

**TOWN OF SOMERS
BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2006**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting was called to order by Chairman James Persano at 7:04 p.m. Present were: Thomas Mazzoli, James Persano, Michael Parker, Marilyn Pronovost and George Warner. Also attending: Treasurer Edward Sullivan and First Selectman David Pinney.

II. LIBRARY EXPANSION (BOND/BAN)

Shirley Warner presented a list of repairs and renovations needed at the Library over the next 2 to 3 years.

Bob Socha explained that the Library Expansion Study is seeking authorization for \$4.7 million. He explained that in October 2002 Mary Louise Jensen, Connecticut State Library Board Consultant, provided information regarding a 10,000 square foot addition to the library. Her information at the time was \$210.00 to \$220.00 per square foot for total project cost of \$2.47 million. She noted that there would be an additional 15% for final drawings and 4% escalation of the price per year from that time. The original cost in 1981 of about \$2.2 million would now be inflated to approximately \$4.1 million.

Mr. Socha extended the 4% escalation cost to the 2007-2008 budget year and added the R.S. Means construction cost estimate. With soft costs added in, the total figure comes to \$5.43 million.

They have a second estimate from Barbara Joslin of \$2.7 million for construction of an approximately 10,000 square foot addition, which does not include furnishings. She also gave the figure of 9-11% for construction costs and architectural fees, and 10% for preliminary drawings.

The estimated total cost for the project is \$4.7 million. This would include an additional 9,709 square feet and would provide a 20,000 square foot library. \$3.8 million will be the total cost to the town, once anticipated grants and fundraising of approximately \$0.9 million are factored in. However, final word on grant approval has not yet been received from the state.

Jim Persano asked if the committee ever determined the cost of demolishing the building and

constructing a new library. It was noted that if this was done, everything in the library would have to be stored and the town would be without a library for 1-1/2 to 2 years. The Committee responded that this option had not been considered.

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The Committee has had 2 information sessions, a number of mailings and is looking for a referendum date near the end of January. They are collecting signatures of public support at Webster Bank, Rockville Bank, at the Library and at the schools and have received about 250 signatures so far.

Mr. Sochia noted that the updated current cost of an existing 8,000 – 9,000 square foot library is about \$4 million, including site preparation.

Mr. Mazzoli noted that the Committee presented a total remodeling cost of \$1.7 million at a previous meeting, and he suggested that this figure also be presented to the town for consideration.

A motion was made by Michael Parker, seconded by George Warner and unanimously approved to send to referendum \$4.7 million in Somers Public Library additions, repairs and renovations.

III. BOARD OF EDUCATION UPDATE

Phil Roland from the School Building Project Committee noted that the Somers Elementary School \$16.8 million construction project has closed out on time and under budget by \$46,000.00. The high school project closed out on time and under budget by \$76,000.00. They are returning these funds to the Town.

Mabel B. Avery Elementary School is at 82% project completion. The project is expected to be finished in August 2007.

They are seeking approval to put back into the project two items cut from the original proposal in order to meet costs. The gym floor needs to be refurbished, as it has 35 year-old varnish on it. The committee would also like to re-introduce a set of bleachers. Each of these items would cost \$17,000.00, for a total of \$34,000.00.

Emery Zahner, who has been handling part time clerical work and FF&E work, was taken ill suddenly and may not be returning. They believe that they have found a way to cover his work and anticipate providing further information about the situation as it develops.

A motion was made by Jim Persano, seconded by Michael Parker, and unanimously approved to close out the Mabel B. Avery Elementary School and the Somers High School building projects and to transfer the remaining balance of the contingency into an account that is appropriate to the Treasurer and then propose to the Board of Selectmen a transfer of \$17,000 for the refurbishing of the floors and adding the set of bleachers.

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Tim Geib presented a handout showing the various transfers on which the Board of Education voted during the 2005-06 budget year.

He also explained that the BOE is simultaneously seeking to fill the positions of Superintendent of Schools, Director of Curriculum and Elementary School Co-principal. CAFE Search Consulting firm has been hired to help with the process. Superintendent application deadline will be the end of January, 2007, with a start date of July 1, 2007 and a salary range of \$125,000.00 to \$140,000.00. The Director or Curriculum position application deadline will also be the end of January, with a start date of early spring, depending upon the type of response received, with a salary range of \$95,000.00 to \$100,000.00. The elementary school Co-principal application deadline will be the end of February with a start date of July 1, 2007 and a salary range of \$95,000.00 to \$102,000.00.

