

# TOWN OF WASHINGTON, CT

## Special Town Meeting

Bryan Memorial Town Hall

March 8, 2007

**Moderator: Greg Seeley**

**Clerk: Sheila Silvernail**

The meeting was called to order by First Selectman Richard C. Sears at 7:33 p.m. welcoming everyone and requesting nominations for moderator. Greg Seeley was duly nominated, seconded, and elected.

The following participants were identified and took part in the discussion and proceedings of the meeting: Richard Sears, Greg Seeley, Sheila Silvernail, Sheila Anson, Diane Dupuis, Paul Frank, Joseph Mustich, Thomas McGowan, Ken Cornet, Janet Buonaiuto, Ken Carlson, Tom Elkins, Carole Matteo, Rod Meissner, Janet Hill, Ray Reich, Keith Templeton, Dean Fraley

Richard Sears: Do I hear a nomination.

Audience: I nominate Greg Seeley.

Richard Sears: The name of Greg Seeley has been nominated. Is there a second to that...Thank you Richard...any others? All in favor of Greg Seeley running the meeting tonight...say aye.

Audience: Aye.

Richard Sears: Thank you. Greg has run many meetings before. We do have a new clerk tonight for the first time. I'd like to introduce and thank Sheila Silvernail for being with us tonight. I'm going to ask Sheila to come and give the warning of the meeting.

Clerk: Warning Town Of Washington, Connecticut: Special Town Meeting  
The voters and electors of the Town of Washington are hereby warned that a Special Town Meeting will be held on Thursday, March 8, 2007 at 7:30 p.m. at Bryan Memorial Town Hall, Washington Depot, Connecticut to consider and act upon the following:

1. To authorize Richard C. Sears, First Selectman, to enter into and sign contracts on behalf of the Town of Washington with the State of Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection.
2. To amend the Town Ordinance "Tax Relief Program for Elderly and Disabled Homeowners."

Dated at Washington Connecticut, this 27th day of February, 2007.

Richard C. Sears, Nicholas N. Solley, Mark E. Lyons: Board of Selectmen

Moderator: Good evening everybody. There are plenty of chairs down here if you would like to sit down, now's a good time to do that, feel free. Just a couple of housekeeping things to start with. We'd like to ask that during the meeting, during the discussion portions of the meeting, if you do wish to direct a question or a comment that you do so towards the podium, not to others.

Secondly, there is a microphone at the stand in the middle. I ask you to come up and pick up the microphone and use it so that everyone in the hall can hear you.

Thirdly, this is the New England form of civil discourse and I simply ask you all to be civil. And finally, just a warning that anyone that tries to trip me up with Robert's Rules of Order details will get ten demerits and in order to attend the next town meeting you'll have to bring a note from your mom.

Lastly what I'd like to ask because I know there is some concern about the boat launch issue which actually happens to be the first item on the agenda. I'd like to ask if there are no objections that we deal with the second resolution first which is the Tax Relief Program for the Elderly. Are there any major objections to doing that in a reverse order? If not, then I'll entertain a motion from the First Selectman on that.

Richard Sears: It would be Item #2 on our agenda. **I move this resolution to amend the Ordinance "Tax Relief Program for Elderly and Disabled Homeowners" to read under "ELIGIBILITY", Section E:**

**"Applicants whose income levels are above the maximum allowable for state tax relief may qualify for tax credits under this ordinance if Total Income for the previous calendar year shall not exceed"...**

...we'd delete "\$36,900" and add...

**"an amount recommended from time to time by the Tax Assessor and approved by the Boards of Finance and Selectmen of the Town of Washington."**

Audience: Inaudible

Moderator: **Thank you. A motion is conveyed. Is there a second?**

Audience: **Second.**

Moderator: **Accept the second. Discussion?**

Richard Sears: Two years ago, we...passed this ordinance to give our lower income seniors an additional tax relief other than the law allowed by the state and federal guidelines...for the past two years we have voted to distribute \$20,000 among all eligible seniors. And we set the ceiling for eligibility higher than the state income level. Now the state income level has gone up as Social Security payments and so forth have gone up with inflation. It's going to happen from time to time. Rather than have to come back every year, or whenever that happens, to a town meeting to amend this ordinance, we thought, the Board of Selectman and the Board of Finance, that if we work with the Tax Assessor who would recommend the new increase, which is slightly above the state level, we would recommend to the Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen, if we all agreed, we would have the power, in giving us the power to set that income guideline. That's the purpose of this.

Moderator: Questions or comments? Again, if you'd come forward to the microphone we'd appreciate it so that everyone can hear you.

Unknown: I just have one...if you're going to up the anti on the amount of dollars and income, why don't you think about altering the \$20,000 at their discretion as well.

Richard Sears: No, We can't and...right now that's the maximum that would be allowed. You have to change the ordinance to change that amount.

Unknown: Change the ordinance.

Richard Sears: We can't do it. We're not going to...are you saying you want to do it tonight?

Unknown: Why not? Change it...inaudible.

Moderator: Just a point of order. CT law does not allow amendments to proposals that have been advertised ahead of time, so it can't be amended tonight. However, it could be introduced as another motion at a future date. Other questions or comments? Going once...anyone at all? If not, **I'll call for a vote. This requires a simple majority. All in favor of the motion as presented please signify by saying aye.**

Audience: **Aye.**

Moderator: **An opposed, nay?**

Moderator: **Motion passes.** We call on the First Selectman again to introduce the next motion.

Richard Sears: **Appearing as Resolution #1 for tonight I would move this resolution,**

**“Be it resolved that it is in the best interest of the Town of Washington to enter into contracts with the Department of Environmental Protection. In furtherance of this resolution, Richard C. Sears, First Selectman, is duly authorized to enter into and sign said contracts on behalf of the Town of Washington. The First Selectman is further authorized to provide such additional information and execute such other documents as may be required by the state or federal government in connection with said contracts and to execute any amendments, recessions, and revisions thereto.”**

Moderator: **Ok, a motion has been made. Is there a second?**

Audience: **Second.**

Moderator: **Ok, there is a second. I'll call again Mr. Sears to address this issue.**

Richard Sears: As you can see, the nature of the motion is simply to empower your First Selectman to enter into contracts with the DEP. It's something which the town, the people gathered, this is the legislative body, this is the power body that enables the Selectman to carry out your wishes. We have to do this for any contracts that we enter into when we award contracts and so forth. So this is simply to sign with the DEP to be able to receive the \$100,000 dollars grant and all the paperwork that's done for that for the DEP for the establishment of the boat launch at Lake Waramaug. If I might, Mr. Moderator, I'd like to further explain several things. I'd like to read to the assembly a memo from the Town Clerk which the Board of Selectman received today. Many of you here, perhaps you all are here for this particular purpose to talk about the boat ramp. And many of you have signed a petition and would like to see certain actions. This is the Clerk's ruling on the petitions.

