

Board of Selectmen's Meeting

August 5, 2010

Present: First Selectman Gayle Weinstein; Selectman David Muller; Selectman Dan Gilbert; Town Administrator Tom Landry; Administrative Assistant Judy DeVito;

This meeting was recorded and videotaped. The tapes are available in the Selectmen's office.

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

Pledge of Allegiance- Emily Weyrauch led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance

Discussion/decision regarding the appointment of Emily Weyrauch as a student member on the Commission for Children and Youth for a term to expire June 30, 2012- Emily is a sophomore at Weston High School. She would like to be a member of the Children and Youth Commission so that she can get involved in youth service projects and learn more about how the Town works. Mr. Muller made a motion to appoint Emily Weyrauch as a student member on the Commission for Children and Youth for a term to expire June 30, 2012. Mr. Gilbert seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/ decision regarding the appointment of Jonathan Wagner to fill the vacancy (Ellen Jones) on the beautification Committee for a term to expire June 30, 2013. Jonathan has been a life long resident of Weston. His architectural work in Weston has ranged from additions to the Weston Town Hall and Firehouse to numerous houses and residential additions in Weston. Mr. Gilbert made a motion to appoint Jonathan Wagner to fill the vacancy (Ellen Jones) on Beautification Committee for a term to expire June 30, 2013. Mr. Muller seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/decision regarding the reappointment of Benjamin Hume to the Cemetery Committee for a term to expire June 30, 2011. Mr. Hume said that over the past year the cemetery committee has made real progress in developing a cemetery for Weston and he would like to continue on the committee. Mr. Muller made a motion to reappoint Benjamin Hume to the Cemetery Committee for a term to expire June 30, 2011. Mr. Gilbert seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/decision regarding the appointment of Robert Pickholtz to the Insurance Advisory Committee for a term to expire June 30, 2012. Mr. Pickholtz had a conversation with Mike O'Brien and Mr. O'Brien feels that he would be an excellent fit for the Insurance Advisory Committee. Mr. Gilbert made a motion to appoint Robert Pickholtz to the Insurance Advisory Committee for a term to expire June 30, 2012. Mr. Muller seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Interview of Paula Savignol for the Board of Ethics position. Paula Savignol has been a resident for 33 years. She was active in the PTO and was a member of a Long Range Planning Committee for the BOE in the mid 80's. She is a long standing member of the non-partisan League of Women Voters of Weston and has served as moderator for a number of Candidate Forums.

Discussion/decision regarding appointment to the Board of Ethics. After some discussion, Mr. Muller made a motion to appoint Paula Savignol to fill the vacancy on the Board of Ethics for a term to expire December 31, 2010. Mr. Gilbert seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/decision regarding the reappointment of Donald Gary to the Building Committee for a term to expire June 30, 2012. Mr. Gary was interviewed at the last meeting. Mr. Gilbert made a motion to reappoint Don Gary to the Building Committee for a term to expire June 30, 2012. Mr. Muller seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion regarding the Fuel Cell- Don Gary- This item will be on the next agenda

Status update on treasury function controls and procedures- Mr. Darling said that for the most part, things have gone well but he would suggest that a couple of changes be made. Throughout the Procedures document it states that the Payroll Accountant was to perform some of the treasury control duties, such as account reconciliations. Mr. Darling is recommending that the Accounts Payable Clerk perform these functions instead. Ms. Weinstein said she had no problem with those changes. Mr. Darling will make the change and forward it to the Selectmen.

Mr. Darling said overall the process has gone well. New investments have gone to the Board of Finance for approval. He is in constant contact with Mike O'Brien, chairman of the Board of Finance, about additional ideas.

Discussion/decision regarding a supplemental request from the Cemetery Committee for \$2,500. Richard Wolf said the cemetery committee has put together a survey and they will need approximately \$2,500 so that they can send out the mailing.

Mr. Gilbert said that money would be better spent by having someone present information to the Town that is as realistic as it can be to give people an opportunity to evaluate something of substance. The \$2,500 can better be spent after the Town has a more realistic idea of what the cemetery is going to look like and what it is going to cost.

Mr. Muller said at our last meeting this was discussed and we recognized that no one was going to do that presentation for free and the expenditure that would be required would be much more than \$2,500. Before we hire someone to do a presentation, we wanted to spend a small amount to find out if there was sufficient interest in Town to take that step. It was Mr. Muller's understanding that the Board had said that they would be willing to approve a small allocation to determine if we wanted to go that next step.

