

Town of Washington – Annual Town Budget Meeting May 20, 2010

Moderator: Hank Martin
Recording Clerk: Sheila Silvernail

First Selectman, Mark Lyon, opened the meeting at 7:30 p.m. requesting nominations for Moderator. Mr. Solley nominated Henry (Hank) Martin which was seconded and passed with no other nominations presented. Mr. Martin then called the meeting to order and read the warning.

WARNING TOWN OF WASHINGTON, CONNECTICUT ANNUAL TOWN BUDGET MEETING

The voters and electors of the Town of Washington are hereby warned that the Annual Town Budget Meeting will be held on Thursday, May 20, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. at Bryan Memorial Town Hall, Washington Depot, Connecticut to consider and act upon the following:

- 1. To consider and act upon the proposed General Fund Expenses and Transfers for the 2010-2011 fiscal year.*
- 2. To consider and act upon the proposed Nonrecurring Capital Expenses for the 2010-2011 fiscal year.*
- 3. To amend Ordinance #121 Establishing a Housing Commission.*

Resolution #1: GENERAL FUND BUDGET - RESOLVED:

To approve an amount not to exceed \$4,123,147 for expenditures from the 2010-2011 General Fund Budget, which includes \$4,003,147 for General Fund Operating Expense and transfers of \$75,000 to the Open Space Fund, \$25,000 to the Housing Fund and \$20,000 to the Legal Litigation Fund.

Proposed by: Mark Lyon

Seconded by: Barbara Johnson

Discussion: Board of Finance chair, Michael Jackson, gave an overview. Audience participation addressed questions regarding timeliness, specific line items, and feasibility of particulars in current economy. Board of Education member Valerie Anderson pointed out that they work diligently on education budgets and then asked pertinent questions regarding alternate ideas for use of Housing Funds as well as beach property expense/income clarification. Valerie Friedman requested clarification on how declining school populations affected budget. Richard McGregor commented on Housing Commission process.

Vote: Moderator requested all those in favor and those opposed. Motion carried with only one dissent.

Resolution #2: CAPITAL FUND BUDGET - RESOLVED:

To approve an amount not to exceed \$926,500 for expenditures from the

Nonrecurring Capital Fund Budget, which will be offset by anticipated grants in the amount of \$43,000, resulting in a net expense of \$883,500.

Proposed by: Mark Lyon

Seconded by: Michael Jackson

Discussion: Several aspects of town use of Titus Road property for storage of road materials were discussed along with feasibility and planning for the possibility of a future purchase for another location.

Vote: Moderator requested all those in favor and those opposed. Motion carried with two dissents.

Resolution #3: ORDINANCE #121 AMENDMENT: RESOLVED:

To amend Ordinance #121 – To Establish a Housing Commission - as follows:

Section III. Membership: Terms, Vacancies: The Commission shall consist of five (5) ADD: REGULAR members ADD: AND TWO (2) ALTERNATE MEMBERS who shall be electors of the Town of Washington, and shall serve without pay, to be appointed by the Board of Selectmen.

The initial appointees of the Commission shall be one (1) member who shall serve for a term of one (1) year; two (2) members who shall serve for a term of two (2) years; two (2) members who shall serve for a term of three (3) years; all such members to hold office to the first day of July in the year of the expiration of their term and thereafter, all appointments shall be for a term of three (3) years expiring on the 30th day of June. ADD: The initial alternate appointees of the Commission shall be one (1) alternate member who shall serve for a term of one (1) year; one (1) alternate member who shall serve for a term of two (2) years; all such alternates to hold office to the first day of July in the year of the expiration of their term and thereafter, all appointments shall be for a term of three (3) years expiring on the 30th day of June.

Proposed by: Moderator Hank Martin

Seconded by: Valerie Anderson (after subsidiary motion carried)

Discussion: Need for alternates for Housing Commission and standard procedure similar to other commissions.

Subsidiary Motion:

To change the number of alternates to three from two with terms of one for one year, one for two years, one for three years.

Proposed by: Dan Lee

Seconded by: Jane Boyer

Discussion: Clarification of change from two to three and years for each.

Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution #3: Continued.

Discussion: Minor change from subsidiary motion allowed and clarified.

Vote: Motion carried unanimously for three alternates with terms of one, two, and three years.

Adjourned: 8:11 p.m.

Transcript of Recorded Meeting

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Moderator: Hank Martin

Recording Clerk: Sheila Silvernail

Transcript of Recorded Meeting

Mark Lyon: I'd like to open with a motion to nominate a Moderator. Mr. Solley?

