

## **Minutes: Special Town Meeting November 15, 2005**

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*[minutes received 12/30/05]*

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING  
TOWN OF WASHINGTON  
BRYAN MEMORIAL TOWN HALL  
November 15, 2005

Proposal to enter into Inter-municipal Agreement with Bridgewater and Roxbury

Proposal to approve amount not to exceed \$33,400 for Town's portion of expenses associated with evaluation of constructing and/or renovating elementary school properties in each town

WILLIAM FAIRBAIRN, MODERATOR  
JANET M. WILDMAN, CLERK

The Special Town Meeting of the Town of Washington, November 15, 2005, was called to order by First Selectman Richard Sears at 7:30 p.m. The first order of business was the election of a Moderator. R. William Fairbairn was duly nominated and elected.

MR. FAIRBAIRN: I'm always willing to give this job up if anyone else is interested. Welcome to a sparse crowd this evening but a most intelligent one. Let's go ahead. Janet, if you will read the Call.

MRS. WILDMAN: The voters and electors of the Town of Washington are hereby warned that a Special Town Meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 15, 2005 at 7:30 p.m. at Bryan Memorial Town Hall, Washington, Connecticut for the following purposes:

To consider and act upon a proposal to enter into an "Inter-municipal Agreement" with the towns of Bridgewater and Roxbury, as amended and approved by the Board of Selectmen on November 9, 2005, to establish an Elementary School Steering

Committee to evaluate the feasibility of constructing and/or renovating elementary school properties in each town and alternatives thereto.

To consider and act upon a proposal to approve an amount not to exceed \$33,400 for the Town's

portion of expenses associated with the evaluation of the feasibility of constructing and/or renovating elementary school properties in each town and alternatives thereto.

The proposed "Inter-municipal Agreement" is available for review in the Office of the Town Clerk and on the Town of Washington website at [www.washingtonct.org](http://www.washingtonct.org).

Dated at Washington, Connecticut this 10th day of November, 2005.

Richard C. Sears, Nicholas N. Solley, Harry H. Wyant, Board of Selectmen.

MR. FAIRBAIRN: Thank you very much, Janet. As you know, we have to have a transcript of the meeting so I would ask if at all possible, unless you speak very loudly, to come up to the microphone. It is important that we do have an accurate transcript. We will go right ahead. We have a motion here. Mr. Sears?

MR. SEARS: Question number one is: Resolved to enter into an "Inter-municipal Agreement" with the towns of Bridgewater and Roxbury, as amended and approved by the Board of Selectmen on November 9, 2005, to establish an Elementary School Steering Committee to cooperatively evaluate the feasibility of constructing and/or removing elementary school properties in each town and alternatives thereto.

MR. FAIRBAIRN: Is there a second?

JOHNALLEN: Second.

MR FAIRBAIRN: There are copies of the motion - copies of the Inter-municipal Agreement in the back if anyone would like them for reference. What I have done is taken a copy and that will be entered into the record for purposes of this particular resolution. Does someone want to address this? Dick? Or Jack?

MR. SEARS: I will give you some background for clarification. The three towns of Washington, Roxbury and Bridgewater have been working with the school board and officials to address the school facilities situation as to whether to renovate or build in each town or construct a consolidated school for the entire district. Finding a consultant to help us get the definitive vote on one school or three schools and to get to that point by February 1 so that it can come to the end of the fiscal year and get our

application in and get the people in the three towns together and they will decide. So we need money. The purpose of tonight's meeting is to approve town funds to get us to R-1, the first step referendum. ....we will pay our share of the portion of the funds. Actually, the package for that work is about \$30,000; and we will pay by students in the district or 44.52% of students in the district belonging to Washington. We will pay 44.52% of any expenses incurred to get to the first vote. The school board is already reconstituting a building committee and they will take it forward to a full referendum with the final price voted on and put before the State. At this stage this Inter-municipal Agreement and the money in the second vote will get us through the first referendum vote. The only way to move forward is to take charge of this first phase.

The Inter-municipal Agreement adopted by the town on that summary basis. That is essentially the background. Last week, Roxbury approved this with the exception of an amendment whereby the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance have said take out of the Agreement - delete Section 7, and it is the same agreement that Roxbury passed last week. That is the essential background of this.

MR. FAIRBAIRN: Jack, do you want to speak to this? However you want to handle it.

JACK FIELD: This came out working since about the first of July with the Board of Education and the leadership of the three towns to present .....to evaluate and give the people in the towns an understanding and the knowledge they need to vote on the referendum involving the school.....concept of individual schools in the towns.

(PERSONAL NOTE OF CLERK: Mr. Field speaks very softly. It was very difficult for the microphone to pick up his remarks; and I, personally, tried to hear what he was saying and get as much as possible down in shorthand but it was very difficult. As you will see, there are going to be many gaps.)

