

• **March 21, 2005**

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

Present: Board Members: Jack Field, Michael Jackson, Mark Lyon and Rex Swain

Alternates: Liddy Adams, Barbara Brown

Selectman: Richard Sears

Treasurer: Linda McGarr

Firefighters: Mark Collins, Dick Murchison. Matt Somerset and Duncan Woodruff

Gunn Library: Phil Farmer

Open Space Committee: Dan Sherr

W.C. Housing Trust: Matt Murgio and John Millington

Housing Diversity Committee: Bill Fairbairn, Jeff Anderson, Simone Rourke and Don Brigham

Guests: Valerie Friedman

Alternates Liddy Adams and Barbara Brown were seated in the absence of regular Board members Jack Boyer and Craig Schoon.

Fire Company:

General Fund: The WVFD's request for \$91,000 for the 2005-06 General Fund was presented. Increased utility, equipment and maintenance costs precipitate the increase in these line items for next year. The Fire Company was asked to present these General Fund expenses in detail to the Board of Selectmen.

Capital Fund: The following capital requests were made:

- **SCBA Equipment (self-contained breathing apparatus):** Current apparatus is 6-10 years old and has malfunctioned on several occasions. 28 Scott SCBA packs were requested at a gross cost of \$161,160. This could be offset by \$11,275 from a FEMA grant and a trade-in of current equipment of \$17,472 for a total cost of \$132,413. Options for leasing are available.
- **Hose:** Over 1,000 ft. of a total of 13,000 ft. of hose failed NFPA standards last year. Some of the hose was manufactured in the 1980's. Cost for cotton hose was quoted at \$26,775 and rubber hose at \$17,705, including related hardware. Fire Company felt rubber hose would be satisfactory. Suggested long-range plan include \$5-7,000 annually for hose replacement.
- **Portable radios:** Portable radios to be used by firefighters, especially when entering emergency incidents, were requested. Immediate need for 15 radios, with total goal of 28. Cost per unit: \$1,125. Fifteen: \$16,875. Total cost: \$28,137.
- **Replacement of Engines 5 and 7 with a combination pumper/tanker:** Engine #7 is 23 years old and due to be replaced at an estimated cost of \$275,000. Current engine #5 is 16 years old. Chassis is obsolete and vehicle was involved in serious accident several years ago. Reliability of apparatus and cost associated with maintenance are questionable. Estimate for replacement is \$375,000. WVFD suggests replacing both with one pumper/tanker. Cost savings would be substantial at an estimated \$410,000 as compared to \$650,000. Lease financing figures were provided. Would not need to include in budget this year if lease option taken. It was felt the purchase of this vehicle would bring the fire apparatus up to date, with engine #3 remaining as the oldest piece of apparatus and usable for another seven years. Historically, a vehicle has been replaced approximately every three years over the past thirty years. The WVFD was asked to provide an up-dated long-range capital plan for vehicles and information as to what part they could assist with financing. They are currently financing approximately \$80,000 toward the new Rescue

vehicle. The Town approved \$137,500 toward this vehicle in the 04/05 fy, with the remaining \$137,500 proposed for the coming 05/06 fy. The firefighters also reported a recent grant would include replacement of rapid intervention team packs, which include turn out gear, special training, SCBA fitted masks and miscellaneous equipment, including harnesses, ropes, etc. They will apply for another grant to deal with the exhaust system in the firehouse.

Gunn Library & Museum: Phil Farmer, chairman of the Board, requested \$108,000 for the 05/06 fiscal year. Town funding equates to approximately 29% of the Library budget as compared to other towns, where funding may be as high as 100%. The Town's contribution has increased at approximately 3%/year. The Library anticipates their budget will grow at a faster rate. Staffing and benefit structures are expected to remain fairly constant, except for the possible funding of a defined benefit pension plan for one long-term employee. The remainder of their income is raised through contributions, trust funds and fund-raising events. Endowment funds are used only if needed. The Board noted their appreciation of the fine services afforded by both the Library and Museum and their appreciation to their many volunteers.

Open Space Committee: Dan Sherr reported the Committee's main goal is to preserve the rural character of Washington. Their primary responsibility is to implement that part of the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development regarding open space. To gain clarity as to how to proceed, the Committee will:

- Monitor and report progress in achieving the TPCD goal of 30% permanently preserved open space by 2015.
- Advocate for community commitment to open space and processes that encourage owners to permanently protect their properties from development.
- Partner with Town commissions and land trusts to insure "management" of the open space resources to achieve the social goals of the TPCD. As the Open Space Committee is not fully equipped to do this alone, partnership with other organizations is being considered.

