

**Board of Selectmen's Meeting  
September 18, 2008**

Present: Selectman W. Glenn Major; Selectwoman Gayle Weinstein; Town Administrator Tom Landry; Administrative Assistant Judy DeVito, residents and member 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. Major called the meeting to order at 7:33pm

Mr. Bliss joined the meeting by telephone.

**Pledge of Allegiance-** Ms. Weinstein led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Discussion/decision regarding the appointment of Valerie Mason to the Commission for the Arts for a term to expire June 30, 2009-** Valerie Mason was educated in the fine arts. She attended the Fashion Institute of Technology to study textile design. She feels she can contribute to the commission.

Ms. Weinstein made a motion to appoint Valerie Mason to the Commission for the Arts for a term to expire June 30, 2009. Mr. Bliss seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**Discussion/decision regarding the appointment of Neil Horner to fill the vacancy (Sharon Shattuck) on the Historic District Commission for a term to expire December 31, 2011.** Neil Horner has been a resident for 26 years. He said he was fascinated with the Historical Society. His abiding interest is the historic aspects of Weston in general.

Mr. Bliss made a motion to appoint Neil Horner to the Historic District Commission for a term to expire December 31, 2011. Ms. Weinstein seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**Discussion/decision regarding the request from interfaith housing for \$14,853- Peter Powell.** Mr. Powell said on Monday they break ground for the Westport Rotary Centennial House which will be six apartments next to the railroad tracks. They are working with the Town of Westport to do twelve apartments on some Town owned property on the Post Road.

The request for \$14,853 is for casework at their Westport facilities. They have been invited also to provide the casework for a large support of housing projects in Norwalk. If they get subsidies to do that then they will be doing their first venture in Norwalk.

In July and August, they had a woman from Weston in Gillespie and Hoskins' Place. Rev. Powell said whenever they get a call from someone in Weston, whether it be Social Services, the Police Department or the clergy, they take whomever is sent.

Ms. Weinstein said that looking at the individual contributions from 2006 to 2007 it seemed to jump dramatically, to over one million dollars. Rev. Powell said they had some events that had done very well. She asked about the cash on hand of \$800,000 after December 2007. Rev.

Powell said the unrestricted cash was much less than that and most of that came from tax credits from CL&P that can only be spent on the Rotary House. He said they try to have 90 days of operating cash in their unrestricted account.

Ms. Weinstein asked about their fund raising cost which had risen dramatically from \$189,117 to \$227,000. Mr. Powell said that they had taken a big risk. They had built the fund raiser around Lewis Black. The event grossed \$360,000 and netted \$160,000. She asked about the amount of money they asked from Weston compared to Westport and Wilton. Mr. Powell said they ask Wilton for the same amount of money, and they have not been able to get it out of them. Westport gave them \$12,000 but they also own the Gillespie Center, Hoskins' Place, Linxweiler Place and the Bacharach Community. Westport forgives the taxes on the Rotary House and they forgive 2/3 of the taxes on Homes With Hope. The cash contribution is a small part of the total contribution which is over \$70,000.

Ms. Weinstein said she was very concerned about what is going on in the economy and what is going on in our budget. Every area in our budget is going to have to be scrutinized to make sure we are making the right decision with our financial dollars. She is concerned that the Warm-up fund is not going to have enough money. She is concerned about the number of Town's people who are going to be utilizing Town services a lot more now and going forward. In looking at Interfaith Housing Assoc. financials she was seeing a healthy cash position.

Mr. Bliss asked the percentage increase from last year. Mr. Powell said it was a 3% increase from last year. Mr. Major asked the breakdown of the unrestricted cash. Mr. Powell said it was \$300,000 in August. Ms. Weinstein said she well aware of how wonderful the organization is and is trying to balance what is going on in our own Town and trying to forecast our needs.

Mr. Bliss made a motion to approve payment of \$14,853 to Interfaith Housing Association. Ms. Weinstein seconded. Mr. Bliss, Mr. Major yes, Ms. Weinstein no,

**Discussion/decision regarding a resolution to participate in the FFY 2009 Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) Program.** Mr. Bliss said the State of Connecticut gets a grant from the Federal Government and the State parcels that out to the various Towns. This is to get a grant from the State for the purchase of certain items for the Weston Emergency Management Operation. We have to have a resolution by the legislative body approving that we apply for a grant.

