

June 17, 2013

Corrected Minutes - Replaces minutes posted July 15

5:00 P.M.

Present:

Regular Members: Barbara Brown, A.J. DuBois, Michael Jackson and Craig Schoon, Rex Swain

Alternates: Liddy Adams

Selectmen: Mark Lyon, Richard Carey

Guests: Sally Cornell, Rex Collum

Appointment of Alternate:

Chairman Michael Jackson introduced Sally Cornell to the Board as a candidate for the position of Alternate. Sally noted her background for the Board members. The Board unanimously welcomed Sally as a new Alternate member of the Board.

Rex Swain noted he was unhappy with the appointment process followed and disagreed with the policy that the Board of Finance follows for filling vacancies. Michael Jackson noted the Board follows the State Statutes as required in CGS 7-343, which allows the Board of Finance to fill a vacancy on their Board until the next scheduled election

Suspense List:

The Board approved the Suspense List as provided by Tax Collector Tanya Wescott. The Suspense List includes those taxes that are no longer assets to the Town, but remain collectible.

Tax Collector - Retirement:

Tanya Wescott has indicated she plans to retire from the position of Tax Collector prior to the November elections and will be leaving office as of December 1. It was noted the newly-elected person may not have any experience in a position of this type, but Tanya has indicated she is willing to return to be of assistance for a while. She has outlined step-by-step procedures to be followed and a job description has been written. The Board noted their appreciation for Tanya's excellent work.

Auditor:

It was noted the audit for the Town must be bid in accordance with Town Ordinances.

Treasurer's Report:

Accepted as submitted.

Financials:

First Selectman Mark Lyon reported most expenditures for the 2012-2013 fiscal year are in line with the budget and he anticipates a small surplus for the year. He did note one area that may exceed the budget line item is in the Police area. Upon checking with the State, it was reported the

State's benefit package is more than they had originally anticipated prior to the current year's budget deliberations. This will be reviewed with the auditor.

Assessor:

The position of Assessor will also become vacant at the end of June. Everyone wished our current Assessor Barbara Johnson well and noted their appreciation of the fine job she has done on behalf of the Town for many years. Barbara's replacement will be Delisse Mocher, currently an assistant to the Assessor of Torrington. Her salary will be \$43,000, she is well qualified, and the Town looks forward to a successful change in this position.

Education:

Members from each of the three Boards of Finance and Selectmen will join in reviewing the long-range planning options for the Region. All options in excess of \$70,000,000 have been eliminated. Michael Jackson noted the impact on individual town's balance sheets and the towns' rating with regard to the \$70 million dollar option. It was suggested that a consolidated school would be the best long-term investment but they did not feel the idea of floating a \$70 million bond would be good at this time. It has been quite a process but they are further along than we have ever been. The Committee will proceed to the Board of Education with a basic recommendation that building a new Pre-K – 5 building at the Shepaug campus should be considered. They would then work on a schedule of funding and repairs on the Middle High School. Costs have been run out twenty years. Whether the Board of Education will consider their suggestions under advisement is uncertain. This option is in the \$30-35,000,000 range, but it will be necessary to get the feeling of where the voters are on their suggestions. It was again noted any change must be agreeable to the three towns and approved at a referendum. While combining classes may help with class size, it does not help with enrollment in the district. Cost per pupil is anticipated to be \$55-60,000. in twenty years at the current status. The main issue is what can be done about the demographics as a whole. The school administration has sent a survey to all realtors in the Region's three towns as it was felt they are experienced with property values. One question was how integral is the choice of school. It was noted many residents already send their children to private schools by choice. Mark Lyon noted one of the most cost effective items that should be substantiated would be if the middle-high school were to be closed and how the students would be accommodated. A cost-wise analysis could be run and most likely a large savings could be realized, but this is probably not something the Board of Education would entertain at this point. It will be a very difficult decision for the Board to make. Regarding the Education budget for the 2012-13 fiscal year, it was noted there most likely be a modest surplus.

Pension:

Rex Swain reported the Pension Committee continues to consider several possibilities in the interest of cost, safety and the future of the Pension Plan: a new defined contribution plan, combining the current 457 Plan with the Town's Pension Plan, as well as developing fund options that employees may choose, which would remove some of the responsibility from the Pension Committee. The Committee will continue to seek legal advice to insure the protection of the Town's Pension Plan, as well as the Firefighters/EMTs Plan with Robinson & Cole. The Committee also has met with USB regarding investments. They are pleased with the job they are doing.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Gollow, Finance Secretary