

November 7, 2005

Special Meeting

Present: Board Members: Jack Field, Michael Jackson, Mark Lyon, Craig Schoon

Alternates: Barbara Brown and John Allen

Selectmen: Richard Sears, Nick Solley

Guests: Valerie Andersen, Valerie Friedman

The Special Meeting was called to consider an appropriation of up to \$33,400 to assist in evaluating the feasibility of constructing and/or renovating elementary school properties in each town and alternatives. This appropriation would be Washington's share of total costs that are not to exceed \$75,000. Jack Field reported it had become clear that the task teams needed professional assistance to complete this major task. The funds would be used to hire S/L/A/M Collaborative as a consultant for \$30,000, with the remainder available for other pre-referendum work needed by the Steering Committee. A town meeting will be scheduled for November 15 to consider this appropriation.

Jack also reported that, in addition to this request for funds, an Intermunicipal Agreement has been prepared that would establish a Committee to oversee the expenditure of these funds. The Steering Committee, for whom these funds are intended to provide pre-referendum support, has been authorized to reach an agreement with the Region 12 Board of Education wherein the Region will call for a referendum to decide on one option, including plans and estimated construction and operating costs, from the alternatives of separate schools for each town and a consolidated school for all towns. The proposed Intermunicipal Agreement would also be considered at the Town Meeting.

Jack noted that another concept suggesting that each town pay for the construction or renovation of its own building had been suggested in the original proposal by the Chairs of the 3 Boards of Finance on 6/15/05. In this concept, each building would be constructed to meet Board of Education requirements, as well as to satisfy each Town's wishes and needs for their own building. This concept has not been discussed by the Steering Committee, but the First Selectmen of the Towns of Bridgewater and Roxbury feel that construction costs should be paid according to the Regional formula. Eventually, the First Selectmen had agreed to proceed on that basis to keep the project moving. It had been suggested that legal counsel be engaged to discuss these options, but again, the Steering Committee has not yet discussed this issue.

The Washington Board of Finance agreed it was not worth postponing the referendum for another year over this issue, because of the costs that would be lost to inflation, and it was felt each town would benefit equally from the Steering Committee's overall project. The cooperation exercised between the Board of Education and the three towns, and between the towns, in coming thus far was recognized.

The Board continued discussion, and it was agreed the Town would be willing to pay its share of the \$75,000 based on the student population formula. It was felt, however, that the final sentence in Section 7 of the proposed Agreement was not pertinent to the approval and management of this expense. Mark Lyons made a motion that the Board approve an expenditure not to exceed \$33,400 for the evaluation, and that the final sentence in Section 7 of the proposed Agreement, stating "All costs including bids and construction to be paid in proportion to the student population allocation under the then current school year" be deleted from the proposal to the Washington Town Meeting. Michael Jackson seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously passed.

The Town Meeting is scheduled for November 15 at 7:30 p.m. The meeting was adjourned at 6 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Gollow, Secretary