

October 24, 2011

The following (revised) minutes of the Board of Finance are submitted subject to approval at the next Board of Finance meeting.

Present:

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

Alternates: Liddy Adams, Keith Templeton

Selectmen: Mark Lyon, Nick Solley

Treasurer: Linda McGarr

Guests: Tony Bedini, IWCC Chairman, Janet Hill, Land Use Coordinator, Ted Bent, Housing Commission Alternate

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

Minutes of the September, 2011 were approved as submitted.

The Tax Collector's and Treasurer's Report were accepted as submitted.

Hurricane Storm Damage:

First Selectman Mark Lyon reported on the extensive storm damage to town roads and properties due to recent Hurricane Irene. Major damage occurred on Tompkins Hill, Cook Street and Walker Brook, along with many other roads. The Town is seeking reimbursement for expenses through FEMA for labor, equipment, outside contractors and materials, which will depend on the projects involved.

Legal Litigation Fund:

Additional funding for the Legal Litigation Fund is needed. Annual deposits of \$20,000 have been deposited to this Fund over the past three years for a total of \$60,000. Attorney fees for appeals to Land Use decisions through October 4th have amounted to \$59,016.41, with additional fees remaining due of \$13,152.76. Consultant and attorney fees for public hearings are charged to the applicants. This is not the case with appeals to decisions made by the commissions.

Tony Bedini suggested it may be in the Town's best interest if an attorney were present at hearings to insure the procedural process is followed properly. If a lawyer's presence is required, an increase in application fees might be considered. Suggestions included raising the fees for everyone in general to spread the cost overall or disbanding the IWCC and sending applicants to the State DEEP. Mark Lyon noted the cost of permits is high, as well as the engineering, survey and commission fees. He did not feel that the fees for the general public should be increased to cover suits that may be frivolous. Michael Jackson felt that most applicants don't require these services but they are paid for by all.

It was suggested that all phases of the application process be reviewed, as well as the fees charged in neighboring towns. Keith also suggested an attorney be consulted with regard to the Town's ability to recover the expenses from litigants if decisions are in the favor of the Town. It was suggested this may be at the discretion of the judge to do so. This will be investigated further.

Craig Schoon made a motion to approve an ex-budget appropriation of \$20,000 to transfer from the General Fund balance to the Legal Litigation Fund. Jack Boyer seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously. The Board noted their appreciation to Janet Hill, the Town's Land Use Coordinator.

Energy Panels:

Mark reported DCS Energy has informed him that the Town & Not-for-Profit Program has been canceled due to their agreement with their funding partner. This funding had made the program possible. DCS will contact the Town if they find another funding partner. Mark noted the panels are being installed. Electricity will go into credit of non-use.

Town Pension Plan:

Rex reported the pension plan will be reviewed in the interest of lowering the annual donation. A defined contribution plan as opposed to the current defined benefit plan will be investigated.

Tax Collector Report:

Collections remain steady.

Treasurer's Report:

Check statutes.

Education:

Tony Bedini reported on Region 12:

All aspects of the \$2.3 million repair work on the middle high school have been completed. The project manager is reviewing the work for completeness. Repairs have come in under cost and they are working on a list of priorities.

The WPS roof is leaking quite badly and a consultant will look at it free of charge. Costs could approximate \$550,000 to replace the entire roof, which will be discussed further. They are also hoping to have the mansard roof at the high school repaired before the winter. These repairs only extend about 100 ft. and they will forego architectural work.

The search for a new Superintendent will be advertised and by the end of this month the paper work and interviews should be complete.

The six subcommittees of the long-range planning committee are gathering data on education, demographics and community issues. Their report is due in early December and they will forward this information to the core committee to proceed. Most likely it will all come together in March or April. He met with Sandy Collins, who is the head of the superintendent search committee.

Town Income/Expense Report:

Mark Lyon reported tax collections have gone well. Most expenditures are in line – current overages are either seasonal or monthly payments; however, approximately \$82,258 is currently anticipated for damages from Hurricane Irene. It is anticipated these will be recovered through FEMA funds. Mark noted most winter storms are easier!

The meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Gollow
Secretary