“This is to Richard C. Sears, Nicholas N. Solley, Mark E. Lyon from Sheila Anson, Town Clerk, March 8<sup>th</sup>: Petitions.

Pursuant to Section 7-7 of the General Statutes of CT, two hundred or more persons or 10% of the total number qualified to vote in a meeting of a town or other municipal corporation, whichever is less, a petition to Clerk. Petitions to act...on the boat launch schedule for the call of March 8, 2007 Town Meeting may be made by referendum and are on file in the office of the Town Clerk. I as Town Clerk certify each petition page contained and...qualified to vote. The total number of certified was less than 200 persons. Attached is a copy of those numbers broken down by elector and tax paid. The petitions contain different languages that...some of the forms, so I broke the numbers down to Petition #1 and Petition #2.

It would be the opinion of the Town Attorney if the petitions refer to the same subject and if the taxpayers are eligible to vote. Also attached are copies of the different forms. Respectfully submitted, Sheila M. Anson, Town Clerk.”

So it’s determined by the Clerk the petition did not meet the requirements to call for a referendum vote.

Audience: What was the number on that proceeding?

Richard Sears: I don’t know.

Audience: You don’t know. How many were submitted? How many were qualified?

Richard Sears: I don’t know.

Audience: I understand it was 197.

Richard Sears: The number of qualified...

Audience: (Sheila Anson?) 196.

Richard Sears: The number of qualified signatures was 196.

Audience: How many were submitted?

Audience: Inaudible.

Richard Sears: I think the Moderator needs to manage the meeting.

Moderator: Ok, again, I’d like to reiterate. If you have a question or comment, please direct it to the podium and please come up to the microphone so everybody can hear you and also I’d like to ask that you identify yourself by name and...so our secretary understands who is asking the question.

Joe Mustich:  
Nettleton Hollow ...was trying to get the Resolution #1 put on the ballot so that all the people in town who vote...voting booth during the day. I spoke with a lot of elders and families with children who can’t come out at night. It’s very difficult. Anyway, I wanted to ask Dick and/or Sheila how many signatures were actually qualified. We needed 200 and we received? Sheila?

Sheila Anson: 23?...(inaudible)...I didn’t get it.

Joe Mustich: How many were qualified?

Sheila Anson: 196.

Joe Mustich: 196?

Moderator: 196

Joe Mustich: ...public record. You think there were how many submitted? 230?

Sheila Anson: Inaudible.

Joe Mustich: 248? Again the intent was just so the people in the audience know is that the resolution be brought to ballot booth so that people can vote during the day...coming out late at night. I got a lot of calls from folks who couldn't make it, old, elderly, etc. etc. There is a question though...of which some of the names were bumped. The count was 196. We needed 200. There'll be some investigation into that. One of the individuals whose name was bumped from the petition, and I had her sign, she signed for me, was Valerie Anderson who is the former co-chair of the Republican Party. I think everyone knows...

Moderator: Your comments are now out of order and I just ask that we get back on the subject at hand. Apparently the petition has been denied by the Town Clerk. There are other means for you to make...about that issue. I'd like to move on.

Joe Mustich: We came pretty close. Thank you.

Moderator: By the way, just for the assembled folks, there is a state law which allows a petition to be tendered to do a town referendum in lieu of a vote at a town meeting. That's really the explanation that may help clarify what the point of this was.

Yes, if you could come forward please and identify yourself.

Janet Buonaiuto: I'm another one of the people who circulated a petition. I had twenty names on the list. Three of the names were bumped. Two for the reason that both the father and the son, both live in Washington, they pay their taxes in Washington, the father and the son have the same name. They were not identified as senior or junior...on the petition. Their names were purged from the list. My question is, "Are we going to be as careful when we take a vote here tonight? Are we going to be as careful about making sure that everyone who votes is qualified to vote? Either a taxpayer in the town or a property owner? How are you going to make sure?"

Moderator: There are two ways we can do the vote essentially. One is voice or a show of hands and the other is paper ballot if you so choose.

Janet Buonaiuto: Ok, but how are you going to make sure that only people who are qualified to vote as you so careful on this petition to purge people to decide if we're not qualified to sign the petition, how are you going to be so careful tonight to do that?

Moderator: The Registrar of Voters has lists of those people who are either registered voters in the Town of Washington or own \$1000 or more in assessment property. So if you do decide to go with a paper ballot, you may notice there are letters up in the corners here as we have done sometimes in the past. Those lists and the registrars will be in the four corners to hand out ballots to those people who qualify.

Janet Buonaiuto: So they're going to check everyone off of the voters list...

Moderator: They would do that, yes, if you choose a paper ballot. And that's your choice as assembled multitude, then yes, every person who gets a paper ballot will be on that list.

Janet Buonaiuto: Thank you.

Moderator: John, if you could come forward.

Unknown: I think you'll be able to hear me.

Richard Sears: For recording purposes.

John Gillen:  
New Preston I live in New Preston. I've lived down in New Preston for over twenty, twenty-four years and enjoyed the lake all that time. Right now I don't think I have enough information to make an informed decision, so I thought this would perhaps be a good idea to go to a town referendum so the issues could be better explored. And I signed the petition. I'm not for or against it at this point. I just don't feel enough information has been given out to make an informed decision on my part. It's my understanding that my name and my wife's name have both been for some reason, bumped off this list, off the petition. I've been...the whole process has been thrown into suspicion when that happens. I don't think...votes and just now the hammer comes down and the petition is denied is acceptable.

Moderator: We do run these according to state statute and that's what the state statute calls for. Again, if you are looking for a remedy of your petition, this is not the...for that, sorry

Audience: What is?

Moderator: I'm not clear on that. I don't know. It's not under the purview of the town meetings to determine the validity of the petition that comes from the Town Clerk's office. I'm sure there are...for that, I'm not really familiar with what they are.

