

Board of Selectmen's Meeting

May 7, 2009

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

This meeting was recorded and video taped and the tapes are available in the Selectmen's office.

Mr. Bliss called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

Pledge of Allegiance- Detective Carl Filsinger lead the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Executive session- Fletcher Thompson settlement- Monte Frank

ATTENDANCE and DISCUSSION: The meeting was convened at 7:33 PM in the First Selectman's office by Chairman Bliss, with Mr. Major and Ms. Weinstein present. Also present were Town Administrator Landry, and Legal Counsel Monte Frank.

FLETCHER-THOMSON. The purpose of the executive session was to review revised settlement offers in the Fletcher Thomson mediation effort, the architectural firm for the school construction project. Appropriate responses and strategies were discussed. No votes were taken.

ADJOURN EXECUTIVE SESSION: The Board voted unanimously (Ms. Weinstein, motion; Mr. Major second) to end executive session and reconvene in open session. The time was 7:41 pm.

Mr. Bliss reconvened the regular meeting at 7:42pm

Mr. Major made a motion to add to the agenda discussion/decision regarding the Fletcher Thompson settlement. Ms. Weinstein seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Major made a motion that they enter into a settlement agreement with Fletcher Thompson to settle claims concerning the construction of the schools subject to receipt of a complete settlement agreement. Ms. Weinstein seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/decision regarding setting a public hearing date for reviewing section 4 of the Land Use Ordinance- Tracy Kulikowski- Tracy Kulikowski said that section 4 of the Land Use Ordinance expires on June 30th of this year. Mr. Bliss said that he did not believe that we need a public hearing that we could extend it without a public hearing. Mr. Major said that the concerns that they had they have not heard any complains but also there has not been much use of it.

Mr. Major made a motion to extend the support service fee ordinance to the effective date to June 30, 2011. Ms Weinstein seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/decision regarding an increase in Building Use Fees- Rack Gleason

Mr. Landry said in 2003 the board voted to increase building fees by a dollar to \$8.00 per thousand. Recently there was a survey done of 27 towns and the survey showed the average fee was \$11.00 and more communities had a fee of \$10.00 than any other amount.

Ms. Weinstein made a motion to increase the building use fees to a rate of \$11.00 per \$1,000 as of July 1, 2009. Mr. Major seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/decision regarding authorization to submit 8-24 application to P&Z and a flood zone development permit application to P&Z for Valley Forge Road Bridge-

Tom Landry- Mr. Landry said he wrote a draft memo to the Planning and Zoning Commission, but the Board of Selectmen are the ones who have to make application since they are the owners of the project. He said they also had to make application to the Conservation Commission for working in a river. They have accepted that application already and he has asked the two boards to do a joint public hearing so if anyone is interested they only have to go once.

Mr. Major made a motion to authorize the First Selectman to file on behalf of the Town an 8-24 application to the Weston Planning and Zoning Commission for the replacement of the Valley Forge Road Bridge. Ms. Weinstein seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/decision regarding Kids in Crisis- Michael Ferguson

Ms. Weinstein said that she felt it would be more cost efficient to everyone if the supplies came from the building that the counselor from Kids in Crisis was at. Michael Ferguson said that they were really a guest in the building and tried not to be a burden on the system on all of the schools.

Mr. Major said that there are two sets of feedback that he has been getting, one that is extremely positive and one that is not positive at all and that is why he has been struggling with this. Much of the negative feedback has come directly from staff at the school. He said that he has taken the time to learn when they get the monthly reports and feels that the numbers that are shown as contacts is really not a good indication of what is taking place because the numbers are exaggerated.

Michael Ferguson said that there are two numbers. Data collection is a struggle in this field. He said Kids in Crisis focus on the individual number of contacts. The rest of the numbers are subject to interpretation.

Mr. Major asked what role did the Kids in Crisis counselor have in other departments in the school system. Lois Pernice said that she has worked within the guidance department and there has been some direct supervision from the guidance department chair. She said

she had also heard positive and negatives and they sat down and tried to talk through both sides being reflective about what it was that was not working. They were looking for more of a traditional social work model, and she thinks that that was where the conflict was.

Mr. Major asked when did Kids in Crisis and the school have their discussion. Ms. Pernice said in September they met and changed the supervision so that there would be more direct supervision. She said they really sat down at budget time and said this is a position that we want to keep and we need. Mr. Major said that he was trying to figure out the time line in connection with when they met. He said he was happy to see that the phone calls he received were prior to that.

Mr. Major said he did not want to have duplication of effort and if there was a school agency or a town agency that can do that and should be doing that within the other context of our budget. He said up until today this was the first time that he had seen the Board of Education have a representative actively engaged in the organization.

