

July 24, 2008

Present: First Selectman Mark E. Lyon, Selectmen Nicholas N. Solley, James L. Brinton (arrived 6:10 p.m.).

Press: Ann Compton-VOICES, Jack Coraggio-Litchfield County Times

Public: Michael Caroe, Chris Charles

Commission Chairmen and/or members: David Owen-Zoning, Brad Sedito-Zoning Board of Appeals, Addie Roberts-Planning, Mark Picton, and Tony Bedini-Inland Wetlands.

Call to Order: First Selectman Lyon called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

Minutes: Motion: To approve the minutes of the July 10, 2008 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. By Nick Solley, seconded by Mark Lyon and unanimously approved.

Communications: George Verrastro of the Washington Food Market has written the Board of Selectmen (attached and on file) thanking them for the recognition given to his father, Gene, for his contributions to the Town of Washington for over 35 years.

Appointments/Resignations: None.

First Selectman's Report: Mark reported:

The Farmers Market, held every Thursday at the Senior Center, has agreed to stay open until 12:30 p.m. to accommodate people who can only attend on their lunch hour.

The New Preston Cemetery Association has approached the First Selectman with concerns about their economic position. Mark has contacted Senator Roraback's office regarding the Town's obligation. The Cemetery Association would like to meet with the Selectmen to discuss their position and the possibility of the Town taking over the care, responsibility, etc.

The Beach Committee is putting the final changes on the plans for the beach house and beach and will begin working with an engineer so the process with the Land Use Commissions can start.

OLD BUSINESS:

Awarding of Bid for Fire Department Cab and Chassis: Mark explained that the bids received have been reviewed by the Fire Department's Truck Committee and have made their recommendation.

Motion: To award the Bid for the 2009 International truck chassis for a new Engine #3 to Marola Motors of Torrington for \$105,500. By Mark Lyon, seconded by Nick Solley and unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS:

DOT Grant Resolution: Mark explained that the Town had applied for a grant for reclaiming and repaving of Painter Ridge Road. As that grant was approved under Dick Sears, a resolution needs to be done authorizing Mark to sign the appropriate paperwork.

Motion: Resolved, that Mark E. Lyon, First Selectman, be, and hereby is authorized to sign the agreement entitled: "State Project No. 150-128, Reclamation of Painter Ridge Road" between the State of Connecticut and the Town of Washington." By Nick Solley, seconded by Mark Lyon and unanimously approved.

Visitors:

Michael Caroe attended today's meeting to ask the Selectmen about:

- 1) the installation of a siren system that could be used to alert the residents of Town when there was an emergency. Mark explained that he had spoken to Rocky Tomlinson, Emergency Management Coordinator, about this and the sirens the Town had would require generators, where they would be placed is a question, etc. The Town has recently contracted for "Alert Now" which is a reverse 911 listing of residents that can be used to contact town residents by phone. Currently the list is made up of numbers listed in the phone book. The next newsletter will have a form for residents to complete and return giving them the option to list their "unlisted" numbers, secondary numbers, cell phone numbers, etc.
- 2) Mr. Caroe asked for clarification on the postponement of a Zoning Board of Appeals public hearing. Nick explained this was due to a change in the meeting date, which resulted in an error in the dating of the legal notice announcing the meeting.
- 3) He asked how Commissions decide how much money can be spent on the hiring of consultants. Mark explained there is a certain amount in the budget but the applicant can also be required to post a bond in anticipation of the need for attorneys, consultants, etc.

Land Use Chairmen:

Mark Lyon explained the Board of Selectmen had invited the chairmen, and/or their representatives, to attend today's meeting to discuss various concerns that have been voiced by some and whether or not it would be beneficial to hire a consultant to review the Land Use procedures, staffing, work flow, organization of the office, etc. The Selectmen thought it would be beneficial to have input from all commissions that would be involved in the process. Brad Sedito (ZBA) felt that if this were to be done, the consultant should be familiar with Washington and what the Town is faced with. The commission volunteers, because of the increase in applications or the nature of them, are putting in more hours and therefore require more support from the office staff. Applicants also require the support of the office staff to assist in the process. He also asked if the consultant would be hired on a regular basis – how many hours? Mark Lyon explained that the thought would be to hire this person on a one-time-basis to review the entire office workings and make recommendations. Following this there would need to be discussion(s) on the need for more staff, budget requests, etc. Tony Bedini (IW) felt that personnel should also have input on what they need – secretaries should definitely be a part of discussions. Mark Picton (IW) has informally spoken with Marty Connor who was once employed by the Town and who is familiar with the Town's Land Use issues and who recently became the Town Planner in Torrington and re-organized its Land Use offices. Mark Picton feels that an important issue to consider is that long after the commission members and staff that are presently involved leave, the commissions and office will remain. If the offices become professionally organized, there would be procedures set up, policies, job performance reviews, etc. that those who come next could follow. Larger and more complex issues are facing the Town and it needs to be capable of handling them. He and Tony have drawn up "draft guidelines" for this consultant. David Owen (Z) felt that the legal delineation of responsibilities should also be addressed. He felt that whoever may be hired for this position should be someone who could professionally and objectively look at all the commissions and not necessarily hire someone that just one commission recommended. The Selectmen should get input and advice from each commission. Mark Lyon assured those present that he would request input from everyone as to what the needs are, what the concerns are, where they feel improvements are needed, etc. The Selectmen also expressed the importance of all involved to speak honestly of their needs, what they feel needs improvement, etc. The result should be a report on how the system can be better organized, more professional, etc. No one should look at this, or the recommendations that may come from it, as a performance review. Addie Roberts (P) complimented the staff for the jobs they do and realizes they are being asked to do more and more. She reaffirmed the feeling that they too should be involved in discussions as to what is needed. She felt that the Board of Selectmen should be the ones spearheading this project – not any one or two commission chairs. Nick Solley also stressed the importance of "structural issues" and whose

responsibility it is to decide if a larger meeting room is needed, taping equipment is properly set up, the importance of good and precise transcriptions, etc. Jim Brinton reinforced the importance of having the Selectmen speak with each of the chairmen and staff members prior to hiring the consultant to assess what they feel the needs may be and what their concerns are. Chairmen and staff should then have input to the consultant, once hired. The Selectmen, and the Chairmen agreed that the ultimate outcome of this endeavor should be to have a Land Use Office that is knowledgeable about the entire application process, that they have the proper support and can assist the townspeople professionally, accurately and in a timely fashion.

Chris Charles hand delivered a letter to the Board of Selectmen regarding what he perceives to be weaknesses, inefficiencies and problems in the Land Use process. The Selectmen will read and review.

Adjournment:

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 6:55 p.m. as there was no further business for discussion. By Mark Lyon, seconded by Nick Solley and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Anne Greene
Selectmen's Secretary