Ken Cornet:  
Nettleton Hollow I also...one of the petitions for this. I feel that I've gotten so many calls from seniors who really would like to be out here. Call after call after call. I think that this is not the right way to do it. When you first...this past year there was not stipulation whatsoever of anybody who voted. It was a very...People came here from different towns and...the people from the different towns. And there was no room to figure out who and where they were. I think that we owe it to our people who've called. They've been here for sixty years...and cannot...and I really think that we owe it to them to have a ballot.

Kathy Gollow:  
New Preston I work for the Selectman's office. Whatever way this goes is fine. If it goes to referendum...ballot, or whatever, but to have you impugn the integrity of the Town Clerk in this town is disgusting. She is one of the most honest people I have ever met. She very, very carefully went through the names. She is very, very free in...she didn't go through every dot and T that wasn't crossed. But, to impugn her integrity is outrageous and it makes me ashamed of the people of this town and the way things are going.

Richard Sears: Thank you Mr. Moderator. What I'd like to do if I could have the privilege, I'd like to explain some things because a number of us are very concerned about this little piece of property over in New Preston at the lake. That's the heart of the concern and I want to address some of those concerns with you. And John, ever after this there perhaps may not be enough information for people to make an informed decision...Again, the decision is on empowering the First Selectman to go after the state grant to make the ramp possible. We're committed by the Lake Waramaug Agreement to have a boat ramp and we can get \$100,000 from the state or we can't. But, I'd like to show you folks, please, and talk with you for a couple of minutes...picture up on the lake.

It's not big enough, but it's a start because people are asking to see what we're talking about. The boat ramp is...and the final details of the ramp, the launch that's been approved by the DEP and the DOT in two and a half years of negotiations with the Town of Washington and has been through all the land use approval processes with many public meetings is not on here. The location of the new boat launch...this is the town beach property. It's just over one acre. It's a tiny piece of property on the south end of the lake by Doc's in the three corners here. Boat launch will go here. Currently there is a boat house, a storage garage...more than ten years in the process with hundreds and hundreds of people involved

starting with an...three towns around the lake saying, "We don't want an unmonitored boat, open...boat ramp at the state park property in Warren." That's the threat, that's the reality because the Commissioner of DEP is under mandate by law to have public access to this...water...all motor boating access for the public that is beyond the citizens of the three towns. But, it's a mandate that these are the public waters of the people of Connecticut. So there will be a public boat launch.

Now if you notice...for the first time, see that the context of this is Allie Chapin stood up for you long before I was in politics as it is, long before Elaine came along in negotiations with the DEP and with the towns of Warren and Kent, to say, "We want to control the lake, motor boats entering the lake so that we don't wreck the lake." And at that point it was the only lake, I understand, in the State of Connecticut without invasive aquatic species. We now this past year have found our first aquatic invasive and it was probably brought in by boats, but not since we have an inspection program. The only kind of motor boat launch on Lake Waramaug is right here at the current town boat launch. Citizens of Washington, Warren, and Kent can use that launch now. Boats...must be inspected. Invasives will be taken off...if they're on it. But, this has protected our jewel of the lake for years. Hundreds of thousands have been put into the lake to keep it clean, to keep aerated, to...the algae bloom, and have one of the finest fresh water bodies in the state or New England. People privately and the towns have put public...to keep it beautiful and clean.

This...over in Warren with a...neutral local commission. It's representatives from three towns that talk once a year about public money that's in our budget to keep the aerator and pumps going and the water transfer pumps on...going to keep this water pure, clean, and fresh for swimming, boating, fishing, or looking at. So the three towns have all supported the beauty and health of this lake.

More than ten years ago, the people around the area in the three towns surrounding the lake said that if we're going to keep the lake, we're going to have to be proactive in controlling open public access because the design for the boat launch at the state park which is that shallow...which would have to be dredged even though there's plenty of spacious acreage out there...the design is for...eight cars and forty-five boats per day without any inspection program. Even if the DEP said, "Hi, we're from the state, we'll inspect for you." Most people who know this lake and know some of the state agencies know that that support would probably go away through budget cuts. So the terrible compromise was where can a boat ramp go to protect the lake and to limit motor boating, but also to allow for...public motor boating. And Allie Chapin sat at the table with Commissioner...and Elaine Luckey sat at the table with

Commissioner...and I sat at the table with Commissioner...the former Commissioner of DEP to hammer out an agreement which was passed in this town hall, the Kent Town Hall, and Warren Town Hall unanimously in 2004. In the public meeting prior to that...there were debating what this is all about, which was like this, people spoke with some energy. But, at the meeting...trying to focus what this was really was all about...when we finally voted as a town, only four people spoke in the hall. One person raised questions about it and wanted to delay the vote. But, the other three, only three people, four people spoke. It was voted unanimously to support the Lake Waramaug Agreement. All three towns and the DEP have signed on and what it says in there is that the only public that will ever be allowed...this agreement, is at the Town of Washington boat launch.

Now what we have is dilapidated, old boat launch...There's people who know this intimately much better than I do. If we do not rebuild this boat launch, we will still be mandated...It doesn't say anything that we have to put in a new boat launch. It says that we have to allow twenty boats a day from outside the three towns to enter that lake through our boat ramp. We could use what we have which has no parking that we own or control. It's part of the...issues I trust. So we can leave the ramp as it is or we can accept the offer of the DEP for a grant for about half the price. Your selectman a year and a half ago with budget coming up, that's already approved, said there's \$200,000. We're depending on \$100,000 grant from DEP and another state grant of the...capital improvement grants. We've already said together, you voted, I voted last May at the budget meeting to support this \$200,000. It's contingent on getting \$100,000 from the state, but if we don't get the \$100,000 from the state I think we'll pay for it. That...to be seen.

That's the singular issue about the resolution tonight. It's about giving immediate power...I work for you to sign the agreement to...the money.

Now what this is...I understand we're tender about this. This is a tiny one-acre piece of property. It currently shares multiple uses already with bathers, and fisher people, and picnickers, and people who...and people who boat, people who stare at the boats, canoes, and kayaks. There's a lawn tractor stored here. There's a Zodiac inflatable safety boat that will save your life or someone else's, an airboat there or fire rescue equipment. The Lake Waramaug Authority is our policing arm funded by the three towns around the lake that keeps their boats...All of those functions emanate out of this little, tiny piece of property.

