

**Town Council Meeting  
Meeting Room 1  
Tuesday, October 13, 2015**

1  
2 **1. Roll Call**  
3

4 The Palmer Town Council Meeting of Tuesday, October 13, 2015 was called to order at 6:30  
5 pm. Present were Town Manager Charles Blanchard, Councilors Robert Lavoie, Philip  
6 Hebert, Barbara Barry, Lorinda Baker, Mary Salzmann, Karl Williams and Donald Blais.  
7

8 **2. Visitors Comments**  
9

10 None  
11

12 **3. Meeting Minutes**  
13

14 August 3, 2015 - Motion to approve the minutes of August 3, 2015 as amended by D. Blais,  
15 seconded by L. Baker. Motion passed 7-0.  
16

17 **4. Old Business**  
18

19 **a. 2nd Reading - Ordinance 2015-01 - Adoption of Chapter 148, Sec. 26 H –**  
20 **Lodging/Boarding House Sprinkler Ordinance**  
21

22 Ordinance 2015 -01 regarding the adoption of chapter 148, section 26 H which would  
23 require the installation of sprinkler systems in all boarding and lodging houses within  
24 five years of adoption was read by R. Lavoie  
25

26 **b. Public Hearing - Ordinance 2015-01 - Adoption of Chapter 148, Sec. 26 H –**  
27 **Lodging/Boarding House Sprinkler Ordinance**  
28

29 Public hearing notice for Ordinance 2015-01 regarding the adoption of chapter 148,  
30 section 26 H which would require the installation of sprinkler systems in all boarding  
31 and lodging houses within five years of adoption was read by R. Lavoie. The public  
32 hearing was opened at 6:38pm by B. Barry  
33

34 Palmer Fire Chief Alan Roy noted that there had been an error in public hearing  
35 notice which stated the Town Council would be adopting MGL Chapter 149, Section  
36 26 H. B. Barry questioned whether the public hearing should be re-advertised due to  
37 the clerical error. C. Blanchard stated that he will clarify whether re-advertisement  
38 was necessary with town counsel.  
39

40 Public Hearing was closed at 6:42 pm  
41

1 **c. 2nd Reading - Ordinance 2015-02 - Adoption of Chapter 148, Sec 26 I - New**  
2 **Dwelling 4+ Unit Sprinkler Ordinance**

3  
4 Ordinance 2016-02, adopting chapter 148, section 26 I, which would require the  
5 installation of sprinkler systems in new and substantially renovated homes with four  
6 or more dwelling units was read by R. Lavoie.

7  
8 **d. Public Hearing - Ordinance 2015-02 - Adoption of Chapter 148, Sec 26 I -**  
9 **New Dwelling 4+ Unit Sprinkler Ordinance**

10  
11 The public hearing notice of Ordinance 2015-02 adopting chapter 148, section 26 I,  
12 which would require the installation of sprinkler systems in new and substantially  
13 renovated homes with four or more dwelling units was read by R. Lavoie.

14  
15 The public hearing was opened at 6:46pm by B. Barry. B. Barry noted the clerical  
16 error on the public hearing notice stating the adoption of chapter 149, section 26 I.

17  
18 The public hearing was closed at 6:46 pm.

19  
20 **e. Rail Service Support Letter**

21  
22 Motion for all members of the Town Council to sign the proposed letter supporting  
23 the restoration of passenger rail service in Palmer and submit the letter to MassDOT  
24 by M. Salzmann, seconded by D. Blais. M. Salzmann asked for letter to be read. R.  
25 Lavoie read the full letter. Motion passed 7-0.

26  
27 **f. 300th Founders Day Committee Update**

28  
29 L. Baker updated the town council on the activity of the 300th Founders Day  
30 Committee. She stated that there are currently five active members of committee.  
31 She stated that they hope to have a link for the 300th Founder's Day website by next  
32 Monday. They are currently looking to add a PayPal function to the website to sell t-  
33 shirts online. L. Baker stated that they have sold 50 t-shirts so far. She stated that  
34 there has been a strong interest from seniors to buy t-shirts.