Nicholas Solley: Hank Martin

Jack Boyer: Second.

Mark Lyon: Nominated by Nick Solley and seconded by Jack Boyer. Any other nominations? OK, yes.

Valerie Anderson: Move the nominations be closed.

Mark Lyon: Nominations to be closed by Valerie.

Kathy Gollow: Second.

Mark Lyon: Second by Kathy Gollow. All those in favor?

Audience: Aye, aye.

Mark Lyon: All those in favor of Hank Martin as Moderator?

Audience: Aye, aye.

Moderator: Good evening, our secretary, Sheila Silvernail, usually reads the ... not on, speak up? Can you hear me?

Audience: Multiple voices.

Moderator: Doesn't sound like it's on.

Moderator: Try it now, hello, can you hear me?

Audience: Yes, better.

Moderator: We're small enough ... I'll just talk loud, how's that?

Audience: Talk loud.

Moderator: Usually our secretary, Sheila, reads the warning, but she's got a bad voice tonight so I'm going to have a go at it.

Moderator: WARNING

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5. To consider and act upon the proposed Nonrecurring Capital Expenses for the 2010-2011 fiscal year.
6. To amend Ordinance #121 Establishing a Housing Commission.

Moderator: Sheila does that better than I do.

Audience: You do just fine.

Moderator: Ok, we have three items. For each one of them we'll have a motion, a second, discussion, and then a vote. And, as you all know, please raise your hand and identify yourselves and I will recognize you. And, please direct any of your questions to me and I will work very, very hard to get the answers for you. With that we come to the first motion. Mark, would you like to make it?

Mark Lyon: On the General Fund Budget:

RESOLVED: To approve an amount not to exceed \$4,123,147 for expenditures from the 2010-2011 General Fund Budget, which includes \$4,003,147 for General Fund Operating Expense and transfers of \$75,000 to the Open Space Fund, \$25,000 to the Housing Fund and \$20,000 to the Legal Litigation Fund.

Moderator: Thank you. Could I have a second to that motion please?

Barbara Johnson: Second.

Moderator: Barbara Johnson, thank you. Ok, before we answer questions or clarification or do you ...?

Valerie Anderson: Discussion.

Moderator: Ok, normally what we do is we have our Board of Finance chair just explain a little bit, introduce the budget, and then we open it up to questions, ok?

Audience: Inaudible.

Moderator: So Michael, would you take the podium?

Michael Jackson: More than happy to. The town budget, if you take all the expenses, it would ... year to year. And it was done in ... by the Selectmen, but we were trying in this environment with what's going on in the economy and what's going on with the region to make sure that we prepare ourselves for next year because we're going to have to go through the whole expense issue with the region again. And, with the declining school population, it's going to become more and more of an issue as we go forward. So what we're try to do this year is keep the budget as flat as we could so that we have got room to work for next year. And that's what we did. That's what the whole Board of Finance and Selectmen did. How next year will work out, you knows, but we're getting, trying to get ready for it. The grand list as you know declined ... for understandable reasons. It still is the first ... since 1982. So, it means something, what it is, we don't know it yet, but we will find out as we vote. So I would say that the Board of Finance, we're sitting here, and the Selectmen are all being very cautious about what we're doing in the future and how it's going to work. So we'll set the mill rate after this meeting once we pass the ... resolution which is the standard we do it every year. And, if there are any questions on any subject, we're more than happy to try to answer them.

Moderator: Valerie?

Valerie Anderson: Oh really, sorry, is this on? Can you hear me ...? Valerie Anderson, Blackville Road, Washington, CT. First off, I want to highlight the net education expense which went down for the Town of Washington 0.69%. I am Finance Chair and Treasure of the Board of Ed and I want you to know that when we go through this budget each and every year, we are highly mindful of the pressures put on our town taxpayers. Now we try desperately to keep things as low as possible with the old infrastructure we have. And we are totally mindful of the fact that we have a declining population.

Moderator: Make sure this is on...

Valerie Anderson: That's ok, I like to talk loudly. So, I do hope that everyone here realizes that we do not take the Town of Washington taxpayers for granted on any level. We thank you for your support. We deeply thank you for your support for the referendum to, what I call, put expensive lipstick on the elementary schools and certainly to pass the budget, the operating budget this year. The net effect to you is a decrease of 0.69%, Town of Washington, partly because we have less kids in the school, but we still have kids going through the system. And, we have to prepare them. So every year we go line by line by line. I sit in many, many conferences, line by line by line, teachers to their superiors to the administrators and then we flesh it all out yet again. So there's not too much that escapes at least the Finance Committee's eyes. So I want to point that out. I also wanted to ask a question about the Housing Fund, \$25,000 allocation this year. What is the balance in the Housing Fund now with that allocation?