The Open Space Committee requested:

- The Town reallocate the real estate conveyance tax proceeds from the General Fund to the Open Space Acquisition Fund.
- Deposit \$.165/\$1,000 of the Grand List or \$150,000 annually to the Open Space Acquisition Fund
- Establish an ordinance to provide tax relief to property owners who place permanent development restrictions on their properties while meeting other open space preservation criteria.

The Board discussed the Land Acquisition Fund established for the eventuality that the Town's contribution would serve as a catalyst and that private contributions, state grants and developer's payments in lieu of open space would raise the major funding. Funds would be managed separately and would not be spent without specific town approval. The Open Space Committee would evaluate opportunities that may become available. This Committee would make a determination and present this to the Conservation Commission for consideration. If approved, the proposal would proceed through the Town's various processes as outlined in the town ordinances and state statutes. The Open Space Committee plans to present a full five-year financial plan to the Board later in the year. Legal costs, monitoring, public use of the properties, transfers of easement and ownership are all areas that will need review.

Washington Community Housing Trust: Matt Murgio, chairman of the WCHT, reported on the three properties owned by the Trust. Recent census figures show 79% of the occupants of the Dodge Farm

apartments and 75% of the Riverwoods Apartments have ties to the Town. Availability, size of apartment, applicant's current need, and credit rating all play a part in determining occupancy for the apartments. After ten years, the Dodge Farm apartments are in need of upgrades. The State has capped the rents that the Trust is allowed to charge resulting in their falling low in their reserves. The Town has offered to assist in applying for a Small Cities grant to help with these repairs, with the Trust supplying the matching 10% required. The River Woods apartments have a tax abatement from the Town for the life of their debt service. Their mortgage expense is approximately 61% of their operating expense, thus not leaving an excess of funds for reserve. 16 Church has a mortgage of \$40-50,000, leaving little remaining funds for writing new projects. Suggestion was made that the aggregate cash flow of the three properties might be considered to cover expenses and/or the Small Cities grant could be used for all three properties. Mr. Murgio requested the Town consider a tax abatement for the 16 Church Street property and that the Payment In Lieu of Taxes (P.I.L.O.T.) program for the Dodge Farm complex be rescinded and replaced with a tax abatement. John Millington noted the importance of providing limited equity single family homes. He felt the Town must assist the Housing Trust in this endeavor.

Housing Diversity Committee: Bill Fairbairn presented a draft of this Committee's report with the following recommendations:

- The Town create a Town Housing Commission to plan for the housing needs of low/moderate income people, including single family homes, rental units, assisted living and congregate homes. The Town's many needs are currently addressed by private entities and a Town Housing Commission would be accountable to the Board of Selectmen. This volunteer group could possibly require a manager in the future.
- A ten-year plan be developed for a minimum of 96 units of affordable housing. In addition, longer range plans be initiated as well. Priority should be given to single-family units.
- The Town immediately address a "Parcel Program" for limited equity single-family homes.
- The Town appropriate \$50,000 per year for the next ten years and adopt a contingency plan for an even larger appropriation during this time period to address the legal pressure from the Connecticut Affordable Housing Land Use Appeals Act.

Treasurer: Linda McGarr reported she had been investigating a Certificate of Deposit Account Registry Service (CDARS) through a local bank for investment purposes. This program would provide full FDIC insurance on deposit amounts larger than \$100,000 and a higher interest rate than currently available through State accounts. The Town's auditor will be asked to review the program.

Minutes: Minutes of the 2/28 regular and special meetings were approved with the correction to change the word "repair" to "renovate to new" regarding the three primary schools.

CT Municipal Consortium for Financial Responsibility: Jack Field reported on this coalition of local officials across the state advocating for local initiatives to increase political leverage on state mandates and their influence on local property taxes. Jack Field made a motion that the Washington Board of Finance support this group. Rex Swain seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously passed. (attached)

Use of Town Vehicle by First Selectman: The Board received the Board of Selectmen's policy regarding the First Selectman's use of a town vehicle as they had requested. The 1999 Ford Crown Victoria currently used for business purposes by the First Selectman will continue through December, 2005. Fuel for said vehicle will be available at the town garage and will be charged to the Selectman's account. Beginning January 2006, the First Selectman will receive \$200 each month to cover

transportation expense for the personal use of his vehicle.

Board of Education Progress of Building Projects Meeting: The Board was invited to attend a meeting on March 28th at 7 p.m. at the Regional High School for an update on the progress of the Region 12 building projects. All Selectmen, Boards of Finance members and PTO Presidents from the three towns were asked to attend. This meeting will follow the Board of Finance Special Meeting scheduled for March 28th at 5 p.m. to review the Selectmen's proposed budgets for 2005-06.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Kathy Gollow, Secretary