

• **February 8, 2007**

Present: First Selectman Richard C. Sears, Selectmen Nicholas N. Solley, Mark E. Lyon

Press: Ann Compton - VOICES

Public: Frank Adams, Valerie Friedmen, Peter Tagley, Jack Field, Valerie Andersen, Peter Pappas.

Call to Order: First Selectman Sears called the meeting to order at 4:33 p.m.

Minutes:

- **Motion:** To approve the minutes of the January 25, 2007 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. By Mark Lyon, seconded by Nick Solley and unanimously approved.

Visitors:

- Frank Adams spoke about the intersection of **Hinkle Road and Romford Road** - poor site line, traffic hazard, etc. Dick Sears offered to speak with Resident Trooper Steve Sordi and Highway Director Kevin Smith. Peter Tagley mentioned the intersection of **Scofield Hill Road and Mygatt Road** as also being problematic and Jack Field asked about the section of **Popple Swamp Road** between Route 109 and Upper Church Hill (repaving of this section is scheduled for this coming spring/summer season).

OLD BUSINESS:

Elementary School Options: Jack Field came to today's meeting to discuss the Elementary School Information Forum that was held in Washington on January 24th. Jack felt that most people at the meeting expressed little support of the Build to Suit option or the Intermunicipal Agreement (IMA). There is concern over how difficult it may be to have all parties (3 towns and the Board of Ed) negotiate when two of the parties are involved in a lawsuit. His personal opinion - and that of many others in Washington - is that renovating the three primary schools will cost much more than building a consolidated elementary school and having three schools could cause more governance issues and more opportunities for conflict. Dr. Carmelich's presentation at the forum outlined the advantages - financially, and most importantly, educationally - of having one school. Mark Lyon felt that people he has spoken with are concerned that getting the three towns to work together as a "team" is the largest problem. Jack felt the Town of Washington has three options: agree to joining into the Intermunicipal Agreement; agree to join but with preconditions (lawsuits be settled, Bridgewater pay what they owe the region, etc.); or not join in as there is no future in another IMA. Nick Solley felt that there was a question as to whether or not more voters in the towns of Roxbury and Bridgewater were now accepting the possibility of consolidation. His personal opinion would be to enter into the IMA only after Bridgewater agreed to certain conditions (as mentioned above). Mark Lyon also brought up the point that in the Build to Suit option, the Region would be overseeing the operating costs and the towns would pay these according to the regional formula - they would not be paid by the separate towns. Valerie Friedman, Peter Tagley and Valerie Andersen all offered opinions for consideration with Valerie Andersen urging the Town of Washington to join the IMA -to sit down and to have discussion - with quid pro quo that Bridgewater pay their bill(s) and drop the law suits. At the end of a lengthy discussion, the Board of Selectmen agreed to enter into the IMA only after Bridgewater drops the lawsuit against Region 12 and pays outstanding financial obligations to the Region. Dick Sears reported that the region has asked for an extension on the lease for WPS - this will be discussed further in two weeks.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Elderly Tax Relief:** Dick Sears explained he had received a communication from Barbara Johnson, Tax Assessor, requesting the Town amend its Ordinance "Tax Relief for Elderly and Disabled Homeowners" to raise the maximum income for tax relief to property owners to \$39,500 to coincide with the State's increase. **Motion:** To amend the Ordinance to approve the increase of maximum allowable income to \$39,500. However, if after reviewing the Ordinance, this needs to be done at a Town Meeting, it will be placed on the agenda of the next Special Town Meeting. By Dick Sears, seconded by Mark Lyon and unanimously approved.

- **River Front Loop Walking Path:** Dick Sears announced that he has put together a committee to look into this project over at the old town garage site - Titus Road. Members of the committee are Joe Fredlund, Elisha Dyer, Bob Williams, Charles LaMuniere and Nick Solley. A survey has been done of the property and Dirk Sabin, Landscape Architect, has been contacted regarding a design of the path.

- **Scheduling of a Special Town Meeting-DEP Grant Approval:** In order to sign a contract with the DEP for the Boat Launch, Dick Sears needs to be authorized to do so by approval of a Town Meeting. **Motion:** To schedule a Special Town Meeting for March 1, 2007 at 7:30 p.m. in the Land Use room for the purpose of authorizing First Selectman Sears to enter into a contract with the DEP. By Dick Sears, seconded by Mark Lyon and unanimously approved.

Adjournment:

- **Motion:** To adjourn the meeting at 6:08 p.m. as there was no further business for discussion. By Nick Solley, seconded by Mark Lyon and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Anne Greene

Selectmen's Secretary