

## **Minutes: Special Town Meeting February 23, 2006**

---

Disclaimer: While we have attempted to reproduce them accurately, the electronic documents you see here are not the official public documents. Official copies may be obtained on paper from the [Town Clerk](#).

---

**SPECIAL TOWN MEETING  
TOWN OF WASHINGTON  
BRYAN MEMORIAL TOWN HALL  
FEBRUARY 23, 2006**

**Immediately following the regularly scheduled Selectmen's Meeting**

**4:30p.m.**

**HENRY MARTIN, MODERATOR**

**MARY ANNE GREENE, CLERK**

**Application for a Small Cities Grant by the Town of Washington**

**On behalf of the Washington Community Housing Trust.**

---

**Dick Sears:** I'd like to call this Special Town Meeting to order on this day, February 23, 2006, 4:52 p.m. in the Land Use Room of Bryan Memorial Town Hall, Washington, CT. Thank you for coming. First order of business is to appoint a moderator for the Town Meeting. Do I have a nomination? Chris..

**Chris Charles:** I'd like to nominate Hank Martin to be the moderator.

**Dick Sears:** Thank you. Is there a second to that motion?

**Nick Solley:** Second.

**Dick Sears:** Thank you. All in favor of Hank being the Moderator, please say Aye.

**Audience:** Aye.

**Dick Sears:** Mr. Martin.

**Hank Martin:** Good Afternoon everybody. Janet would you, excuse me, Mary Anne...

**Mary Anne Greene:** I'd be happy to have Janet come in and take the minutes.

Laughter

**Hank Martin:** See, I'm already in my flow here. Mary Anne, would you read the Warning, please.

**Mary Anne Greene:** Town of Washington, Warning, 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, February 23, 2006, immediately following the regularly-scheduled Selectmen's meeting at 4:30p.m., for the following purpose: To consider and act upon a Resolution by the Board of Selectmen to approve the filing of an application with the Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development for a Small Cities Grant on behalf of the Washington Community Housing Trust for the purpose of renovations to infrastructure of the Dodge Farm Housing complex in an amount not to exceed \$400,000; and to authorize and direct the First Selectman to file such an application, to provide such additional information, to execute such other documents as may be required by the Commissioner, to execute an Assistance Agreement with the State of Connecticut for State financial assistance if such an Agreement is offered, to execute any amendments, recessions and revisions thereto, to implement project activities, if approved, and to act as the authorized representative of the Town of Washington on behalf of the Washington Community Housing Trust. Dated at Washington, Connecticut this 17th day of February, 2006. Richard C. Sears, Nicholas N. Solley, Board of Selectmen.

**Hank Martin:** Thank you. The way these meetings typically go will be the way it goes tonight. We will have a Resolution, hopefully it will be seconded and at that point we will open it up for discussion. Anybody who has questions or comments about the Resolution will be able to do so. I'll recognize all hands and after the discussion is exhausted, we'll vote on the Resolution. In opening up the discussion part of this the first thing that typically happens is we have an explanation of the Resolution for all of us to hear and understand and then it will be opened up to the

public. The only thing I ask, I think we are in a small enough room that we probably don't need to have everyone come up and speak into a microphone but if you could stand, identify yourself and identify your street address and speak, you know, as loudly as you can so that the tape will pick it up and that will be great. And the other thing I ask, even though many of you we know, and you know we know you, please identify yourself and state your street address because Mary Anne is looking downward into her notes taking the minutes so she's not looking out at you to see who you are and identify you by your face. So, with that, let's start the process and have the Resolution. Mr. Sears.