Mr. Muller made a motion to approve a supplemental appropriation request from the cemetery committee in the amount of \$2,500.00. Ms. Weinstein seconded and the vote was Mr. Muller; Ms. Weinstein yes. Mr. Gilbert, no.

Discussion/decision regarding Board of Education salary increases-

Phil Schaefer gave an update of the previous evening's Board of Education meeting. He said that there was a lot of thought that went into the Board of Education decision to give the salary increases to the different administrators. The Board of Education feels that Mr. Belair and his team have saved the town millions of dollars. If this team was not in place, they would not be able to bring in budgets at such a low increase where there were no substantive cuts in programs for the district.

The three Selectmen voiced their disapproval for the increases. Mr. Muller felt that the Board of Education had taken significant steps to destroy the trust that had developed over recent years between it and the Board of Selectmen. Ms. Weinstein echoed the same sentiment. She stated that this goes beyond the numbers and is concerned about the various relationships that will be affected by this decision. Ms. Weinstein said that she was concerned that the people that came out to support the budget in previous years will either not come out at all or vote to not support the budget. Mr. Gilbert felt that the Board of Education made the wrong decision and the increases should have been spread out over time.

Ms. Weinstein opened the meeting up to the public.

Neil Horner- Catbrier Road- What concerns him the most is the sense of trust that he has lost in the Board of Education. At a BoE meeting on July 20, 2009, a motion was passed by the Board of Education that acknowledged that the administrators agreed to forgo the 2009-2010 increase of 2%. No one informed us that forgo meant deferred.

Lois Guberman- Catbrier Road- What she heard tonight was that the Board of Education did not think of the consequences. They need to be looking at the big picture and looking ahead. We cannot afford this.

Barbara Gross- Blue Spruce Circle- She said that she would like the members of the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance and the Board of Education to understand that this Town is not just about kids. Weston is her home and she did not come here to use Weston as an educational way station and that's what a lot of people are doing in this Town. She does not want to be taxed out of living in her home.

Hal Shupak- Autumn Ridge- We have an outstanding Board of Education and by large, they have done an outstanding job. However, there has been a lack of transparency. He agrees with the remarks made by the Board of Selectmen. As a member of the negotiating team for the Police Commission they have spent this past year negotiating a contract with the police. They reached an agreement with the police a month before going to arbitration. They will get 1 ¾% this year, 1 ¾% next year and 2% the year after that. The

police worked with them and understood where the community was and recognized it and was willing to go along with it. In the face of that, we see an increase of this size. The repercussions do not just affect the Board of Education or the taxpayers; it affects everybody who is putting in their time and effort in this community to make it the place it is.

Christine Lomuscio- Everyone in Town Hall “walks the walk.” Other educators in Connecticut were forced to take a two week furlough. The \$55,000 that was in the budget as unallocated should have been used for the social worker.

Steve Ezzes- Georgetown Road- Wanted to know if the impetus for even considering the increases in salary was based on the Board wanting to address it, or if the administrators asked for it? Mr. Schaefer said that Mr. Belair had started at a lower salary than the former superintendent and they thought that he had performed extremely well in the past two years. Last year they wanted to make an adjustment and they could not because of the horrific economy. So this year they made the decision to increase the salaries. Mr. Ezzes said that he now has to view the Board of Education budget process as suspect.

Hal Mathews- Treadwell Lane- He said that this Town is a victim of excess. There are four or five rooms in the kindergarten that are empty. The Board of Education is not tuned in to the economy. He feels there are six members of the Board of Education that are in denial.

Bob Machson- White Birch Road- The Board of Education is driving this Town. We need to know that they are making competent decisions. He said that he assumes that they [the administrators] were given the raises because they were going to leave. They [The Board of Education] should have gone to the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance, at a minimum, and said, “We have a situation and we need to keep these people and the only way we can do it is to kick it up \$25,000 a year.” Not going to the appropriate boards was not only a breach of trust that had developed in the Town, but it also is a procedural mistake.

Jane Anglim Young- Woods End Lane- Wonders why, knowing the reaction to the raises, the school board was so callus as to not have found a different location for the meeting last night. She wants to know what corporation in America or in the world allows an employee that is looking for a pay increase to be in the discussion, with an attorney, with those that are granting the pay increase.

