

January 24, 2011

The following minutes of the Board of Finance are submitted subject to approval at the next meeting.
Chairman Michael Jackson called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Present:

Members: Michael Jackson, Jack Boyer, Barbara Brown, Gary Fitzherbert, Craig Schoon, Rex Swain

Alternates: Liddy Adams, Keith Templeton, A. J. Dubois

Selectmen: Mark Lyon

Treasurer: Linda McGarr

Guests: Tony Bedini

Chairman Michael Jackson called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Minutes of the December, 2010 meeting were accepted as submitted.

The Tax Collector's report was accepted as submitted.

The Treasurer's Report and Financial Reports were reviewed. Jack Boyer questioned a discrepancy in the checking account balance on the General Fund Balance Sheet and the Treasurer's Report. This will be investigated. Note: (This has been reconciled. A tax collection deposit had been misdated, therefore, was not included in the December report.) Reports accepted as submitted.

Education:

Tony Bedini reported the First Selectmen and Finance Chairmen of the three towns will be meeting on the 26th to discuss the 2011-2012 Education budget. They will address two major issues:

- 1.) The need for an in-depth review and costing of the repairs required at the MS/HS and how they will be funded. The cost for this architectural work is priced at \$25k.
- 2.) The urgent necessity of adding two additional maintenance positions to the Facility Department: a State-licensed electrician and a general maintenance person. They currently have only two maintenance people for the four buildings and are unable to keep up with the flood of maintenance and repair problems.

Items discussed:

* Operating costs for the four buildings continue to increase. Special Education costs have increased as have the number of students requiring this service. Reimbursements from State and Federal agencies are at their lowest levels since 1976 will undoubtedly affect the Region's budget as well. Tony did not feel it would be in the best interest of the three towns nor the Region to hold a zero budget line and that this could be an opportunity for the Region and the towns to work together.

* The Repair Project has gone according to plan and physical work to the schools has been halted while school is in progress. The window replacements for all three schools are being designed and fabricated this Winter. They are continuing to work on the details of style, materials, color, etc. The plan is to have them ready for installation at the close of school in the Spring. It is expected the project to be completed within budget.

* At the MS/HS a 65 foot length of Mansard roof has separated from the main roof structure in the vicinity of the pool area. It was determined to be a life/safety issue and a contractor has been hired to shore up the roof with a temporary support. The main disconnect switch for the building has been inoperable for several years. Because the cost to repair is \$20k - \$50k, there are many of these kinds of problems that need to be addressed in the very near future. This is the reason to fund the work necessary to determine what needs to be done and how much it will offset the costs.

* A full-day Kindergarten has been approved for the next school year at no extra cost to the Region. An

excess of teachers due to lower enrollment may result in some teachers being reassigned.

* School alarm systems were discussed. The Board agreed any difficulty at the school that could result in injury to the children or teachers is not acceptable and a liability to both the Region and the three towns. Further information will be sought and the Chairman of the Board of Education will be contacted to insure that all systems are compliant with required codes.

* Michael Jackson noted his concern and the importance that the towns and the school administration work together. He suggested they are looking at items from two different perspectives when it comes to costs. Some items are immediate and are no longer long-term planning issues.

Winter Maintenance:

Mark noted approximately 20% of the Winter Maintenance budget had been spent as of the end of December, with 50% as of January 31. He felt the town is holding its own with the recent major storm storms; but overtime, materials and contractors will most likely exceed the budget. He felt the Highway Department has done an outstanding job, are still doing it and have earned every penny of it! Clean up continues on both local and state roads with further storms anticipated.

2011-2012 Budget:

State Funds:

The Selectmen have begun working on the 2011-12 Budget with an attempt toward keeping it at a zero increase. Receivable State funds are still undetermined. The Education Cost Sharing grant may be cut, as 14% of it has been supplemented by Federal funds over the past two years. It was felt that the smaller, more affluent towns could be first in line for decreases. We may suffer 50% while others may suffer 10%. We have applied for a State bridge 80% grant fund for Walker Brook Road . As soon as definite information on State income is received, the Selectmen will notify the Finance Board.

Insurance/Pension:

The Selectmen will continue to meet with the Town's insurance consultant regarding health insurance costs. The increasing cost of the pension contribution was discussed. Various plans will be investigated for comparative pricing, including a 401k plan and the current defined benefit plan vs. a defined contribution plan. Rex will confer with the pension consultant to determine their response to that request and what the costs would be.

Income:

It was suggested the Selectmen consider increasing costs for the use of certain town facilities and programs in the next fiscal budget. All anticipated revenue as well as expenditures to identify areas for a 0% increase.

Revised Plan of Conservation and Development:

Keith Templeton will represent the Board of Finance on this subcommittee of the Planning Commission.

Financial Management:

A report received from consultant Linda Savitsky provided recommendations on financial systems used by municipalities of similar size and in close proximity to Washington . Based on Ms. Savitsky's findings, results from nine towns were provided that indicated most used versions of QuickBooks. Ms. Savitsky suggested the working group plan to visit at least two of the users of these applications, identify all costs for hardware, software and consulting associated with upgrading the current system, including

costs to review/upgrade/modify the existing chart of accounts and structure, develop an updated budget estimate which includes all costs associated with upgrade of the current program, documentation of work processes, job duties, and a policies and procedures manual, make a final determination of whether to upgrade and improve the program or issue an RFP for an integrated governmental software package, and develop a realistic timeline for implementation dependent upon the final determination. Contact will be made with adjoining towns to begin this process.

The meeting adjourned at 6:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Gollow
Finance Secretary