

September 20, 2004

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

Present:

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

Alternates: John Allen

Selectmen: Richard Sears, Nicholas Solley

Treasurer: Linda McGarr

Tax Collector: Tanya Wescott

Guests: Thomas & Betsey Burke

Minutes: The Secretary noted the following changes to be made to the August, 2004 Minutes: Page 1, 4th paragraph: Increase transfer for 03/04 from General Fund to Nonrecurring Capital from \$860,025 to \$890,025 and decrease transfer for 04/05 from \$780,525 to \$711,554. Jack Field provided suggestions for additions/changes to the August 17th minutes regarding the Board's policy for transferring funds (attached). It was agreed this full discussion had not been included at the meeting but that Jack's suggestions should be reviewed and the Board would articulate a statement regarding Capital Funds at the next meeting. The minutes were accepted as submitted.

General Fund: The Board addressed the large net revenue over expenditures in the General Fund for the 2003-2004 fiscal year of \$985,514*. This amount included the projected transfer to the Nonrecurring Account for the 03/04 fiscal year of \$890,025, which was to be made during the month of September, 2004. Income for that year exceeded budgeted line items, mainly in the areas of taxes, building inspections and town clerk fees. Income projections for the current 04/05 budget have been increased in the latter two areas, but it was agreed to review this more closely for future budgets.

Capital Account: Rex Swain made a motion to transfer \$22,599 from the Capital Fund to the General Fund for capital projects that have been unappropriated as they have been completed. John Allen seconded the motion. Motion was unanimously passed. This amount is shown on the NRCEF report for August, 2004.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer's Report was reviewed and approved. Linda is investigating the possibility of reducing the number of town accounts by using a program offered through FNBL known as the CDARS program (Certificate of Deposit Account Registry Service). This service is available to large depositors. The Bank would use deposited funds to purchase smaller cd's that would be covered through the FDIC \$100,000 insurance limit. Linda will review further and request of list of probable investments.

Tax Collector's Report: Tanya presented a comparison of her monthly tax postings to deposits made by the Treasurer. She also provided year-to-year collections by month. She has forwarded several accounts for foreclosure proceedings and anticipates payment for four delinquent properties as soon as the lien on the property is released. The Board commended her on her collection rate.

Suspense List: The Board approved the 2000 Suspense List submitted by the Tax Collector.

Selectman's Report:

Ex-Budget Appropriations:

Police: A request was received from Resident Trooper Sordi to cover unanticipated costs associated with the transfer and installation of mobile radio equipment from the old police vehicle to the police office

(letter attached). This was in conjunction with the \$35,000 capital line item approved toward a new police vehicle, for which a DWI 80% grant reimbursement has been submitted. The Secretary was asked to reconcile costs and forward to the Board. **John Allen made a motion to approve an ex-budget appropriation not to exceed \$1,785 for appropriation for police equipment.** Craig Schoon seconded the motion. Motion unanimously passed.

Changes in Land Use Staffing: Dick provided information outlining certain changes in employee staffing in the Land Use area to better service the public. (attached) This would result in an additional \$2,565 needed for full-time secretarial services for Planning, Zoning and Wetlands, as well as 18 hours/week for Wetlands enforcement and 9 hours/week for Zoning enforcement. **Jack Boyer made a motion to approve an ex-budget appropriation not to exceed \$2,565 for these changes in employee services.** Mark Lyon seconded the motion. Motion unanimously passed.

Elderly Tax Relief: Information had been circulated to the Board regarding elderly tax assistance programs in the towns of Woodbury and Redding. Dick suggested a committee be formed to obtain information on the number of eligible seniors, income guidelines used by other towns, the impact such a program would have on the tax rolls affecting other taxpayers, etc. It was felt the assessor and municipal agent may be able to provide insight into obtaining this information. Dick will talk with them and the public.

Analysis of Electric Use: Dick reported the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities has hired a consultant to analyze the rates and services of potential vendors to provide electricity to the towns in addition to CL&P. He requested the Board empower him to use CCM's recommendation in making this decision for the Town as he feels their consultants are better equipped to review these numbers. The Board agreed.

Town Planning Process: Dick provided an outline for the various forums scheduled to discuss the Town's future in the areas of open space, housing, education and municipal and community projects. The following dates are planned:

October 4: Town Meeting - overview of process and short presentations from each area.

October 4: Newsletter with overview and major article from each area.

October 20: Municipal Projects

October 28: Open Space

November 4: Diversified Housing

November 9: Public Education

He requested the Board attend as many of these forums as possible.

Thomas Burke expressed his concern over Region #12's proposal to purchase a parcel of land in the Town of Roxbury adjacent to the primary school building. He did not feel this would be in the best interest of Washington taxpayers to pay for property in another town. Jack Field reminded the Board that the Town needs to lay out all future plans regarding housing, open space, education etc. in order to allow taxpayers to make informed decisions on the future of the Town and what the tax burden would be when all projects are considered.

Pension: Rex reported the Pension Committee had met with the Town's pension consultants to review the

Plan and the assumptions used to calculate annual deposits to the account. A 7.5% interest rate and a 5% salary increase had been used in the calculations, both of which the Pension Committee felt too high. It was agreed to use a 5.5% interest rate and 3.5% increase in salary. Computations using these new percentages will be done and the actuary will report back to the Pension Committee if this results in a big change in annual cost. The Pension Committee planned to invest approximately 75% of the funds in laddered bonds and 25% of the funds in an S&P 500 index stock fund in order to keep the budget within an acceptable amount. Rex has since investigated further and is concerned mainly with the safety of the funds. He will report this to the Committee for further review.

A legal opinion was received from Robinson & Cole regarding a former employee's status for pension funding. Dick will contact the First Selectman of Bridgewater with this information.

The Board voted unanimously to enter Executive Session at 6:40 p.m. to discuss personnel matters.

The Board re-entered the Regular Meeting at 6:55 p.m. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Gollow
Secretary