**Board of Finance**

**September 15, 2014**

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

 **Present:** Members: Jack Boyer, Barbara Brown, Sarah H. Cornell, Michael Jackson, Craig Schoon, Rex Swain

 Alternates: Liddy Adams, Reginald Templeton

 Selectmen: Mark Lyon, Richard Carey, Jay Hubelbank

 Treasurer: Linda McGarr

 Tax Collector: Donna Alex

**Tax Collector’s Report**: Donna Alex presented the August 31, 2014 Tax Collector’s report, which is a revised version from previous reports. She suggested it would be easier to follow and would provide more comprehensible monthly information. Her report included the current tax receipts through August 31st. She also noted the Tax Office has been very busy and is in the middle of a conversion.

The suspense list was shown separately. Though taxes may be suspended, she still collects these funds for fifteen years. She currently has one tax account with a State Marshal. She noted she needs legal counsel who is well-versed in the municipal tax statutes to be available when she and the Assessor are in need of assistance. Mrs. Alex noted the collection rate has remained the same as in prior years. She sends out notices of delinquent property taxes.

**Treasurer’s Report:** The Treasurer’s Report as of August 31, 2014 was approved as submitted. (attached)

 **Financial Reports:**

**2013-2014 Budget Report:** First Selectman Mark Lyon noted that some items in the General Government, Public Safety and Highway areas had been over-expended in the 2013-14 fiscal year (i.e. bldg. inspection fees, police private duty, highway budget). However, these are offset by income in these areas. Regarding the new town garage, Mark noted things are going very well and the construction should be covered financially. He is anticipating November 1st to begin reconstruction. The only big overage was the installation of footings during the construction due to the trees and other materials found underground at the site. This unanticipated expense will be covered by contingency funds. Actual construction is coming along well.

**Education:** Mark reported he had sent a letter to the Region 12 Board of Education encouraging them to meet with other districts to determine if they would be interested in sharing. Curtis Read of Bridgewater is working on a letter from the Region which he will circulate. There is a fair amount of concern about the future of the Region, which is warranted; and there have been several conflicting opinions. Suggestion has been raised if the three towns cannot agree, perhaps it should be split. Others feel the future of education is in this Region and we should support it. Possibilities include housing the elementary school students at Shepaug, with the towns using their current elementary school buildings for other purposes. The elementary school population currently seems to be viable.

Mark felt the Town should support the Region’s initiative to support the educational issues. Some work needs to be done on the building if it will continue to serve as a middle-high school. We don’t have much to offer facility-wise. Michael Jackson noted a Steering Committee of the Boards of Education, the Selectmen and the Superintendent is committed to setting goals and communicating with the public on a quarterly basis. Jim Hirschfield, Board of Education Chair, has agreed to contact other districts. Decisions must be made whether to consolidate or to take the students out. The public will have the opportunity to participate. Jim Hirschfield will look at the projections on the Region with other schools.

**Cell tower** Mark updated the Board on the proposed cell tower, noting that as soon as it is built, it will be operating. However, he is unsure as how soon that will be. A lease had been signed by the Town in March and the application was sent to the Siting Council in June. The CT Siting Council had approved the cell tower on August 21st.

**Finance:** Linda Kennedy Gomez continues to work with the Selectmen’s Office on the financials in that office. Mark will request a progress report and a summary from Linda.

**Old Business:**

**Personnel Changes:** Michelle White, part-time secretary in the Land Use, will be leaving to take another position. Linda Nelson, formerly a secretary in the Assessor’s Office, will take this position. An ad will be posted on the assessor’s website to generate interest in the vacant position

**New Business:**

**Finance Meeting Changes:** Michael Jackson noted when Mark Lyon had agreed that it did not seem necessary to have a meeting in July, concern was noted about the process of canceling the meeting. It was pointed out that there also was not meeting scheduled for the month of August, as has been the policy for many previous years. Rex Swain suggested this was unacceptable to make this decision without the consent of the full Board and he did not feel the July meeting should have been canceled. He did not feel this was good leadership. Craig Schoon noted that Mr. Jackson has chaired the Board well for many years and has done so effectively. Rex feels the Board should reach out. A discussion will be held in the future on the matter of the summer meetings.

**Tax Collector’s Request for Legal Advice:** The Board discussed Mrs. Alex’s request for a lawyer specifically noted for tax cases. It was felt that Mrs. Alex should be comfortable with the attorney she requires. The meeting was adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

 Respectfully submitted,

 Kathy Gollow, Secretary