And I'm sad for the energy that says just do anything because it's not needed, it's...because things need to be continued either here or somewhere else. For instance, this piece here of the boat launch, if you just look at the entire sense of it. The new boat would be here, parking

spaces, and ramp. This is that ugly, deteriorating garage structure. It's 30 by 50 feet two stories. It's a boat house and also includes the fire and rescue boats, and Lake Waramaug equipment, and the groundskeeper's equipment, and the air compressor pump that's run by the three towns...that pumps air that keeps the lake clean. It's all in there now. That has to go away to meet the needs of the state and the three towns to make the boat launch fit on this part. So nothing initially from here over is touched. Now this is the Hanks house, this is the cottage. It's a little deteriorating cottage with the 1943 model bathrooms downstairs, upstairs actually. This is the beach house. The beach...so forth are here. That's not going to be touched. It may never be touched if the people of Washington don't want to support that.

This is not a conspiracy by...This is moving along. This is urgent because of a timer clicking away to get the boat launch in place with the DEP in a certain time frame. So the...functions in the current boat house, these would be...They don't have to be in a new 30 by 50 foot facility, but they have to be provided for, a rescue boat, a fire boat, a police...a committee being led by Ray Reich, a...citizen, long-time member of the town and on the Parks and Rec Commission, and his committee...their working with...replace it on this tiny property and design a functional building to take care of one, two, three, four, or five of those functions. That's where they are conceptually right now.

There's been no attempt to keep critical information from you...There's an engineer working with...Let me show you, the septic system is here. The swings are here and are over the septic system. This is the sandy beach area. This is...it's grass, it's beautiful. Much of it is shaded. This is the fence line. This is the parking area. None of that will be touched. I'm telling you. That's the...the functions that need to be placed elsewhere...the compressor to keep the lake healthy. That may be a new building. Boats may go, canoes, kayaks, rowing...or they may not. It's really up to you and I now point out that the improvements for all of this are yet to come. If you don't like the design or the placement or the signs or the...or the money spent, you will have plenty of chance to talk about that, talk against it. Nothing is a done deal except we're working on the boat launch to meet the greater health and safety and public access of Lake Waramaug.

So all this grassy area...this is grass, this is the ugly fence. We're talking about protection and upgrading of the entire waterfront property over a couple of years. So the functions here that are going to go away need to be placed somewhere. Perhaps, someone said...Hank's house in the basement, maybe jack it up two stories. That may be the end of the day answer. That's not out of the question. So you don't have...coverage which is an issue. But the answers are not in yet. But we're moving in that

direction. Whether or not we ever spend a couple of hundred thousand dollars to upgrade the house and bathrooms for the beach and the Hank's house...caretaker. Some don't. What about security and presence in a public area, especially on the lake. That's what we've had. It works now.

These decisions haven't been made yet. They're not being made tonight. It's not about the vote tonight. This is about all the town has. It is a committee working on what has been called Phase Two which is the relocation of the boating and compressor and police issues.

So, I know this is...concerns and people have been planning that life as we know it at the beach will stop when we get this \$100,000 grant. It has to go through such stringent approval process. It has to come before you, these steps. That's what I...as the head selectman. My other two selectman will confirm that this is really...The cost of this...I mean this is amazing to me. Someone said...this tiny one-acre piece of property and it's going to cost us a million dollars. The boat launch estimate by the engineer, and engineers aren't notoriously accurate nor architects because we know that by the time you get done doing what they say you should do...the construction of the boat ramp will be \$216,000. DEP \$100,000. We've already set aside...from the town. We won't need all that. I know that. Town of Warren is deliberating on \$25,000 to see if their people will support that. The Town of Kent is considering whether they want to put money in it or not. The Lake Waramaug Association has already promised \$25,000 for this phase. So our cut is going to be somewhat...less than \$100,000 if it comes in reasonable. Giving an unheated...facility boathouse if it were that size 30x50...post and beam construction, no Taj Mahal. Functionability that looks nice and is in scale, how much per square foot? Maximum \$200,000? Most of that would come from the town...have said we'd be interested in supporting it if we can have our boats in there. And, the Lake Waramaug Task Force wants to replace their compressor pump in an 8x10 building there or elsewhere and they'll give money for that. So there's private money towards this. Fifty? I don't know. And yet this house is for us to do...That's all we know. You needed to know the condition and we'll keep talking about it.

The approvals are in front of us. The motion before us is to empower the First Selectman to simply sign and receive the grant to make the boat launch happen. Thank you.

Moderator: Ok, who's next?

Mary Weber:  
Cogswell Road I live on Cogswell Road, also known as Slaughter House Road and that's why I got rejected. Sorry that's my mistake. Anyway, I think a lot of people ought to know that I'm really not happy about this boat launch financing. I've gone to the lake every single day every single summer that

since I've moved here twenty-seven years ago. We, I have a real problem with the fact that all the...of this boat launch is Washington's. It's Washington's roads. It's Washington's money. It's Washington, Washington, Washington. Why do only have a maybe Kent will put some money in, whatever they feel. And Warren, Warren has a beautiful beach. No one has really...on their property. I don't like this. That's the problem that I have with the whole thing. It's all us. The three towns are on the lake and Washington gets the shaft. I cannot...that has to take it, take it, take it. The one thing that bothered me most about the whole thing about the forty-five boats they wanted to...on was that the fact that there was going to be so much traffic. But now, you launch your boat, you have to go to the state campgrounds to get your...then you come back and you launch boat. Then you take it back, then you have to...back in the boat. I don't see how that's going to help our traffic situation at all. And these roads cannot support traffic, traffic, traffic. I don't get it. This was supposed to help us with traffic. If you ride your bike, which I do, along the lake, I use the lake a lot or you run, or you...that lake, this is not a safe place to be with all this traffic. I just feel like Washington is the one that is always going to be the giving portion here and the other towns are just saying, "You know what folks, we hit a home run." Is there any way...help with that? Also, I would like to request that we go to paper ballot.

Moderator: Anyone else? Yes, step up please.

Ralph Averill:  
New Preston I live on New Preston Hill Road. I swam in Lake Waramaug as a young child. I'm a little flabbergasted that we're even having this discussion at this late date. The Lake Waramaug Association has been all over this. It's been before the Zoning Commission in a public meeting. It's been agreed upon. Dick Sears is asking for authorization to get some free money. Whether or not we agree with the situation as it is, it's done. We voted and we are committed to it. At some point, the State of Connecticut is going to lose patience. Their going to say, "We gave you ten years. We gave you \$100,000 in free money. We gave you everything we could to allow access to what is a public lake." At some point they're going to say, "The heck with you. We're dredging the lake. We gave your chance. Have a nice day." After ten years, anyone who is not informed completely on all the issues at hand is not likely any more informed in the time in might take to have a referendum.