Ms. Weinstein said she had asked Ms. Pernice what a guidance counselor does and what a social worker does and they are two very different jobs. Ms. Pernice said the social worker works more with the families and goes to the home.

Mr. Major asked if an issue came up in the 3-4-5 school or the elementary school are they precluded from getting involved in that. Mr. Ferguson said no, this is one of the benefits of having the program in Weston.

Mr. Major made a motion to authorize a supplemental appropriation \$68,611.00 for Kids in Crisis subject to the Board of Finance approval and subject to the Board of Finance determining whether the appropriation should come from the 08-09 or the 09-10 fiscal year. Ms. Weinstein seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Robert Machson voiced his disapproval of this item not being an item in the budget. The Selectmen explained why.

Discussion/decision regarding cell tower consideration at Morehouse Farm Park-
Tom Landry- Mr. Landry said that they were approached by AT&T for a cell tower at Morehouse Farm Park. They need coverage into Redding and that end of Weston. Mr. Landry told them that they need to talk to the Parks and Recreation Commission. The Commission met and was indifferent to it. They could not see how it would enhance their programs or enhance their facility but they did not see how it would bother them.

Mr. Landry said that there are some procedural problems. There are some restrictions on the deed when the property was bought. It would enhance our police and fire coverage. They have coverage in their vehicles with hand held walkie talkies that do not work well. Mr. Major asked what carriers were on the transfer station tower. Mr. Landry said T-Mobile and Sprint are currently on and we have signed contracts with Verizon and AT&T.

Mr. Landry said from his discussions with them the benefit to their coverage is really more into Redding than it is into Weston. Mr. Bliss said that he had spoken to Ernie Albin who is one of the executors of the estate and he is very enthusiastic about this because cell reception there is very poor. They talked about where the revenue might be used and talked about using it in the spirit of the agreement which was for recreation.

Mr. Major recommends that we get Verizon and AT&T up on the transfer station tower and then talk to the people in that area on what their cell reception is. He said that he did not think it was appropriate for the Town to have a tower in Weston to serve Redding.

Mr. Major said the executors do not get to change the terms of the will. He said before he was on the Board of Selectmen he helped draft the terms of the will and it was very limited as to what the intent was. She wanted it specifically for active recreation or for a school should it be needed for a school. Mr. Bliss suggested that we get an opinion from Town Attorney with regard to how much work is involved in changing the document. The second thing would be to get the people from AT&T to come in and explain the charts.

Discussion/decision regarding Emergency and Disaster Planning Ordinance and setting a date for a public hearing –Woody Bliss- Mr. Bliss said that we sent it out and only got one response and that was Mike Ferullo, Director of Emergency Management. Mr. Major suggested that we do the public hearing on June 18th and we get the response back by the end of the month so that way we can incorporate it on our meeting on June 4th.

Mr. Major made a motion to set for June 18, 2009 at 7:00pm a public hearing on the proposed Emergency and Disaster Planning Response Ordinance. Ms. Weinstein seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/decision regarding community service/volunteerism- Gayle Weinstein Ms. Weinstein said on a national level community service and volunteerism has received a lot of attention and has become a very big movement that she would like to see incorporated in our Town. The Serve America Act which passed in April was the most expansive community service since the Peace Corp. back in the 70's. Many people have approached her to ask what kind of community service is available in the Town of Weston. She said that there is no kind of organization, website, any sort of consolidation of what community service projects are or can be that people can do.

If we were to have some sort of community service volunteer activities, she would want it to come from the entire town and not be restricted to one particular party. She said she looks at it as a way that could even potentially offset budgets in a very minor way. If we had a base of people that might be willing to provide the services that those dollars pay for. She gave examples of how this could be used.

Ms. Weinstein said that she had spoken to Charlene Chaing Hillman and Kristin Ferrara about this and Charlene said that she had a lot of people who are out of work who are looking to volunteer, to do something productive with their time. Kristin has had a lot of parents that have approached her in terms of summer activities for their kids to volunteer to help.

She asked Mr. Bliss to approach Kiwanis and get them to buy in on this idea. Mr. Bliss asked if she had any thoughts about mechanism or process, because we have a ton of volunteers in the Town. She said that she envisions it as some kind of board not associated with the Town, but works closely with the Town in terms of a community calendar that people can put their activities on. She said to get different aspects of the community working together can be a real positive thing for Weston.

