

August 16, 2004

Present: Board Members: Jack Field, Michael Jackson, Mark Lyon, Rex Swain
Alternates: Liddy Adams, John Allen, Barbara Brown
Guests: Richard Sears, First Selectman; Betty Mullin, resident

Guests: Betty Mullin requested the Board consider ways to ease the tax burden on the Town's seniors. She noted while many seniors are in favor of maintaining open space and providing for housing and education, they are unable to fully support these efforts due to increased taxes. The Board's reaction was positive. Programs in neighboring towns will be investigated and the Board will review the impact various programs could have on the Town budget.

Treasurer's Report: Accepted as submitted.

Financial Reports: 2003-2004 year-end reports were reviewed. General Fund Income exceeded budgeted forecast, mainly in the areas of Building Permits, Police Private Duty and Town Clerk's deposits. Expenses also exceed forecast, mainly in areas of Building and Police expense.

The Town's financial and demographical information will be updated in anticipation of school building plans and contract negotiations. The importance of long-range planning for future Town projects was addressed. John Allen, chairman of the Buildings and Grounds Commission, reported code and infrastructure studies are planned for Bryan Memorial Town Hall, as well as the on-going review of other town buildings and properties. Dick Sears reported a series of forums is planned for October to discuss the Town's preferences for the future and rank them in accordance of their importance.

The Board agreed approved capital project funds are restricted. These funds will be transferred annually to the Nonrecurring Capital Account. Income received from state grants and interest that have been deposited to the Capital Fund will be transferred into the General Fund annually. Michael Jackson made a motion to transfer \$860,025 from the May, 2003 town meeting and the net of \$780,525 from the May, 2004 town meeting from the General Fund to the Capital Fund for approved capital expenses. He further moved that \$70,869 received in state grants and interest be transferred from the Capital Fund to the General Fund. Rex Swain seconded the motion. Motion unanimously passed.

Town staffing was discussed. Added responsibilities and work load in the land use, finance and building upgrade and maintenance areas were recognized as more complex and time consuming. The Board will request the Selectmen to review current personnel responsibilities.

Old Business:

Rex Swain presented the following items for discussion:

- **Parks & Rec Bathroom and Storage Facility:** Rex reminded the Board that \$50,000 had been approved at town meeting for this project. The Parks & Rec Commission planned to raise the remainder with the assistance of private efforts. Initial anticipated costs were \$158,000 in April of 2003. A recent bid was received for \$232,000, which included additional space set aside for a future kitchen. The Selectmen will review this project further.
- **Use of Police Vehicle:** Rex questioned the use of the police vehicle by the First Selectman. Dick explained a new police vehicle had been included in the long-range capital plan for the 2003-04 fiscal year. Funding assistance became available through federal highway safety funds that support DUI law enforcement efforts in Connecticut. A stipulation of the grant was the vehicle could not

replace a current police vehicle, and it was felt this grant for \$26,000 would greatly offset the capital cost of \$35,000 budgeted. Dick also noted as First Selectman he serves as the Chief of Police. He felt the old vehicle would serve the Town well through use of its radio and would provide professional miles to do his job. He did not consider a benefit for the position of First Selectman but rather a service to the Town. Rex questioned if it would be necessary to provide another vehicle if this breaks down. Michael reminded the Board that the Selectmen are responsible for setting employee policy annually and make recommendations to the Finance Board. He suggested an analysis of other towns' policies could be provided rather than the Board dictating policy.

- **Boat Launch:** Rex questioned what the result would be if the anticipated \$100,000 D.E.P. grant was not received in conjunction with the Lake Waramaug Agreement. Dick reported there is no guarantee that the Town will receive this grant as it is separate from the Lake Agreement. He noted there are many questions that cannot be addressed until the Agreement is approved by all three towns. (Town Meeting - September 2, 2004) If approved, the Town must then apply for various land use permits. Engineered drawings for the proposal had been provided by the Lake Waramaug Association. Costs are estimated at approximately \$120,000. If all permits are not obtained, the Agreement may be terminated by all parties subject to receipt of the grant. Items such as on-going staff expenses, additional hours, etc. must still be addressed and the financial impact is not yet determined. Dick noted if the State were to construct a ramp, there is no guarantee of continued maintenance or monitoring. The Agreement reserves 13 boat permits for campers and seven permits for day boaters. Availability of the ramp will remain open to all residents of Washington, Warren and Kent. There are approximately 120 boats currently on the lake.
- **Town Aid Road Account:** Rex suggested Town Aid Road Funds be outlined more clearly during the budget process. These funds are used at the Selectmen's discretion for unanticipated road and tree work. A report of the Fund is provided to the Board monthly and the Fund is audited annually. There is approximately \$200,000 currently in the Fund. It was agreed to include this Fund's balance with the Town budget assumptions.
- **LoCIP Grant:** The Local Capital Improvement Program state grant is available for capital projects. Funds may be used annually or carried over from year-to-year for larger projects. In the past, this fund has been used for such projects as the town garages. Rex suggested the balance in this Fund should be included as an asset.
- **Mill Rate:** Rex suggested going to the annual budget hearing with a specific mill rate. Michael noted several mill rates are provided at the budget hearing with the budget assumptions. He felt a certain amount of flexibility should be preserved by the Board to vote on this until after hearing public comment at the hearing.

Pension Committee: Barbara Brown reported the Pension Committee will meet with the Town's actuary on August 23 to review the annual reports for the Town's various Plans. The Committee will review the investment policies and confer with the Bank to clarify fiduciary responsibilities. A legal review of the Town Pension Plan has been completed to insure all legislative criteria has been met. A matter regarding a former employee will be referred for legal clarification.

Ex-Budget Appropriation: The Board approved **an ex-budget appropriation in the amount of \$7,000** for purchase of DUI Enforcement/Education equipment. A reimbursement grant for \$5,574 has been approved under the Federal Highway Safety Program, State Project No. 0184-6372.

Binding Arbitration: Mark Lyon volunteered to represent the Board of Finance in Region 12 contract

negotiations. It was felt a presence from the Finance Board indicating the Town's interest in the process is most important.

The meeting was adjourned at 7.05 p.m.
Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Gollow, Secretary