

Board of Selectmen's Meeting
June 20, 2013

Present: First Selectman Gayle Weinstein; Selectman David Muller; Selectman Dennis Tracey; Town Administrator Tom Landry; Administrative Assistant Judy DeVito; Residents.

This meeting was recorded and videotaped. Copies are available in the Selectmen's office. The meetings are available for viewing online via the Town's website.

Ms. Weinstein called the meeting to order at 7:30pm

Pledge of Allegiance-

Accept the resignation of Susan Seath from the Board of Assessment Appeals effective July 1, 2013. Mr. Tracey moved to accept the resignation of Susan Seath from the Board of Assessment Appeals effective July 1, 2013. Mr. Muller seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/decision regarding the appointment of Joseph Fitzpatrick to fill the vacancy (Peter Voulgarakis) on the Building Board of Appeals for a term to expire December 31, 2017. Joe said that he has been engaged in the Town for many years. He has a background in New York City code. This position involves interpretation if there is any ambiguity. He can use his good sense and judgment and his background to try to adjudicate those things.

Mr. Muller moved to appoint Joseph Fitzpatrick to fill the vacancy on the Building Board of Appeals for a term to expire June 30, 2017. Mr. Tracey seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/decision regarding the reappointment of Richard Wolf to the Building Committee for a term to expire June 30, 2015. Richard said he has been a member of the Building Committee since 1990 and has served as the chairman for 8 years and is currently the vice chairman. He has a 40 year background in the design profession and the construction industry and a fairly good knowledge of the major facilities in Town. He enjoys participating in the Committee and can assist the committee and the Town in the assignments that they are given.

Mr. Tracey moved to reappoint Richard Wolf to the Building Committee for a term to expire June 30, 2015. Mr. Muller seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/decision regarding the appointment of Richard Bochinski to fill the vacancy (Michael O'Brien) on the Board of Finance for a term to expire November 12, 2013. Richard said that Board of Finance was where he started. He spent 28 years on different boards and commission and most recently almost 8 years on the Board of Education. He would welcome the opportunity to return to the Board of Finance.

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Mr. Muller moved to appoint Richard Bochinski to fill the vacancy on the Board of Finance for a term to expire November 12, 2013. Mr. Tracey seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Accept the resignation of Pierre Rattee from the Planning and Zoning Commission effective immediately. Mr. Tracey moved to accept the resignation of Pierre Rattee from the Planning and Zoning Commission effective immediately. Mr. Muller seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/decision regarding the appointment of James Carlon to fill the vacancy (Pierre Rattee) on the Planning and Zoning Commission for a term to expire November 12, 2013. James said that he has been a real estate attorney in the State of Connecticut for 14 years and has been practicing primarily transactional real estate during that period of time. He has a little experience with zoning issues that have come up. He is currently a partner at Dave Pitney based in the Stamford office. He has two sons and has lived in Weston for the 12 years and loves the Town.

Mr. Muller moved to appoint James Carlon to fill the vacancy on the Planning and Zoning Commission for a term to expire November 12, 2013. Mr. Tracey seconded and the motion passed unanimously

Discussion/decision regarding the reappointment of Harvey Bellin and Donald Saltzman as Weston's representatives to Area 9 Cable Council for a term to expire June 30, 2015. Ms. Weinstein said she told both Harvey and Don they did not have to attend the meeting but she wanted to thank them for all the hard work they have done.

Mr. Tracey moved to reappoint Harvey Bellin and Donald Saltzman as Weston's representative to Area 9 Cable Council for a term to expire June 30, 2015. Mr. Muller seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/decision regarding granting a driveway variance at 106 Eleven O'Clock Road. Ms. Weinstein said we had the public hearing earlier in the evening. An abutting neighbor did not have an issue per se with the driveway construction but he did want to register a concern about the existing stone walls and what would happen. Mr. Conte did not share the concerns and thinks that the stone walls will be fine if the driveway is widened by 4 feet.

Mr. Muller moved to grant a driveway variance to Amy and Lawrence Cohen, 106 Eleven O'Clock Road, the driveway to be located as shown in the drawings submitted to the Board of Selectmen and verified by the Town Engineer. Mr. Tracey seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/decision regarding request to access the Vehicle sinking fund for the purpose of purchasing a loader (up to \$200,000) and a large snow plow and related equipment (up to \$175,000).- Joe Lametta. Ms. Weinstein said Joe is looking for a front end loader. We currently have two. The newest one is 10 years old and will rotate to

the transfer station. Current vehicle is a 1984 CAT. We appropriated \$200,000 into the vehicle sinking fund account for this purchase and it looks like the cost of the loader come in less at \$145,020.61. We will get money on the trade in of the 1984 CAT of \$35,000.

