

February 21, 2006

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

The Board met with Doug Greene and Jim Brinton regarding the position of alternate.

Present: Board: Jack Boyer, Jack Field, Michael Jackson, Craig Schoon, Rex Swain

Alternate: Liddy Adams

Selectmen: Richard Sears, Nicholas Solley

Guests: Jim Brinton, Valerie Friedman, Doug Greene

The regular meeting was called to order at 5:15 p.m.

Minutes: Minutes of the January 23, 2006 meeting were accepted as submitted.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer's Report was accepted as submitted. The Treasurer will be asked to provide comparative report on investments.

Taxes: The auditor will be consulted to clarify question on taxes in audit.

Town Pension Plan: Discussion over increased pension costs continued. The current Plan states "actual compensation" paid to employees. It was noted Private Duty time is a voluntary choice of the employees, while overtime hours in Highways and Police are mandatory and expected as part of their regular duties. It was agreed to investigate how this is managed in other towns. Data on the percentage of overtime and private duty time will also be provided to the Board. Rex reminded the Board that any change to the Pension Plan will not reduce the current pension expense.

Financials: Attached. It was noted invitations to bid will be prepared for roof replacement and painting of the Senior Center, as well as Transfer Station/Recycling contracts for 7/1/06-6/30/09.

Small Cities Grant/Dodge Farm Housing: Dick Sears reported a town meeting has been scheduled for February 23 to authorize him to file an application on behalf of the Washington Community Housing Trust to renovate the Dodge Farm Housing complex and to act as the authorized representative of the Town on behalf of the Trust. Since State funding had been used for the initial construction, the lowest bidders had been chosen for this construction and the Trust had not been allowed to raise rents to establish an adequate reserve to cover long-term maintenance costs. The Trust had approached the Town for assistance and it was determined that Town funds could not be used but use of this State grant would be valid. A public hearing was held in April and the Selectmen voted in August to give the First Selectman authority to sign a contract with the State on behalf of the Trust, with the Trust being a sub-recipient of the grant. It had been brought to the Selectman's attention recently that the Board did not have the authority to enter into this State contract and that a town meeting would be required. Michael noted the Board had not been informed of this and was concerned over the Town's liability. It was noted any cost in excess of the proposed \$440,000 grant would be paid by the Trust. Anticipated costs include \$350,000 for rehabilitation and renovation, \$48,000 for design, architecture, engineering and hazardous materials and \$45,000 for grant administration by L. Wagner Assoc., Inc. The Board agreed they should meet with the Housing Trust annually. They will be asked to attend the meeting in April for review of the budget for their three sites.

The Fire Company and Library will be invited to attend the March meeting to discuss their budgets.

Pension: Rex Swain questioned why the additional pension contribution had not been included on the Call for the March 23rd town meeting. Dick noted due to the urgency of this town meeting, it was felt this matter could be included in the regularly scheduled town meeting in May. Rex felt all town meetings should be held at the same time and evening meetings would be preferred. Dick will bring this up at a Selectmen's meeting. If a special town meeting is scheduled before May 16th, this item will be included on that agenda.

Selectman's Report:

Proposed 2006-07 Budget: Dick reported the Selectmen have been reviewing the assistance to the public in the Land Use areas, with the possibility of rearranging personnel next year to be of most assistance to the public. He also noted the Building and Property Coordinator has done an excellent job and has provided a savings to the Town as he is a skilled tradesman and does many of the projects himself. He is working on a long-rang budget for town buildings. There is also the opportunity to hire him for part-time police services as he is full-certified and has come highly recommended. This would reduce the current 15 shifts to 12.5/week and would result in a savings to the Town.

Ex-Budget Re-appropriation: The Board approved the re-appropriation of \$4,730 as an ex-budget appropriation for an electric lighting project that had not been completed in the previous fiscal year. Jack Field so moved, seconded by Michael Jackson and unanimously approved.

Town Clerk Appropriation: It had been reported by Sheila Anson that she had received her annual State grant of \$7,000 for preservation of Historic Land Records. However, there had not been a line item for this purpose in the Capital Fund. Since this would not result in any additional expense to the Town, the Board agreed a line item could be established for accounting purposes. Jack Boyer so moved. Rex Swain seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Finance Letter regarding Educational Costs: Jack provided a DRAFT letter to the Board on the financial implications of the proposed school building projects. At the previous meeting, the Board had indicated they wanted to provide information to all Town residents in an unbiased way in order that they are thoroughly informed on the financial implications of the proposals as set forth. They felt it their responsibility to present basic and valid facts and assumptions in order to assist the townspeople in make an educated decision. Jack noted it is important that the Board has done its homework and feels that the data is accurate. The Board, as well as the First Selectman, endorsed the letter and felt it validates the Steering Committee's work.

Executive Session: The Board entered Executive Session at 6:40 p.m. to discuss the appointment of an alternate to the Board.

The Board re-entered the Regular Meeting at 6:45 p.m.

It was unanimously agreed to appoint Jim Brinton as an alternate to the Board.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Gollow
Selectman's Assistant