

Palmer Town Council

Meeting Minutes

July 8th, 2024

**Call to Order:**

The Palmer Town Council Meeting of Monday, July 8th, 2024, was called to order at 6:30 pm by Town Council President Barbara Barry. Councilors Jessica Sizer, Philip Hebert, Chris Pelletier, Karl Williams, and Mark Caci were present. Also present were Town Manager Brad Brothers and Executive Assistant Marlene Ottomaniello.

President Barbara Barry would like to welcome Chris Pelletier as our new Councilor and take the opportunity to thank Bob Lavoie for all his years of service on the Town Council.

**Visitors Comments**

Dave Golden, Faragon Ave - The roads, particularly French Street to Faragon, are in hazardous condition. There are potholes approximately 3 feet wide and 6 to 8 inches deep. We are concerned about emergency vehicle access due to these road conditions. DPW will take a look to see what can be resolved.

**Minutes**

January 8, 2024 - Motion by P. Hebert, 2<sup>nd</sup> by K. Williams vote: 5-1-0

June 10, 2024- Motion by P. Hebert, 2<sup>nd</sup> by K. Williams vote: 5-1-0

June 24, 2024- Motion by M. Caci, 2<sup>nd</sup> by J. Sizer vote: 5-1-0

June 27, 2024- Motion by P. Hebert, 2<sup>nd</sup> by K. Williams vote: 4-2-0

**Old Business**

Ordinance 2025-1 - Amendment to Ch. 122 Streets and Sidewalks, Article III Snow, Debris, Water, and Sediment on Ways and Sidewalks

Motion by J. Sizer, 2<sup>nd</sup> by M. Caci vote: 5-0-1

**New Business**

**Resolution 2025-01 ARPA Request** to purchase a 2025 Western Star 10-wheeled Dump/Plow Truck for the DPW in the amount of \$349,289

*Discussion* – DPW Director Matt Morse and Town Council review the conditions, including photos of the 2012 International Truck proposed to be replaced by a 2025 Western Star 10-wheeled Dump/Plow Truck. The DPW has three 10-wheelers and six 6-wheelers. The current truck has numerous issues including hydraulic problems, engine issues, and frame rot. Estimated repair costs for these issues alone are around \$30,000, and the expected lifespan of these types of trucks can be 10 - 20 years, potentially 30 years. The Town Council raises concerns about the maintenance practices at the DPW facility and that the vehicles should be repaired and maintained properly. Matt Morse informs the Town Council that all vehicles are maintained on a regular basis, the need for better facility maintenance tools as well as the recently acquired pressure washer. He also notes his concerns about washing salt-covered trucks near a river in a flood zone as the facility does not have a proper wash bay for vehicles.

*Motion by K. Williams, 2<sup>nd</sup> by B. Barry vote: 0-6-0 did not pass*

**Resolution 2025-02 ARPA Request** to purchase a 2024 Ford F350 for the DPW in the amount of \$70,445 as outlined in attached memo

DPW Director Matt Morse - (memo) This new 2024 Ford F350 will replace truck #2 in our fleet. Truck #2 is a 2012 Chevrolet 2500. This truck is used as our day-to-day task vehicle, picking up materials, trash runs, cardboard runs, used to pull trailers with equipment, haul tools and basic transportation. This truck is also used to snowplow some

smaller lots like the Senior Center. This truck has reached the end of its life expectancy. The following is a list of major concerns. The cost of these repairs at this time would be expected to surpass the value of the truck; rotted Frame, Body, gas lines & brake lines, transmission needs a replacement. This new truck will be purchased through the State Contract, VEH110 2023/2024 Cooperative Procurement Specifications Contract: VEH110. Option to purchase a ford F250 for \$69,026.00, but we recommend purchasing a F350. The price difference between the 250 & 350 is \$1,419.00, and the price difference comes with a heavier duty truck, better overall performance with upgraded suspension and capabilities, along with a much higher towing and payload capacity. Both options come equipped with municipal snowplow setup.

*Motion by P. Hebert, 2<sup>nd</sup> by K. Williams vote: 6-0-0*

**Town Council Approval -Bill H:4668**, An Act authorizing the Town of Palmer to grant three (3) additional licenses for the sale of all alcoholic beverages to Tables at the Farm located at 3092 Palmer St, Don Juans Cantina Palmer LLC located at 1519N. Main St, and Lukes' located at 1478 N. Main St.

*Motion by P. Hebert, 2<sup>nd</sup> by K. Williams vote: 6-0-0*

### **Department Head Report**

William Fenner, Building Inspector gives department head report and handouts of example violation notices that come from Massachusetts State Building Code - 780 CMR. Key points discussed were Building Code Enforcement, Non-Criminal Ticketing, Permit Application Process, Appeals Process, Energy Code Requirements and Upcoming Code Changes.

Discussion- Town Council and William Fenner review how the permit processing works step by step. Fees are typically paid upfront; payment alone does not constitute permit issuance. Applications go through various departments for approval, including Tax Collector verification. Applicants are then notified when permits are ready, either through an online portal or by phone. Appeals process- there is a 21-day period to appeal, this is a means of getting compliance.