Ken Carlson:  
Calhoun Street I didn't know that state tax money was free. I thought that was our money too. I don't want to discuss votes or algae or anything else. My issue is as I understand it we have until September to sign the agreement with the state to get this money. We also have two years after that to finish the boat launch. So rather than have this meeting now to go ahead and demolish the building...without fully developed plan, I would prefer exactly what it is we're doing with long-term expense involved and what the overall scope

of this project is going to be for our one-acre plot there. That's all we have on the lake. Once you start...so yeah, \$200,000 you build a launch, but now we don't have anything to put all this stuff in, so we're in the hole. We're not, you know the free money goes pretty quickly as I see it. I would just like to back up and take some time to fully develop a plan before we start down the road. Thank you.

Tom Elkins:  
Sandstrom Road

I agree with some of the concerns that have been posed...I was...to the petitions originally. Spent the past several days finding out how far back this dates...several First Selectmen as I recall. It's been approved... September 2004. Sheila Anson got me the minutes of that meeting and I can see clearly that it was approved then and so it's time to go forward. Tonight's meeting is simply to give our First Selectman the power to do the job and I will certainly be happy to vote yes. I live right above this area and can see it quite clearly. I'm looking forward to town meetings involving us in the planning process. I do...that you will do that. I have no reason to not believe that you won't and I want to be as involved as I could there. I feel confident that you will continue to engage in discussion, but those are future meetings. Tonight is simply to assign a formality...we give him the power to do that so I will be voting yes on that. Also, I recently had a conversation with Selectman Solley regarding beach access. We have to...access to homes on Sandstrom Road. He's aware of that. There will be, of course...taken...with that. I look forward to being at future meetings. Thank you.

Paul Frank:  
President  
Lake Waramaug  
Association

To me the issue of this meeting is a very simple one. The Lake Waramaug Agreed in September 2004 contained all the provisions dealing with the reconstruction of the boat ramp. It looked to the execution of an agreement with the state for \$100,000 grant. That's where we are now. That's in the agreement. It was approved by unanimous in three town meetings. The purpose of this meeting is really a technical step to be taken with respect to the execution of that agreement. Normally, the Selectman would just sign the agreement. It doesn't require approval by a town meeting. The state in all its contracts however requires that the person signing the contract evidence his authority to act. The resolution before you tonight does not deal with approval of the underlying agreement or his right to sign that agreement. It is a proposal that would recognize the right of the First Selectman as the head of any organization. He certainly has the apparent authority to sign contracts. This will indicate that he has the actual authority to sign contracts. If the town had something like a corporate which said the president of the corporation has the power to sign contracts, coming to this kind of a meeting would not be necessary. In the past that has been handled just in a town meeting and...called in a Selectman's meeting. There are other issues that are going to be discussed here tonight. They are areas of concern with the beach area which is not involved as Dick has said in the construction of the boat ramp. But I'd like

to...talk about the history of the progress...and all that has happened and all that is intended to be done at the boat ramp. And I think the perfect person to do that is Tom McGowan who is Executive Director of the Lake Waramaug Task Force. I'd like to ask him to...to you.

Audience: His he a resident of Washington?

Paul Frank: No, that's why I'm asking him to speak.

Thomas McGowan: Thank you for the opportunity to speak and I will be brief. I realize that Executive Director this is a very...subject. It's of great concern to you and I don't know as Lake Waramaug I've had a chance to speak to all of you about what has been going on at Task Force Waramaug for the last thirty-two years. For thirty-two years has combating algae. Algae had consumed the lake in the 1970s to the point where you only could see your toes when you got up to your knees as you walked into the lake. Over these last thirty-two years with the cooperation with the three towns, so many citizens, and governmental grants, and you can't believe how much work, we've been able to improve the lake. Tremendously, to a water clarity average of eight to ten feet. But it's taken that much time and literally millions of dollars. We realized in the 1990s that yet a greater threat was...invasive aquatic weeds. Algae of course are microscopic plants that float in the water...Weeds we know are rooted plants. And in the 1990s we realized Connecticut was being invaded across the state by rooted invasive aquatic weeds. We've seen Bantam Lake now with Fanwort, Eurasian Water Milfoil, and Water Chestnut. These plants are almost impossible to eradicate once they get into the lake, the same at East Twin Lake up in Salisbury. In fact all the major lakes around us, Candlewood for thirty years has had Eurasian Milfoil growing to twenty feet depths covering 275 acres of that lake. So much so, there's really no hope to rid the lake of it. The Task Force immediately committed itself to a proactive program to prevent our lake succumbing to that disaster. Washington took the lead and I thank Washington did right off the bat to establish on its own a voluntary program to inspect all boats by the launch. To take the extraordinary unusual action to in fact put a gate up and close that launch when an inspector wasn't there. And what did that do? That saved the lake from being infected by these rooted aquatic plants for all these years up until June last year when we found a...plant in two isolated locations. We desperately hope and think that we'll able to arrest that and stop that growth. I can't promise you we'll eradicate that plant however. And I can't promise you it will cost a \$100,000 at a minimum. You have no idea what those plants can do to this lake. I lived in Washington for a brief period of time. I in fact used the beach with my small young children. I understand how valuable that piece of land is to you. I tell you I've worked with all three Selectman on this, Allie Chapin, Elaine, and Dick. Each one of them has had one primary tenant. This plan, whatever it is, and this agreement with the state cannot do one thing. It

cannot harm that beach. I think that they've held to that plan all the way done the line. I've been to every meeting for the last ten years on it. So, I will stop talking. I would love to talk to you more about our problems at Lake Waramaug and our solutions and our...to address those problems, but I just wish you would take an action to support this tonight.