**Dick Sears:** Mr. Moderator, Thank you. Richard Sears, First Selectman, Town of Washington.

WHEREAS, Federal monies are available under the Connecticut Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program, administered by the State of Connecticut, Department of Economic and Community Development pursuant to Public Law 93-383, as amended; and,

WHEREAS, pursuant to Chapter 127c, and Part VI of Chapter 130 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development is authorized to disburse such Federal monies to local municipalities; and,

WHEREAS, it is desirable and in the public interest that the Town of Washington make application to the State for \$400,000.00 in order to undertake a Small Cities Community Development Program and to execute an Assistance Agreement therefore, should one be offered.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN OF WASHINGTON:

1. That it is cognizant of the conditions and prerequisites for State Assistance imposed by Part VI of Chapter 130 of the Connecticut General Statutes; and,
2. That the filing of an application on behalf of the Washington Community Housing Trust, for the purpose of renovations to infrastructure of the Dodge Farm Housing complex, in an amount not to exceed \$400,000.00 is hereby approved, and that the First Selectman is hereby authorized and directed to file such application with the Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development, to provide such additional information, to execute such other documents as may be required by the Commissioner, to execute an Assistance Agreement with the State of Connecticut for State financial assistance if such an Agreement is offered, to execute any amendments, recessions, and revisions thereto, to implement project activities, if

approved, and to act as the authorized representative of the Town of Washington on behalf of the Washington Community Housing Trust.

I make that Resolution.

**Hank Martin:** May I have a second to that Resolution, please.

**Bill Fairbairn:** Second.

**Hank Martin:** We have a second and we are now into the discussion part of this. Mr. Sears, do you have something else?

**Dick Sears:** Yes. I would immediately like to propose a small amendment to this Resolution as published and as read. I would like to amend paragraph 2 under the "therefore, be it resolved" section that the amount of money which was published was the incorrect amount for the size of the grant that has already been applied for. We would change the amount from \$400,000.00, I would amend and ask for a second to the amendment for \$440,000.00.

**Bill Fairbairn:** Second.

**Hank Martin:** OK. We have a seconded motion to amend the primary Resolution. What I'd like to do. So, we sort of have two things going. What I would like to do is have a discussion around the amendment first and then move on to the primary Resolution itself. Does anybody have any comments, questions about the amendment?

Yes, Valerie.

**Valerie Andersen:** Valerie Andersen, Blackville Road. Why? Why change what happened?

**Dick Sears:** Good. Thank you. I was going to offer the reason. This was a typographical error on the part of publishing because the grant itself has been published and sought for \$440,000.00.

**Hank Martin:** So, it was basically a typo in the Warning? That's basically it? It should have said 440 instead of 400?

**Dick Sears:** Yes.

**Hank Martin:** Any other questions or issues on the amendment? Yes sir.

**Nick Solley:** Nick Solley, Selectman. Dick, you referred to paragraph 2, should you also refer to the third "whereas"?

**Dick Sears:** Yes, that's correct. Thank you. It's also mentioned in the third "whereas" of the Resolution. The amount mentioned would be amended in both places to be \$440,000.

**Hank Martin:** Just to keep things clear. Dick would you re-state the whole amendment?

**Dick Sears:** The amendment is to change the amount in the Resolution from \$400,000.00 to \$440,000.00.

**Hank Martin:** OK. And that number, 400 that is going to be changed to 440 appears in two places?

**Dick Sears:** Yes.

**Hank Martin:** Any other questions on the amendment? We'll get to the meat of the Resolution in a minute. I would now like to ask for a vote on amending the number in the primary Resolution from \$400,000.00 to \$440,000.00. Could I have a show of hands of who is in favor of that amendment? OK. Any opposed? OK. Could you note that the amendment passes with one person in opposition. OK. Now we are going on to the primary Resolution itself that has been read and can I ask for an explanation of that in hopefully laymen terms.

**Dick Sears:** Sure. As you heard by some of the language, the federal government gives States block funding money - this is part of the Community Development block funding program and it is handled by various State agencies. It can be used for certain uses. This comes in to us under the Small Cities Program of the State of Connecticut which allows municipalities of 10,000 persons or under to qualify. There are certain other sets of qualifications that need to be met - it can't be used for just anything. One of those, which was the purpose for this application, was housing rehabilitation for moderate and low income persons. Any of this money coming down from the federal government must be used for that criteria alone. It must benefit low or moderate income persons or it must prevent or eliminate blight, which is not the case here. It must meet other community development needs having a particular urgency because existing conditions pose a serious or immediate threat to health or welfare of the community. There are only three criteria for using this money. So this one fits that criteria. More than a year ago, the Washington Community Housing Trust approached the Board of Selectmen and said the housing that was built over at Dodge Farms which was completed in 1995, erroneously is reported as created 25 years ago - it's