### **Department Head Report**

Marlene Johnson, Council on Aging- gives department head report. Key Points- The Senior Center served a Total of 3,446 seniors and 1,788 of them were unduplicated. The Outreach Program Services- 635 unduplicated seniors served 1,097 duplicated service units provided including housing, family support, insurance, nutrition, cell phone use, medical care, elder abuse support, utilities, and other support services. Phone Call Program- 24 unduplicated seniors served, 362 phone calls made. Meal Programs- Breakfast served Tuesdays and Thursdays. Lunch is served Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Total meals served: 3,224 lunches and 76,200 breakfasts. Transportation -Two vans, with a third one being leased soon. There were 3,818 rides provided (including volunteer driver program) Other Services- Brown Bag program 852 bags provided, CESA Program 35 seniors signed up for 10 weeks of fruits and vegetables. Farmer's Market Coupon Books 50 books valued at \$50 each (total \$2,500) were given out. 18 Senior Volunteers donated 2,182 hours. Senior Work-off Program has 18 seniors participating.

### **Age & Dementia Friendly Action Plan- Becky Basch & Marlene Johnson**

Becky Basch- Community Assessment and Action Plan. Developed by Pioneer Valley Planning Commission with a task force including the senior center and other departments. Follows the town's comprehensive plan but includes additional areas like social environment and support for people with dementia. Regional Age-Friendly Initiative Proposal for a resolution to designate the whole region as age-friendly. At least half the towns in the region have become age and dementia friendly. Plan Aims to include engagement with older adults in all regional and municipal planning processes. Senior Center Services Provides assistance with insurance selection, fuel assistance applications, brown bag program applications, and other support services. Offers activities like memory cafes for people with dementia and their caregivers. Acts as a starting point to direct seniors to various

resources and services. AARP designates communities as age friendly. Provides support services, training, and technical assistance to towns. Works with the state on age-friendly action plans.

Discussion- The Town Council is concerned that the report does not provide enough specific information or resources for dementia care, there is a need for more awareness and support services for dementia in Palmer. Marlene Johnson explains the outreach coordinator asks specific questions to find out if seniors need extra help such as assisted living or senior housing.

Motion to approve and submit the community assessment and action plan to AARP - *Motion by K. Williams, 2<sup>nd</sup> C. Pelletier vote: 6-0-0*

Approval of the resolution (and signed by the chair) in support of Age and Dementia Friendly Pioneer Valley Planning Commission - *Motion by K. Williams, 2<sup>nd</sup> by J. Sizer vote: 6-0-0*

**Appointments - Motion to approve Appointments as listed by P. Hebert, 2<sup>nd</sup> by K. Williams vote: 6-0-0**

Appointment – Robin Lamothe to the Historical Commission term ending 6/30/27

Appointment – Michael Korzec to the Historical Commission term ending 6/30/26

Appointment – Richard Fickett to the Board of Registrars term ending 6/30/27

Appointment – Valerie Wlodyka to the Board of Registrars term ending 6/30/27

Appointment – Larry Jasak to the Board of Assessors term ending 6/30/27

Appointment – Donald Blais to the Conservation Commission term ending 6/30/27.

Appointment – Naomi Ellis to the Conservation Commission term ending 6/30/27.

Appointment – Tyler Allen to the Cultural Council term ending 6/30/27.

Appointment – Beth Zelazo to the Cultural Council term ending 6/30/27.

Appointment – Lisa Newton to the Cultural Council with a term ending 6/30/27.

Appointment – David Droz to the Licensing Commission term ending 6/30/27.

Appointment – Robert Frydryk to the License Commission term ending 6/30/26.

Appointment – Paul Benard to the Board of Health term ending 6/30/27.

Appointment – Michelle Rame to the ZBA term ending 6/30/25.

Appointment – Dennis Fountain to the ZBA term ending 6/30/27.

Appointment – Ingrid Thompson to the ZBA term ending 6/30/27.

**FY25 Town Council Meeting Schedule** - Town Council reviews the schedule, dates are subject to change and additional meetings may be added.

**Discussion of Council Rules** - Town Council members to review and update at next meeting.

**Discussion Council Sub-Committees** - Town Council members to review and submit interest to Council President Barbara Barry for next meeting.

### **Town Manager's Report**

Thursday Concerts at Hryniewicz Park are ongoing- next dates are Aug. 1 and Aug. 6.

Personal Property tax bills are due on August 1.

On August 6th, the Palmer Police Department is hosting the annual night out from 6pm – 8pm

8/8-9/24 Palmer Recreation is hosting the Rising Stars Basketball Clinic

Duke Track/ Field will hopefully be finished within a week or two, with a good stretch of weather.

Building Bridges is offering free lunch for all Veterans, sponsored by AMVETS on Friday July 12<sup>th</sup>, from 12 - 1:30pm

### **Councilor's Roundtable**

Councilor Phil Herbert would see the use of ARPA Funds in the amount of \$100,000 to aid in fuel assistance.

### **Town Council Reorganization**

President Barbara Barry - Nominated by J. Sizer and 2<sup>nd</sup> by C. Pelletier vote: 6-0-0

Vice President Jessica Sizer - Nominated by B. Barry and 2<sup>nd</sup> by C. Pelletier vote: 6-0-0

Clerk Mark Caci - Nominated by B. Barry and 2<sup>nd</sup> by J. Sizer vote: 6-0-0

*Motion to adjourn meeting at 7:50 pm by P. Hebert, 2<sup>nd</sup> by K. Williams Vote 6-0-0*