

April 4, 2011

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

Present:

Members: Michael Jackson, Craig Schoon

Alternates: A. J. DuBois, Keith Templeton

Selectmen: Mark Lyon, Nick Solley

Guests: Roger Stikeleather, Steve Haas, Jack Field – Gunn Memorial Library/Museum,
Tony Bedini - Region 12 Board of Education

Chairman Michael Jackson called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Alternates A.J. DuBois and Keith Templeton were seated in the absence of regular members Jack Boyer and Barbara Brown.

The purpose of the special meeting was to meet with Gunn Library and Museum representatives regarding the Town's proposed 2011-2012 budget request and their future plans. The Board welcomed representatives from the Gunn Memorial Library and Museum. Roger Stikeleather, Chairman of the Gunn Library and Museum Board, noted they have appreciated the Town's support in the past, as well as it's positive perspective of their accomplishments during that time. He also noted his appreciation of Jim Brinton and Liddy Adams, who represented the Town in meetings with the Gunn in a joint Town/Library task force over the past year.

The Library and Museum would not have been able to provide their excellent programs without the help of the Town. The very favorable comparison of the Gunn Library and Museum to similar-sized libraries and museums across the State is a result of this support. Utilization of both of these entities is very high.

Mr. Stikeleather reported the Board and administrative personnel have cut the operating expenses of the Library since 2008 by 12%. The number of full-time employees has been reduced to one Executive Director and one Museum Director, thus reducing costs for benefits. The remaining staff is part-time with no benefits. There are over 70 volunteers. Without the volunteers and part-time people, the budget would be much higher. Expenses are higher due to fuel and utility costs, as well as the increased use of electronic services.

Looking ahead, Mr. Stikeleather noted a plan for the future is needed. Approximately 51% of their income has been realized from fundraisers and investments, with another 23% from the Town. A silent phase of capital fundraising resulted in over \$400,000 received from members of the Board, with these funds used for capital maintenance of the buildings, etc. The Trustees have focused on restraining the expenses while not cutting services. They are committed to living on this income, plus their investment funds. Funds of the Library and Museum are now co-mingled.

There is a greater public awareness of the Museum, a dedicated group that believes in the Museum, and the recognition that the Museum is coming into its own. The Capital campaign raised \$75,000 for the Museum. The Board also voted to reduce the Museum spending by another 10% over the next two years. The Trustees are working on a long-term plan to show that they can remain stable. They are considering two plans for the future. Under the first plan, services would remain intact, pretty much as they are now. Under a second plan, a reorganization of the Museum might be considered, with thought being given to minimizing the Museum to a stand-alone entity. The Historical Society's opinions would be sought to consider this concept, which could result in the Library/Museum continuing to maintain the Museum building, with the Historical Society taking responsibility for the programs, etc. This would occur over a five-year period. The Trustees do not feel this is the time for a capital campaign. Instead, it had been

recommended that they request an increase in support from the Town's from 23% to 33% over a five-year period. It is his understanding that historically support funds had been at a one-third ratio from the Museum, the Library, and the Town. It also was recognized that the culture of antiques is changing. The recent Antique Show had been successful, but the dealers did not do as well. The 25th anniversary of the Antique Show is coming up. The Library Luminaries events have been successful and very helpful.

Jack Field updated the Board on the history of the Museum and the Library, noting the Museum had originally been self-funded and the concept was that of a quasi-private/public library. During the planning stages for the building of the new Library, it was decided to raise funds for its future growth and \$2.5 million was raised. The Boards have been proud of the structure and maintain close control over its content. It has been successful beyond expectations, with 13,000 visits (two times the State average) and 8,000 patrons this past year. It had been anticipated that funding could be derived from the Town, the Library's investments and the Library's annual fund raising - basically - in thirds. Two five-year plans were instituted to build up the endowment from 1998-2003 and 2003-2008. Funds were increased from \$500,000 to \$3,000,000 through a combination of fundraising and the growth of the principle. Their Finance Committee is now self-directed by experienced members in order to reduce investment fees. Other income has been derived from book sales, fines and estate funds. The members of the Finance Board noted their appreciation for the efforts of the Library and Museum.

Town Budget:

The Selectmen continue to work on the 2011-12 proposed budgets, including comments on the following areas:

- * They are addressing additional fuel oil costs and social service requests.
- * The possibility of acquiring property to be used for the storage of road materials adjacent to the current town garage site is being considered in an effort to complete remediation of the Titus Road property. There is not enough area at the current Town Garage property due to the topography of the land.
- * Mark noted original requests in the Capital Fund have been scaled back from a 4.5% to 1% increase.
- * Funding for a fire truck has been postponed this year.
- * Mark reported he has been working with the Highway Director regarding the road maintenance program, who feels this has not been adequately funded for the past four-six years and we are at a level where we are losing ground. He has been working the Town's equipment to increase the work that can be done in-house.
- * The dam behind the BMTH is in need of repair as it serves as the fire pond.
- * The Open Space Fund currently has \$300,000, while the Housing Fund has \$290,000. Whether or not to continue funding these two areas could be under consideration.

Michael Jackson noted the question must now be asked "Where do the people want to spend their money?" Michael felt this would be a year of compromise in the hopes of reflecting the interests most important to the public. He suggested the Capital Fund be reviewed further with a reduction of perhaps -1%. Make sure that everyone knows exactly what the long-range plan will be. The Selectmen agreed they will review the budget proposal and keep the public's interests in mind.

Change of Meeting Date:

The next regular Board of Finance meeting was rescheduled from April 18th to April 25th. This change of date was approved. The Selectmen felt their final budget proposal should be completed by the 25th.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Gollow
Finance Secretary