Diane Dupuis:  
New Preston

The reason that the petition was first circulated was because, it started with the mothers. The mothers were concerned about their beach. I know we all know this agreement has been discussed for a decade, but this particular part of the agreement is two years old. And if Allie Chapin were here he would tell you he wasn't party to this part of the agreement. The mechanism that puts the work into effect on the beach is..."Lake Waramaug Agreement #D subject to and conditioned upon the Town of Washington receiving the grant herein set forth within twenty-four months of the date the town has entered into a binding agreement, that's twenty-four months, two years, with the State of Connecticut DEP for the grant and has obtained all necessary approvals from all the state and federal authorities including Town of Washington ordinances, the Town of Washington shall implement the construction changes to the Washington boat ramp. If while exercising due diligence the town is unable to complete such construction within such period, the town shall be entitled to automatic extension of an additional twenty-four months within which to complete such construction." Another thing that's being mentioned that there was a unanimous agreement in the town meeting in 2004, but was agreed to in 2004. There's a Q&A that was on the website. A Q&A went out to everyone with the agreement required funding by the Washington taxpayers. The agreement provides the town that's eligible for \$100,000 grant with the DEP which is estimate to cover the cost of upgrading the town launch. It's not what we have here. However, if the approved facility should more, the town could seek contributions from Warren and Kent and from private sources. No one knows what Warren and Kent are going to give us. I have a motion to make after this is through, but there's no harm in...any funding by the town would require authorization under the usual budget procedures. Now there's a terrible disconnect going on here and there's those for and those against. And some of it has to do with semantics. The biggest semantic and the reason the mothers got together and wrote this, there were twenty people circulating petitions in town. It wasn't one person. It wasn't a small uninformed group. I'm on conservation, cell tower, open space. I'm informed. I'm in town all the time and this deal stuck in under the radar. It wasn't there. All were asking is that we wait and let's let the town have input in what happens up there. The beach is not just a sandy area. Unless your seven and under, you're not sitting in that sand. We consider, those of us who use the beach, consider the picnic area which is going to be parking lot, the beach. So, that's a problem. There is time. There's time to take this apart and have the town have input on what happens with the facilities. People have

already come and shown that's impossible, not...but an engineer, took the drawing and tried to back a boat in on the boat launch. That's not possible. I went to every single committee meeting and I'm conservation. Every single meeting we're not allowed. Our questions were not answered. What is happening? Can't the DEP do a study. You guys have time. Nobody is saying settle this agreement, but what we're asking for is that you look at the beach and see what the best case scenario is here. And Dick, you know, I look at that little tiny little post-it up there, but we sit over there. That's where the trees are and mothers sit there and read by the beach. And yes, it's a passionate issue, but putting a boat house there and there's three phases of plans and only some people know. Most of the people who know that are you guys on the Task Force and you know it. The bottom line is here, the problem is it's turning into a class war because what is wanted is limited access on this lake and that's not right. It's just not right. I've been coming here since 1960 swimming in this lake. You can bring boats in and you can canoe in the lake. There are ways to limit aquatic invasives coming onto this beach. If you have \$600,000 to build a three-phase project you can...people looking at those boats day and night for each...so I ask that you really consider what happens here. **I'd also like to make a motion to the delay until we find out what Warren and Kent are going to contribute.**

Moderator: Ok, I'd just like to be clear about what this motion is that you just made. So if you could restate your motion, please.

Diane Dupuis: **I'd like to make a motion to delay the vote on call item #1 at the town meeting tonight until we have information form the towns of Kent and Warren as to how much they will be contributing to this boat launch.**

Audience: **It's a motion to table.**

Moderator: **Yes, It's a motion to table and I'm going to accept it as a motion to table. In a case of a motion to table, there is no debate on this. You will have the vote immediately on tabling this motion. It requires a simple majority and there's no debate. Is there a second to this motion?**

Audience: **Second.**

Moderator: **There is a second. So...and a vote in favor is to table this motion. A vote opposed is to continue discussion. All in favor in tabling this motion please raise your hand. I'll quickly ask you to lower your hands and let's see opposed to tabling the motion. We may have to do a count of hands. I think we're going to have to do a count of hands.**

Audience: Could you describe what you mean by tabling the motion.

Moderator: There was a motion to table the motion. It's undebatable and requires a simple majority vote. If it's tabled, that is discussion on this subject for tonight.

Audience: Inaudible.

Moderator: The motion is to table the motion that is before us. The motion was the first item on the call of the meeting. The motion has been made to table that motion for tonight.

Audience: To table Dick signing the contract?

Moderator: Correct. That is, no vote would be taken on that motion. The motion would simply die tonight without a vote. That requires a simple majority and because I know that there are a lot of interested parties here, what I'd like to do is get a hand count and I'm going to need some help counting hands.

Audience: How do you determine whether those who are going to vote yea or nay are either taxpayers or registered voters?

Moderator: I'm going to ask only those people who are registered voters for the Town of Washington or who own property in excess of \$1000 that are on the tax rolls of the Town of Washington to vote. I'm hoping we're not going to be off on this by one vote, so please help me out here.

Audience: Inaudible.

Moderator: Ok, so can I get a couple of volunteers to help me out here please?

Audience: Can I ask a question?

Moderator: Are we getting a couple of volunteers back here? Great...what I'd like to do is get three of you perhaps on this side to count. You guys back by the door move to one side or the other please. If you three can agree on a hand count for this side and you on this side for me, one of you anyway...raise your hand if you're in favor of tabling this motion. Please raise one hand and keep it up...You're voting to table this motion.

Audience: By this motion you mean...

Moderator: The first motion, yes, will be tabled if this passes. You're not allowed to raise your hand and lower it and raise it again. Keep it up there as best you can. If you need help, get your neighbor to help you hold it up.

Moderator: Alright, you can put hands down and a deep breath. Now it's the rest of your turns. So if you are opposed to tabling the main motion, that is if you want to continue discussion on this motion tonight and perhaps even take a vote on it, now you should raise your hand to vote nay on tabling the motion. Keep your hand...only one.

Moderator: **Ok...this motion has not passed. The vote was 90 to 75 in opposition to tabling the motion. So the discussion will continue.**

Moderator: Who's next?

Ken Cornet:  
Nettleton Hollow I'm just going to say this is a continuation of scare tactics about all these folks coming here. We were told...coming here. I have a...here written by the head of the DEP. It's dated February 15, 2007. It's not from ten years ago. It's from the present Commissioner of the DEP. She states that...the plan that Washington...represents a reasonable a negotiated settlement to long-standing need for...public boat access to the lake. But the DEP's ultimate goal was to secure a launch that would support...parking spaces for boaters who appreciate the generous offer to assist within limitations of their boundaries...with the public boat access to Lake Waramaug. Now we're talking about five boats more than this agreement is asking for. Now if...boats from the state park which...traveling back and forth with trailers who are not given even one space guaranteed to any resident of this town for a boat. It's first come, first served for...spaces that are available. So I can't understand...

