

**Board of Selectmen's Meeting  
February 05, 2008**

Present: First Selectman Woody Bliss; Selectman W. Glenn Major; Selectwoman Gayle Weinstein; Town Administrator Tom Landry; Administrative Assistant Judy DeVito, residents and members of the press.

**This meeting was recorded and video taped and the tapes are available in the Selectmen's office and the Building Department, respectively, for further reference.**

Mr. Bliss called the meeting to order at 7:34pm

**Board of Selectmen review First Selectman's Budget**

Mr. Bliss made a presentation starting with the forecast for the Town. He said that the fund balance forecast as June 30, 2008 \$10,419,296. The total budget increase is 2.9 million. He went through the Town budget explaining the increases and the decrease in insurance and benefits.

Mr. Major asked about the overtime figure. Mr. Landry said it was minutes, building checks on weekends and snow removal for Town building. Mr. Major asked about the floater. Mr. Landry said that it was Cynthia Williams and she floats in different departments, but most of her time is in the Town Clerks Office.

Ms. Weinstein asked about the \$7,000 for Memorial Day and Veteran Day activities. Mr. Bliss said we would get her a breakdown.

Ms. Weinstein asked about Kids in Crisis. She said that if we were paying for a fulltime person they should be not only covering the high school, but should be covering the middle school at least one day a week. They should also be on call for the intermediate school because most of the problems with kids begin at that age. Michael Ferguson said in the other Towns where the program is in the middle school it is a completely different counselor who covers the middle school and is also partially funded by the Town. He said that they were covering the middle school in the other Town part-time, but have since gone full-time.

Mr. Major said that his understanding when they had come to us before that it was going to be for the high school and the middle school. He said there is an issue from his prospective right from the onset. He would like this taken out of the budget and done the way we did it last year. He said we would fund it with a supplemental appropriation, if we deemed it appropriate.

Ms. Weinstein asked if the legal expense figure was a realistic figure given our past history. Mr. Bliss said litigation expense is extremely hard to estimate.

Ms. Weinstein asked about contractual services. She wanted to know about paying a contract \$36,000. Mr. Landry said it was a former employee who is contracted to provide

us services up to that amount. She asked who determined how much he worked. Mr. Landry said the employee did and it was really a transitional agreement.

Mr. Major asked the Fire Department about the car. He said that he noticed that it bounced back and forth between the fire department and the fire marshal. Mr. Landry said that this was a new arrangement this year that the fire marshal and the fire chief were the same people. John Pokorny said the fire chief's car is part of their operating budget.

Mr. Major asked about the contractual services for the Fire Marshal's office and why we had an issue with a backup Fire Marshal now that we did not have in the past. Mr. Landry said we had a secretary improperly acting as a deputy Fire Marshal.

Communications center 5.3% increase. Mr. Major asked about the salary wages the increase is that because of step increases. Mr. Darling said "yes" and also the contract was settled after we approved the budget. Mr. Major asked about the 43% increase in part time salaries. Mr. Landry said if you look at the overtime you will see that it is down and part time salaries is up, because when there is an open shift depending on when it comes open you either fill it with fulltime dispatcher at time and half or you fill it with a part time person at a much less rate, so it is price advantageous to have more of the shifts filled by part time employees.

Police Department had a 6.3% increase. Mr. Major said in essence we have one more police officer than we thought we were going to have when we did the budget last year, but we have one less sergeant than we thought we were going to have when we did the budget last year. He said if we fill the sergeant's position from within we settle out even in the end. Chief Troxell said yes. He said when they promote from the inside into the sergeants position they will be down to 10 patrolmen instead of 11. Mr. Bliss said the total head count should be 15. This budget does have an extra patrolman.

Mr. Major asked about Chief Troxell's salary. He wanted to know why the salary amount on the budget was the same as Chief Land's. Mr. Landry said that it was doubtful that that would be the salary amount. They are talking about elevating a sergeant to another rank and that would require a salary supplement on top of a sergeants pay. The feeling was that that amount would cover whatever they settled on with the police chief contract which is expected to be less than that.

Mr. Major said the information that was given to the Selectmen was wrong. The salary for the police chief is the same number as what was approved and that is not going to be the case. He said it is totally misleading and asked that they get a true projected year end for the police department for Thursday. He said the projected numbers are off so much that it is hard to understand the request and how they relate to reality.

