

**TOWN OF CROMWELL - BOARD OF FINANCE
SPECIAL MEETING
THURSDAY, MAY 21, 2009
CROMWELL TOWN HALL, ROOM 224/5
7:30 p.m.**

MINUTES AND RECORD OF VOTES

Present: Michael Gengler, Ed Maley Jr., John Flanders, Loraine Caruso, Joe Corlis, Jack Henehan, Alternate Jamie Kiefer, and Dan Kelly (arrival at 7:55pm)

Absent: Alternate Julius Neto

Also Present: Finance Director Marianne Sylvester, Janet Murphy, Public Works Eric Hood, Brett Trepanier, Tax Collector Sharon Ramsey, First Selectman Jeremy Shingleton

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Michael Gengler called the meeting to order at 7:43 pm

B. SEAT ALTERNATES

None were seated.

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion was made by John Flanders, **seconded** by Jack Henehan to approve the agenda. All were in Favor. *Motion Passes.*

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

1. Special Meeting, April 14, 2009

Correction: Page 1, Mr. Maley Jr. called the meeting to order at 7:13pm not a Public Hearing.

Motion was made by John Flanders, **seconded** by Jack Henehan to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of April 14, 2009 with the correction. All were in Favor. *Motion Passes.*

2. Regular Meeting, April 23, 2009

Motion was made by Loraine Caruso, **seconded** by John Flanders to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 23,2009. All were in Favor. *Motion Passes.*

E. CITIZENS COMMENTS

There were none.

F. REPORT OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN

Mr. Shingleton waived his report.

G. BUDGET REPORT

There were no comments.

H. REPORT OF THE TAX COLLECTOR

There were no comments.

Chairman Gengler opted to discuss the mill rate next.

J2. Discussion and decisions on setting the mill rate for fiscal year 2008-09 should the entire budget be approved.

The Board began by a discussion of the mill rate calculation worksheet. There was some discussion regarding the Assessor's concern with 9.6 million dollars in disputed court cases and whether it should be addressed. Mr. Maley Jr. expressed concern that the Assessor was not at the meeting to set the mill rate. It was noted that an emergency had come up for the Assessor. Mr. Maley Jr. remarked that ongoing cases have never been part of the mill rate discussion in the past. Chairman Gengler did not feel that they have ever netted a court case into the mill rate. The First Selectman expressed concerned with past practice. Mr. Maley Jr. stated that taxes are you owe what you owe and that the rate is not based on litigation.

A break was taken to double-check the numbers from the Assessor's office.

J7. Approve appropriation within the LoCIP Fund of \$62,000 for improvements to Willowbrook Road.

Mr. Hood described the improvements needed for the base of the road from the Bank to Rte 372. First Selectman Shingleton reinforced the need to work on this area. Mr. Maley Jr. asked if anything in writing was provided on this project. Mr. Maley Jr. stressed that he would not vote in favor in the future of any item without proper documentation to support the decision making process.

Motion was made by John Flanders, **seconded** by Loraine Caruso to approve the appropriation within the LoCIP Fund of \$62,000 for improvement to Willowbrook Road. All were in Favor. *Motion Passes.*

J9. Approve the following appropriations within the CNR Fund:

- i. Parks & Grounds: equipment storage building \$75,000

Motion was made by Loraine Caruso, **seconded** by Jack Henehan to approve \$75,000 for the Parks & Grounds: equipment storage building.

First Selectman Shingleton discussed the Library Study and the concern that the building is maxed out with parking. Mr. Shingleton explained that the BOS would be going to referendum in the fall with the Library and the Senior Center. Mr. Shingleton explained that many departments met within the Town and discussed what the current needs are. The Library costs would be going into the bonding. They currently have a very in depth set of plans to got to referendum with.

Mr. Hood explained the use of the Butler building and that this is the most inexpensive option to store equipment to maintain the life of the equipment they have and increase efficiency.

Mr. Shingleton explained that the BOS approved the bottom line but wanted changes to the items approved under CNR. There was some concern with the changes made by the BOS and how that affects the motions made by the BOF. There was discussion regarding the recommendations by the BOF. There was some discussion on what is the best option for the Senior Center and the Library and concern for where the monies come from.

Mr. Maley Jr. expressed that he was happy with what the BOF did last month. Mr. Kelly asked for clarification on the CNR process between the BOF and BOS.

Mr. Hood and Mr. Trepanier clarified what would be going into the shed.