about 11 to 12 years old - needed a great amount of rehabilitation to keep it up to good living condition and several hundred thousands of dollars were needed and could the Town help. The Board of Selectmen said let's look for a grant. This met the Small Cities guidelines. So in April of 2005, part of the process starts off with public hearings - public conversations - saying what could the Town of Washington need Small Cities monies for. We saw this elevator project which is completing tomorrow and I invite you all to come tomorrow at 2:00 for the celebration and dedication of all the work for the elevator and ADA - Americans with Disabilities Act upgrades - another criteria this money could be used for. This money can't be used for building public buildings and- new town halls, senior centers. It can be used for handicapped access and a variety of other purposes along with housing rehabilitation. So the Board of Selectmen held a public hearing in this very room following a regular meeting saying what would good uses of this kind of federal money be? The Housing Trust already had something in mind and we asked by publishing it should there be other things. No other great needs that fit the criteria were in front of the Town. The Board of Selectmen did not supplant some other need by taking this grant. They said, this to us, seems to be a valid need for the Town, for the people of the Town. It meets one of the Plan of Conservation and Development's major thrusts to provide good, clean, safe, affordable housing for our people. So what we did then was to hire a grant manager, a grant contractor which is L. Wagner and Associates - we have a representative from them here today to answer any questions about how the grant will be used and managed and what part the Town has in it and what part the Housing Trust has in the process. So then in August of '05 the Board of Selectmen had a Resolution presented to them which was essentially similar to the Resolution of today. What happened was, and we're backing up, the Board of Selectmen passed this Resolution and said we want to have this money, we're going after it and the Board of Selectmen does not have the authority - it's you the people, it's the people of the Town that grants us the authority to sign all these documents that are mentioned with the feds. So, we forgot that step. It's an oops. Can't go that way. When we did the elevator process, we did it right the first time. The Selectmen approved it because we sit thinking about the whole Town on your behalf and thought it was a good thing and then we did bring it to a Town Meeting. We neglected that step this time and today's meeting is to undo that error. In the meanwhile the grant application was prepared, the document is this thick, it was accepted by the Department of Community and Economic Development in the State of Connecticut and the monies have been put aside and what we need to do today to get that money is to pass this Resolution. That's probably more than enough information at this point. There are people from the Washington Community Housing Trust here, their management company that manages their properties - they will take part in the implementation of this. So we have lots of people here who can answer any questions. We would really like to get out any questions.

**Hank Martin:** OK. Before we start, I am willing to hold things up a little bit if you all standing in the back would like to be seated. We have extra chairs here and you are all welcome to come on up and sit down.

Just to review where we are - we have a seconded amended Resolution on the table and we are entering the discussion phase of that and I am opening this up to the public. Mr. Fairbairn.

**Bill Fairbairn:** My name is Bill Fairbairn, I know many of you. I took over as President of the Washington Community Housing Trust after Matt Murgio dies - not necessarily by choice but apparently by a bylaw that I didn't read real carefully. (Laughter) But I'm proud and looking forward... What I'd like to do - if anybody has questions about this - the project - I will try to answer them or ask other members of the Housing Trust and former members of the Housing Trust who are here who have more familiarity than I do. We have Tammy Lautz who is the regional coordinator of Elderly Housing Management who manages our properties for us who is here with some of her staff to answer specific questions if you have them. So if there are questions that specifically relate to this that we can answer, I'd like to go from there.

