Town of Washington

Board of Finance

**April 18, 2016**

Present: Members: Michael Jackson, Sally Cornell, Craig Schoon,

Elizabeth Adams, Jack Boyer, Ted Bent

Alternates: Keith Templeton, Phyllis Allen

Selectmen: Mark Lyon, Jay Hubelbank

Treasurer: Linda McGarr

Guest: Tony Bedini

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

**Minutes:** Minutes of the March 21, 2016 meeting and April 11, 2016 meeting. Jack Boyer made a motion to approve, second by Liddy Adams and unanimously approved.

**Tax Collector Report:** No questions. She is over 98% collection.

**Treasurer Report:** Are setting up a new account at National Iron Bank.

**Selectman:** Overall budget is a little over 75% which is a little high but that is because some expenses are onetime expense that have already been paid.

**Financial Reports**: No Comments

**Board of Education**: Per Tony Bedini nothing worse than the last time. Per Selectman Lyon, they are putting together a forecast for the next 5 years with the birth and graduation numbers. Trying to predict if the Washington percentage will continue to go up in the future. There is concern that the percentage might go up 2 to 3 % each year If there is a decline in enrollment the board of education budget cannot stay flat. The state legislature is starting to look at the relations between the Board of Finance and Board of Education. Per Selectmen Jay Hubelbank, legislation has been looking at this problem for the past 5 year for regional Board of Education. The Board of Finance has no oversite on the board of education which is a problem. They have nonrecourse on the Board of Education budget. This is not far to the taxpayers.

Changes in the State Education grant is lowering this year from $240,147 to S221, 936. The Finance appropriate budget is lowering the education it to 109,082 but the Governor’s proposed budget is taking our education grant to 0. Other pilot funding is also getting cut. Town Aid road at this point has no change. We may know by end of May what will happen.

There is idea coming out of the Board of Education that the surplus in education budget be kept in their 1% fund instead of being returned to the towns. It would be kept in the funds to defer for future increase in budget for construction project. Michal spoke to Gary Lord and he said Roxbury and Bridgewater want to keep their money. We could set it in our own account for future increases. The imbalance is going to get worst with the Scholl budget.

Phyllis Allen approaches the subject of affordable housing. The Affordable Housing Act requires town to have affordable housing. How is it that some towns do not? You are required, but the penalty if you don’t is that someone can come in and bypass the zoning law. Bridgewater tried but the locations ground was not suitable for the septic. Roxbury has a committee but no affordable housing

Need to analysis on our affordable house on the young families and if the children stay in the system.

**New Business:** 2016-2017 Budget

The budget is down 1.44%. Most of the decrease came out of capital budget which is a matter of deferring stuff. The budget presented on 04/11/2016 was an increase in the Municipal budget of $147,212. After cuts the Municipal budget has a decrease of $179,210. It is a decrease of 2.73% from the 2016-2017 budgets.

Following changes since last meeting;

Road salt is down this year so are we are buying $20,000 worth and lowering next year budget

$7,200 was taken out of the Fire Department

A little over $1,500 was taken out of the Parks & Recreation

$5,000 was taken out of Annual Repairs

$20,000 out of the Legal Litigation line item which will still leave us with $200,000 in that fund. Only pending litigation to knowledge, is with the History District and that is to go to mediation.

With the contemplated increase in the mil rate and with the cuts we are at a deficit of $300,000.

The Fire Marshal is still in at 35 Hours. Phyllis Allen stressed her concerns with a full time Fire Marshall.

Many towns use a Building Inspector / Fire Marshall combination. Roxbury and Woodbury share a Fire Marshall and Bridgewater uses a per diem Fire Marshall from Brookfield. Salisbury which is similar to Washington uses a Building/ Fire Marshall combination and also a part time employee for 20. Per Selectmen Mark Lyon, there are over 300 annual inspections and 90 bi annual and tri annual inspections to be done. It is a state regulation that the inspections to be done. It is a liability to the town if they are not done. Michael Jackson asked if there was a way to set up a plan that he does X in so many hours and then when the system becomes more efficient to lower the hours.

Guest, Joan Lodson spoke that the” Board of Finance in this current fiscal year increased the Fire Marshal hours to 24 to play catch up. Why does he now need an additional 11 hours a week? New Milford has only one”. Per Selectmen Jay Hubelbank New Milford has one because they have not hired a deputy yet. In the 2015-2016 Washington budgets a deputy was budget to do some of the inspection but the town has not been able to find one. If the Fire Marshall position became 30 hours it would still be fulltime for benefits. A Question has come up if you can charge for the Fire Marshall inspections. Selectman Mark Lyon believes you could. The town charges for building inspection and health inspection but not for land use inspections. Land Use office has two full time employees and two part time secretaries with the budget of over $160,000. In comparison the land use office only inspects when there is a change. The reason for Land Use enforcement and the Fire Marshall is that is required by the state and a requirement and safety of the town as is a police force.

Discussion on IT Computer is it is the support for the new server with both monitoring and phone support. Their support is to help John Gueniat who works at the town hall, with support and training.

**Old Business:**  None

The meeting was motioned to adjourn at 5:41

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Kennedy Gomez Financial Administrator