**Board of Finance**

**December 15, 2014**

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

**Present:** Members: Liddy Adams, Jack Boyer, Sally Cornell, Michael Jackson, Craig Schoon

Alternate: Reginald Templeton

Selectmen: Mark Lyon, Jay Hubelbank

Treasurer: Linda McGarr

Guests: Tony Bedini, Board of Education, Town Bldg. & Property

Linda Kennedy Gomez

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

**Minutes:** Minutes of the November meeting were approved.

**Tax Collection:** The Treasurer’s Report was approved as submitted.

**Budget:** First Selectman Mark Lyon reported that all expenses on the November 30th financial reports are in order and we have started the Winter Maintenance line item. He noted he had met with the Town’s auditor regarding the 2013-2014 budget. The two areas that exceeded the budgeted line items – Public Safety and Parks and Recreation – had been corrected and a motion was approved to correct a Parks and Rec line item for $119. Jack Boyer made a motion to appropriate funds from the General Fund balance to correct this. Liddy Adams seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously passed. The Town’s auditor will be asked to attend the January meeting.

**Education:** Mark Lyon reported the Board of Education planned to meet that evening to discuss the possibility of adding Agriculture Science to the Region’s curriculum. Michael Jackson noted a meeting had been arranged to meet with the Governor and new Education Commissioner to see if this would be plausible. Mark noted his hope is that the new Education Commissioner will be willing to work with the Region in trying to come up with ideas to make our small system work. The Boards of Finance and Selectmen in the three towns are working with the Regional Board of Ed to come up with a plan to support the Region; however, there are issues when you get to the State level on how things get done. Mark reported he had spoken with Norfolk and Colebrook regarding current regulations that the State will allow to support their local schools.

Jack Boyer suggested the State may assist financially if Regions are considering changes. Governor Malloy is looking to cut back funding for schools with less than 1,000 students; but it was felt there needs to be support at the State level. Everyone is acutely aware of the problems of population in the Regions in this area, but it is almost impossible to deal with the current State regulations. Our regional plan is from 1959. The main questions are why we have this problem and why the school population is declining. We have to come to a sense of where the government is and that it can only be solved state-wide. The towns alone are not going to solve this issue.

Mark noted his hope is that the new Education Commissioner will be willing to work with the regulations when we are trying to come up with ideas to make the small system work. It was agreed the Boards of Finance and Selectmen will work with the Region to come up with a plan to support the Region when any decisions come into effect; however, there are issues when you go to the State level on how things get done.

Mark reported he had spoken with Norfolk and Colebrook. They would like to come up with a financial package that the State would allow them to support their local schools. Innovative ideas are needed.

It was noted Gov. Malloy is looking to cut back funding for schools with less than 1,000 students. Jack Boyer suggested the State might assist financially if Regions were willing to move around. It was agreed it is difficult to know what other school districts are doing or how to consolidate; however, it was felt that everyone in acutely aware in the Regions in our area that it is almost impossible to make changes with the current regulations. Michael questioned why we have this problem of Region declining. It was suggested we have to come to a sense of where the government is and this can only be solved statewide. The Town cannot solve this issue.

It was suggested a Vo-Ag program would give the Region an opportunity to bring more students into the Region. The Board is interested in working methodically for a solution until all the issues are understood and what the State will allow.

**New Business:** The members of the Board discussed the current vacancy on the Board. Jack Boyer suggested the nominee come from the Democratic Town Committee. It was noted the past protocol has been that the Board of Finance has filled vacant positions on the Board.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m. – a record!!

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Gollow, Finance Secretary