

February 24, 2003

Present:

Board: Jack Field, Michael Jackson, Craig Schoon
Alternates: Liddy Adams, Barbara Brown, Mark Lyon
Selectmen: Elaine Luckey, Nick Solley
Press: David Lombino, Litchfield County Times

Minutes: Minutes of the previous meeting were discussed. It was suggested they include that the Board appreciated the visits by Board members Valerie Andersen and Liz Miller and hoped other members of the Board of Ed would attend meetings, perhaps in the Fall, prior to budget season. The minutes were accepted as amended.

Pension Fund: Michael reported funds that had been in cash and equivalents were now invested in ladder agency papers and receiving an interest rate of 3-4-%.

Treasurer's Report: Accepted as submitted. The Treasurer will be asked to attend meetings on a quarterly basis, if possible. Investment income will be lower than anticipated this year.

Tax Collector's Report: The Tax Collector will be asked to provide an historical comparison of tax collections, as well as her opinion on anticipated taxes receivable. Question was raised regarding the difference shown in taxes collected on the Tax Collector's Report and on the Financial Reports. (\$261,376). This will be reviewed with the tax collector, but it was felt it was due to the timing of deposits. Tanya will be invited to attend the next meeting. The report was accepted as submitted.

Financials: General and Capital Funds were reviewed. While the budget currently remains within the Winter Maintenance line item, it is anticipated expenses will exceed this line item due to recent storms and cold weather. Projects remaining to be completed in the Capital account amount to \$357,481, while funds available are \$481,936. This balance is due to state grants received to reimburse specific projects that have been deposited in this account, as well as interest received on the past several years. Whether to make the annual transfer of funds from the General Fund to the Capital Fund for projects approved at the May 2002 town meeting was discussed, as it has not yet been made. It was agreed to continue to transfer the specific amount of \$445,900 as approved to insure the close tracking of these funds and the integrity of this Fund, as has been the practice in the past. All assets in both the General Fund and the Capital Fund are taken into consideration when determining the mill rate. Elaine noted her concern that several anticipated state grants are being reduced in the middle of the year. Exact reductions are still not determined, therefore, all anticipated funds may not be forthcoming. While the Town has received approval for a STEAP grant in the amount of \$450,000, she noted we have not as yet received a description of the specific requirements.

Selectman's Report:

Legal Representation - Cell Towers: Potential legal costs for negotiations regarding cell towers were discussed. At the previous meeting, it was felt the quotation of \$15,000 was too high. Whether it would be necessary to have the attorney oversee the application presented to the Siting Council was discussed, and it was felt it would be in the best interest of the Town to have this legal review. If the Siting Council did approve an application to locate a cell tower within the Town, the attorney would be responsible for negotiating a contract to protect the Town's interests. Attorney Michael Ziska of Murtha Cullina LLP has experience in this area and will be asked for legal counsel. The Board agreed to an ex-budget appropriation not to exceed \$8,000 at a rate of \$200/hour.

2003-2004 Budget: The Selectmen reported they have begun budget work sessions. In the area of Emergency Management, Litchfield Country Dispatch has been proposed a 50% increase. The members of both the Northwestern Ct Council of Governments and the Litchfield Planning Agency have asked that this be reduced. A definitive answer on specific state grants must be obtained in order to make a decision on several capital projects that had been planned. It was reported the Grand List has increased 2.6%.

Legislative Review Survey: Jack Field reported the Legislative Review Committee will proceed with nearly all of the recommendations provided by their Survey Review Committee, except the proposal that school boards pay for school budget referendums rather than towns. They are still considering a statute revision allowing the individual deregionalization of elementary schools. They will proceed to draft legislation on the recommendations and will consider expanding the statute that provides for the dissolution of Regions. It was suggested the Board consider the primary school surplus space and the primary school population with respect to our share of the Regional budget. Jack will attend the next session on March 10.

The meeting was adjourned at 6 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Gollow, Secretary