**Hank Martin:** Thank you. Janet.

**Janet Wildman:** I have some questions...

**Hank Martin:** Could you please state your full name and street address, please.

**Janet Wildman:** Janet Wildman, Old Litchfield Road. Some of these will maybe sound picky - I guess maybe they are. On the application which was submitted, the very first sentence says Dodge Farms is a 14 unit assisted family rental complex which is approximately 25 years old. Now that was submitted to the State of Connecticut, it wasn't a case of reporting by the media. This came from here. I don't know where they got that information but this is a company that apparently files things and should be accurate I would think. They also refer to the Housing Trust as being 6 Kirby Road, Washington Depot, 06794 - that's the First Congregational Church address. The phone number given is for a Richard Luby (sp?) in Warren. There are places that are misspelled. Kathy Gollow's name is misspelled. Streets are misspelled. It says the overall responsibility for the project is with the Board of Selectman, Miss Kathleen Gallow, assistant, will provide administrative and management support for the day to day activities. I don't know what that means. Is she getting paid to do this?

**Bill Fairbairn:** What I expect...

**Janet Wildman:** I have one more. The Town will provide all financial record keeping and disbursement through its Treasurer's office at no cost to the grant as indication and commitment to the project. Now, I don't if the Treasurer knew about that or not. Is that true? Will the Treasurer...

**Bill Fairbairn:** I'll try to start at the beginning.

**Janet Wildman:** It seems as though for a company that is being paid, I have no idea what this company is paid. But I would think they would research and have a little better accuracy. And God knows there are many more pages that I didn't...

**Bill Fairbairn:** Well clearly there are some mistakes. They are not anything of substance-they have to do with form. I'm sure that whoever prepared it - I think that was that the preliminary application...

**Janet Wildman:** No. This is the one signed by the First Selectman, swearing...

**Bill Fairbairn:** I know Janet. Certainly there were errors made - what can we do? Whoever did it, we're sorry. The substantive things - what substantive things do you have that I can address?

**Janet Wildman:** Well, the very fact that they say this is a complex that is approximately 25 years old.

**Bill Fairbairn:** its 10 years old. The project was financed by DECD through grants and loans. DECD is the one who administered this so they know that it's 10 years old. Clearly, that was an error and I will apologize on behalf of the Housing Trust, the Town and anybody else that was involved in it. Clearly it's not anything of substance.

**Hank Martin:** Bill, let me pull something that I heard from that that is substantive and ask it as a question. Will there be any Town employees on Town time needed to administrate this project?

**Bill Fairbairn:** This fund has funds built into it for administration so if there is any time that Town employees put in on this it should be reimbursed by this grant. That's my understanding. Where's the gentleman from Larry Wagner? Come on up. Do you want to answer that question for us?

**Peter Testa:** Hello, my name is Peter Testa from L. Wagner & Associates. First off, I do want to apologize for the typographical errors and mistakes that our firm made in the preparation of this application. As said before, the project is still eligible. It doesn't matter if it's a 10 year old project or a 25 year old project. As Mr. Sears mentioned



before, the benefit to income eligible low to moderate income families still exists. Notwithstanding the errors, the application was reviewed and approved by DECD and the intent still stands and it is still a valid application. As far as your questions on administrative costs, there are program costs for the delivery of this project on the whole and yes, any time that is spent by a town employee specifically for the purpose of administration of this grant can be reimbursed to the Town for those hours spent.

**Janet Wildman:** Reimbursed to the Town or to the employee?

**Peter Testa:** Well, the employee is paid through their normal salary, so that salary would be reimbursed back to the Town through the grant.

**Bill Fairbairn:** We aren't hiring someone extra to do the work. It will be done as part of their duties and whatever amount of time is done specifically on this will be reimbursed to the Town so the Town is not out any money.

**Janet Wildman:** But they're not being paid personally.

**Bill Fairbairn:** They are being paid by the Town.

**Janet Wildman:** So the Town is paying its employees to do work for a private Trust?

**Bill Fairbairn:** No. They're being reimbursed. The grant is going to the Town. The Town is getting the money and the Town employee - whatever the administrative responsibilities are entailed in that will be marked down and recorded and whatever comes from taxpayer revenues will be reimbursed by this grant so the Town is paying nothing for this.

**Hank Martin:** OK. Let's move on to the next question. Valerie.

**Valerie Andersen:** I don't want to move on..

**Someone:** Name?

**Hank Martin:** Wait a minute. We are moving on by virtue of the fact that I've called on you. Will you please state your full name and street address?

