

September 15, 2003

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

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

Alternate: Mark Lyon

Selectmen: Elaine Luckey, Nicholas Solley

Guests: Linda McGarr, Town Treasurer; Richard Sears

Payments In Lieu of Taxes: The basis used to determine the annual donation in lieu of taxes made by The Gunnery, Rumsey Hall and the Devereux-Glenholme School was discussed. Currently, the Assessor determines the assessed value of buildings, which are not used for educational purposes. Letters are sent to report the amount of tax that would be generate on these buildings at the current mill rate. Since the Montessori School does not have buildings other than their schoolhouse, they have not been notified. The Board discussed other rationale that might be considered, including the use of various Town services. It was agreed that an analysis of the school population, use of emergency service, town programs, etc. would be done.

Tax Collector's Report: This report included funds collected through August 31. (attached) The Board would like to compare the tax collection rate to specific months in prior years on an historical basis. The tax collector will be asked to provide this information. Accepted as presented.

Treasurer's Report: (attached) Accepted as presented.

Financial Statements:

2002-2003: Financial Summaries of Town funds for the 2002-2003 fiscal year were reviewed. (attached)

General Fund: Unanticipated additional income was received from federal and state grants, Town Clerk fees, penalty for early sale of land assessed at reduced forest/farm rates, taxes, and reimbursements from Region 12 for year-end surplus and capital improvements funds. All areas of the General Fund expense areas came in under budget except the Highway section, which was due to last winter's many storms. **Rex Swain made a motion to transfer \$17,463 from the Sanitation section of the budget to cover these Highways costs. Motion was seconded and unanimously passed.**

Capital Fund: A proposal to unappropriate \$39,693.60 remaining in the Wykeham Road repair line item was tabled until the next meeting as an additional payment of approximately \$400 may be due the State for their grant services. Once the State accounting is approved, it is anticipated another \$22,000 +/- will be received from the grant used toward this project. Project costs were \$260,000. \$162,400 has previously been received.

Selectmen's Report:

CCM Lawsuit vs. State of CT: In January, the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities brought lawsuits against the State after it refused to make payments of two grants due to the Towns - the PILOTS for New Machinery and Equipment grant and the Town Aid Road grant. These totaled \$79,776 for the Town of Washington. The legal fight ended only after the State agreed to pay \$60 million to the cities and towns, about three quarters of the original appropriations. CCM withdrew the lawsuits when the State made the payments. Each town has been asked to share pro rata in the costs of the lawsuits. Elaine requested the Board's approval for a \$400 appropriation for this purpose. She noted the Town has received good response from communications with CCM during the past year. **The Board agreed to the**

\$400 request.

Ex-Budget Request - Zoning Enforcement: The Selectmen asked the Board to consider funding for additional zoning enforcement to assist Janet Hill in the Land Use office. This request was recognized as a very valid necessity due to the large scope Janet's large scope of responsibility. **Jack Boyer made a motion to approve an ex-budget appropriation not to exceed \$2,300 for this purpose.** Craig Schoon seconded the motion. Michael Ajello, who currently serves as the Town's Wetlands Officer, has agreed to provide five hours per week. **The motion was unanimously passed.**

Grants: The Selectmen reported on the status and procedures required for the Small Cities and STEAP Grants. A hearing to discuss the Small Cities grant is scheduled for September 16th. It is the intention of the Selectmen to install an elevator and upgrade the handicapped access to the town hall if this grant is approved. Laurence E. Wagner of L. Wagner & Associates in Waterbury has been contracted to assist with completing the necessary applications for this project. The hearing will also consider any other concerns or suggestions presented by citizens that fall within the requirements of this grant.

With regard to the STEAP grant, the Selectmen have solicited requests for proposals from engineers for the projects that are planned. Funds to begin some of the project had been approved at the May town meeting (i.e. site work & surveying of garage property and paving town hall rear parking area). The necessary applications have been submitted and we are awaiting formal approval from the State. As this process progresses, each project must be submitted to the State for approval prior to soliciting construction bids. As each project is approved, it is understood the State will deposit funds in an account specifically established to cover the costs. The Town would then spend directly from this fund and would not have to rely on reimbursing Town funds.

New Business:

Meeting Dates: Meeting dates were scheduled for **May 6, 2004 for the town budget hearing** and **May 20, 2004 for the town budget meeting.**

Education Report: Michael reported a positive response had been received from a meeting with Elaine Luckey, Jack Field, the Superintendent of Schools, the Business Manager and the Board of Education Chairman toward the establishment of a financial advisory council for the school board. The purpose of this council would be to get both Boards more involved in the entire budget process, with the hope of arriving at philosophical agreements and a better understanding prior to the beginning of the budget process. Jay Hubelbank will pass this idea along to the Board of Ed for their reaction. Michael assumed that if the enthusiasm continues, two members from each town's Board of Finance would meet for a series of non-public meetings with the business manager. It is hoped a five-year budget forecast could be prepared. Of course, any agreement would be totally non-binding on the part of the Board of Education, but it was felt that a discussion process prior to budget deliberations would prove useful and in the best interest of all.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Gollow, Secretary