

April 15, 2002

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

Present:

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

Alternates: Liddy Adams, Barbara Brown, and Mark Lyon

Selectmen: Elaine Luckey, Nick Solley

Parks & Rec: Sheila Anson, Joe Fredlund, Holly Haas, And C. J. Kersten

WCHT: Dick Sears

Guests: Valerie Friedman

Parks & Recreation: Sheila Anson presented the Commission's proposal for construction of a combined bathroom/maintenance/storage building at the Washington Primary School grounds. She noted the Commission has overseen many improvements to the town fields through the generosity of the Town, the Village Improvement Society and the Washington Garden Club. The proposed building is designed to be vandal-proof and well constructed. Anticipated costs are currently at \$198,700, which would also include a well and septic system. The Parks & Rec Commission feels a new bathroom has become a necessity in the interest of safety for the children, who would not have to leave the fields and walk through the parking area. It is also the feeling of the school administration that open access to the building is not desirable. The commissioners felt those using the pavilion and the walking path would also use the bathrooms. The Commission is also seeking storage space for equipment, which is currently stored in the Town Hall or in a rented garage. First Selectman Elaine Luckey noted the Selectmen had not disapproved of this proposal but rather referred it to the Board of Finance for consideration.

The Board noted their concern over cost and questioned if an addition or renovation to the bathroom in the school building had been considered. The Commission noted this still would not solve the problem of safety and this area is under water much of the time. The Commission members agreed to investigate available grants, private funding and Region #12 funding to assist with costs. In exchange, the Finance Board will consider the possibility of partial funding for start up costs and/or budgeting funds over a two-year period once further information is received.

River Woods Senior Housing: Dick Sears, chairman of the Washington Community Housing Trust, reported the construction project is progressing well and it is hoped they will be ready by July 1. Besides the assistance given by the Town, the First Congregational Church and individual fundraising, Dick reported the Housing Trust had felt it would be a good idea to get the broad support of town residents for this project by sending a fundraising letter to invite support and interest. They have received approximately \$20,000 toward their goal of \$60,000. \$25,000 had also been approved at the May 2001 town meeting for rental assistance and a discussion was held as to how this would work. It was felt these funds had been approved to assist the Housing Trust in the event they were unable to meet costs due to shortages in rental income. Jack Boyer suggested guidelines be set forth as to how to draw against these funds. Michael did not feel an annual line item should be added to the Town's budget, but rather if further funds were needed, an appropriation would once again be approved at a town meeting. Dick reported the same organization would be used to determine qualified initial renters as was used for the Dodge Farm rental units. They are experienced in these matters and it seems to be working well. Further discussion will follow.

Minutes: Rex Swain noted he had not attended the March meeting as noted. The minutes were approved as submitted.

Treasurer's Report: A suggestion will be made to the Treasurer that longer-term investments might be investigated after reviewing anticipated expenses.

Town Proposed Budget: Elaine Luckey outlined adjustments the Selectmen had made to their previously submitted budget proposal. The insurance areas are the largest proposed increases and higher deductibles will be investigated in an effort to reduce costs. It was agreed an invitation to bid on all insurances would be extended next year. The Selectmen were asked to work on a long-range capital plan.

Newsletter: Jack Boyer made a motion that the Board include a letter in the Town's newsletter regarding the impact the increases in the Education and Town budgets will have on the mill rate over a period of time. Rex Swain seconded the motion. Liddy Adams noted she felt strongly that the Town newsletter was not the place to take a stand for or against the proposed budgets and that opinions should be expressed in the local newspapers. The majority of the Board felt it was appropriate to disseminate this information to the public. All, except Liddy Adams, approved the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Gollow
Secretary