Michael Jackson: Where is?

Valerie Anderson: What is? Total amount now?

Michael Jackson: \$251,040...

Jack Boyer: \$265,000.

Valerie Anderson: And with this allocation?

Multiple Voices: Inaudible.

Mark Lyon The \$25,000 would be in addition to that.

Jack Boyer: That's ...

Valerie Anderson: Ok, so tell me what the total amount as we ...

Multiple Voices: Inaudible.

Valerie Anderson: \$290,000.

Mark Lyon: We're talking \$290,000.

Valerie Anderson: \$290,000, after tonight, \$290,000. What are we doing with \$290,000? Is there any kind of program set now?

Mark Lyon: The housing commission is currently looking at a parcel of property, hopefully, to purchase to provide a building site for affordable ... housing units.

Valerie Anderson: A few months, years ago, I did mention, if you don't mind, I'll put this down. Wouldn't it be great to help young Washington couples or singles who are feeling the pinch of the economy to offset mortgage problems they have with that fund to help people actually buy existing properties? And, we could name quite a few. Where they buy the property, live in it, sweat equity, and then they can, then return what they borrowed from the town and move on. ... bigger houses, more property tax will be paid. I'm really concerned we sit on money and wait for one kind of affordable housing plan to go forward. And, we know that that's voted down time and time again. And, this is probably going to happen. I just want you to think of an alternative program to pilot. And I volunteered to help out with this. Let's pilot a program where we find some old ramshackle house and a couple who live and work in Washington, who really want to have that sweat equity, but need a little boost into a down payment. Give them that loan. Tell them they must pay that back and let them do some work to start paying property tax without restriction.

Michael Jackson: It's a perfectly wonderful idea and we'll get it to the Housing Commission and they'll take it from there.

Valerie Anderson: I'm volunteering. In fact, there are about 100, 50 witnesses here, I have volunteered again and again. I want to see us use almost \$300,000 worth of dollars to good effect. And now, if not now, then when? When we have a lot of, we do have some foreclosed properties. We do have some properties that can meet the standards that we have to have. And we do know of couples, I'm thinking younger couples, but older couples, who can, or single people, who can actually do some work there. So I just want to highlight those two things and also where do you put income in this?

Jack Boyer: Where do you put income?

Mark Lyon: This is just expenditure.

Multiple Voices: Inaudible.

Valerie Anderson: How does rental income flow into this?

Mark Lyon: It doesn't appear here. It shows up on the income sheet and it's under Selectmen's Receipts.

Michael Jackson: We have two funds. We have a General Fund where all the tax revenue goes in.

Valerie Anderson: Right.

Michael Jackson: And the ... revenue is ... paid. What the town's expenses are what the region's, our share of the region's, expenses are. And that, we have financial statements that come out every month ... That is not in this budget. This is just expenses portion.

Valerie Anderson: So ...

Michael Jackson: Here is the expense portion of it. That's why ... And you have the Nonrecurring Capital Fund too.

Valerie Anderson: Ok.

Michael Jackson: That's the other part.

Valerie Anderson: Got you.

Michael Jackson: And money is allocated into the General Fund and into the Nonrecurring Capital Fund to fund those projects.

Valerie Anderson: Ok, but we are now voting on this budget first and then we go to nonrecurring?

Michael Jackson: These are only expense items that we're ... and we have to do that because then we have to, after this meeting, go in and set the mill rate.

Valerie Anderson: Sure.

Michael Jackson: Ok?

Valerie Anderson: So my question is?

Moderator: Can I just say one thing?

Michael Jackson: Sure.

Moderator: In terms of the Housing \$25,000, that's just a funding mechanism. Any time a specific project is going to be proposed where we actually spend that money...

Valerie Anderson: Ah, ha.

Moderator: The Housing Commission would have to come back to this body again and explain it.

Valerie Anderson: Is there any limitation they could spend up to X dollars without getting any?

Michael Jackson: They have to get approval for specific projects.

Valerie Anderson: The Open Space Fund is \$6000?

Michael Jackson: Open Space, Housing, correct.

Mark Lyon: And Housing has that capability to do that through the Board of Selectmen and up to, I think it's \$5000 and it may be \$6000.

Valerie Anderson: And that's to explore properties, do some testing?

Mark Lyon: Right.