Audience: Because anybody in any of the three towns has access to the lake at all times.

Ken Cornet: No we do not.

Audience: Inaudible.

Moderator: Ok, excuse me. We have one speaker at a time. Please address the podium, thank you.

Ken Cornet: Inaudible...spaces with that...no spaces. First come, first served.

Moderator: Excuse me, this is not open discussion. If you have a comment to make, make your comment. Someone else...come up and speak to this.

Ken Cornet: If you look at the agreement, it's all...the agreement. So their talking about five spaces different. This is a state mandate, not a town mandate. Now let's look at the town beach area that they're talking about. Right here, this is where there are picnic tables. It's the park and the beach that are being destroyed. We're talking about this house here. We know that

it's going to have to be redone. We know it's...put somewhere. It's not...It's not going to be put someplace else. It's going to be put someplace in this area. We do not know how much money ultimately we will have to pay for this. The state has a hundred acres almost. We have...acres. Why are we so generous as...said. I don't understand that. The inspections can be demanded from the state. There seems to be no reason why that can't happen. If you...to inspect the boats...at the state park. Not only that, but things have tremendously since the original offer...because we have a state senator, state reps all have suddenly converted to environmentalists. Our state rep, state senator has...to give \$100 million, of course...accepted...environmentalist. So we can ask...that the Department of Environmental Protection is not the Department of Environmental Pollution. And as many people said, many of the other...have been...We can't let that happen again. And it won't happen again. Thank you.

Carole Matteo:  
West Shore Road

I live on West Shore Road, formerly of Sandstrom Road. I've lived on the lake my entire life. I have to say I'm really shocked that this resolution just wasn't going to be simply voted on and passed. This started with Janet Bates in the 70s. And if it wasn't for Mrs. Bates there wouldn't be any lake now. There're people....

Audience:

Clapping.

Carole Matteo:

...When I was at the lake in the 70s, I've been here my whole life. When I was young you could swim right down to the bottom and see fifteen feet down. We're almost back to that today. But in the 70s the lake was like pea soup. You couldn't swim in it. It was ridiculous. For people now to try and jeopardize what has taken thirty years to accomplish is just...right over. And Ken saying we can go to the state park. He knows better, he knows better. First of all, you'll ruin the lake by dredging it. Secondly, the state is not going to police the boat launch after a few years. There going to abandon it and then everybody's going to be on the lake. I'm sure some of you can remember times when there was a boat launch at the old Casino and the lake was just full of boats. Lake Waramaug is not a lake that can hold that many boats. It's a very narrow lake. So if you want to have all these boats on the lake, you're going to jeopardize the kids swimming. You're going to jeopardize the canoeing, your kayaking, and all of that. And we won't even talk about the milfoil and the invasive species. We'll just talk about how the boats are going to ruin the lake. Don't believe what he said about the state park being better. Everyone knows that that's not true. Look at the history. This plan was a home run for Washington. I don't care about Kent and Warren. I care about Washington. This is a home run for our town. This lake is known throughout the United States. It's a model lake for the United States. And we have the privilege of having it. Don't get muddled with these people coming up with all this

stuff now, all these questions now. These questions have all been answered, believe me. It's a simple resolution. The rest of it, what their talking about, the other phases, that's if you're concerned about your beach, if you're concerned about the boat house, that's the time to argue about that, not tonight. Tonight is just a resolution so we can get going with this plan. I'm begging you. If the lake returns back to being what it used to be or if we have fifty boats a day on the lake, it's not going to be the same. People are going to move out and our tax base is going to go sky high. It's a precious asset and I'm asking you. If you need an answer, I'll answer it. Mr. McGowan will answer it. I mean we've been here. I'm surprised at that gentleman. He was on Lake Watch. I was part of the Lake Watch which tried to do stuff to help the lake and he was one of the people. He knows better. He's misinforming you. So I ask you to vote for this proposal. Thank you.

Rod Meissner  
New Preston

I know we're supposed to address the podium, but everybody seems to be going this way, so. It's not about the ramp and stuff like that. It's about how we as town's people are being treated. I'm not opposed to controlling the boats and all and you say there are questions to be answered...and so forth and so on, but what you're approving your Selectman to do is to purchase something without a plan. You have no plan. It's a maybe here and a maybe there. You know, where's the real plan? Where's the plans...so people can see this stuff. I've heard...to gain the space that we need for the ramp. Maybe that part is..., but this is the stuff that's going on. I think that everybody needs a more informed access. I mean if people...the thing of it is, is that 260 were put forth to this town and they were...I've known Sheila my whole life. Nobody is questioning her integrity. This is a small town following a big statue. Nobody is questioning her integrity. It's just a matter of, there were people that were removed from a list for signing their name the way they did on the tax paperwork, stuff like that. I mean it's silly stuff. So yes, there's other alternatives and I would like to see a more detailed plan and more commitment from the other towns before we just go and purchase something that we don't have all the information on. So everybody that is for or against, I can appreciate it. To be honest I'm right in the middle of the fence. I'm just disappointed at the lack of the details. This totally was under the radar. For those of you that are...on the lake and you want to control it, I understand it, but this is under the radar. More information needs to go forth and you all know it. You don't go buy a car sight unseen without paying for it.

Janet Hill:  
Inlands-Wetlands  
Zoning

There are detailed plans for Phase #1, the reconstruction of the boat launch on file in the Land Use Office...Both Inlands-Wetlands and Zoning Commission had public hearings. It was well noticed in the

local papers. It was...all that...notices in the mail so no one can say that there aren't exact plans on file, that the town didn't have adequate notice. You should come in and have a look.