**Valerie Andersen:** Valerie Andersen, Blackville Road. I just want to compliment Janet on picking this up. I don't think anyone here has real doubts that perhaps this is money that can be used properly for the people in Dodge Farm. It's the method and the agency that frankly bothers me. The agency is that we have put forth a document to the feds that is erroneous. Some of that is typos. Some of that, I think, is rather

substantive. A 25 year old roof should be replaced - not a 10 year old roof - things like that. So that could technically be misleading in getting these funds, I think, and the Town of Washington is the agent through which this application has been made. Also, I would like to see a schedule or let's talk about what these funds are being used for because I think there is a duplication of administrative costs. Clearly, the grant does not indicate that Kathy or our Treasurer are going to be reimbursed either directly or through the Town. I guess they better work that one out. And there seems to be some number missing. The first number was \$40,000. So now that's back on the table-we know its 440 not 400 and once again it's not about the project and the need for the exact repair - it's about the process and before we get into the numbers - I think it would be a great idea to get those numbers - I want to know the history of this project. Has it always been through the Town of Washington? Has the Town of Washington always been the agency for funding for the private non-profit Washington Trust? Are we doing something different here? Question.

**Bill Fairbairn:** The answer is with regards to the question-not the comments-but the answer to the question is that this grant is available through the towns - it has to come through the towns. Numerous towns in Connecticut have done these. I've seen Governor Rell's and Andy Roraback's statements - a number of towns and you probably can address that (Peter Testa). The funding has to go through the town. That's how you apply for these grants. There is no other alternative.

**Valerie Andersen:** Thank you.

**Bill Fairbairn:** Do you want to say something?

**Peter Testa:** Yes. As you said. The municipality must apply and that's actually to the State not to the feds just for clarification. So the municipality applies to the state and then the agency regardless of whether it's the Housing Trust or another housing authority any non-profit is eligible as a sub-recipient to the funding from the community.

**Bill Fairbairn:** I would just add back in 2002 a physical needs assessment, replacement and reserve analysis was done for this specific project by an independent contractor in terms of all the systems out there - what needs to be done and we can get into more details if **everybody** want to hear them. This was done to address the concerns and needs of this place to keep it. It's important for the neighbors, more important for the people who live in this project to have it safe, healthy environment to live in and these funds will make this property, you know, workable, healthy and that's critical to do and that's why we've done it.

**Hank Martin:** Let's move on. Let me ask for other comments and questions. Alright, well I have one. Speaking as an individual, does the approval of this Resolution encumber or require, or potentially require, any spending of monies by the Town of Washington itself from our own taxpayer's monies that are in our treasury? Is there any conceivability that could happen?

**Bill Fairbairn:** No.

**Hank Martin:** Why are you so sure?

**Bill Fairbairn:** Because the grant incorporates money for its administrative expenses as we just explained.

**Hank Martin:** What happens if there's an overrun on the project?

**Bill Fairbairn:** Well, there isn't going to be an overrun. You can't spend any more money than what you've got. So that's it. This isn't the school board.

(Laughter)

**Peter Testa:** As soon as the Town accepts the funds, a separate account is established - an expenditure account in which all funds that come from the State are directed to and then paid directly out of. There is no co-mingling with the Town's budgetary monies.

**Hank Martin:** Well what about the practical risks that we spend \$440,000.00 and at that point there is still stuff left to be done - a half built roof or something like that.

**Bill Fairbairn:** That's not going to happen, Hank. It's going to be administered properly.

**Peter Testa:** The projects are put out to bid - competitive bids - and then contracts are awarded based on the bids received and obviously the budgets are reviewed prior to the awarding of these contracts so we are aware of what our maximum available funds are, what are costs are.

**Hank Martin:** So this Resolution in no way obligates the Town to spend any of its own money?

**Bill Fairbairn/Peter Testa:** Absolutely not.

**Hank Martin:** Any other questions, comments? Yes.

**Wayne Hileman:** Wayne Hileman, River Road. I would actually say the opposite to you. What if your administration of this project is so miraculous that you actually come in under budget? Does the Town get the remainder of the money? Do we have to surrender it back to the State? Can it be used for an up and coming future affordable project?

