

# November 19, 2012

Chairman Michael Jackson called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

**Present:**

Members: Jack Boyer, Barbara Brown, Gary Fitzherbert, Michael Jackson, Craig Schoon, Rex Swain.

Alternates: Ted Bent

Selectmen: Mark Lyon, Tony Bedini, Richard Carey

Treasurer: Linda McGarr

Guests: Phyllis Allen, Judea Cemetery Commission

**Minutes:**

Minutes of the October 15, 2012 were accepted as submitted.

**Financials:**

Year-to-date financials, the Treasurer's Report and the Tax Collector's Report were reviewed.

The Tax Collector's report as of November 15, 2012 indicated 53.84% of the anticipated tax income had been collected. Michael Jackson noted his concern on the current low interest rates. Treasurer Linda McGarr noted while the interest rate is low it does cost the banks to insure that the Town's principle funds are always secure, which is most important. Linda will communicate with the banks regarding current rates.

**Judea Cemetery Commission:**

Phyllis Allen, Treasurer of the Judea Cemetery Commission, updated the Board on the need for additional maintenance at the Judea Cemetery site due to the recent storms. The property is Town-owned and the necessary tree and maintenance work will exceed the current budgeted finances.

The State Statutes regarding cemeteries were discussed. They are very stringent with regard to the financing of cemeteries. Funds from the purchase of lots must be deposited to a Perpetual Care account. Only the interest received from this account may be used to cover expenses. This is in addition to Town-appropriated funds in the annual Town budget, which are currently budgeted at \$4,000. An estimated \$15,000 is needed to repair the storm damage.

Jack Boyer made a motion to approve an ex-budget appropriation of \$15,000 to cover these expenses. The motion was seconded by Gary Fitzherbert and unanimously passed.

The Selectmen will work further with the Cemetery Commission to address a long-range plan for ongoing funding and maintenance.

**Education:**

Tony Bedini updated the Board on the Region 12 facilities. Kaestle Boos has been contracted to do an audit of the middle-high school building to determine what repairs are necessary and the estimated cost for those repairs. They expect to have those cost estimates this month. Kaestle

Boos also submitted a preliminary drawing showing a possible MS/HS/Elementary configuration for the present building, which is an interesting design showing feasibility.

Coliform has recently been found in a well at the high school site and bottled water has been made available to everyone. They are working to determine the source and correct the issue.

Tony noted the Mansard roof on the middle-high school is complete after having been torn out and rebuilt.

Tony also reported possible changes to class scheduling and curriculum are being addressed by the Superintendent and the Board. A vocal minority of parents, encouraged by teachers, have argued long and hard against any changes. The changes are necessary to comply with State regulations and to provide more educational opportunities for the students.

Many opinions have been expressed on this long-range planning. Michael Jackson reported a meeting with the Superintendent of Schools, Board of Ed Chair, First Selectmen and Board of Finance Chairs has been scheduled for November 30th. He noted the issues of declining student population and the use of buildings is a state-wide problem with 16 of the 18 regional school districts throughout the State. He is seeking information at the State level to see what has been done in the various Regions as these matters worsen daily. The Superintendent has noted we are not currently meeting State standard requirements. Suggestions include county-wide regionalization or merging with another Region. It was noted students cannot be tuitioned-out if towns have a high school or merge with another region. Current Education costs are \$22-24,000 /per student. Our Special Education percentage as compare to other Regions is high.

### **Highway Garage:**

Mark Lyon reported we have contracted with Lenard Engineering to do a design/build spec for a new town garage. Plans will include attaching the building to the existing garage and storing extra materials in the foundation from the former building. A settlement with the insurance company has not yet been completed; however, settlement has been made on the vehicles. We have one new truck budgeted for the 2012-13 fiscal year for \$110,000. Plans include running electrical service to the upper storage barn. There are no immediate plans for the Titus Road site as there is no area at the town garage for by-products or construction materials.

### **Town Hall Building:**

Requests for Proposals have been extended for building heat and window replacement in the main hall. An architect has been hired to reconfigure the downstairs area. A structural engineer from the insurance company will also review the area. Mark reported he had met with the Buildings & Property Committee, as well as the BMTH trustees regarding the future use of the stage area. A new heating system has been installed and has worked well. This will be more efficient and will lower costs.

### **Cell Tower Lease:**

Mark reported a balance of \$1,400 remains in the ex-budget line item appropriated for the cell tower matter; however, outstanding invoices are currently \$4,000, with another \$2-3,000 anticipated. Legal fees to address land use issues may also remain with the lease. He noted working with Homeland Towers has been very fruitful; however, it has been recommended that the Town have protection in case there are any changes in the ownership of the company. If a lease agreement is finally reached, it must be approved at a town meeting. Homeland Towers would be

responsible for obtaining agreements with companies to go on the tower. These would then be forwarded to the State Siting Council for approval.

Jack Boyer made a motion to approve an ex-budget appropriation for \$10,000 for cell tower costs. Barbara Brown seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously passed.

**Roads:**

Tony Bedini reported road projects are going very well. Highway Director Kevin Smith will be asked to the next meeting. Tony noted he is working with Kevin on a spreadsheet of all the town roads.

**Greenways Account:**

It was agreed that this account be closed.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathy Gollow, Finance Secretary