

# June 18, 2007

Present: Finance Board: Barbara Brown, Michael Jackson, Jack Field, Craig Schoon, Rex Swain

Alternates: Liddy Adams, John Allen, Jim Brinton

Selectmen: Richard Sears, Nicholas Solley

Fire Co.: Dick Murchison, Chief; Duncan Woodruff, Ass't. Chief, Brian Ohmen, Ass't Chief

Guests: Valerie Friedman

**Fire Co.:** The Board met with Fire Company representatives to discuss overexpenditures in the 2006-07 fiscal year in the areas of vehicle maintenance and physical exams. It was noted these were necessary costs for maintenance and repairs on fire vehicles and physical exams required by OSHA. The Board appreciated the importance placed on maintaining the vehicles, as well as the health of the firefighters. They discussed procedures that the Town be notified when excess expenditures of Town funds are anticipated. These procedures will be reviewed. Jim Brinton will work with the Fire Company.

## **Selectman's Report:**

**Property:** First Selectman Sears presented a map showing the Wyant property located on Blackville and Bee Brook Roads, which is currently for sale. He reported the Selectmen feel the Town would benefit from purchasing a portion of the available property adjacent to the new highway garage, which could serve for storage issues. Members of the Board questioned the adequacy of the property if the adjoining property were cleared, its steepness and future potential. Dick will continue to pursue more information about this property.

**Ex-Budget: Fiber Optic Cable Connection:** Dick requested an appropriation of \$2,500 for the unanticipated costs for installation of a fiber optic cable between the town hall and future police offices in the former firehouse. These offices are currently being constructed and should be complete this Fall. Jack Field made a motion to approve an ex-budget appropriation of \$2,500 for this request. Craig Schoon seconded the motion. Motion unanimously passed.

Dick also reported the town hall phone system is being replaced as part of the Town's technology plan. Rental income from the upper floor of the old firehouse will be reduced \$100/month as the Town will use the garage that the tenant is currently using. He reported Selectmen's legal fees are expected to exceed the budgeted line item due to personnel issues. The Board will be updated in the future. An Executive Session to discuss this was suggested for the next meeting.

**Strategic Plan:** The Board discussed the Town's future goals and the need to hear the concerns of the Town for the future. Jack Field reported the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development included the goal to maintain diversity in our population - That 10% of the housing unit be affordable and that we must employ a strategy to obtain a higher degree of this housing to allow young people to remain in Town. Currently that number stands at approximately 2% and the State's forecast shows a decline in population. Jack also noted it has never been determined what the Town really wanted with regard to Education. Do we want a three school package or one consolidated school? How does the proposed site in Roxbury compare with our current site, which is situated in a floodplain and sometimes underwater? He noted the Board has not had a way to get a uniform town explanation. He suggested a Fall referendum be considered to give people the choice on the issues of where the Town is heading and what is best for Washington. He felt that the Town needs to revisit the Washington strategy.

Additional concerns included deregionalization as an alternative, merging with Litchfield, the fact that the three towns cannot seem to agree, how much money the taxpayers are willing to pay, alternative uses of the school property, etc, etc. The Board agreed it is important that Washington get clear as to what it wants to do; and as leaders, the Boards of Finance and Selectmen needs a clear, cohesive view from the townspeople. It was also agreed these thoughts must be made clear to the Region. It was agreed to take this to a town meeting to be presented to the public. It was agreed to seek the assistance of a professional consultant to assist a task team to reevaluate what is "best" for Washington.

**Barbara Brown made a motion to approve an ex-budget appropriation of \$15,000 for a study to engage a professional consultant to assist a task team to reevaluate the "best" for the Washington Primary School. Michael Jackson seconded the motion. Motion unanimously passed.**

Meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Gollow, Secretary