Michael Jackson: And try to keep in mind that the expenditures for both Housing and Open Spaces were something that resulted three or four years ago from a series of town meetings where people were asked and indicated their preference for how they wanted to spend money. So that came from the townspeople and their meetings in each one of the separate towns. And that's what they wanted to do with it and that's what they are ...

Valerie Anderson: What do you mean separate towns?

Michael Jackson: New Preston, Marble Dale, all the villages.

Valerie Anderson: Separate villages, Town of Washington, got you. And I was there and I saw that. I'm just curious where we're banking this money and why is it just being banked and not used?

Michael Jackson: Ok.

Valerie Anderson: And one other thing, sore point. What was the rush in renting the beach house? Why did it have to be done immediately?

Michael Jackson: Inaudible.

Female: Inaudible.

Mark Lyon: It's not typically a budget question, but you're ...

Valerie Anderson: Some expense is related here, some income is vaguely related.

Audience: Inaudible multiple voices.

Mark Lyon: There is, there is no expense.

Moderator: Yeah, I would say as Moderator that that is a question that you would better be, ... able to ask at the Selectmen's meeting because it's really not part of the three items we have business to do here tonight.

Valerie Anderson: So the expense of running the beach is not here?

Moderator: I think, there's probably some expense of running the beach, but not associated with that rental per se.

Valerie Anderson: So nothing related to the beach property, the town beach property expense is related in here at all?

Mark Lyon: There is expense from, in the Parks and Rec budget for lifeguards, the beach director ...

Valerie Anderson: Then my question is about the item? Why the rush? It is veiled in here. I want to know, why the rush?

Moderator: You're talking about the rental income of the property, right?

Valerie Anderson: Yeah.

Moderator: ... that's a piece of business that would be better asked at the Selectmen's meeting, not here tonight. I don't see that as being part of this.

Valerie Anderson: Well, your legislative body won't be there.

Jack Boyer: The expense for that house is already spent. It's not part of this budget.

Valerie Anderson: So there's no expense ...

Jack Boyer: No expense...

Multiple Voices: Inaudible.

Moderator: You're not asking about expense.

Valerie Anderson: Backing up

Moderator: Yeah.

Valerie Anderson: Who is inspecting the boats before they're launched.

Female: Vallely.

Mark Lyon: Hank Vallely. The same guy who's inspecting them now and it's a dollar per hour budget item in the Parks and Rec budget. It's listed under Boat Ramp Attendant.

Valerie Anderson: And it's in the Lake Waramaug Authority contribution?

Mark Lyon: No, it is in boat, Parks and Rec, it's part of the Parks and Rec budget and it's a line item in the Parks and Rec budget under boat launch attendant. It's part of the Parks and Rec budget.

Valerie Anderson: So my question is valid, at least to ask what's going on with the beach.

Michael Jackson: No, you're asking about a revenue item, not an expense item.

Valerie Anderson: So there is no expense related to the beach in here except for...

Michael Jackson: Inaudible.

Valerie Anderson: ... the dollar ...

Michael Jackson: ... that's the way it comes out of ... here.

Mark Lyon: Parks maintenance, Parks and Rec.

Michael Jackson: Could I just make one comment?

Moderator: Yeah.

Michael Jackson: The other thing I wanted to say about the region is they have been very forthcoming in this year and they asked the Board of Finance members from each one of the towns, First Selectman from each one of the towns, to become and start getting involved with their budget so that we understand the details of it. We understand how they work. Mr. Bedini has been very involved with the capital program for restoring the schools. So we're for the first time at the Board of Education's request, people beyond the Board of Education are now involved in the process with the schools. And we hope to be more involved as it comes, we go through the next year. And we appreciate the invitation. Valerie?

Valerie Friedman: West Morris Road. I have a question actually that's relevant to that. You said earlier, Mike, that the decline of school population has some affect on our budget.

Michael Jackson: It will.

Valerie Friedman: How, how does it? The school population's been declining for a long time, but that doesn't mean our budget declines, so what is the relationship.

Michael Jackson: No, no. There are two variables. One is the aggregate population...

Valerie Friedman ...right

Michael Jackson: ... in the school ...

Valerie Friedman: Right.

Michael Jackson: ... has been declining.

Valerie Friedman: Right.

Michael Jackson: Then each town ...

Valerie Friedman: The shares.

Michael Jackson: ... has it's percentage within depending on its ...

Valerie Friedman: ... share.

Michael Jackson: We have about 44%

Valerie Friedman: ... percent, right.

Michael Jackson: We used to be up as high as 50%.