**Hank Martin:** Good question.

**Peter Testa:** Actually, it's a very good question. The majority of times, our administrative fees do come in under budget and that money is turned back into the project itself so if we do come up with a shortfall, based on our bidding and what the cost of the estimated vs. the cost of the actual received and that money is indeed turned back into the project. If there are no remaining eligible expenses that we can utilize this funding for it is turned back into the State.

**Hank Martin:** Further questions or comments? Valerie.

**Valerie Andersen:** Could we just find out what the money is going for, please.

**Bill Fairbairn:** Do you want an itemized list of everything?

**Hank Martin:** Let's start with the major items.

**Bill Fairbairn:** We're talking resurfaced parking lot, sidewalk replacement - \$75,650, septic tank pump replacement - \$22,147, site lighting replacement which will increase the energy efficiency, reduce the actual cost - \$11,700, replacement of the well pump...\$11,023, fuel pump replacement - replace existing fuel tank - \$2800, exterior repairs which includes roofing, sheathing, replacing damaged and cracked siding... - \$81,600, interior repairs to bring up all the existing vinyl and carpeted flooring - we had one handicapped unit out there which is now vacant and received quite a bit of use - \$84,300 and then we have contingency and we have administrative costs.

**Hank Martin:** Further questions, comments? Pro or con? Yes.

**Linda Frank:** Linda Frank, West Shore Road. I'd just like to thank the Selectmen the Washington Housing Trust for doing all this work so Dodge Farm residents have a better place to live.

**Bill Fairbairn:** I would just like to take this time to thank all of you who have contributed over the years to the Housing Trust in terms of your time, talent and treasure, to make affordable housing a reality for many people in our Town who you know, love and care for. Thank all of you.

**Hank Martin:** Any other questions or comments? (None). OK, as Moderator, I would like to move this to a vote and I will read the amended resolution one more time - it's long so bear with me.

WHEREAS, Federal monies are available under the Connecticut Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program, administered by the State of Connecticut, Department of Economic and Community Development pursuant to Public Law 93-383, as amended; and,

WHEREAS, pursuant to Chapter 127c, and Part VI of Chapter 130 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development is authorized to disburse such Federal monies to local municipalities; and,

WHEREAS, it is desirable and in the public interest that the Town of Washington make application to the State for \$440,000.00 (the amended amount) in order to undertake a Small Cities Community Development Program and to execute an Assistance Agreement therefore, should one be offered.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN OF WASHINGTON:

3. That it is cognizant of the conditions and prerequisites for State Assistance imposed by Part VI of Chapter 130 of the Connecticut General Statutes; and,

4. That the filing of an application on behalf of the Washington Community Housing Trust, for the purpose of renovations to infrastructure of the Dodge Farm Housing complex, in an amount not to exceed \$440,000.00 (the amended amount) is hereby approved, and that the First Selectman is hereby authorized and directed to file such application with the Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development, to provide such additional information, to execute such other documents as may be required by the Commissioner, to execute an Assistance Agreement with the State of Connecticut for State financial assistance if such an Agreement is offered, to execute any amendments, recessions, and revisions thereto, to implement project activities, if approved, and to act as the authorized representative of the Town of Washington on behalf of the Washington Community Housing Trust.

That's the amended Resolution. All in favor of this amended Resolution please signify by raising your hands and saying "aye".

**Audience:** "AYE"

**Hank Martin:** Those opposed, please raise your hands. (None rose).

OK, let the minute's show that the amended Resolution was passed unanimously.

With that, I would like to make a motion that we adjourn as that's the only item on the agenda. Seconded by Dick Sears and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Anne Greene

Selectmen's Secretary

**I, Mary Anne Greene, do hereby certify that the within is a true and accurate transcript of the Special Town Meeting regarding the filing of a Small Cities Grant by the Town of Washington on behalf of the Washington Community Housing Trust.**

**Dated at Washington, Connecticut this 25th day of February, 2005.**

**Mary Anne Greene**