

• April 18, 2005

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

Present: Board Members: Jack Boyer, Michael Jackson, Mark Lyon, Craig Schoon and Rex Swain

Alternates: Liddy Adams, John Allen, Barbara Brown

Selectmen: Richard Sears, Nick Solley

Guests: Planning Commissioner members: Addie Roberts, Winston Fowlkes

Matt Murgio, chairman, Washington Comm. Housing Trust

Valerie Friedman

Depot Study: Planning Commission members reported proposals ranging from \$40,000-\$100,000 had been received from six firms for this study. Wilber-Smith Associates of New Haven was chosen. This is the only firm that allowed the Town to consider the project in two phases. Phase I would include the conceptual planning of transportation and land use development in the area, while Phase II would consist of a series of additional tasks that would provide greater detail and additional planning services that address the items more completely. The cost for Phase I is proposed at \$29,900, inclusive of direct expenses. \$35,000 had been approved at the May, 2004 town meeting for the study. Phase II has been estimated at a total of \$49,000; however, tasks could be chosen separately for specific costs, including drafting zoning regulations, roadway operational analysis, streetscape renderings, inventory of waste management systems and inventory of public utility systems. The Board reported another \$35,000 is included in the 2005-06 capital proposals to be earmarked for Phase II. Once Phase I is completed, the Planning Commission will return to explain how they propose this additional funding would be spent prior in Phase II.

Tax Abatement: Matt Murgio, chairman of the WCHT, requested the Board consider abating the taxes on the Housing Trust's Church Street property, as well as the Dodge Farm property. There are not sufficient reserve funds to cover maintenance that is needed at Dodge Farm. Jack Boyer reported the abatement of the taxes at Dodge Farm would assist greatly with these costs. This payment in lieu of taxes currently paid on this property resulted from an agreement that was made between the Trust and the Town at the time of construction; however, it could be rescinded by the Town. It was agreed the Trust would provide an aggregate financial statement of their three properties for the Board's review prior to considering this request.

Treasurer's Report: Linda McGarr has asked the Town's auditor to review the new investment account she proposed using at the last meeting. Treasurer's Report accepted as submitted.

Budget: The Selectmen and Board continued discussion on the proposed budgets. The following items were discussed and remain under consideration in the General Fund:

- The use of Town Aid Road funds to offset sand and salt costs in the Highway budget. Nick Solley felt it would distort the actual budget costs in this area.
- Discussion on the benefits and/or margin of error resulting from the use of GIS mapping. Dick Sears reported the Conservation Commission feels this would be very useful for local soil and tax maps.

- An historical analysis of the Fire co. award program was requested for the next meeting.
- The amount of police coverage in the future that the Town will require.
- The excellent job done by the Emergency Management coordinator.
- The use of a contractor for winter snow storms as opposed to increasing the length of highway employees trip routes.
- Culverts - do they belong in capital or general operating account? Ask auditor for opinion.
- Pavilion Maintenance: In an attempt to reduce costs, it was felt current town employees could lock/unlock each day, as well as maintain.
- Animal Control Officer - increase in # of hours from 20 to 22/week. Does more.
- Newsletter. Opinions varied as to its necessity. Some felt costs too high. First Selectman felt it is an excellent way to communicate with the public. Website may be solution in future. Important to keep people advised of what is going on. Suggested cutting to two/year.

The following items were discussed and remain under consideration in the Capital Fund:

- Whether the addition of \$200,000 in new initiatives (open space and housing) should have an impact on the Selectmen's annual capital projects. Nick provided information that the average capital expense over the past eleven years has been \$945,000. Both Boards recognized that some years are going to be higher than others. It was agreed the answer must be from the taxpayers as to what they are willing to pay. This will be reviewed further for future budgets when time allows.

Special Meeting: The Board will hold a Special Meeting on April 25th to continue discussion of the budget. A forecast will be provided at that meeting.

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

Respectfully submitted, Kathy Gollow, Secretary