Mr. Major made a motion that the First Selectman Woody Bliss be it hereby is authorized to act on behalf of the Town of Weston, Board of Selectmen in executing a Memorandum of Understanding with that State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security for participation in the Fiscal Year 2009 Emergency Management Emergency Performance Grant Program. Ms. Weinstein seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**Discussion/decision regarding legal services from Cohen and Wolf.** Mr. Landry said that the Legal Review Committee had recommended that the engagement letter be updated. Mr. Major said without having the prior letter it was hard for him to know the difference. He said we should

take the letter and read it in conjunction with the Legal Review Committee report to make sure that all of the recommendations that they made are in fact embodied in the agreement.

Mr. Major asked that this be deferred to the next meeting to allow Mr. Landry to have the opportunity to compare the two and ask Mr. Bernhard to make appropriate revisions.

**Request for property tax refunds:**

<b>Eugene John Roche</b>	<b>\$7,108.58</b>
<b>America's Servicing Co.</b>	<b>\$7,039.56</b>
<b>Victoria Fash</b>	<b>\$2,190.23</b>
<b>Honda Leasing Trust</b>	<b>\$1,141.16</b>
<b>Toyota Financial Services</b>	<b>\$469.78</b>
<b>Nissan Infiniti-LT</b>	<b>\$434.71</b>
<b>VW Credit Leasing</b>	<b>\$185.91</b>
<b>Lee P. Phan</b>	<b>\$73.68</b>
<b>Eugenia K. Bryce</b>	<b>\$33.07</b>
<b>Rachael D. Nevas</b>	<b><u>\$5.08</u></b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$18,681.76</b>

Ms. Weinstein made a motion to authorize property tax refunds for the above mentioned people totaling \$18,681.76. Mr. Major seconded. Mr. Major suggested the motion be amended to include "subject to Mr. Bliss's review of the refunds with the Tax Collector." (Done on September 22<sup>nd</sup>.) Ms. Weinstein accepted the change. The motion passed unanimously.

**Any other business to come properly before the meeting-**

**Ms. Weinstein made a motion to add the Weston Food Pantry to the agenda. Mr. Major seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

Ms. Weinstein said that she felt that they should have a discussion of what has gone on. She is very upset and concerned that Norfield Church will no longer allow the food pantry to operate there. She wanted to discuss issues regarding what the functions should be with the Board of Selectmen in relation to the food pantry.

She said that several of the locations that are being looked at were on Town property and we needed to take a step back and speak to our attorney, which she did and asked him to forward what the issues would be if we did have a location like the food pantry on Town property. Also to decide what the selectmen's roll should be in this. Mr. Bliss said that all of her questions were a bit premature. He has been working very hard to find an alternate solution. He has an assurance from Norfield Church that there will be continuity of service. He wants it to come to the Board at the next meeting when he is physically there and discuss it when he thinks they will have a finished proposal.

Mr. Major said this is a classic example of how the Freedom of Information prevents the Board of Selectmen from having any kind of a brainstorming discussion. He has concerns and frustration also but felt as long as Norfield Church as committed to maintaining the food pantry until an appropriate substitute location can be located, gives him the peace of mind to know that

the people in need will continue to be able to have that need met as best as possible until an appropriate solution is found.

Mr. Major said after we get the update at the next meeting we should call a specific meeting to invite all the various groups because he is concerned that if it is put on Town property about certain liability issues from the Town's prospective.

Ms. Weinstein said that this was one of the reasons that she wanted to bring it up beforehand rather than someone coming up with the perfect solution and find out there was a road block. She wanted to see what Mr. Bernhard had to say about having a private non for profit organization assuming that the food pantry is run as such located on Town property. Her personal feeling is that the food pantry should be run by a private non profit 501c3. She did want it run as a Select Committee or under the Board of Selectmen. She had spoken to a 501c3 who looked like they were potentially willing to take this on.

**Mr. Major made a motion to add to the agenda to discuss and decide upon a public hearing and town meeting dates for the funds allocating for the fire department. Ms. Weinstein seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

After some discussion Mr. Major made a motion to hold a public hearing at 7:30pm October 6<sup>th</sup> in the Town Hall Meeting Room and a Town Meeting on October 16<sup>th</sup> at 8:00pm at the Middle School Cafeteria for purposes of reviewing, discussing and appropriating the \$900,000 for the new fire station at Lyons Plain Road. Ms. Weinstein seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**Mr. Major made a motion to add to the agenda to schedule a hearing on an employee matter. Ms. Weinstein seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Major made a motion to set 6:00pm October 2<sup>nd</sup> for the employee hearing. Ms. Weinstein seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**Executive Session- If needed-None**

**Adjournment:** At 8:25pm Ms. Weinstein made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Bliss seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted

Judy M. DeVito  
Administrative Assistant  
Approved 11/06/08