Solid Waste- Mr. Landry said the contract with CRRA is about to expire the end of the calendar year. They have solicited proposals and CRRA has the ability to match the last best. We do not know exactly what the tonnage fees are supposed to be, they have not set

the tonnage fees as yet. Mr. Bliss said that we would be hearing a lot more about this in the months to come.

Nancy McCormick said the Westport/Weston Health District budget has been approved by the Board of Directors and it is a flat budget.

Weston Water Utility will define some things that the system needs. School Town Water supply there are some Capital needs there. They will do what they can with some remaining Capital money for the new well. It will be folded into the Kaestle Boos study.

Human Services had a 6.8% increase. Ms. Weinstein said that she would like to see a line item added to this budget to include families in need. She felt that Charlene has done an outstanding job getting money from outside organizations. She said she felt the Town should have some type of cushion to help families in need should the other sources of funding dry up. She said even if we establish the line item and put \$5,000 to help families in need it would be a great start.

Mr. Major said it was a wonderful thought, but it is too difficult to try to digest it as part of the budget and perhaps if that is something that Charlene thinks is useful that she should come in and get an appropriation and see how it is administered and that it works. He said that Charlene should put together a proposal with criteria since it is difficult to do it during the budget process. Ms. Weinstein said she did eventually want to see it in the budget.

Youth Services had a 21% reduction. Mr. Major said he was confused about the request since we only had one person currently working in the department. He asked if it was conceivable that it would be resolved in 2008-2009 budget and therefore we need the dollars in there if it gets resolved in a particular fashion. Mr. Landry said that works.

Mr. Bliss said that Capital Budget had not yet been reviewed by the Capital Committee. Ms. Weinstein said that she had a concern and that was the Lyons Plain Fire House. She said that the department requested \$900,000 and it is imperative that we have a fire house on that side of Town. She said we need to find some way to assist the fire department in paying for this. She did not feel that it was something that should be overlooked for a year.

Mr. Bliss said his position is that it was not appropriate to have it in the Capital Budget. Curtis Gunn, President of the WVFD, said that they are looking for a commitment for the next three years in the Capital Budget for a total of \$900,000. Ms. Weinstein said that however the Capital Committee decides the best way to fund it that she did not have an issue, but we need to take care of it this year. Ms. Weinstein said it was a public safety issue.

Mr. Major said that he felt that we had been given very little backup to substantiate the request. He said we need to know what we are paying for. Curtis Gunn said that his concern was it would not make it in this Capital Budget. Mr. Major said that they did not

need to because we have the general fund available if you have an immediate need that you cannot cover, you can get a special appropriation to address it. Mr. Bliss said an amount like that has to be approved here then go to the Board of Finance and then to a Town Meeting.

Craig Cohen asked if the Selectmen were giving them the green light. Mr. Major said that they have given them very little information so it was hard for them to give them a green light. Mr. Major said that the Board of Selectmen acknowledges that there needs to be a new firehouse on Lyons Plain Road. He is cautious about what they want to build there, because if you come back with a structure that does not make sense for the needs of the Town, then you will not get the Town support.

There was discussion about the guardrail in the budget. Mr. Major said the bigger issue would be a sidewalk between the 3-4-5 school and the elementary school. Mr. Bliss said the Superintendent asked about the guardrail and he had John Conte look into it. He asked that they let Mr. Conte address that tomorrow night.

Mr. Major asked about the Kaestle Boos report. Mr. Landry said that in the study they have different priorities and he does not know which priorities will be selected by the building committee as their priorities and that is where that money comes from.

Mr. Landry said he has about 2.6 million and they have talked about 1.1 million for OPEB Liabilities for town and school, \$350,000 for the Town Hall Roof and \$300,000 for the High School Auditorium. You then have about \$600,000 left and then you go to the Kaestle Boos and decide which of the items you want to do. Mr. Major said he felt that we were going about it the wrong way by not setting a number and having to go back into it. Ms. Weinstein said even if we took care of the repairs that were imminent we have over 7 million dollars worth of repairs, so what is \$600,000 going to do. Mr. Landry said we bond the 10 million next year. Ms. Weinstein said that this is a number that the Board of Finance needs to look at a little closer and figure out in the grand scheme of things how this is going to go down.

Mr. Major said that this should go back to the Capital Committee and that that they should convey the comments that he and Gayle have made to them.

At 10:20pm Ms. Weinstein made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Major seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted

Judy M. DeVito  
Administrative Assistant  
Approved 3/19/09