

• **November 4, 2004**

Present: First Selectman Richard Sears, Selectmen Nicholas Solley and Harry Wyant.
Public: Victoria Cherniske, Mark Lyon, Valerie Anderson

Call to Order: First Selectman Sears called the meeting to order at 4:33p.m.

Motion: To include subsequent business not appearing on the posted agenda for today's meeting. By Dick Sears, seconded by Nick Solley and unanimously approved.

Minutes: Motion: To approved the minutes of the October 21, 2004 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. By Nick Solley, seconded by Harry Wyant and unanimously approved.

Visitors: Visitors welcomed by Dick Sears.

- **Victoria Cherniske, Judge of Probate** - see below under New Business.

- **Valerie Anderson** came to today's meeting as a "self-appointed liaison from the Board of Education". She reported that the educational specs for the three primary schools have been received - the Building Committee of the Board of Ed is reviewing them. A Communications Specialist has been hired by the Region for a cost of \$10,000. Valerie voiced her disapproval of this. Negotiation meetings have started with Jim Hirschfield heading this committee. Valerie is the Board's treasurer and has begun looking into bonding figures - possibly to renovate/repair the track at Shepaug as the STEAP grant did not work for this project. The purchase of the piece of property next to Booth School in Roxbury is not going to happen at the present-Region 12 has withdrawn their offer. Dick Sears spoke of the Boards of Selectmen and Finance in the three towns expressing the desire to keep the three primary schools but did not exclude other ideas to help in the renovation process (example moving the fifth grades to the Shepaug campus). Valerie suggested the Boards of Selectmen can be helpful in controlling the "scope of work" on the primary schools. She also requested information regarding the State's funding of the "No Child Left Behind" - how much money comes back to the smaller towns in the State? Dick will ask about this at next NW Council of Governments meeting. Dick again encouraged the other Selectmen and members of the Board of Finance to do the walk through of the primary schools.

- **Mark Lyon**, Washington's Board of Finance representative to the Region 12 union negotiations, reported work has started and is proceeding.

Communications:

- **Travis Morse** has written a letter to the BOS regarding drug use among teenagers and suggesting more drug education be offered by the Town. Dick has responded to this letter explaining what programs are already in place.

- **Eric Todorski** has written a letter to the BOS regarding the Potter's Farm being for sale. He inquired into the possibility of groups being formed to donate money to possibly purchase the farm and offered an idea of having volunteers farm the land. Dick will also respond to this letter.

Both of these letters come from scouts that are working on the Citizenship in Community Merit Badge.

OLD BUSINESS:

- **West Mountain Road sign:** The matter of the "Private Road" sign at the intersection of Nettleton

Hollow Road and West Mountain Road was again discussed. All the Selectmen have inspected the area and feel that as there is nowhere for vehicles to park and/or turn around if they turn into West Mountain Road, it is best to leave the signage as is, even though the discontinued road can be used for recreational use. One private home is accessed by this road. **Motion:** To leave the signage as is, ("Private Road") as the situation cannot be made better by changing, and in fact could become more dangerous if cars were allowed to go in (entering from and exiting onto Nettleton Hollow Road). By Harry Wyant, seconded by Nick Solley and unanimously approved.

- **Painting of Pavilion Hall in New Preston:** Dick reported that the neighbor to the Pavilion Hall has given permission for the painters to go on to her property to paint the north side of the building. **Motion:** To accept A Stroke of Colors Amendment to the painting bid to paint the fourth side of the building for \$2200. By Dick Sears, seconded by Harry Wyant and unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Probate Court update - Judge Victoria Cherniske** attended today's meeting to update the Board of Selectmen on the current talks that are occurring in the Probate system. Currently there are 123 courts which make up the Probate Assembly. The Assembly reports to the Probate Administrator who is appointed by the Chief Justice of the State of Connecticut. There has been a great deal of discussion of consolidating the courts due to a "financial crisis" that the Administrator feels is a result of the phasing out of the succession tax. There is a proposal to urbanize the courts leaving the local courts to only handle administrative duties. The urbanized courts would handle all contested issues and trials. The Assembly is not in favor of the proposal. For residents of Washington, the closest urbanized court would be Danbury but people could be directed to go to Bridgeport, Waterbury, etc. Tara further explained that any proposal would have to be passed by the State's Legislature before the current system could be changed. The Assembly has offered alternative proposals if there is indeed a financial crisis in the Probate system - i.e. insurance for the courts being covered by the State. If the current proposal were to be passed it could possibly cost the Town of Washington \$50,000 (an assessed fee) as opposed to the \$4500 currently in the Town's budget of the Washington Probate Court.

- **Signage at Washington Primary School:** The Parks and Recreation Commission of the Town has requested permission to post signs at the Pavilion at the Washington Primary School due to complaints and damage that has occurred due to skateboarding, etc. They would like to place "temporary" signs now and install more permanent signs after the work is completed at the Pavilion. **Motion:** To approve the placement of temporary signs at the Pavilion that would read: "Per Order of Selectmen, Town of Washington: Absolutely No Skateboarding, Rollerboarding or Acrobatic Bicycling Allowed". By Nick Solley, seconded by Harry Wyant and unanimously approved.

Motion: To include subsequent business not appearing on the posted agenda for today's meeting. By Dick Sears, seconded by Harry Wyant and unanimously approved.

- **Elderly Tax Relief:** Dick explained that on 10-7-04 he had announced that a committee would be formed to study the matter of Elderly (and totally disabled) Tax Relief. State law says the committee must have five members and once formally appointed has 60 days to do the research and report to the Board of Finance. The report must include numbers, the rationale for the tax relief and the impact to the Town. **Motion:** To appoint to an Elderly (and totally disabled) Tax Relief Study Committee Lyle Whittlesey, Brigid Davidson, Elizabeth Hinkley, Elizabeth Mullen and Pamela Collins. By Dick Sears, seconded by Harry Wyant and unanimously approved.

Adjournment: Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 5:28p.m. as there was no further business to discuss. By Nick Solley, seconded by Harry Wyant and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Anne Greene

Selectmen's Secretary