JACK FIELD: We have set up a task group, four in number, to do this homework and these are .....both Board of Education people and townspeople.....one each for individual schools and individual towns. ....school case and the other task working on the consolidation. About October, we had gone about as far as we could and needed professional help. We did that and this Inter-municipal Agreement was the means to provide.....three towns to.....a bidding process required by law and that process would include ..... request for proposals.....two weeks evaluating the responses and then a short list, and finally looking at October..... before we could get this ..... Meanwhile, we discovered.....Glastonbury.....school just opened this past Fall....available and work on the project and we were very impressed with the..... they provided. ....large organization..... Particularly strong area of pulling together....of the process and built a consensus. Referendum support by the townspeople and the Board

of Education. This was the goal we had and still is. Meanwhile we put together the real work on this agreement which provides.....to continue that work. ....

MR. FAIRBAIRN: Thank you, Jack. We will go ahead with questions. Over here. Pete?

PETER TAGLEY: NOT AT THE MICROPHONE

CAN'T HEAR A @#\*% THING!!!!

THE CLERK: He has to come to the microphone.

HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO ALWAYS BE REQUESTING THAT??????

MR. FAIRBAIRN: Pete, please come to the mike.

THE CLERK: I don't think that mike is picking up anything. I don't think it got any of what Jack said.

MR. TAGLEY: (What I could get) The fact that rules are taken back by the turnout. (?) This could be an....expenditure in \$30,000. ....I am not in favor of this proposal and I will tell you why. The Board of Education spent an excess of \$50,000 on consulting engineers and architects, and taxpayers did not approve the referendum. Now the proposal is to spend an additional \$75,000. ....ad hoc committee. Where is the money going to be spent? Consultant.....before Board last week.....\$30,000 to do an ....of what is going to be a proposed.....and give everybody .....But tonight they ....\$30,000. I have no problem with spending that if we know what we are going to get in addition to the \$50,000 already spent. You propose an additional \$45,000 and it doesn't say where or how this will be spent. I really feel we have spent enough money.....different view as to how the Board was heading and where we are going to end up ten-fifteen years down the road. To keep spending money .....\$10 million to renovate in 1987. ...back again seventeen years later and rehash out the same old argument and no one can come to an agreement. Now we have an ad hoc referendum down to two items.....I am not sure.. ...going to do this. .. ..enable all of us....whether we want to consolidate or make renovations to Washington Primary and new schools in each town. ....I have no problem with that. Everybody can vote on what we are going to do before another referendum. You also.....additional \$45,000...We have spent enough on this. Same issue last 20 years. Somebody has to stand up and tell.....

MR. FAIRBAIRN: Dick?

MR. SEARS; Yes, you are right. It isn't obvious...The first selectmen in each town or representative...it may be more money than the \$30,000 to get to the first referendum. It may be near \$75,000. Maybe we will need a closer study of the consolidated site for an engineering study for the Shepaug site because that's the potential site. Whatever money is spent.....engineer on that site before ....soil scientists....get facts to the people. Maybe \$50,000 from the town. Probably not any where near that. The Shepaug site needs to be looked at in more detail in the next few months to see if it is worthy of a new school. Some of the engineers say it cannot be done. \$30,000 is a given..... With all the views and all the facts, we need some wiggle room.

MR. TAGLEY: Isn't that the job of the Board of .....? (don't know whether he said Selectmen or Education)

MR. SEARS: The towns have decided to come on board for the first time.....not going to endorse. The three towns-what they are going to do.....

MR. FAIRBAIRN: Is there someone who wants to speak?

IRENE ALLEN: The \$30,000.. .the \$75,000 is actually a small amount to spend to do the job well and make it a really decisive presentation so that we can actually come to a decision as soon as possible. Every year that we lose in decision-making and deliberating we incur at least 4 to 6% in additional cost in construction. Each time we don't make plans and file with the State by June 30th you have lost an entire year because the next opportunity is the June 30th. It behooves us to do a thorough dotting of I's and crossing of T's and maybe spend \$30,000.

MR. FAIRBAIRN: Anybody else want to speak who hasn't had an opportunity. Pete, another question? Rex?

REX SWAIN: I am curious. Roxbury has voted on this with a sentence deleted. Is that correct?

MR. SEARS: No.

MR SWAIN: Voted with the sentence not deleted.

MR. FAIRBAIRN: That could be a problem. Maybe the Boards of Selectmen and Boards of Finance that are working together can iron out.

MR. SEARS: This is something that we disagree on. The recourse we have is the last phrase...Agreement Number 11 and we will have to see what Bridgewater does Thursday night We have been acting as a Steering Committee for four

months.....reconcile the differences and have an agreement or not have an agreement. Early on all three towns must ratify this. We will work toward that ratification together.

MR. SWAIN: Roxbury would have to have another meeting to modify this agreement.

MR. SEARS: I don't read it that way. "This Agreement may be amended, supplemented or modified only by a written instrument duly executed by or on behalf of each Town hereto." I would take that to mean that the Boards of Selectmen of the three towns can agree on the justification as the committee works it out and it will not have to go to another town meeting.

MR. SWAIN: But it is your position for the Town of Washington that it should be deleted - not negotiate that back in at any time in the future?

MR. SEARS: We will have to....