Valerie Friedman: Right.

Michael Jackson: What's going to affect the region's budget over time is the aggregate decline in student population because as you get fewer and fewer students your cost per student ...

Valerie Friedman: Go up.

Michael Jackson: ... unless you do something with it, go up. That's the way it works and that's what I was referring to.

Valerie Friedman: But the only, there's no savings related to a smaller school population unless the region decides to make some changes. Right?

Michael Jackson: There ...

Valerie Friedman: And we make ... declining school population and a budget that continues to increase unless there's, hard decision to make.

Michael Jackson: The region has started and we will participate in the development of a strategic plan for the region. So that's, you know, we're doing what we can to ... in consideration of the demographic issues that we face.

Moderator: Other questions? Yes?

Richard McGregor: Yes, I'm Richard McGregor. I live on 49 West Morris Road. I just moved to this area in January. We find it very nice my wife and I. Under the housing establishment there, the ... for a Housing Commission, I just have some little bit of advice. I reported the council meetings in the City of Norwalk since 1976 and I'm still doing it. I've seen what happened is when you have a housing thing, if you go for state or federal grants, you tie your hands because what will happen is, you have no control of who goes into those houses, ok? And they could come from anywhere. Once you ... federal government, they came from, anybody can come from anywhere in the country to into there and you can't turn them down. Same thing with the state. If you use state funds, you can't turn them down. However, the direction that I would like to see the Housing go for is for seniors because the seniors are living on

fixed income. I just retired myself. I'm only 60 so I guess I'm not a full senior yet. I'm not looking to go into any public housing or anything, but I would like to see the seniors benefit from it. But, use only money that you develop from the city, well you're not a city here, Town of Washington. Do not take any state or federal grants. Otherwise your town will end up in years to come, it will look bad. And if you want proof of the pudding, go down to Norwalk and right down ... Avenue, right down Suncrest Road, right down ... Park which is a 1000 feet from the police department where all the addicts sleep overnight. I mean this is what will happen. So all's, I'm not against housing development thing that you want to do here, that's fine, but I'd like to see it go for senior housing, for seniors. Take care of them first, but do not accept any state or federal grants, because that's when your hands are tied.

Moderator: Thank you, I have a favor to ask of you.

Richard McGregor: Yes?

Moderator: The Housing Commission is the body that's developing strategies and making decisions on the lines of what you were talking about.

Richard McGregor: Yes.

Moderator: So the favor I have to ask you is would you attend one of their meetings and say the same thing to them that you just said to us?

Richard McGregor: Yes.

Moderator: Thank you.

Richard McGregor: I just hope it's of the second or fourth Tuesday of the month because that's when I record council meetings.

Female: No, its ...

Male: Second Monday.

Moderator: It's the second Monday of the month.

Richard McGregor: Second Monday of the month, that should be fine. I would definitely like to address them.

Moderator: Thank you.

Richard McGregor: Thank you.

Moderator: Other questions? Comments? Are we ready to vote?

Female: Yes.

Moderator: Ok, let me read the motion again that has been seconded.

To approve an amount not to exceed \$4,123,147 for expenditures from the 2010-2011 General Fund Budget, which includes \$4,003,147 for General Fund Operating Expense and transfers of \$75,000 to the Open Space Fund, \$25,000 to the Housing Fund and \$20,000 to the Legal Litigation Fund.

The motion's been made and seconded. All in favor, please say aye.

Audience: Aye, aye.

Moderator: Any opposed? One opposed. The motion carries and we're on to question number two. Mark would you like to make the motion on question number two?

Mark Lyon: Sure, Question #2:

CAPITAL FUND BUDGET – RESOLVED: To approve an amount not to exceed \$926,500 for expenditures from the Nonrecurring Capital Fund Budget, which will be offset by anticipated grants in the amount of \$43,000, resulting in a net expense of \$883,500.

Moderator: Ok, so this is for non-recurring items that are one-time items, not recurring general items. And, hold on, would anybody like to introduce this or summarize it before I open it up to questions? Ok, then we'll start taking questions right now. Valerie you had your hand up?

Valerie Anderson: Was there a second to the motion? Did I ...?

Jack Boyer: Not yet.

Moderator: Thank you, thank you.

Michael Jackson: I'll second.

Moderator: Thank you, alright, Michael Jackson has seconded the motion that mark made. Thank you Valerie.

Valerie Anderson: The question ... item fund....

Moderator: Could you speak up a little bit so everybody could hear you.

Valerie Anderson: The question ...

Moderator: Sorry about the microphones.