Mr. Tracey moved to approve a request of \$145,020.61 from the vehicle sinking fund to purchase the front end loader. Mr. Muller seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

The snow plow trucks take more than a year to build which is why we are looking for it now. It includes a plow, a dump body, a sander and a radio. We put \$175,000 in FY2013-14 for the plow truck and the department is looking to access the funds. The bid came in at \$165,000 and the final cost was \$147,000. We are only going to draw down the necessary amount to purchase the plow but she would like to get an appropriation of up to \$175,000 for when we get the final bids in.

Mr. Muller moved to approve a request of up to \$175,000 from the vehicle sinking fund to purchase a snow plow truck. Mr. Tracey seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/ decision regarding supplemental operating budget request for the purpose of overtime expense (\$56,000) – Police Commission. The Police Commission asked that this item be moved to the next meeting. Chief Troxell is babysitting his grandchildren and could not attend the meeting. This item was tabled to the July 8th meeting.

Discussion/decision regarding supplemental appropriation request for FY2012-13 Town operating budget (\$37,000). Rick Darling- Rick said the Board of Finance voted for the balance of the Town Operating Budget. We are forecasting a project deficient of almost (\$93,000). Health Insurance has a surplus because the rates came in lower after the budget was approved last year. We had to pay Social Security pension for Sgt. Ferullo who was out on active duty. He is considered an active employee and under MERS we owed him the pension amount for the time he was out so we have made a 17,000 payment to MERS. Unemployment compensation was from the former Youth Director and worker comp rate was up over what we had expected in the budget. Overall the reason for the deficient is mostly storm related. There was more discussion about the different line items. The \$37,000 is the difference between the \$93,000 deficient and the \$56,000 overtime expense.

On the revenue side the fund balance is going to go up even with some of the supplemental that we have done recently. He is forecasting almost ¾ million over budget in tax collection, mostly in back taxes in interest and the supplemental vehicle levy. Departmental receipts are \$260,000 over budget so about 1 million over budget.

Mr. Tracey moved to approve a supplemental appropriation of \$37,000 for FY2012-13 Town Operating Budget. Mr. Muller seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/decision regarding an allocation to Weston Cares from the Community Grant Line- Ms. Weinstein asked that they budget money for the food cards to give to residents in need.

Mr. Muller moved to approve a donation of \$3,000 to Weston Cares from the Community Grant Line in FY 2012-2013 budget for the purchase of food cards for Weston families in need. Mr. Tracey seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/decision regarding an allocation to the Weston Food Pantry from the Community Grant Line - Betsy Peyreigne. Betsy said that there is no decrease in the number of families using the food pantry. There has actually been an increase where they have seen families where there was a senior household but adult children have been forced to move in.

Summer is her worst time because she doesn't have the schools to do food drives, a lot of people that buy things and drop them off are away for the summer. She has less coming in but the same amount going out. She asked for the Town's help so that she can shop over the summer and keep the pantry full. Ms. Weinstein said that Betsy has been working to meet the basic need of families and if you're going there it is because you need it.

Mr. Tracey moved to approve \$3,000 to the Food Pantry from the Community Grant Line in FY 2012-13 Budget. Mr. Muller seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/decision regarding Bill No. 6629 an act concerning regionalism in Connecticut. Ms. Weinstein said the Southwest Region tried really hard to fight this bill. Although she is a favor of becoming a COG, her issue comes from the fact that the State is mandating that we become a COG, which may be illegal. She is also concerned about the implications of additional responsibilities and what the State will push down to the Region level.

The Bill actually says is that the OPM study is now due to the Legislature sooner than expected on October 1, 2013. The study requires OPM to consult with the Department of Transportation and analysis the capacity of Regional Planning Organizations and see if perhaps they need to change the size of the regions.

The bigger issue has to do with the restructuring of all regions to COGs which has to occur a year and a half from now on January 1, 2015. Ms. Weinstein said part of problem she has with this is from a legal prospective. At the MPO meeting that will take place next week, they will discuss if they should hire an attorney or perhaps have the town attorneys all work together to figure out some of the legal implications with this.

If we were to change our structure, it would require by State Statute an ordinance change. We know that four of the municipalities in our region are adamantly against becoming a COG even before it was mandated. If those four decide not to join the COG, then does a COG really exist if nobody joins it and what happens to the funding.

