

September 16, 2002

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

Present:

Board: Jack Boyer, Jack Field, Michael Jackson, Craig Schoon, Rex Swain

Alternates: Barbara Brown

Selectman: Elaine Luckey, Nick Solley

Guests: Michael Caroe

Selectman's Report: Elaine reported on the following matters:

Gunn Hill Road: Gunn Hill Road has not been maintained during the winter months; however, it is used during the other three seasons as a throughway from the end of Lake Waramaug to the top of New Preston Hill Road. Recently, two building sites have been approved and the Selectmen reported it has become necessary to upgrade a portion of this road. They are coordinating this with the property owner, who has offered to provide contractor services. Further discussion will be held with the engineer, road foreman, and property owner and this information will be forthcoming. This may require additional funds.

Asbestos Removal - Town Hall Lower Level: Pipes in the lower level are flaking and it was agreed the Selectmen will obtain bids for the removal of the asbestos and the re-insulation of the pipes in all rooms except the Land Use meeting room and bowling alley, where it is unnecessary.

Recycling Container: An additional recycling container is needed at the transfer station due to the increase in plastic recycling. An ex-budget request will be made once a quotation is confirmed.

Registrar Training: At the request of the Secretary of State, the Town has agreed to join in the State's automated system of voter registration. Currently, the registrars have been having a difficult time with the system. Although they have met with the State, they still feel there are problems and have requested the assistance of Kenneth Johnson to remediate the problem with the program, as well as provide computer lessons for them. He has offered to do so at \$300/month for 6 months. The Board agreed to utilizing Mr. Johnson's assistance between now and the November election for \$600. He will be contacted.

STEAP grants: Elaine and Nick will meet with Peter Talbot in order better define the proposed housing project of the Washington Housing Trust in New Preston. This is required to define costs and to proceed with the application for grant funds to repair roadwork, sidewalks, recreational fields, etc. in the neighborhood. Whether grant funds would be available up front or whether they would reimburse the Town, it was agreed the project should be noted in next year's capital budget and would be presented at town meeting for approval. Elaine felt this STEAP grant may have ample funds available that could also be used for other projects in Town; therefore, additional requests will be included in the grant application. These will be discussed by the Selectmen.

Education Expenses: The Board's discussion continued on the differences of opinion regarding Educational expenditures. Elaine explained she had written to the chairman of the Board of Education regarding the Finance Board's concern that funds that had not been approved for expenditure during the past budget season be returned to the towns. He responded with an explanatory letter as to how and under what conditions money would be returned. Michael reported the chairmen of the Roxbury and Bridgewater Boards of Finance have agreed to obtain a legal opinion to articulate what their responsibilities are with regard to the Region. It is clear that the Board of Finance may have a specific

responsibility for Region 12's overall budget and a right to participate in certain contract negotiations. The three towns agreed to fund obtaining the legal opinion and are now awaiting to receive it.

Michael also noted some Board members had responded to the survey on Regional School District Governance presented by the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee Survey. After speaking with the counsel for this Committee, Michael indicated we would like to testify if hearings are held. He has also spoken with State Senator Roraback, who indicated there are problems between other towns and other regional school districts as well. Once the opinion is received, he will forward it to Senator Roraback.

Elaine reported the Selectmen had voted to forward a request to the Board of Finance from the Washington PTO Playground Committee in the amount of \$2,500 to help in offsetting costs for the new playground. Question was raised as to the Region's priorities in spending money in that they did not pay for the playground but had funds to cover those needed for the former superintendent's retirement. Question was raised as to use of the building after school hours and the Parks and Rec Commission's responsibilities in covering some of the costs involved with the use of the school fields. It was felt this was a matter on which the Town and Region must come to agreement and it is hoped with the new administration these matters can be resolved. It was agreed the PTO Committee had done a wonderful job in raising the funds and the ex-budget appropriation was approved for \$2,500 on a motion by Jack Boyer, seconded by Rex Swain and unanimously passed. The Board did note, however, that the regular budget process should be followed by all unless unforeseen circumstances require ex-budget appropriations during the year.

Minutes of July 15: Jack Field suggested "within the approved budgets." Be added to the end of the 7th sentence in the 1st paragraph. All agreed. Minutes accepted.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer will be asked to indicate the current rate of interest for each investment account on her report.

Tax Collector's Report: \$5,015,178 has been collected as of 8/31/02. Rex will meet with the tax collector regarding the report.

Financial Sheet: Jack Field provided a financial spreadsheet that will include the beginning balance, income, expense and current balance for all accounts in the General Fund, Capital Fund and Town Aid Road funds. He suggested the concept of the current Assumption Sheet is somewhat difficult to follow; therefore, he and Rex will review this for clarity. Financial reports will be provided to the Board earlier. The Treasurer will be asked to obtain interest rates from the bank at an earlier date.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Gollow, Secretary