MR. SWAIN: At the end of Section 7 bold face. It has been my impression all along that one of the differences.....discussed this year in the event three primary buildings.....renovate each town would pay its own share for expenses and going back to where Washington pays half of the total of the three towns. I am alarmed to see that creep back in there. I don't want to see it pop back up again.

MR. FAIRBAIRN: Quickly reading this anything to do with construction, this would be up for grabs. Jack, would that be right?

THE CLERK: Bill, will you please ask him to speak into the microphone. I think he is speaking over it and not into it.

MR. FIELD: Is that better? The purpose of the inter-local agreement when we decided we needed professional help and we set up the mechanics to pay for it. ....we found a way.....We byreason for the 45(?) is that we are still going to be under severe time limits and it is necessary to have additional consulting before the referendum. We would like to have the mechanics in place.....

(DESPITE THE FACT THAT MR. FIELD WAS SPEAKING INTO THE MICROPHONE, I COULD NOT HEAR ALL HE WAS SAYING AND THE MACHINE DID NOT PICK IT UP, EITHER)

MR. FIELD: Rex, your question.....We didn't feel that particular sentence had anything to do with procuring consulting.....for the referendum. Therefore, we did not think it would belong in there. Particularly with the binding arbitration, we

thought that was okay to deal with different towns but we did not want to be in a position..... the eventual cost would be allocated to the towns in binding arbitration. I don't think it should be a problem and I am confident when we sit down we can work .....barring any legal.....come back to the town meeting.....

MR. FAIRBAIRN: Anybody else want to speak either for or against? Tara?

MRS. TARA CHERNISKE: I am not sure this Special Town Meeting had five days notice...on the agreement...

MR. FAIRBAIRN: What Jack, I think, has said is that the sentence is not part of the agreement it is for informational purposes, but the agreement - this is the agreement. This is the agreement.

MRS. CHERNISKE: Oh, no. Not agreed on by the three towns.

MR. FAIRBAIRN: I think what Jack is saying from a time standpoint is that if this is approved tonight then the Board of Finance and the Board of Selectmen representatives will meet with the other two towns and say, "This is what we have approved" and I think Jack has made a fairly persuasive argument about what they should be willing to accept that If they don't, and they want to amend it, then, as Jack said, they have to go to town counsel for review and then, I believe, they would have to come back to a town meeting.

MRS. CHERNISKE: UNABLE TO UNDERSTAND ANYTHING SHE SAID.

MR. FAIRBAIRN: I think what Jack is saying is that if the town is not willing to accept that - it is put in there for informational purposes only. The vote tonight is to be whether or not you accept this agreement as written. The deleted part is not part of the agreement. Is that correct, Jack?

MRS. CHERNISKE: We are not voting on that.....

MR FAIRBAIRN: Anybody else?

MR. RICK HUNT; Referring to the time line...voting money appropriating in this ....I think we have ....cost of living.....consultants are available to start?

CLERK: AGAIN-WHO KNOWS!

MR. SEARS: By February. This is the only way to get this done by June 30 . The town is paying a portion of the \$30,000. This is the way to get to the end zone.

MR. FAIRBAIRN: Anybody else? Are we ready to vote?

MR. TAGLEY: May we have a show of hands?

MR. FAIRBAIRN: All in favor please reply by raising their right hand. (19)  
Opposed? (3)

MOTION CARRIED.

MR SEARS: Resolved to consider and act upon a proposal to approve an amount not to exceed \$33,400 for the Town's portion of expenses associated with the evaluation of the feasibility of constructing and/or renovating elementary school properties in each town and alternatives thereto.

MRBOYER: Second.

MR. SEARS: This may be confusing. Our portion is based on that student population of that expenditure up to \$75,000. Our portion based on the formula of students will be \$33,400. So if, for any reason, we have to spend up to \$75,000, I can't imagine, the amount Washington would spend would be \$33,400 maximum. This amount was approved by the Board of Finance last Monday and it is up to the town body if there is any extra expenditure.

MR. FAIRBAIRN: Any questions on this?

MRS. ANNETTE MACDONALD: Is the \$33,400 based on our school attendance?

MR. FAIRBAIRN: The formula used for this is called ADM - average daily membership - based on enrollment on October 1. Is that still right, Irene? What they do is take the enrollment in the whole school system and divide it up by towns and that's what they pay. I believe that \$33,400 is the 44.5% ADM. That is the percentage of the \$75,000. Anybody else have a question? Shall we vote on the motion? All in favor say aye. Opposed?

MOTION PASSED.

MOTION MADE, SECONDED AND PASSED TO ADJOURN AT 8:07 P. M.

THIS WILL CERTIFY that the transcript done by me of the Special Town Meeting of the Town of Washington held on November 15, 2005 is NOT CERTIFIED as a true and accurate copy of the proceedings. Inability to hear affects my ability to take down what people are saying and defective recording equipment also makes transcription at



many times almost nonexistent. I cannot in good faith certify to the accuracy of this transcript.

DATED AT Washington, Connecticut this 29th day of December, 2005.