Town of Washington

Board of Finance

September 19, 2016

Present: Members: Michael Jackson, Ted Bent, Craig Schoon, Jack Boyer, Liddy Adams

Alternates: Phyllis Allen

Selectmen: Mark Lyon, David Werkhoven

Treasurer: Linda McGarr

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

**Minutes:** Minutes of the July 18, 2016 meeting unanimously approved

**Tax Collector Report:** No Questions.

**Treasurer Report:** No Questions or comments

**Selectman:** Mark Lyon state the budget is moving right along. Items that have been paid in full are the Pension and many service contracts. Parks & Recreation is up because the beach and boat launch which is almost over. Policy Private Duty is high because the construction companies have enlisted our police officers for the work on Kirby and Wykehem Road. The construction company reimburses the town for more than their salaries. The town was also given money toward the paving of Kirby Road which will be done in the spring after a fair amount of drainage is done. Wykehem Road will have a permanent patch done but in the spring they will come back and redo. It is Aquarian Water is doing the job and it has had some issue with ledge which has made the job more time consuming.

Mark stated the time line on 109 at Sabaday Road for repair of bridge will be done in 2017. Their plan is to close the road down a couple of weeks. They need to replace the culvert that presently is a double culvert that is in poor condition. It will be replaced by a recast concrete single pipe which will help with the water flow. The little house and barn has been purchase and will be dismantled.

Patchwork was done on Mygatt Road & Scoville Road to give us another 3-8 years. Paving and drainage is paid out of the capital fund.

Bridge Repair Update:

* Walker Brook in in process and waiting on the final check with the DOT to award it next spring
* Romford Road Bridge - engineering has started. This will be a 3-3 ½ million dollar job that the state will pay 80% which will still cost the town around $600.000
* Application have been made for more Bridge Grants for Town Road bridge and for the recondition the Whittlesey bridge

We are still working on getting new Fire Deputy to do inspections. Our current Deputy has been doing more inspection. It was asked if there is a concern that all the inspections are not getting done and is there a risk. It is something that has been unproved in court. The question was asked if Fire Marshal who is also the Tree Warden has the time for both. The Fire Marshal is a part time job and the tree warden has a minimum of hours so he has time for both. Most tree stuff is done by the highway department. Concern is if we do not have a deputy the Fire Marshall will be full time.

**Financial Reports**: Question on budget line item Event of $1,000 – This payment is to John Gueniat who works during an event when the town hall has been rented. The fee for using the town hall pays for his salary.

**Education**: The issue on hand is the Ag-Stem Program. Mark Lyon, First Selectman stated that Michael Jackson concerns of the possible payback of the bond has created rumors and a frenzy that the project was ill advised and that the Board of Finance of the Town of Washington is not in favor of the Ag-Stem Program which was not the intention. Michael Jackson stated that the difficulty for him is, that the economic future if the Ag Stem system and the #of student that will come from where is ambiguous. If they do not get the students and the program doesn’t work they will have to pay back the money. It is the board’s obligation to see how much of a risk the town wants to be unfunded for if the Ag-Stem program should fail. There could be a reserve that the town puts in ½ million a year then the town would not be in the position to have to borrow 45% of the 29 million if it should fail. He would like there to be a reserve and have everyone know there is a reserve and that they are covered so there is no financial risk. If all went well we would discontinue the reserve and put in back into the general fund. Questions were asked if there is insurance for this kind of thing and has any other town had this situation to have to pay the money back?

Selectman, Mark Lyon stated that the commissioner said we are at the top of the list to get the money next year if we are ready for it. The state has awarded bonds to towns in the past that have not been used for 4 years. They do not want to bond any town that is not ready. That is why they want to be “shovel “ready.

Per Selectmen Lyon, there is a willful group of people that are doing their best to torpedo the whole project. They made a concretive effort to go to the board of education and municipal meeting to speak out that this project is not going to work. They went not only to regional meetings but also to town meetings of the towns that would send their children to the program. They profess their support of the school but are doing their best to torpedoing the thing that will populate the school. They are casting doubt that the program will not be successful. Mark Lyon stated that the program is based on 200 students if you only get 150 it will not pay for itself which will create an increase in expenses. Does that mean it is a failure and does it mean the school is a failure and will close? Per Ted Bent he believes it would only be the failure on the Ag-Stem program not the school. Mark Lyon stated as a citizen not as a selectman, his opinion if student do not come from outside the region the region would not be able to sustain a quality school. The smaller classes would be ineffective and the cost per pupil will go too high. They have to create a program to bring students in. Michael Jackson stated they would possible have to send student to other town and dissolve the region.

Liddy stated she got a text that stating that” Mike Jackson was proposing a tax”. Social Media has taken a life of its own. This was an incorrect quote.

The income the town would receive would be $9,000 from the sending town and $3,000 from the state. There is no obligation for a town to send students.

Guest, Tim Laughlin of Painter Ridge spoke that there is a concern about towns sending their student. He read an email from Loy Wilkinson that said the Board of Finance in Washington is considering a failure fund where the town will collect an annual tax to be set aside to use if the Ag Stem program fails and the state demands their money. This would be the town’s self-insurance. He said these were quotes by Mike Jackson. Michael Jackson said he never had this conversation. Michael stated he did not see the e-mail. Michael Jackson and Liddy Adams said they had met with Loy Wilkinson. Craig Schoon said the fact is the Board of Finance is taking no position on this and will not. It is not their position to do so. They only approve what the selectmen bring to the Board of Finance. Michael said he will write a letter. There is a process and we follow that process. The board thanks Mr. Laughlin for bringing his concerns.

**New Business:** Pension committee will be meeting with Pension Consultants next month and if anyone has opinion or concerns please let them know. Reports from last year have yet to come in. They delay our audit every year. We will look into who other towns use.

**Old Business:** None

**Next Meeting: October 17, 2016**

The meeting was motioned to adjourn at 5:48 by Craig Schoon and second by Ted Bent. Unanimously approved

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Kennedy Gomez Financial Administrator