

October 18, 2004

Chairman Michael Jackson called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Present: Board Members: Jack Boyer, Michael Jackson, Mark Lyon, Rex Swain

Alternates: John Allen, Barbara Brown, Liddy Adams

Selectmen: Richard Sears, Nicholas Solley

Guests: Peter Tagley

Minutes: Approved as submitted.

Guests: Peter Tagley voiced concern that the Board of Education is proceeding with building plans for the three elementary school based on authorization they had received from the three Boards of Finance and Selectmen. He felt savings are not being considered and that specifications for the new structures would be larger than the current structures. He suggested a representative from the Board of Finance should be involved on the Building Committee and felt the project had not been taken to the public for approval at a referendum.

Michael reported two members of the Boards of Finance had met with the School Administration on several occasions. The Boards of Selectmen of the three towns had sent letters to the Board of Education indicating there was not political support for closing the elementary school buildings and that each Town wanted to maintain its primary school. This letter was not authorization to proceed to construction or renovation, but rather it was expected the Board would explore various alternatives and costs. The Boards of Finance has requested the School Administration provide more information to the Towns and felt it would be in their best interest if the Towns were allowed to review the information and comment on any proposal. Michael noted the Board of Education may proceed with a bond issue without the permission of the Towns.

The town Forums that are scheduled will include one on Education. Projected costs most likely will be available for the final forum to discuss in conjunctions with the other Town priorities for the future, i.e. municipal facilities upgrade, open space and housing. In addition, it is anticipated the tax consequence for various options will be provided. The Board agreed it would be prudent to have representation from the Finance Board on the Building Committee in order to clarify their understanding.

Tax Collector's Report: Accepted as submitted.

Treasurer's Report: Accepted as submitted. The Treasurer will be asked to provide a current STIF statement to the Board members.

Financials: Income and expense in the various Town Funds were discussed. The Board considered whether it would be more prudent to maintain a reserve in the Capital Fund or to transfer funds to the General Fund. The current reserve in the Capital Fund allows the Town to proceed with approved projects before grant funds are received. It was agreed that unexpended balances from completed projects could be returned to the General Fund. The Board will review their policy/

Selectman's Report:

Land Use Brochure: Dick reported the Conservation Commission has obtained funding for the publication of the Land Use Brochure from the Watts Fund. This will alleviate the need for the \$5,000 approved at the May town meeting from the capital funds and is greatly appreciated.

Elevator Project: The architectural drawings for this project will be completed within the next two weeks. These will be forwarded to the Town's consultant for review and preparation of the bid specifications for the Small Cities Grant. It is anticipated construction would begin next Spring.

Pension Obligation: The Board reviewed a letter received from the First Selectman of Bridgewater regarding a former employee's pension. The Board agreed no response was necessary having already forwarded a legal opinion on this matter to the same.

Fire Truck: Due to concerns about the frame of a fire vehicle that had been repaired in 2001, the truck has been taken out of service until the problem has been evaluated. Insurance funds paid for the initial repairs to this vehicle.

Pavilion bathroom: Dick reported the Board of Selectmen accepted a bid of \$147,000 for the pavilion bathroom project, subject to the successful completion of fund raising. Total costs, including architectural fees, amount to \$180,000. The Parks and Recreation Commission raised approximately \$80,000, while the Town approved \$50,000 at the May, 2003 town meeting. The Commission will continue with their fundraising efforts for the remaining \$50,000 needed. Water system well, septic, etc. are included in these costs.

Town Forums: Dick invited the members of the Board to attend the initial town forum scheduled for October 20. This forum will address municipal facilities and provide an overview of future needs. Financial implications will not be addressed at this forum. John Allen reported a study of the infrastructure of the town hall is also currently underway. Issues include the implementation of the Lake Waramaug boating program as outlined in the DEP Agreement, boat ramp construction, boathouse removal and replacement, beachhouse repairs. Dick will report as these projects come forward. Construction plans require removal of the boathouse for parking. Preliminary engineering costs were \$112,000 with no building left. Finance it through public and private funds.

Police Vehicle: Dick reported a stipulation of the recent DUI grant to obtain a new police vehicle included that the new vehicle must not replace a vehicle from the current fleet. Since the Town does not have its own Police Department, the First Selectman also serves as Chief of Police. Dick felt while the decision-making process to maintain this vehicle for his use may have been confused, there was no intention to deceive; and he had spoken about use of the vehicle with the Board of Selectmen. The Finance Board felt use of a vehicle by the First Selectman may be a policy question since use of the asset had changed. Nick Solley was asked to work with a member of the Board of Finance to frame such a policy to be implemented next summer. A survey of other towns will be done to assist with policy

Michael reported the Shepaug River lawsuit going to a final draft of an Agreement. Further information should be available in the next few weeks.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Gollow, Secretary