Mr. Bliss said Kiwanis and lots of other organizations have lots of volunteers and lots of community service. He wants more specifics on what she had in mind. Ms. Weinstein said that is why we need to get Kiwanis, women club, warm-up fund, Charlene Hillman, Kristin Ferrara, and Clem Malin from Weston Cares and sit together and flesh this out. Mr. Major said that there is a group of people already volunteering and he would hate to lose them to spending their time coordinating volunteering. Ms. Weinstein said if we had coordination of efforts it would be less work on all the individual volunteers.

Mr. Major said he did not see how the Board of Selectmen should be addressing this concern. Ms. Weinstein said that she did not feel that the Board of Selectmen should be addressing this concern, but felt that the other selectmen need to be aware of this since she had this conversation with Jen Ruddy and Charlene Hillman as to how a volunteering network can help out the Town. She said it could be something as simple as a website link.

Mr. Bliss said there is an organization in Norwalk call VAC which does matching of volunteers in organizations across Westport, Weston, Wilton and Norwalk. Mr. Major said he would be happy to support a program, but someone has to come up with a program.

Robert Machson said that he has spoken to a number of people about volunteerism. He said that he thought that we do need to formalize it. He said that you could cut expenses and provide meaningful opportunities for professionals, retirees and the people work in the town that have skills and expertise that the town can use and would otherwise pay for.

During the budget process he learned that the Board of Education spends 1 million a year on stipends which is nothing more than teachers volunteering for pay in a number of activities.

He said a way to start is to ask all the town department heads and the Board of Education department heads to identify positions that could be filled by skilled members of the Town.

Discussion/decision regarding interest rate for deferments – Woody Bliss

Mr. Bliss said each year the Board of Selectmen have to vote on the interest rate for deferments. It has been 4% for the last several years. We operate on the basis of simple interest so when you change interest rate that changes it backwards for the money that was outstanding. He said that his suggestion is to stay at 4%.

Mr. Major made a motion to establish the interest rate for fiscal year 2009-2010 for deferments at 4%. Ms. Weinstein seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Open Items list
Ongoing update

Food Pantry Lease- Awaiting PBA reply- Woody Bliss- No Change

Emergency and Disaster Planning Ordinance-Woody Bliss- Mr. Bliss proposed that this item come off since we have a date for a public hearing.

FAA- Woody Bliss- A number of Mayors and First Selectmen are going to Washington on May 11, for oral hearings and Dick Blumenthal will do the opening agreements. The oral agreements can take three months to a year or two to come back with a written decision.

LaChat- W. Glenn Major- Mr. Major said they had a meeting and Mr. Landry sent out the charge to the LaChat Building Committee.

Grants- Gayle Weinstein- The Recovery Working Group is only working on transportation money. The list that was submitted and resubmitted means nothing. They have suggested that we go through the Clean Energy Fund, but if you look at the conservation grant that is coming out it can go towards Fuel Cells or sidewalks or bike paths. If we get funding for the Fuel Cell from another source then we can pursue bike paths or sidewalks.

Craig Cohen, Mike Ferullo and Jon Weingarten met on Friday and they are applying for money not only for the fire trucks and for an ambulance, but they noticed that in the Kaestle Boos project list, one of the items is sprinklers for the fire department. She said that is the number one priority in the fire fighters grant.

Ms. Weinstein said that she received an email for Shanta Hanks who works in Congressman Himes's office who is fairly positive that when the other part of the firefighters grant comes up for building construction that even though we broke ground we will still be able to apply.

Carbon Minoxide Ordinance- Mr. Major said they either needs to do it now or for their benefit wait until after the summer.

Policy Changes Purchase Orders. – Tom Landry

Separation of Duties for the Finance Director and Treasurer- Written policy- Tom Landry

Tickler file, discuss as updated

Municipal Amnesty (SB1200)-

Recycling- Tom Landry

Reimbursement from FEMA for Cartbridge- Tom Landry

Reimbursement from State for school projects- Tom Landry

Building Survey Fees- Take off

Booster Barn- Tom Landry- Mr. Landry said we are still waiting for a response to operational questions from the Boosters. Mr. Major said he wants to make sure that when the Boosters answer the questions they answer it understanding the ramifications of their answer.

Discussion/approval of the minutes of the Special Board of Selectmen's meeting of February 4, 2009; Board of Selectmen's meeting of April 2, 2009 and April 21, 2009 and Executive Session minutes of April 27, 2009.

Mr. Major made a motion to approve the Board of Selectmen minutes of February 4, 2009, April 2, 2009, April 21, 2009 and April 27, 2009 with the typo's corrected. Ms. Weinstein seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Any other business to come properly before the meeting.- None

Adjournment- At 9:35pm Mr. Major made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Weinstein seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted

Judy M. DeVito
Administrative Assistant
Approved 05/20/09