35  
36 L. Baker stated that the 300th Founder's Day Facebook page is active. She stated  
37 that there will be a 6:00 pm meeting of the Founder's Day Committee, Thursday,  
38 October 15th at the Palmer Police Department. They are currently looking for  
39 volunteers to assist in conducting the proposed activities. L. Baker shared a  
40 proposed list of events for the year which included events for each month. She  
41 stated that if they are unable to conduct an event each month, they will do one event  
42 each quarter. She stated that August 20, 2016 will be the Founder's Day Parade.  
43 They have also scheduled a Christmas Tree Bonfire for January 20, 2016. L. Baker  
44 stated that Dick Rondeau of Rondeau's Ice Cream has donated ice cream for an ice

1 cream social event. She stated that the senior center has donated manpower for  
2 their events. L. Baker stated that the committee has sent out letters of interest to  
3 local businesses to procure donations for the events. She stated that the committee  
4 did a radio interview on WARE to promote the Founder's Day events.  
5

6 L. Baker stated that the committee currently has \$3,522.57 remaining in their  
7 revenue allotment. She stated that they will be selling more t-shirts and will have an  
8 information table at Palmer Pumpkin Palooza. M. Salzmann asked if a mural will be  
9 done in conjunction with the 300th Founders Day. L. Baker stated that they will look  
10 into the mural proposal. She also stated that they be purchasing a large birthday  
11 cake which will be decorated by students from the three schools.  
12

### 13 **g. Other Old Business**

14  
15 M. Salzmann asked if the FY15 financial books are closed. C. Blanchard stated that  
16 they are. M. Salzmann asked when the Ordinance Review and Recodification  
17 Committee would be scheduling a meeting soon. C. Blanchard stated that he will  
18 schedule a kickoff meeting.  
19

## 20 **5. New Business**

### 21 **a. Discussion on the adoption of MGL 58 section 8C**

22  
23 C. Blanchard gave an overview of MGL Chapter 58, section 8C which would allow  
24 the town to enter into agreements with abandoned property receivers under the  
25 Attorney General's abandoned housing initiative. C. Blanchard stated that the town  
26 would need to adopt the section of law as an ordinance to allow the town to eliminate  
27 owed late fees and up to 75% of owed taxes to allow a receiver to take over property  
28 which had been abandoned. C. Blanchard stated that he had reviewed the proposal  
29 with both the town's Tax Title Counsel and General Counsel. He stated that he is  
30 looking to see if there is any interest from the Town Council in moving forward with  
31 adopting this section of law. C. Blanchard stated that there is a strict set of guidelines  
32 that the property must fall under and the potential receiver must follow in order to  
33 qualify for tax relief under this section of law.  
34  
35

36 M. Salzmann asked how many properties would fall under this program. C.  
37 Blanchard stated that he is not sure how many properties would qualify for this  
38 program. He stated that the Board of Health has been working with many properties  
39 in town to combat property abandonment. L. Baker asked how much of the town's  
40 housing stock is considered affordable housing. C. Blanchard stated that 5.2% of all  
41 housing is considered affordable. C. Blanchard described the proposed receivership  
42 process. B. Barry stated that she would like to look into the proposed legislation  
43 closer to make sure the process does not open a loophole allowing tax forgiveness

1 on all properties. Discussion will continue at the next meeting after more information  
2 on the proposed legislation is obtained.

3  
4 **b. Catch Basin Cleaning Truck**

5  
6 C. Blanchard stated that the WWTP vactor truck has been used for cleaning catch  
7 basins but has needed significant maintenance due to excessive wear and tear.  
8 DPW Director Gerry Skowronek stated that there would be significant costs if the  
9 town needed to replace the vactor truck. He stated that a special revenue account  
10 with \$100,000 was established in the sewer surplus at the end of the CSO project  
11 which was to fund the purchase of a camera truck. Upon review, the town  
12 determined that the investment in a new camera truck was unnecessary, however,  
13 the funding was never moved. G. Skowronek stated that it would cost the town  
14 \$199,000 for new catch basin cleaning truck. He would like to move forward with  
15 purchasing a new catch basin cleaning truck before the end of the year to avoid cost  
16 increases to the production price. G. Skowronek stated that the current fleet of DPW  
17 vehicles is about 20 years old and is in desperate need of replacement.

18  
19 C. Blanchard stated that he would like the town council to transfer \$100,000 from the  
20 sewer surplus account and appropriate \$100,000 from Chapter 90 funding to  
21 purchase a new catch basin cleaning truck. M. Salzmann asked if MassDEP is  
22 planning to impose any stricter guidelines. G. Skowronek stated that new stormwater  
23 regulations are coming down from the state. P. Hebert asked what the primary  
24 function of the vactor truck is. G. Skowronek stated that the vactor truck to clean  
25 sewer lines, but is not designed to clean catch basins. He stated that after the  
26 purchase of the catch basin cleaning truck, there would be \$200,000 remaining in the  
27 Chapter 90 fund and \$1.5 Million in the special revenue account. G. Skowronek  
28 stated that the DPW has spent \$600,000 to date in Chapter 90 funds.

