

# July 15, 2013

5:00 P.M.

## **Present:**

Regular Members: Jack Boyer, Barbara Brown, Michael Jackson, Rex Swain, Craig Schoon

Alternates: Liddy Adams,

Selectmen: Mark Lyon, Tony Bedini, Richard Carey

Treasurer: Linda McGarr

Guests: Sarah Cornell

## **Minutes:**

Minutes of the Board were reviewed and amendments were made as follows:

Washington Community Housing Trust:

Jack Boyer noted a correction to the May 20th minutes that it had been the intention of the WCHT to purchase the existing house, restore it, and retain ownership of the remaining land. This land would then be leased, rather than purchased, by future home builders.

Rex Swain noted that it was he who had questioned the Board's appointment policy for filling vacancies on the Board, not Rex Collum.

Minutes were approved as corrected. Apologies to both Jack and Rex.

## **Financials:**

General Fund:

Mark Lyon reviewed 2012-13 General Fund year-end financials, noting specific areas:

- \* The Fire Department was over budget, mostly due to extra repair work on engine 6.
- \* The Private Duty Police line was over budget; however, this is reimbursed by income received for this work. The Resident Trooper line item was over budget due to the increase in the police pkg. with State that was approved after our budget was set.
- \* While the Building Department expenditures are over budget as they are annually; they are more than offset by income derived from this Department.
- \* The Tunxis Recycling Operating Committee for recycling costs for the 11/12 fiscal year had been included in the 12/13 year, thus the over-budget in this line item.
- \* MSW and Recycling:  
Possible funding may be received from BRRFOC and TROC from the Town's tipping fees over the past few years. It may be appropriate to set up a separate fund in order to use these funds for work needed at the transfer station, as well as to offset costs anticipated for new recycling bins to be purchased for town residents. The Town's auditor will be consulted.

Nonrecurring Capital Fund:

Currently, funds are being spent mostly on road work. Bids received for the anticipated purchase of a new tractor were higher than those budgeted.

### **Town Garage Replacement:**

Mark reported final engineering documents should be received in order to go out to bid.

### **Town Hall Refurbishment:**

Replacement windows are being installed. The Selectmen have met with the architect regarding the stage area with regard to new code-compliance, lighting, a sound system and more exits. They are also looking into the stage area for use as a conference room, land use area and possible storage as opposed to the stage. Discussion has resulted in the conclusion that the town hall no longer needs a stage. The possibility of a kitchen in the stage area was also discussed, and question was raised if a kitchen in that area is really needed if the town hall continues to be rented for outside parties.

### **Education:**

Tony Bedini updated the Board on the status of the current school buildings and the possibility of considering other options for the Region. Until an actual referendum on the future of the Regional setup is held, nothing will change. A referendum question would be required and would have to be shaped by attorneys and sent to the Secretary of State for approval. If given the State's approval, the proposal would again be submitted to the Board of Education and a Regional vote would be required to determine the outcome. Tony noted the Board has not gotten to the point of having a vote on the issue and it is currently an awkward situation. The Board of Finance recognized this problem of diminishing school populations throughout the regional school districts in the State; and it was suggested that consolidation in some form may be the only answer. The importance of solving this problem and allowing the School Board to function with regard to their regular business is vital. It was suggested if the three towns and the Region can't come to some agreement, it may become necessary to get the State involved.

### **Former Texaco Station:**

Mark Lyon reported a group of people have been working toward the purchase of property in the center of the Depot formerly known as Vinnie's Texaco station. The current owner had excavated under the floor of the building and it had received a clean bill of health from the DEEP and continues to be monitored. It is understood the property would remain in its current ownership as a non-profit. While the Commission felt this project would be a worthwhile addition to the village and provide more clean space, it was noted that it does not meet the criteria to be considered as open space and would not be eligible for Open Space funding. It had been suggested that the Board of Finance might consider an ex-budget appropriation toward this project. Michael Jackson noted the matter must first be recommended by the Board of Selectmen prior to consideration. Concerns were raised if this is the type of project for which Town funds should be used, that it would take away from further business use, that contamination issues may still remain, and it is in a flood zone. It was noted contamination issues would stay with the previous owner. Question was raised if the Town did provide funding would it become a partner. It was noted the Town funding would be assumed as a gift. It was noted the seller would have to provide insurance. It was suggested there should be a town-wide request for funding by the non-profit and that the Selectmen should come to a consensus on the matter before proceeding.

### **Request for Proposal:**

Rex Swain suggested while a response had been received for writing Request for Proposal procedures from the Town's auditor, this should be put out to bid as required by our Town Ordinance. He also requested a response from the auditor why the billing is now on an hourly basis rather than as a flat amount in the past. Rex felt there should be flat dollar amount.

**Pension issues:**

Fire/EMT Fund:

Rex Swain reported the trust document for the Firefighters/EMT account is being reviewed by the bank.

**Town's Defined Benefit Plan:**

Rex Swain reported he had not heard back about closing the current Employee Defined Benefit Plan for new entrants. With regard to a Defined Contribution Plan, the Pension Committee has scheduled a meeting with the USB as to how it would work. The current idea is that this Plan and the current Employees' 457 Plan could be handled by the same company, where the employees would choose their own investment accounts. The Pension Committee will continue their review.

**Town Bidding:**

Selectman Tony Bedini reported he felt the requirement to extend Invitations to Bid for projects estimated at \$12,000 or more is inadequate at this point. A detailed description of work is now required, as well as hiring an architect. The scope of the work is beginning to cost as much as the project. It is difficult to get a local response because of the many requirements. He suggested \$25,000. would be more realistic and would allow the use of local contractors for many smaller projects. Jack Boyer suggested contacting other communities for their requirements. This change to a Town Ordinance would require a vote at a town meeting. The Selectmen will continue addressing this issue.

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

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathy Gollow, Finance Secretary