Town of Washington

Board of Finance

**March 21, 2016**

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

Barbara Brown, Elizabeth Adams, Jack Boyer

Alternates: Keith Templeton, Phyllis Allen

Selectmen: Mark Lyon, Dave Werkhoven

Treasurer: Linda McGarr

Guest: Delisse Locher, Tony Bedini, Dick Carey

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

**Minutes:** Minutes of the February 22, 2016, Barbara Brown made a motion to approve, second by Liddy Adams and unanimously approved.

**Guest:** Assessor, Delisse Locher has brought a proposal to the Board of Selectman looking ahead to the town’s revaluation due October 2018. Per Selectman Mark Lyon, Delisse is motivated and willing to do more in house which will save us a fair amount of money and that we will get a better product. Delisse proposal is to waive bid and go to contract with to eQuality Valuation Service, LLC because they can provide a service that no other company can. The company current handles the town’s software and does assessment work. eQuality can provide an open portal so both the town and eQuality can input into our current system. In order for other companies to enter into our current system there would be an additional charge. Delisse believes if we waive the bid process we can demand deep discounts from eQuality and we can handle more revaluation duties in house. Delisse currently inspects all permitted properties to discover list and value. If we wait for the 5 and 10 revaluation we will not catch the improvements that do not have permits because it would not go on grand list until the 5 and 10 year revaluation. Delisse stated the town is very different from other towns because it has two markets, one that is over a million that are selling 3 times the market and then the rest of them. We have to get a baseline data which is hard to get with a standard 5 - 10 year revaluation. The theory is to expense the revaluation over the next 3 years before the 10/01/2018 deadline. If we go to contract we will get and manage a better product; it’s timelier and a better property value data. This plan could save the town approximately $30,000. If we negotiate with the current service we can dictate what we want done. Pick certain properties, have them send the data mailers, request their best assessors since they are not at crunch time because most town are not doing them now. eQuality was the company that was used in the last revaluation. Michael asks Delisse to check with other town on how many towns do in house revaluation and use eQuality for their Revaluation. The Selectman has met with Delisse on this proposal and believes it is a viable alternative. Some towns in the northwest corner have started doing in house revaluation. The revaluation company will still handle the appeals if anyone questions their assessment. As a budgetary point of view this process will give a more update grand list. The baseline was created two years ago that is updated in our system for inspections, & permit. If there is no change then it is updated by sales.

Another step Delisse is taking is getting the maps online so there will be less traffic in the office. Which will leave more time for the revaluation.

**Tax Collector Report:** No questions. Two tax sales have been turned over to Attorney Adam Cohen. He has sent notices out to make things right and there has been a flurry of activity.

Chairman, Michael Jackson asked the Selectman what his assessment of t the changes in the Tax Collector and Assessors office. The change in the computer system has been very positive. Delisse did all the research on the new program. Donna has been very aggressive in her collections and Delisse has also been aggressive in her assessments. We have had more appeals but the majority has held up in appeals.

**Treasurer Report**  Question on line item “special fees and land use bonds” Bonds on land use or driveways that we hold until the jobs are done. Linda McGarr has letters from all the banks stating all accounts are collateralized. Michael stress that the town need all account collateralized.. Iron Bank has shown interest in working with the town.

**Selectman:**

* Overall budget is at 75% which is a little high but that is because some expenses are onetime expense that has already been paid. Some accounts are out of line but departments are good.
* Questions on Bridge repairs. All bridges that are over 20 feet are inspected by the state. Two bridges that are being worked on are Walker Brook Road and Romford Road . The Walker Brook is a million dollar project that there is grant which we will be reimbursed 80%. It is projected to go to bid in the Spring. The Romford Road bridge has just started engineering and is a 3 million dollar project that we will get 20%. The Whittlesey Road bridge needs a new decking and the Tunnel Road bridge needs repair. The town has an average of 30 bridges. The state will be starting to look at all bridges that are less than 20 feet this season. The wall behind Parks drug is a project that needs to be tackled. The Spring Hill Road bridge will be done out of the Storm Irene Funds.
* Question on the Resident trooper: It is at 85% this year, and have not heard any news if they are going to change it in 2016-2017
* Our Budget is almost done. We have a 5+ % increase in our education budget based on ou higher percentage of children. The preliminary is at 6.25% increase which we are still working on. April 11 is the tentative date to present budget to the Board of Finance.
* The selectmen have met with board of education and the original budget was a .08% but then after changes it is flat. Even if flat Bridgewater and Roxbury budget goes done and we are going up. It would have to be a legislative change to change how the cost percentages are done. It is done by statue. Over the last 10 years the town’s contributions activity has been Bridgewater has gone down 3%, Roxbury has gone up 20%and we have gone up 25%.

**Financial Reports**: No Comments

**Board of Education**: Per Tony Bedini, the cost per student is around $30,000. Much concern has come up about combining class in Bridgewater. Bridgewater has a total population of 49 which 5 of the student are from Washington and 1 from Roxbury. Due to the fact that parents use a day care in Bridgewater that will bus them to school

**Old Business:**  None

**New Business:** None

The meeting was motioned to adjourn at 5:56

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Kennedy Gomez Financial Administrator