Representative Rojas said the COG will exist but if you don't join it you will not get any money. If was just the MPO portion that money is separate and comes from the Federal government and that is not part of this process. She is talking about all the other things that are handled in our Regional Planning Structure and what the implications are with that.

Ms. Weinstein gave the Selectmen a summary that was created by Floyd Lapp and Craig Lader to tell some of the issues that they will have to deal with. She asked the Selectmen to become familiar with the summary. A copy of the summary is attached to the minutes.

Mr. Tracey said he has been opposed to COGs from the very beginning. It is clear to him that this is the State trying to create a structure under which larger groups of municipalities can be charged with responsibility for areas including asset transfer and taxation and this is the first step to do this in his opinion. Although you can opt out of a COG if they allocate money to the COG that otherwise would go to critical services that we are required to deliver that would be punishment for not being in a COG. He thinks there are serious issues although you can opt out at any time you would be responsible for allocations that have been created before you opted out so you continue to pay for everything.

Ms. Weinstein said after we become a COG they want us to join with other municipalities to become an even bigger COG. So now it will not only be our 8 municipalities but it might be 20 to 22 municipalities around a table. She is concerned that the smaller municipalities will get shut out.

Mr. Muller said while we are pondering whether this is valid we have to assume that this is in effect in a year and five months and having to take a number of steps in terms of deliverables as of January 1, 2015.

The next steps is they will be having a meeting on the 27th where they will be discussing this and she is hoping at that point they can get Town attorneys together to take a look at it and figure out the implications. She will bring this back to the board after that to discuss.

Discussion/decision regarding Senior Center Memorandum of Understanding.

Ms. Weinstein said she and the superintendent have been working on a MOU. Until the end of the summer they are going to continue with the current MOU that is in place and the only difference will be that the electric, heating and cleaning cost for the area occupied by the Senior Center will be assumed by the Town of Weston which was a decision that was made during the budget process. Ms. Weinstein asked the Board to authorize her to continue the negotiation process and as long as it is substantially the same as what we currently have as far as space and commitment to finances to allow her to sign that agreement. If there are any material changes she will bring it back to the board.

Mr. Muller moved that the Board authorize the First Selectman to negotiate and enter into an agreement substantially similar to the current 2012-2013 agreement concerning the Weston Senior Center with the Weston Board of Education as long as there are no material changes. Mr. Tracey seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Open Items

Updates

First Selectman updates-

Ms. Weinstein said the total cost for the senior tax relief is \$493,165. We budget 520,000 this year it has come down a little bit.

We were recognized by a federal organization called the Alliance to Save Energy which is an organization that advances energy efficiency. It's a nonprofit coalition that facilitates strategic partnerships between business, governments and nonprofits.

Colleen More and Julia Moreledge made a proposal to ban plastic bags. They met with Jim Magee and they made a presentation and Deirdre Doran chair on the Sustainability Committee was there. They talked about the positives and negatives to plastic bags. Mr. Magee said he is looking to see if he can give cash back or perhaps donate that money to the food pantry. They also spoke about the possibility of the girls working with Jim to stand outside of Peter's Market and encourage people to bring their own bag.

She will get back to the Selectmen with an update on the striping on Old Mill Road.

Ms. Weinstein said she went to Washington DC and met with housing and urban development officials along with the housing commissioner Evonne Klein. She was there primarily to take about FEMA reimbursement for coastline communities for storm Sandy. Ms. Weinstein said she felt it was important to represent the inland communities that were severely impacted. She spoke about the need for funding for resiliency and the need to work on our power grid so we don't have the power outages that we have and the fact that it can become a public health issue when power is out for a week.

Ms. Weinstein said she will be meeting with Brian Humes regarding the space needs study of the police department. She has been working with the Chief of Police and the sergeants and the police commission to talk about what is necessary and what is not necessary. Going through the study there are rooms they all agreed that the police department didn't need. They were able to cut down about 3000 sq feet. Tom also noted that there are other places in Town that the police use so it's not tripling space but

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maybe doubling space. They will continue to refine the process and bring it back to the Board.

The library was gifted with a large sum of money from a bequest which we are incredible grateful for. She is very pleased that the Library Director has been working closely with the library board to establish a space planning committee where they are looking to figure out renovations that need to take place. They are looking to use the funds to create a more modern efficient library.

Any other business to come properly before the meeting- None

At 9:00pm Mr. Tracey moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Muller seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted

Judy M. DeVito
Administrative Assistant
Approved 8/15/13