Ellen Uzenoff (Vice-Chair, Board of Education)- Davis Hill Road- There were no threats to leave at any point by any personnel to any Board of Education member. The Board has deliberated for about three years on this issue. With the proposed adjustment in Mr. Belair’s compensation, he will be earning less than our superintendent earned in 2006-2007. Ms. Uzenoff said that there are no empty rooms lying around the schools; they are full and working

Harvey Bellin- Maple Street- Feels that all negotiations for contracts, salaries and pensions should be transferred from the Board of Education to the Board of Selectmen.

Nina Daniel- Goodhill Road- The decisions appeared to be made behind closed doors without regard for the public. There is a lack of fiscal responsibility and transparency. She requested that the Board of Selectmen send a formal resolution to the Board of Education requesting a retraction of the non-union increases. It is her understanding that the contracts have not been finalized. Mr. Schaefer said she can have a copy when it is finalized and that is in process.

Les Wolf (Board of Education member)- Blue Spruce Circle- Most people come to Weston because they value the school system. The school system is at the highest level that he has seen in almost 30 years. Dr. Pierson laid a great foundation and standardized management of the school system to a degree that the public was not aware of. After she left, Mr. Belair took the role, did double duty and proved his worth. The staff has earned their keep; the system could have been status quo this last two years. Through their effects and Board support we saved on an ongoing basis upwards of 3 to 4 million. That was over and above what we would have anticipated. Jerry Belair was told by the Board of Education if you perform, we will reward that performance.

Martha Diamant- White Birch Road- Ms. Diamant went thorough some of the headlines in the Weston Forum from April 2010 to current about the school system. Out of the resent graduation of about 200 hundred students only 4 went to Ivy League colleges. She is retired here and wants to stay.

Mr. Gilbert commented that it would be nice if the administrators felt like they were more in partnership with the Town which could then lead them to offer to take less of an increase.

Request for property tax refunds

Wendy Church	\$1,714.08
Kerstin Chrisman	\$470.25
Nissan Infiniti-LT	\$406.31
Toyota Lease Trust	\$267.41
Chrysler Financial	\$175.23
CAB East	\$169.33
Michael Magidson	\$131.30
Jayn Baker	\$47.98
David McDonald	\$23.36
Kenneth Kleban	\$14.69
Laura W. McDonald	\$19.16
Heidi Ryan	\$12.56
Total	\$3,451.66

Mr. Gilbert made a motion to approve property tax refunds in the amount of \$3,451.66 as listed on the August 5, 2010 agenda. Mr. Muller seconded and the motion passed unanimously

Open Items

Ongoing update

Grants- Gayle Weinstein- We applied for a STEAP Grant of \$178,000 for Revson Field. The grant is actually a 50% match, so the Boards of Selectmen and Finance would have to approve a supplemental appropriation to cover half that amount. We should know sometime in the Fall if we will receive the grant.

Tracy Kulikowski, Land use Director, has applied for a FEMA Grant to assist with some of the ongoing flooding problems at Deepwood Court.

Booster Barn- We are down to the last punch list and then we are ready for Health Department inspection.

Tickler file, discuss as updated

Reimbursement from State for school projects- Tom Landry- No News

Any other business to come properly before the meeting

Mr. Gilbert made a motion to add a discussion/decision regarding STEAP Grant Certified Resolution for the Weston Historical Society. Mr. Muller seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Landry said that a couple of years ago, we wrote and were granted a STEAP Grant for the Historical Society. We had to name a signatory and the Board named its then First Selectman, Woody Bliss. The Office of Policy & Management insist that we do the same resolution but with the current First Selectman.

Mr. Muller made a motion to authorize the First Selectman to execute the STEAP Grant Certified Resolution for the Weston Historical Society. Mr. Gilbert seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/approval of the minutes of the July 8, 2010 Board of Selectmen's meeting. Mr. Muller made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 8, 2010 meeting. Mr. Gilbert seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

At 10:20pm Mr. Gilbert made a motion to enter into executive session. Mr. Muller seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Executive Session- Union Contract negotiations update

ATTENDANCE: The meeting was convened at 10:20 pm in the First Selectman's Office by Chairman Weinstein, with Selectmen Muller and Gilbert present. Also in attendance was Town Administrator Landry.

DISCUSSION: The meeting was called to update Board members on the status of labor negotiations with the Town Hall, Dispatch, and Highway units. No votes were taken.

ADJOURN: At 10:45 pm, a motion (Mr. Muller, Mr. Gilbert second) to adjourn executive session and resume in open session passed unanimously.

ADJOURN: At 10:46 pm, a motion to adjourn the meeting (Mr. Gilbert, Mr. Muller second) passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted

Judy M. DeVito
Administrative Assistant
Approved 9/02/10