Valerie Anderson: The question about 500, Initial Funding for Highway Materials and Storage Property. When you had the hearing, I apologize, I was at a Lease Committee meeting. I tried to get here, but you had already broken up about 8:30, but I was here. We are buying property for highway storage?

Mark Lyon: Currently...

Valerie Anderson: Or is this exploration ...?

Mark Lyon: Currently we still have material stored at Titus Road ... which we need the space to store elsewhere. And it may involve purchase of property. And this, and we do not have a particular piece or site in mind, but we did include in the budget some funding provisions if we do have the opportunity to purchase a property. If there is a property to purchase, it will have to go through Planning, Board of Finance, and it would have to go to a town meeting because of it's a real estate purchase. But, the funding, this puts the funding into place.

Valerie Anderson: And there's no grant for that?

Mark Lyon: No, not at this time ... if there was a grant, it would have to be applied for, for a specific purchase or ... item. ... I don't know of any that are available for property purchase for the item here. That doesn't mean there aren't any.

Valerie Anderson: And the property we had on Blackville and on 202 in Marble Dale, in New Preston rather, is not adequate?

Mark Lyon: There isn't space for all the storage in the ... We do have, initiated, done some initial engineering to provide some storage space on that property. It will probably not be sufficient for all the storage, material storage that we need. The property in Marble Dale ... where the New Preston Fire House is sited as well as a piece that is adjacent to that and behind the state highway storage facility which is deed restricted for recreational use. And if it's not used for recreational use or other any structural improvements to it, it goes to back to the State of Connecticut.

Valerie Anderson: And do we have an increase in material now that needs to be housed or where did all of this material come from?

Mark Lyon: This is not, this is typically road material, repair material. There's not an increase. It's just it, and also our chip seal stone and like I said, road repair material that we stockpile to have on hand for use in small quantities when it's needed by the Highway Department. We also store. We have chip seal stone that we, a large quantity of once a year, but then we reclaim a smaller quantity for when, after we go buy ... cleanup and that has to be stored through a season to be reused the next year.

Valerie Anderson: Now this has always been on Titus Road property, because I thought we were in the middle of a massive cleanup there?

Mark Lyon: That has always been on the Titus Road property, before my time anyhow. And it has never left it. What we've done over there now is do we have accumulated byproducts of road construction and that has accumulated there and that has been used to do some more of the grading and cleaning up of that property as well as processed ... topsoil that will be there as well as elsewhere in town.

Valerie Anderson: And there is no other source of this material other than the town need, what the town has already either had loaded there or has been there?

Mark Lyon: Source of what material?

Valerie Anderson: The material that we have to buy property to move.

Mark Lyon: The source is a quarry operation. It's processed gravel, different sizes of stone, and it's a stockpile of virgin material that is used in the road ...

Valerie Anderson: I'm just wondering why this is happening this year, cause it seems to me that we've always had this problem with Titus Park area and we've always wanted to clean it up.

Mark Lyon: Because we have to have ...

Valerie Anderson: ... and there's been no other place to put all this stuff?

Mark Lyon: Correct.

Valerie Anderson: Why didn't we ask for this three, four years ago when it was a big major issue? I mean is there an increase?

Mark Lyon: No.

Valerie Anderson: There's nothing different?

Mark Lyon: It's, right, it is, it is an effort to finally vacate the Titus Road property with our Highway Department operation.

Valerie Anderson: And, but your allocating this now even though you don't have a property in mind.

Mark Lyon: Correct.

Valerie Anderson: And why wouldn't you finance this once you get a property in mind? Can you finance ...?

Mark Lyon: Yes we can.

Valerie Anderson: I just think in a bad budget year to allocate \$180,000 for property that we don't know about yet is kind of different.

Michael Jackson: Well it's, Valerie, in another sense it's no different than what we do with bridge construction. We know historically that there're going to be, we're going to spend so much money on bridge construction. And that's may be any one single bridge is a half million dollars apiece. We don't want to put a half-million dollars in every four years. So what we do basically is every year we put in a hundred or a hundred and fifty thousand dollars and we get ready for those bridge construction moments in advance of when they come so we don't have a budget that goes from \$800,000 to a million three in one year. It isn't. It doesn't let us even out the tax rate. So, it really is anticipating something we know is coming. We don't know exactly all the details about it. We don't know what the final cost is, but we know it's coming just like the bridge repairs. And, it makes more sense, particularly in a year when you're going to have a flat to a down budget like we've got this year, to put it in. If we don't use, we don't use it.

