

November 9, 2006

Special Meeting

First Selectman Richard Sears called the Special Meeting to order at 5 p.m. The purpose of the meeting was to consider a draft letter to the Board of Education clarifying the Washington Selectmen's position regarding the school construction, in particular the "build to suit" option, in an effort to solve the Region's elementary school space concerns. Present: Selectmen: Richard Sears, Nicholas Solley, Mark Lyon Guests: David Miles, Town Counsel Valerie Andersen, Board of Education Dick outlined the letter, which explained the Town's initial understanding that the "build to suit" option would meet all educational specs, we could not count on receiving State aid, and that each town would be expected to pay their own costs, including debt service and operating costs. This would bring the gross capital cost to \$11.6 M. With State reimbursement, the net would have been \$9.3 M.

It noted the WPS "build to suit" option had been abandoned when heavy pressure was received from the Region and the two other towns to allocate construction costs according to the Region's formula by percent of overall student population, rather than paying our own costs. The \$11.6 M option was given to SLAM and the Steering Committee as the Town's final plan for submission to referendum in early 2006. Numbers derived by this task team would be numbers that would be given to the Board of Ed for a "build to suit" total.

Questions still remained if Board of Ed specs would be met or changed, what provisions the town lease to the Region would contain, how the debt service and operating costs would be allocated, and if state reimbursement could be negotiated. It was concluded there was not much more that could be contributed by the Town until an evaluation of the concept and the specific proposals put forth by Roxbury and Bridgewater could be evaluated by the Region.

The letter concluded that the current thinking is that we would hope to get State reimbursement to reduce the number from \$11.6 M to \$9.3 million.

Nick questioned what impact the letter might have on the current status of the search for land by the Board of Education and the other two towns. Dick noted these two models are being explored at the same time. This letter would be partially as a response that we would still consider "build to suit," which had been the agenda for this particular meeting. Mark Lyon noted that he had mentioned in the past that this is our proposal. The task force has worked at great length and come up with a proposal to meet the educational specs. This is the Selectmen's official statement. Nick felt this letter would only be official in that this is our current feeling on the "build to suit" issue and that it could only be viewed as a work in progress.

Valerie Andersen reported the towns of Bridgewater and Roxbury have presented some plans, some of which were accepted, some not. The SLAM proposal plans were to be the plans for Washington. The Press erroneously had reported that Washington had no plans.

A Board of Education meeting is scheduled November 20th to discuss the concept of "build to suit," as they have not had the opportunity to do so. Valerie felt it is important for the Selectmen to let the Board of Ed know that the Town is engaged and committed to anything, but that State reimbursement is a requirement.

Richard Sears made a motion to send this letter to the Board of Education. Mark Lyon seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Richard Sears made a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss a potential real estate transaction. Nicholas Solley seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously passed. The Board entered Executive Session at 5:12 p.m.

The Board re-entered the Special Meeting at 6:40 p.m.

Richard Sears made the following motion: "That the Board of Selectmen present the Potter Farm proposition to the citizens of Washington for their consideration at a town meeting in January, 2007. Mark Lyon seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously passed.

Mark Lyon made a motion to adjourn. Motion seconded by Nicholas Solley and unanimously passed. The meeting was adjourned at 6:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Gollow
Selectman's Assistant

A copy of the draft letter is included with these Minutes.
[draft letter was not submitted to webmaster]