Motion was made by Jack Henehan, **seconded** by Loraine Caruso to approve the funding of \$75,000 for the storage building given that the total amount of the disbursement of CNR is not to exceed \$423,960. (In Favor, Henehan, Caruso, Corlis, and Gengler) (Opposed, Flanders, Maley Jr.) *Motion Passes.*

Main Motion of approval of \$75,000 for the Parks & Grounds: equipment storage building. (In Favor, Henehan, Caruso, Corlis, and Gengler) (Opposed, Flanders, Maley Jr.) *Motion Passes.*

ii. Parks & Grounds: zero-turn 60" diesel mower (1) \$15,000

First Selectman Shingleton explained that another mower is about to break and expressed concern due to having additional personal but no mower.

Motion was made by Loraine Caruso, **seconded** by Joe Corlis to approve zero-turn 60" diesel mower (1) \$15,000.

Mr. Hood expressed that there is a lot of aged equipment and with extra fertilization and sprinkler systems that they need more powerful mowers. Mr. Hood explained that the fields are in constant use with the increased sports activities and they need good mowers.

The Chairman called for the vote on the motion. (In Favor, Henehan, Caruso, Flanders, Corlis, and Gengler) (Opposed, Maley Jr.) *Motion Passes.*

J2. Discussion and decisions on setting the mill rate for fiscal year 2008-09 should the entire budget be approved.

The correct Assessor's numbers were verified in the table.

There was some concern with the correct Senior Tax Abatement numbers from last year.

Motion was made by Loraine Caruso, seconded by Jack Henehan to set the Senior Tax Abatement no higher than last year at \$126,000. Motion was withdrawn.

Motion was made by Loraine Caruso, **seconded** by Jack Henehan to set the town's contribution to the Senior Tax Abatement program at \$115,000. All were in Favor. *Motion Passes.*

The Board discussed revenues from the State. No items can be confirmed at this time so the latest figures are the best numbers to go by.

Tax Collector, Sharon Ramsey described her areas of revenue and the items that she felt could be increased. The Board discussed where the monies come from and looked at previous years figures for comparisons.

Motion was made by John Flanders, **seconded** by Loraine Caruso to approve Tax Collector's revenues with Interest & Liens at \$135,000, Supplemental M/V at \$234,000, and Prior Years Taxes at \$180,000 and Misc. at \$400 for a total of \$549,400.

Mr. Henahan asked for the logic in changing the numbers when the Tax Collector gave different figures. Mr. Maley Jr. explained that they typically change the numbers. Mr. Shingleton provided an explanation regarding an adjustment within the budgets if the figures are not achieved.

The Chairman called for the vote. All were in Favor. *Motion Passes.*

The Board discussed Building Fees and Conveyance Fees. The Board analyzed Building Fees.

Motion was made by Edwin Maley Jr., **seconded** by Loraine Caruso to approve Building Fees at \$125,350. All were in Favor. *Motion Passes.*

The Board discussed investments. The Board discussed the final revenue figures.

Motion was made by John Flanders, **seconded** by Loraine Caruso to set the revenue figure at 6,416,898. All were in Favor. *Motion Passes.*

Motion was made by John Flanders, **seconded** by Loraine Caruso to set fund balance at \$271,750 and the collection rate at 98.75%. All were in Favor. *Motion Passes.*

Motion was made by John Flanders, **seconded** by Loraine Caruso to set the mill rate at 26.16. All were in Favor. *Motion Passes.*

Chairman Gengler called at recess at 10:07pm.
The meeting was called to order at 10:15pm.

J3. Discussion and action on Tax Collector's suspense accounts

Tax Collector, Sharon Ramsay gave the Board updated figures for these accounts.

Motion was made by John Flanders, **seconded** by Loraine Caruso to approve transfer of \$23,695.77 from Personal Property and \$40,123.40 from Motor Vehicle to the Suspense Book. All were in Favor. *Motion Passes.*

Ms Ramsay remarked that the old suspense list is being worked on with a collection agency.

I1. Approve \$44,080 appropriation from Sidewalk Fund fund balance for projects on West Street (at the intersection of Main Street) and Washington Road.

Mr. Shingleton described the project and how it would finish off Washington Road. The sidewalks would also be completed with the streetscape project near Main Street in front of the Bank and Police Station to Community Field Road. The bids are already in on the project. Mr. Maley Jr. stressed for something in writing and communicated the point why this was important as a Board when they made decisions.

Motion was made by John Flanders, **seconded** by Loraine Caruso to approve \$44,080 appropriation from Sidewalk Fund fund balance for projects on West Street (at the intersection of Main Street) and Washington Road. All were in Favor. *Motion Passes*

The Washington Road project has been in the works for about 2 years. Mr. Flanders said for the record he would believe it when he steps on the sidewalks.

