

• March 1, 2004

Chairman Michael Jackson called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

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

Alternates: Liddy Adams and Barbara Brown

Selectman: Richard Sears

Treasurer: Linda Mc Garr

Press: John Addyman, VOICES ; Sarah Sparks, Waterbury Republican/American

Guests: WVFD: Duncan Woodruff, Chris Moore, Dick Murchison, Aaron Hodge Valerie Andersen, Board of Education ; Alan Chapin, Thomas & Betsey Burke

Guests:

Fire Department: The Fire Department provided information on their request to purchase a new Rescue vehicle to replace their 1993 Rescue truck. Duncan Woodruff reported this truck is considered a first responder certified vehicle. This enables its use for ambulance calls until such time as the ambulance is available, as well as for motor vehicle accidents and fires. In addition to carrying extensive life-saving equipment, the vehicle also carries a generator, an extrication tool, air bags, an air cascade system for Self Contained Breathing Apparatus, ice rescue equipment and equipment used for forcible entry and general scene support. OSHA, EPA and NFPA standards now require that towns establish an Incident Command System, as well as a Command Post, for safety personnel to coordinate their efforts at large and/or complex incidents. This vehicle would allow the Department to meet these requirements, as well as to provide space to carry hazardous material equipment and rescue ropes. The proposed cost to the Town is estimated at \$275,000, with the Fire Department providing an additional \$50,000. This vehicle is part of the Department's long-range plan presented to the Board of Finance in 2002. The Board and the Fire Department will investigate various funding and payment schedules and the Department will provide an updated five-year plan to the Board. The Board of Selectmen will consider this request further as part of their overall capital budget for the coming year. The Department was thanked for their efforts on behalf of the Town and its residents.

Historic Records Preservation Expense: An ex-budget appropriation of \$1,974 was approved for the preservation and management of historic documents in accordance with Public Act 00-146 at the request of the Town Clerk. A three-dollar fee is collected by the Town Clerk for each land record. Two-thirds of this fee is remitted to the State Librarian for the preservation of historic documents. The Town retains one-third, which must be expended for the restoration and maintenance of town records. Town Clerk Sheila Anson will use these funds to restore two volumes, as well as to purchase a new town seal and binders for vital statistics.

Minutes: Minutes of the November 17, 2003 and January 26 meetings were accepted as submitted. Rex requested the quarterly Town Pension reports be circulated to the Pension Committee.

Treasurer's Report: Linda continues to review the interest rates on Town investments to insure that we are collecting the highest rates while maintaining flexibility in the use of Town funds. She requested the Board advise her in writing if a transfer from the General Fund to the Capital Fund is to be made for the capital items approved at the May, 2003 Town Meeting. The Board will review this prior to the next meeting.

Tax Collector's Report: A comparison of the Tax Collector's Report and the taxes on the Financial Report was discussed. A monthly report will be prepared to outline the differences in the monthly totals.

This comparison will be forwarded to the Board during the month.

Financial Reports: General, Nonrecurring Capital and Town Aid Road Fund accounts through January 31 were reviewed. It was noted the Winter Maintenance area will most likely exceed the budgeted line item this year.

Selectman s Report: Dick Sears reported on the following:

- **Budget:** The Selectmen continue to review Town operations and meet with personnel in preparation for the coming budget. A salary range has not been established as yet. Many large capital items are under consideration. It is anticipated several will be reimbursable through grants.

- **Grants:** Dick attended a seminar on federal grants available through FEMA and the Department of Health Services. Additional grant applications currently being submitted are:

- o State D.O.T. DUI Enforcement Vehicle Program To purchase a police vehicle using this grant to seek 80% reimbursement. Application has been submitted.

- o Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program through Homeland Security For training and/or equipment at a 90% match. Dick noted we are not eligible for a vehicle through this grant. He is working with the fire company to submit this application by April 2.

- o Positive Police Interaction With Youth Application has been submitted for a \$10,000 grant. Dick is working with Resident Trooper on this grant and the establishment of a Shepaug Youth Patrol.

- **Education:** Dick commended the School Administration and Board of Education on their attempt to maintain a reasonable increase in the Education budget. It is currently in the 4.99% range. Rex commended the Boards of Selectmen and Finance of the three towns for their strong unified statement against closing any of the elementary schools and encouraging the Board of Ed to consider alternatives, such as reconfiguring the current grade setup in each building. Holding a referendum to obtain public opinion on whether to consolidate or renovate was suggested. Valerie Andersen reported the Board of Ed is considering calling a referendum prior to the budget referendum or at the same time. Rex suggested increasing the voting hours 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. on the Education budget referendum. The Board of Education would make this decision. Additional hours would be added to next year s General Fund budget.

- **Bryan Memorial Town Hall:** Dick noted his appreciation of the Board s approval to proceed with rewiring of the town hall office computers from dial-up service to Cable. The Bryan Memorial Hall Trustees have agreed to pay for this wiring, which should occur within the next few weeks. They have also voted to pay for an engineering study of the major systems within the building to insure that they meet required codes.

Revised Grand List: The Board received the Assessor s report on the revised Grand List as of 10/01/2003. Total Net Grand List: \$915,387,180, which is \$294,646,420 (47.4%) higher than 2002 (\$620,646,420). Motor vehicles declined by \$173,970, which has been the case across the State as used car prices have dropped. Personal property increased by \$108,360. The increase was basically in real estate. The Board will consider a revision to the mill rate following the May town meeting; however, it was assumed the Grand List numbers will precipitate a substantial decrease in the mill rate.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Gollow, Secretary

Board of Finance: March 1, 2004