalf of the Town, said easement deed to the Palmer Redevelopment Authority by J. Polonsky, seconded by M. Lovell. Guy Hannum of Sherwood Lumber thanks the Council for considering granting this easement and for their support of the project. C. Blanchard explained how the planned rail spur would support development in the industrial park. Motion passed 7-0.

**4. Quaboag Street Crossing**

C. Blanchard gave an overview of the ongoing legal battle with Rail America over the Quaboag Street crossing. He outlined the resolution accepting the settlement and release of the pending lawsuit against Rail America. P. Burns questioned the wording in the agreement referencing Connecticut. C. Blanchard would confirm the wording with legal counsel.

Motion to authorize the Town Manager to sign the Settlement Agreement and Release regarding a certain civil action filed in Hampden County Superior Court, Case Number 12-795, Town of Palmer v. Rail America and New England Central Railroad, Inc., Defendants. By P. Burns, seconded by D. Blais. Motion passed 7-0.

**6. Old Business**

**1. Capital Improvement Program**

Finance Director John Kuzmiski addressed the Council regarding the recommended FY15 Capital Improvement program. He stated that the program included \$68,970.00 in town improvements and \$40,000 in school improvements. B. Barry asked what school improvements were being proposed in the Capital Improvement Plan. J. Kuzmiski stated that the bleachers, cafeteria freezer and steamer all at Palmer High School were all listed on the capital plan. J. Kuzmiski presented the five year capital improvement plan to the Council. P. Burns asked if projects not listed on the current capital plan would be carried over to the next year. J. Kuzmiski stated that projects not recommended for this fiscal year would be considered in the next fiscal year. M. Salzmann asked if the intention of the committee was to fund smaller projects or save to fund larger projects. C. Blanchard explained that the recommendations presented took into consideration the availability of funds in FY15 but were not specifically geared toward being larger or smaller projects. All requested projects were taken under consideration.

**2. 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee**

C. Blanchard presented a letter to the council requesting that business owners attend the next meeting of the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee. He also stated that he has

101 received additional interest from people looking to serve on the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
102 Committee. C. Blanchard requested that the council confirm the appointment of  
103 David Whitney, Iris Cardin and Eric Raymond to the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee.  
104 Motion by P. Burns, seconded by D. Blais to confirm the recommended  
105 appointments. Motion passed 7-0. C. Blanchard stated that he plans to present a  
106 recommendation to set up a 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Revolving Fund when the Council  
107 adopts the budget.  
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### 109 3. **FY15 Budget**

110  
111 C. Blanchard presented the proposed FY15 Budget to the Town Council. P. Burns  
112 asked that the Outreach Coordinator position at the Council on Aging be reviewed to  
113 ensure there is adequate funding in the budget. He also asked if the lower proposed  
114 funding will affect the library's grant funding. C. Blanchard stated that the budget  
115 presented does not pose a threat to losing accreditation. P. Hebert asked if the legal  
116 fees to fund union negotiations were included in the library budget. C. Blanchard  
117 confirmed that they were. P. Burns reiterated his concern over the lower library  
118 funding.  
119

120 Motion to approve the library budget as presented by M. Lovell, seconded by M.  
121 Salzmann. P. Burns asked that the number presented be confirmed with the Library.  
122 D. Blais stated that he would not support the library budget as presented. J. Polonsky  
123 stated that he believed it was a fair budget. Motion passed 6-1 with D. Blais against.  
124

125 P. Hebert stated that the issue of transferring \$142,000.00 from insurance to the  
126 School budget had been tabled from the previous meeting. C. Blanchard stated that  
127 the schools should present an actual deficit number by the end of the week. He  
128 presented the current free cash amount. C. Blanchard explained that the additional  
129 funding in the health insurance was to compensate for an increase in enrollment  
130 during the year. M. Lovell asked how the vote on the school floor replacement could  
131 affect the project if it didn't pass. C. Blanchard stated that the project would need to  
132 be scaled down to fit within the operating budget under proposition 2 ½. Motion to  
133 retable the discussion on moving \$142,000.00 from health insurance to the School  
134 budget by J. Polonsky, seconded by D. Blais. B. Barry stated that she wanted to meet  
135 the Net School Spending number and provide enough funding to spend on text books.  
136 Motion failed 5-2 with J. Polonsky and D. Blais against.  
137

138 Motion to transfer \$142,000.00 from the Health Insurance account to the FY14  
139 School budget by B. Barry, seconded by M. Salzmann. M. Lovell stated that he did  
140 not see it as a prudent use of the funds. Discussion continued on the status of the  
141 school floor replacement project. J. Polonsky stated that he would support the transfer  
142 based on conversations that he had with the school department. Motion passed 6-1  
143 with M. Lovell against.  
144

145 B. Barry asked for more clarification on the proposed increases in the budget. She  
146 also asked that the merit increases be broken out from the union increases. B. Barry  
147 asked that the registrar's stipend be reduced. She also asked that \$3,500 be moved  
148 from the Police Department expense to the Treasurer Contract services to cover the  
149 Unemployment services cost. B. Barry requested additional information on the  
150 \$1,500 in capital expenses for the Dog Officer and why there was an increase in the  
151 Group Life Insurance budget.

152 J. Polonsky asked that the council clerk funding be moved into the Executive  
153 Assistant's salary. P. Burns stated that the two positions should be kept separate.  
154 Motion to move \$3,500 from the police department budget to the Treasurer's budget  
155 by M. Salzmann, seconded by J. Polonsky. Motion failed 2-5 with M. Salzmann and  
156 B. Barry for the measure.

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158 Motion to move the budget as presented to the public hearing by P. Burns, seconded  
159 by M. Salzmann. Motion passed 7-0.  
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161 **7. Subcommittee Reports**

162  
163 D. Blais reported that the Police Station is now open and is 98% complete.  
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165 **8. Town Manager's Report**

166  
167 C. Blanchard stated that street sweeping is currently behind schedule due to the extended  
168 winter and malfunctions with the sweeper. He also reported that woodworking equipment  
169 from the school had been donated to the DPW for their use. Finally, he stated that June 19<sup>th</sup>  
170 would be the organizational meeting of the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee.  
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172 **9. Councilor Roundtable**

173  
174 D. Blais thanked everyone on the Open Space Committee for their efforts in developing the  
175 Open Space plan. He also thanked veterans for their service and reminded residents to vote at  
176 the town election on June 10<sup>th</sup>.  
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178 M. Salzmann thanked Palmer Paving for the job they did constructing the new tennis courts.  
179

180 P. Burns reminded everyone to vote at the town election. He also congratulated all the  
181 graduates for Palmer High and Pathfinder.  
182

183 J. Polonsky asked that residents have respect for political signs and not deface or steal the  
184 signs of individuals running for office.  
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186 P. Hebert stated that he would like to expand the DARE program into the High Schools. He  
187 also stated that he would like to continue the push on Economic Development  
188

189 **10. Adjournment**

190 Motion to adjourn by M. Salzmann, seconded by M. Lovell. Motion passed 7-0 at 8:20 pm.  
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193 Minutes submitted by: Andrew M. Golas