Valerie Anderson: And this, and this, we plan to do this every year?

Michael Jackson: It can't be used without a town meeting.

Valerie Anderson: And this is going to be a recurring kind of thing you're going to build in? This is it?

Michael Jackson: I don't know. If I knew what the purchase price of the property was, I could answer the question, but I don't.

Valerie Anderson: And are we actively seeking this now? Are we like looking around, advertising, going to the real estate agents?

Michael Jackson: Well, we're not doing it quite that way.

Valerie Jackson: We're negotiating now?

Mark Lyon: No.

Michael Jackson: No, we're not.

Valerie Anderson: Seems like a lot of money in a year that maybe could hold off on this for an ongoing problem ...

Michael Jackson: You don't, you don't

Valerie Anderson: ... always, always had.

Michael Jackson: ... know whether it's going spent yet, Valerie.

Valerie Anderson: I understand that. I understand what goes on here. I truly do, I'm not that stupid. I'm just concerned about this allocation in this budget year.

Michael Jackson: Well it wasn't ...

Valerie Anderson: ... for a maybe.

Michael Jackson: It wasn't a comment on your intelligence. It was just a comment on the planning process.

Moderator: There are some financial planners that would say we are being prudent to provide for a need like this if you know it's coming even though you don't know exactly how much it's going to be. And then it might, might be more responsible to, to provide for it this way than to not even though it's a tough economy. That's just, you know, ... I'm, I'm the apolitical moderator.

Valerie Anderson: Yeah, apolitical.

Mark Lyon: If we do get an opportunity, it may, may, it will may, it provides the funding because we are. Are we, am I working with a real estate agent. No, I'm not, but we are actively trying to remediate that property and vacate that property and it's going to involve a purchase of another piece of property somewhere.

Valerie Anderson: Well, we should have done it four years ago.

Mark Lyon: Well, we didn't though.

Moderator: Ok, question to my left.

Dan Lee: This is not meant to be a contentious question. It's really a question of inquiry. You have \$35,000 for financial ... Did you put that out for bids or was it simply something you just took. You know, you talked to someone and that's what you got. That's all.

Valerie Friedman: \$35000 for what?

Mark Lyon: For, it's line number 499.

Dan Lee: 499, I ... curious. It's not meant to be contentious.

Mark Lyon: No, it's, it's, we've been looking at. We worked with a consultant two years ago and they recommended upgrading to our software and perhaps some hardware upgrades to upgrade our town processes and to make some improvements in our office practices. And, this is a recommendation from that consultant as to what costs may be incurred in that process.

Michael Jackson: Could I ...

Mark Lyon: And it has, and it will go out to bid when it, when we get to that point.

Michael Jackson: Let me just add one piece of color to what Mark said. We have an accounting system and a financial reporting system that was developed sort of ad hoc over forty years. And, we're all getting to the point where no one wants to take any more risk with that system. So we went out and we talked to a consultant who was the head of the Board of Finance of a town down south to try to get a hold of the systems and then we're going to review the jobs that we're going and whose doing them and how we're doing them. And, we're going to revamp the whole system and we hope to finish it this year. And that's part of that expense will be the whole review of that financial side of what we do in the town hall.

Dan Lee: I think that's marvelous. You're telling more than I want to know.

Male: You now know more than you need ... right?

Moderator: Other questions? Are we ready to vote? Sheila, yes.

Sheila Anson: 249 Woodbury Road. I would just like to thank the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance for the hours and hard work that they have put into this budget and they deserve a round of applause.

Audience: Applause.

Moderator: Thank you very much. Any other comments, questions? Ok, let me read the motion again.

RESOLVED: To approve an amount not to exceed \$926,500 for expenditures from the Nonrecurring Capital Fund Budget, which will be offset by anticipated grants in the amount of \$43,000, resulting in a net expense of \$883,500.

All in favor please say aye.

Audience: Aye, aye.

Moderator: Any opposed?

Audience: Opposed.

Moderator: One opposed.

Audience: Two.

Moderator: Two opposed. Thank you, the motion carries and we're on to question #3.

Moderator: Now we have the Housing Commission chair here, but I'll just, if you don't mind, read this and you'll be my backup in case any questions come up that I can't handle, which could be any question. Question #3 is:

RESOLVED: To amend Ordinance #121 – To Establish a Housing Commission - as follows: Section III. Membership: Terms, Vacancies: The Commission shall consist of five (5) ADD: REGULAR members ADD: AND TWO (2) ALTERNATE MEMBERS

That's the main change. When we set the commission up a few years ago alternates were not provided for. It was probably a mistake that we didn't do that then. Every commission in town that I am aware of has alternates. And, I don't see any reason why this one shouldn't as well. Any body have any questions about this? Yes, Jane.