Paul Frank:

The way this town operates is through a Board of Selectman and town boards and commissions. Each of the town boards and commissions that have a jurisdiction held a public hearing in this matter. The engineered plans, which were worked on and negotiated and redone and redone by a professional engineer, were reviewed by each of those commissions. People came, opponents, proponents came to each of those hearings. They were fully reviewed and fully discussed. That's the way things work. There is...necessarily a town meeting to...every project of the town. The town is protected by the fact that it has elected and appointed commissions who look at this material very carefully. We're very fortunate to have them. We may...of the proponents of the plans as well. And each commission approved unanimously the...and obviously the towns in those town meetings approved the plan. I would just like to make one other comment about the tiny question that has been brought up. Under the Lake Waramaug agreement, we have twenty-four months from the date...signed which was in September of 2004 to get all the necessary approvals and make the grant arrangement. Negotiations were still going on. Plans were still being reviewed during that period so the town secured a twelve-month extension that runs this September. If this is not in effect by that month, the state has the right to terminate this agreement and to return to the plan to build the major boat launch at the state park. And that boat launch is open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week because federal funds are taken for that purpose. That would be an economic and an environmental disaster...Thank you.

Ray Reich:  
Scofield Hill

I'm one of the radar operators I think. I sit on the Park and Recreation Commission. I have been and preceded even Dick and previous selectman all the way back to Allie Chapin. I have been with the Park and Rec at almost every meeting this entire...has had. I have sat through some of the most boring meetings in my life. But we have the agreement and I stuck with it because they represent the bathers, the boaters, homeowners who wrote to Parks and Rec to provide us with softball and baseball, swimming and everything else the town does. The Parks and Rec Commission has agreed that we wanted to make sure that this boat ramp was done as best we could. It is a negotiated item. We're not completely happy with it. We are ready to move forward though. Parks and Rec agrees that this needs to go forward right now. There are details that have to be worked out. Granted, every single item that I've heard by way of objection to this we have already heard. We have already dealt with folks. Counting...counting dollars, looking at the agreement...of all the agreements we've signed in getting to the current agreement. The people in Hartford get paid for doing that. We don't. We go to these meetings and we have...what we think is

the best deal we can have right now. And we're just, I'm ready to throw that out in the air and let you folks pick up all the pieces and go back to square one which is where we would be. And that would be a disaster folks. The agreement we have right now is workable and I'm one of the people trying to keep people informed who are interested. And the letter...Where have you folks been? I'm...my taxes. I will be paying whatever the rest of us pay also, but I'm one of the people that has been scanning the radar every now and then making sure we see all the obstacles. We have dealt with every single obstacle that we're aware of. The item...we've handled some of those five, eight, ten years ago and maybe in this past year in Zoning and...We've done an awful lot of work on this and I have to pat the selectman on the back. They have carried the brunt of this. Selectmen come and go, but somehow we at Parks and Rec stick around for a while. I'm the one who has agreed to look at Phase #2 if there is a Phase #2. We're not even convinced that's the...of our bathers and of our moms and or our kids and the people like to picnic over there. If that doesn't fly, it doesn't fly. We'll worry about that as soon as we get some better plans. Right now we just want you help us...and let's just get this show on the road folks.

Keith Templeton:  
Golf Course Road

I haven't been in Washington very long. I've never been in Lake Waramaug. I've never been along Lake Waramaug. I've driven around it. It looks like a perfect place for paddles, oars, and sails. Now, I was at the meeting, the town meeting that approved this. I thought all the arguments in support of it will founded and well intended. I still do. I was at the Planning or Zoning Commission meeting as well. That's when I saw the nature of the parking area and the launching facility and the ramp, the changes that have to be made there. I think that's where some of this came off the rails. A lot of people were surprised that there's going to be a lot of paving involved. There might be additional congestion and so forth. But, one comment that was made, shame on me because I wasn't really diligent about following up on this, but the comment was made or the question was asked at that Zoning Commission meeting about the limiting the horsepower...that could use this launch. And it strikes me that the horsepower of the boats being launched there could be limited to ten or fifteen horsepower the requirement for that...pavement and that kind of facility might change dramatically. I'd like to know that before I vote on this tonight because if we're saddled with monster boats and anybody that's got one can launch it on this ramp, I vote to go ahead. There's no point in delaying any further. But, if instead you could limit this to boats of a size that, and I'm not talking about the people that own homes on the lake. If you've got a home there, you've got your own dock. Be my guest. But if we could limit the horsepower of boats that are being launched on that lake on a daily basis, I think that would be a good idea and might change the nature of the boat launch...

Moderator: Hold on just a second, I think Dean was next. If you want to take a seat right up here, I'll get you next.

Dean Fraley Well, I think everybody here has heard a lot. **I think everybody here has also made up their mind what they're going to vote, so I'm going to make the motion that we have the vote. Do I have second?**

Audience: Yes.

Moderator: **I...a second...the question has been called. There's been a second to that. There's no discussion on that...to take the vote. Let me preface this by saying if you decide to...by this vote, I will then entertain a motion if you so choose to go to paper ballot if that's your choice. First we need to deal with the question at hand which is...debate. This requires a two-thirds majority and there is no discussion. So those in favor calling the question and ending the debate as of now, please signify by raising your hand. Just for grins, put those down. Those opposed to ending the debate, anybody. Then it's easily two-thirds majority so no more discussion. Now as I said, I will entertain a motion for paper ballot if you so please.**

Audience: I do.

Moderator: **Ok, there's a motion to have the vote by paper ballot. Is there a second to that?**

Audience: **Second.**

Moderator: **I hear a second. This requires a simple majority. All in favor in voting by paper ballot, please raise your hand, just one. Thank you. All opposed to voting by paper ballot, please raise your hand...the majority is in favor of a paper ballot. Now this is how this will work. You can see there are signs in the four corners of the room. The registrars may need a...get there paper ballots...but ultimately what you'll be doing is collecting ballots.**

Audience: You have to have identification.

Moderator: **You're going to need identification. You'll have to go to the corner, provide identification and you'll get a ballot...We'll announce the results in a while.**

Pause: Audience goes to vote.

Moderator: **Ok, may I please have your attention please. We still have to adjourn this meeting, but before we can...I'll entertain a motion to do that in**

**just a second after we announce the results. The yes votes were 115 and the no votes were 50, 5-0 even, so the motion's been carried.**

Moderator: Is there a motion to adjourn, please. Thank you, a second. All in favor of adjournment? Thank you very much.

The moderator adjourned the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

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End of Transcript

I, Sheila R. Silvernail, do hereby certify that the foregoing pages are a true and accurate transcript of the Special Town Meeting of the Town of Washington held on March 8, 2007, to the best of my ability.

\_\_\_\_\_ Dated at Washington, CT this 9<sup>th</sup> date of March 2007

Note: Copies of minutes, transcript, and audio recording of said meeting is available in the Office of the Town Clerk.