J5. Approve transfer of \$132,000 from the General Fund fund balance to the LoCIP Fund fund balance.

The Board discussed the LoCIP Fund and that the Town has been using it and paying themselves back the past several years. The Coles Road project would receive no reimbursement. There was discussion on why the Coles Road project is in the LoCIP fund. Mr. Shingleton explained that the Town is responsible for additional costs incurred in the project. Mr. Maley Jr. was concerned where the monies are coming from. There was discussion that this should have been a CNR item and not in the LoCIP fund. The Board would like more information regarding the project and funds and responsibilities.

Motion was made by John Flanders, **seconded** by Loraine Caruso to approve transfer of \$62,000 from the General Fund to the LoCIP Fund. All were in Favor. *Motion Passes.*

Mr. Maley Jr. asked for clarification on the funds.

J6. Approve an additional appropriation within the LoCIP Fund of \$65,000 for the Coles Road Improvement project. This is to be used for supplemental design work, field changes, and miscellaneous construction as required by the State Department of Transportation agreement with the Town of Cromwell.

Mr. Maley Jr. discussed concern for inappropriate accounting decision to place the Coles Road funds in the LoCIP account and that the BOF was not involved or aware of the decision.

Motion was made by Loraine Caruso, **seconded** by Jack Henehan to table action on additional appropriation within the LoCIP Fund of \$65,000 for the Coles Road Improvement project. *All were in Favor.*

J8. Approve supplemental appropriation of \$7,500 from General Fund fund balance for a new recording system for Room 224/5.

Mr. Shingleton discussed the several phone calls he received regarding the malfunction of the system after a recent Planning & Zoning meeting. Clerk Jennifer Donohue spoke of the problem with the system and other issues that have consistently been an issue with recording.

Motion was made by John Flanders for \$7500 to approve supplemental appropriation of \$7,500 from General Fund fund balance for a new recording system for Room 224/5. Motion withdrawn.

Mr. Maley Jr. expressed concern with the cost of the microphones and whether the whole system needed to be replaced and to look for just a digital recording system to tie in.

Motion was made by Edwin Maley Jr., **seconded** by Loraine Caruso to approve \$2500 supplemental appropriation from General Fund fund balance for a new recording system for Room 224/5. All were in Favor. *Motion Passes.*

J4. Discussion and action on appointment of independent auditor for the Town of Cromwell for fiscal years ending 6/30/09, 6/30/10, and 6/30/11.

Finance Director Marianne Sylvester gave an overview on the Committee's process to come down to the final choices for independent auditor. Three of the companies met all the standards and they felt they could work with all three. The bids were not opened until after. CCR was the most impressive but came in at the highest with \$45,000 for the 1st year, \$46,500 the 2nd year and \$48,000 the third year. Blum Shapiro was the known choice and they came in the middle at \$41,500 for the 1st year, \$43,500 for the 2nd year and \$45,500 for the third year. McGladrey & Pullen came in the lowest at \$35,000 for the 1st year, \$36,600 the 2nd year and \$38,200 the third year. Ms Sylvester explained that OPM provided references for McGladrey & Pullen and there were 5 positive references. Cromwell was paying the least. Ms Sylvester felt confident that they would work well with the Town and her staff.

Motion was made by Loraine Caruso, **seconded** by Jack Henehan to approve McGladrey & Pullen for independent auditor for the Town of Cromwell for fiscal years ending 6/30/09, 6/30/10, and 6/30/11. All were in Favor. *Motion Passes.*

J1. Discussion and decisions on the budget based upon the results of the budget referendum. Should the budget not be approved, action to recommend a new budget to the adjourned Town Meeting.

No action.

K. BOARD OF EDUCATION- LIASON REPORT

Mr. Corlis informed the Board that he attend the BOE meeting on May 12th and reminded the BOE to attend the Town Meeting following their meeting and reminded them to vote. Mr. Corlis remarked that the Town Registrars had registered 26 new voters at the High School and encouraged them to vote.

L. CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Chairman Gengler thanked Finance Clerk Jennifer for her efforts and asked if anyone knew anyone who wished to clerk.

Chairman Gengler thanked the First Selectman for getting out the vote.

Chairman Gengler discussed State monies and how things are unclear.

M. VICE CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS-None

N. GOOD AND WELFARE-None

O. ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by John Flanders, **seconded** by Jack Henehan to adjourn the meeting at 11:15pm. All were in Favor. *Motion Passes.*

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Donohue
Finance Clerk