Jane Boyer: Why is it two, I mean on the Historic Commission and we have three, so.

Moderator: That's a good question which I'll put to Wayne. Most of the commissions in town have three alternates and five regular members. Do you want three or why do you only want two?

Wayne Hileman In all honesty it just seemed like a nice number. There was not a lot of thought given to the actual number of alternates. There was only thought given to the idea that we should have alternates. In the four and half years or so that the Housing Commission has existed, we have had several meetings actually be canceled because we didn't have a quorum, mainly in summer months. And, we also had an issue last fall which I think some of you may remember where the Housing Trust was asking for money from the Affordable Housing Fund and we had one member who had to recuse herself because she was a member of both organizations. And we had no alternate to seat in her place and that really doesn't serve ...

Moderator: Agreed.

Wayne Hileman: ... the town very well. And this is basically an amendment to remedy that problem.

Moderator: I don't think anybody here would deny the need for alternates here, but let me ask this body do you think we should have three instead of two because it's a minor enough change that we can do it if you want to do it.

Audience: Yes, yes.

Moderator: If you want to just stay with two, that's fine with me too. Give me a little feedback.

Audience: Three, three.

Female: I think it's consistent with the other commissions so that's ...

Dan Lee: I move the change motion to read three.

Audience: Second, second.

Moderator: Ok, I, I, I rule that motion to be in order only because it's a minor change that doesn't change the overall purpose of the question and we can do it even though the actual warning says, not the warning, but the, the original motion says two. Would anybody like to second the motion to change the number of alternates from ...

Audience: Second.

Moderator: ... two to three. Jane Boyer. And, and is there any further discussion on the subsidiary motion of changing the number of alternates from two to three?

Mark Lyon: Just ...

Female: I guess we just have to change the scheduling of the alternates. It has to be one for one year, one for two years, one for three years. Is that right Mark?

Moderator: Alright.

Mark Lyon: To add into the amendment ...

Female: Right.

Moderator: Go ahead.

Mark Lyon: Down at the bottom, one of the other additions has to do with, like Valerie said, the scheduling, and we would just, we started out we had one for one, one for two, and then we'll have a third for three. So they will be a sequence for years to replace them as well as with the regular members.

Moderator: That's just a sequence of ... one year at a time.

Mark Lyon: So we have to add, I guess to add to add to Dan's motion we have to go down to the bottom and add that third.

Moderator: Is that ok with you ...

Dan Lee: Sure.

Moderator: ... to complete your motion by adding the sequence that's at the bottom of the original amendment.

Dan Lee: I'd like to rephrase it again. I'd like, I would like to have a motion that increases the number of alternates to three with them to be reckoned one for one year, one for two years, one for three years.

Moderator: Ok, and Jane is that ok for that motion to be the one you seconded. Alright. Any further discussion on the change in the number of alternates from two to three? Then, then I will say all in favor please say aye.

Audience: Aye, aye.

Moderator: Any opposed.

Audience: Silence.

Moderator: Well, we're not done yet. Now that we've done that, we still have to go back and vote on the original resolution here, which is question #3 now that it has the change in it from two to three. Everybody with me on that?

Audience: No.

Female: Are we voting it as three or as two.

Moderator: Hmmm?

Female: What?

Moderator: No, no. It's not. Question #3 you should read it as three alternates now because of what we just did.

Female: Ok.

Moderator: Ok. I'm not going to read it again because you know, we just covered it, but we're basically providing three alternates to the Housing Commission phased in one year at a time. Any questions? Yes?

Valerie Anderson: Did you have a motion and second on that? I don't think you did.

Sheila Silvernail: No.

Mark Lyon: On which?

Moderator: I made the motion.

Sheila Silvernail: No second.

Mark Lyon: On?

Moderator: I think we don't have a second in that right?

Sheila Silvernail: No second.

Audience: Inaudible.

Male: Jane here ...

Valerie Anderson: Second.

Moderator: Valerie Anderson seconds. Thank you, appreciate that. Alright, so we have a seconded motion to address question #3 with the change we've already made to three alternates. Any further discussion? Ok, all in favor please say aye.

Audience: Aye, aye.

Moderator: Any opposed.

Audience: Silence.

Moderator: Ok, the motion carries. We've finished the business of the evening and I call the meeting adjourned. Thank you.

Adjourned 8:11 p.m.