29  
30 *Motion to transfer \$100,000 from the sewer surplus account for the purchase of a*  
31 *catch basin cleaning truck by M. Salzmann, seconded by L. Baker. P. Hebert asked*  
32 *why the full amount cannot come from sewer surplus account. G. Skowronek stated*  
33 *that due to the fact the truck would be used as a dual purpose vehicle, he did not*  
34 *want to fund it strictly from the sewer surplus account. Motion passed 7-0.*

35  
36 **6. Subcommittee Reports**

37  
38 Ordinance Subcommittee - D. Blais stated that the Ordinance Subcommittee began  
39 discussions on revisions to the Snow and Ice Ordinance. They will be meeting will be  
40 meeting on October 29th to discuss the proposal further. R. Lavoie stated that the  
41 Ordinance Subcommittee did not have any recommendations on a false alarm ordinance,  
42 but would be discussing further.

1 Council Rules Subcommittee - M. Salzmann stated that the revised council rules had been  
2 sent to everyone

### 4 **7. Town Manager Report**

5  
6 C. Blanchard stated that he recommended appointing Andrew Golas to the License  
7 Commission. *Motion to appoint Andrew Golas to the License Commission by D. Blais,*  
8 *seconded by P. Hebert. Motion passed 7-0.*

9  
10 C. Blanchard stated that the council may recommend appointing a counselor to the final  
11 open position on the License Commission. M. Salzmann expressed interest in serving on  
12 the License Commission. *Motion to appoint M. Salzmann to the License Commission by D.*  
13 *Blais, seconded by L. Baker. Motion passed 6-0-1 with M. Salzmann abstaining.*

14  
15 B. Barry stated that she believes the makeup of the License Commission should be the  
16 Town Manager, a Town Councilor, the Police Chief and two residents. Discussion continued  
17 on what the makeup of committee should be.

18  
19 C. Blanchard recommended appointing Dave Cotter to the Conservation Commission.  
20 *Motion to appoint Dave Cotter to the Conservation Commission by M. Salzmann, seconded*  
21 *by L. Baker. Motion passed 7-0.*

22  
23 C. Blanchard recommended appointing Mike Magiera to serve on Ordinance Review and  
24 Recodification Committee. *Motion to appoint Mike Magiera to the Ordinance Review and*  
25 *Recodification Committee by M. Salzmann, seconded by D. Blais. Motion passed 7-0.*

26  
27 C. Blanchard provided the council with the recommendations brought forward by the Traffic  
28 Study Committee. He stated the recommendations would be forwarded to MassDOT for  
29 review before they are implemented. P. Hebert stated that he would like to serve on the  
30 Traffic Safety Committee.

31  
32 C. Blanchard stated that Boston Mutual Life Insurance is offering a new policy for  
33 employees. Finance Director John Kuzmiski stated that the purpose of the new program  
34 was to appeal to younger employees.

35  
36 L. Baker asked which crosswalk in Three Rivers was scheduled to be eliminated by the  
37 Traffic Safety Committee. Andrew Golas stated that the crosswalk directly outside of the old  
38 Tambrands entrance would be eliminated because it did not meet the standard of the traffic  
39 safety code.

### 41 **8. Misc. Correspondence**

42  
43 M. Salzmann acknowledged the report from the DPW Director.  
44

1 B. Barry stated that there would be a forum on the restoration of passenger rail at the  
2 Palmer Public Library on October 28th at 6:30 pm. She also acknowledged the cleanup of  
3 the Converse Street Memorial and thanked Nick Czajka for his efforts on that project.  
4

#### 5 **9. Councilor Round Table** 6

7 D. Blais thanked the Palmer Public Library for hosting his talk about the Lincoln  
8 Assassination. He also congratulated Patricia Gardner on being appointed the new  
9 superintendent of schools. He stated that he will be attending the legislative breakfast in  
10 Chicopee.  
11

12 P. Hebert wished everyone a Happy Halloween  
13

14 M. Salzmann stated that the Veterans Day Parade would be held in Bondsville on  
15 Wednesday, November 11th.  
16

17 B. Barry stated that the CMS Trot for Technology has raised \$18,000 for new computers in  
18 last few years. She would like to appropriate additional free cash to aid in the purchase of  
19 new technology at the school.  
20

#### 21 **10. Adjournment** 22

23 Motion to adjourn by D. Blais, seconded by K. Williams. Motion passed 7-0 at 8:00 pm.