

October 21, 2002

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

Present:

Board: Jack Field, Robin Hirschfield, Michael Jackson, Craig Schoon, Rex Swain

Alternates: Liddy Adams, Barbara Brown, Mark Lyon

Selectman: Elaine Luckey

Guests: Barbara Johnson, Assessor

Press: David Lombino, Litchfield County Times

Minutes: Minutes of the September 15th meeting were accepted as submitted.

Tax Collector's Report: Report accepted as submitted. Will ask that date appear on next report.

Guests: Barbara Johnson reported the bid for revaluation of the October 1, 2003 Grand List was awarded to Leshner-Glending by the Board of Selectmen in the amount of \$31,000. The firm has offered a 10% reduction if one-half of the cost is paid before the end of this month, which would reduce the contract price to \$27,900. They have also agreed to reduce this further to \$27,500 as she requested, which is the amount the Town expects to receive from a C.A.M.A. grant from the State. These funds are expected within 60-90 days. Barbara recommended the Board consider this offer. The Board agreed to obtain a credit report, and if positive, to enter into contract for \$27,500. Rex Swain made a motion that the Board approve an amount not to exceed \$13,750 as an ex-budget appropriation for the first half payment for this project, and that the remaining \$13,750 be presented for approval at the May, 2003 town meeting. Robin Hirschfield seconded the motion, which was unanimously passed. Costs for reval were based on an average of \$25/parcel for 300-400 parcels.

Treasurer's Report: Report accepted as submitted. The Treasurer will be asked to note the rates of interest on each account monthly.

Financials: The Board reviewed the General, Nonrecurring Capital and Town Aid Road funds.

Nonrecurring Capital: Rex Swain moved to return \$7,932.39 to unappropriated status in the Nonrecurring Capital Fund as the following projects have been completed:

- 47: Revaluation '98: \$ 4.05
- 59B-2: Town Garage Bldg. \$ 367.54
- 60E: Road grader \$9,544.20
- 60F: Fire tanker (\$ 62.40)
- 60H: Land Records Pres. (\$2,301.00)
- 60K: Office Furniture \$ 380.00

Total: \$7,932.39

Motion was seconded by Robin Hirschfield and unanimously passed.

Excess funds have accumulated in the Capital Account from state grants and interest received over the past several years. It has been the Board's practice to transfer the full amount that has been specifically approved at town meetings from the General Fund to the Capital Fund. Discussion was held whether it is necessary to transfer the full amount of \$445,990 as approved at the May 2002 town meeting or only those funds needed to cover costs. After further discussion, it was agreed to transfer the full amount as it

will be easier to track and because the balances from both funds are taken into consideration when setting the mill rate. Michael Jackson made a motion to transfer \$445,990 from the General Fund to the Nonrecurring Capital Fund. Rex Swain seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed. It was also agreed to transfer funds from the previous sale of a pickup from the Capital to the General Fund as recommended by the auditor.

New Business:

River Road Senior Housing: Discussion was held regarding the \$25,000 approved at the May 2001 town meeting to subsidize rents for the River Road Senior Housing. Michael noted it had been his understanding that these funds were to be used to subsidize rents for Washington residents in the event the WCHT needed them to maintain an estimated \$600/month rent/unit. Recently, he had been asked if the WCHT could use these funds as a working capital shortfall. Michael did not feel this was the intent of the funds and they had not been made available for this purpose. Question was raised as to why the apartments were not filled at this point. Liddy reported the Housing Trust had not initially promoted or advertised the project as they wanted to determine the in-town need to insure that Washington residents or their relatives would be given first consideration for this housing. Issues of delay of availability, timing of moves, etc. had affected the number of people able to make the move at a specific time. Currently four units are rented, two of which are Washington residents. The Trust is now beginning to promote the project, hoping it will raise the local awareness. Members of the Board felt this raised several questions about the demand for the housing, as well as the guidelines. It was agreed to ask representatives of the Housing Trust to attend the next meeting to bring the Board up-to-date on their projects.

Selectmen's Report:

Recycling Container: Elaine reported the Board of Selectmen had recommended the purchase of a 30 cubic yard recycling container for \$4,125. While this is an unanticipated cost, it will reduce the number of hauling trips.

Use of School Building: Elaine reported Region 12's prior administration had decided to close the WPS school building evenings to reduce costs by \$40,000. They would keep the Roxbury and Bridgewater buildings open and Washington residents could use the middle-high school for programs. The Parks and Rec Commission did not agree with this and felt the middle high school building would be used for school athletics and events and would be unavailable for their programs. The current administration did not feel a saving of \$40,000 would be realized and has agreed that the Primary School will remain open as usual for use by the Town. They will meet with Parks and Rec commissioners to discuss the annual \$3,000 that has been requested for reimbursement for work done on the fields.

Asbestos: A low bid of \$12,480 was awarded for removal of asbestos from the town hall basement heating pipes, disposal and reinsulation.

Grant Writer: Elaine reported she had met with local resident Carole Powers regarding her experience in writing grants. She felt this assistance would be of benefit to the Town in seeking grants that might be available and completing the necessary documentation. The Board indicated their interest and she will be invited to come to a future Board of Finance meeting.

Registrars: Elaine reported further discussion had been held with Kenneth Johnson regarding training for the registrars. It was agreed to contract Mr. Johnson to provide training for the registrars, as well as updating the voter records. He would assure the Town that all information required for the November 5th election would be fully available and functional for that date and that the Registrars would become fully competent with the State system by the end of March 2003. This was agreeable to the Board. Robin Hirschfield made a motion that an ex-budget appropriation be approved in the amount of \$1,800 for this

purpose, seconded by Michael Jackson and unanimously passed.

S.T.E.A.P. Grant: Elaine reported the Town has received word that we have been approved for the S.T.E.A.P. grant in the amount of \$450,000. Written confirmation should be received shortly.

Resident Trooper: Elaine announced the Town's former resident state trooper, Bob Gavell, has retired. Steven Sordi has been appointed to replace Bob and the Town is looking forward to working with him.

Building and Property Commission: Elaine reported this commission is working hard and will assist the Selectmen with capital budget priorities. These may include painting the outside of the town hall and the Boys Club, among other things.

Americans with Disabilities Act: Elaine reported she has appointed Gary Fitzherbert as the ADA coordinator for the Town. She is very pleased with his expertise and he will assist the Town in clarifying policies and procedures. The proposed project of installing an elevator in the town hall will significantly upgrade the building to assist the handicapped.

Ex-Budget Appropriations: Michael Jackson made a motion to approve the asbestos project in the amount of \$12,480 and the roll-off projects in the amount of \$4,125 through ex-budget appropriations. The motion was seconded by Jack Field and unanimously passed.

Board of Education: Michael reported the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance chairmen from the three towns met with the interim superintendent and new business manager and members of the Board of Education for a remarkably constructive discussion. He felt the superintendent and business manager were very professional, knowledgeable and sensible in their approach and were interested in addressing the towns' financial concerns and bringing them to completion.

Auditors: Michael will meet with the auditors to finalize the 2001-02 audit.

Assumption Sheet: Jack reported he and Rex had worked on a revised assumption sheet that should be easier to follow for long-range forecasting. He provided this to the Commission. The Assumption Sheet title will be changed to "Long-Range Forecast." A history of previous budget will be included.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Gollow, Secretary