A consultant will be meeting with various community groups intending to develop leadership profiles useful for establishing applicant criteria. The Board of Finance members will soon be receiving invitations to participate in a focus group the morning of January 22, 2007. In addition, the community will be given the opportunity to take part in sessions held on January 29th, both in the morning and in the evening.

The consulting fee for the Superintendent was \$13,400.00 and a contract for the 2 remaining positions is still being negotiated. It is estimated that the total consulting fee for all 3 positions of approximately \$20,000.00.

The 2006/07 budget appears to be under control and the 2007/08 budget is currently in process.

The Administration's budget will be presented to the Board of Education on January 8th. It is expected to be a difficult year. Fixed costs are starting to go over the 5% number now.

Tim Potrikus explained that the CIP process is underway and they would appreciate the Board of Finance considering a 4% to 5% increase to the budget.

Jim Persano noted that all of the carpet replacements and major items should be taken before CIP to ensure that the efforts of CIP and Board of Education remain connected.

David Pinney noted that the Board of Selectmen are interested in having a combined meeting with the Board of Finance and the Board of Ed in early January to review the

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current budget year, get an estimate of how things are lining up for the upcoming year, capital aspects, personnel and any other necessary issues.

IV. POST RETIREMENT-MEDICAL TRUST FUND

- GASBE has determined that a sum equal to the difference between the discounted premiums offered to retirees for their medical and dental and the normal premium needs to be accrued and accounted for in the town's financial statements. The town is being required to bond the accrued sum and interest is to be paid and collected. This is expected to begin in the 2008/09 budget year and will be approximately \$700,000.00 to \$800,000.00. The town has about 30 former Board of Ed employees who are currently using the medical insurance. In total, this will be approximately \$3,000.00 per year per employee which the town will need to reflect as a liability on the financial statements.

There is a state law that mandates that under the teachers' retirement plan the town is ultimately responsible for covering this cost.

V. FIXED ASSET SOFTWARE

The Treasurer reported that he is in need of new fixed asset software, which will cost about \$2,000.00. More information will be forthcoming on this.

VI. AUDIT REPORT PACKAGE FOR FISCAL YEAR 2007/2008

- The auditors who prepare the financial statements have come forward saying that the Town needs to prepare its own financial statements rather than having them prepared.

VII. CORRESPONDENCE - None presented.

VIII. SELECTMEN UPDATE

- Mr. Pinney explained the appropriation request included with this meeting's packet. The Board of Selectmen is seeking an appropriation of \$85,000 to the Capital Projects Account. These funds represent engineering services for flood analysis and application for revision of FEMA's flood map and, upon payment by the town, will be reimbursed from the \$500,000 STEAP grant.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service has an emergency watershed repair program to take care of some of the emergency repairs from the flooding about 18 months ago. The NRCS will cover 75% of the cost and the DEP will take care of 25% of the projects. The town has to commit to 25% to take advantage of the program. The town's responsibility on the first project will be approximately \$24,000.00.

The furnace at the maintenance building at Field Road Park is badly cracked and not repairable. They are still looking into options on that.

IX. MINUTES APPROVAL

A motion was made by Michael Parker, seconded by Tom Mazzoli and unanimously voted to approve the minutes of the November 20, 2006 meeting as written.

- **X. MINUTES CORRECTIONS** - There were none.

- **XI. BILLS, TRANSFERS AND APPROPRIATIONS**

- The following transfers and appropriations were deferred:

From Recreation transfers of \$2,386.96 from Acct. 90-98-770.3 (Summer Camp) to Acct. 90-98-508.8 (Summer Camp) and \$425.55 from Acct. 90-98-770.1 (Recreation SS) to Acct. 90-98-770.3 (Summer Camp) and reimbursement appropriations of \$16,000.00 to Acct. 68-10-765 (Recreation Self Support) and \$7,000.00 to Acct. 68-10-765 (Recreation Self Support).

From Public Works an appropriation of \$2,610.40 to Account 30-18-553.1 (Road Maintenance).

A motion was made by Marilyn Pronovost, seconded by Thomas Mazzoli and unanimously voted to approve a transfer request submitted by Capital Equipment of \$900.00 from Acct. 68-10-990.1 (Capital Reserve) to Acct. 68-10-376.2 (Fire Dept. AED) and an appropriation request submitted by the Selectmen in the amount of \$85,000.00 to Acct. 69-10-230.1 (Capital Projects).

XII. OTHER - There were no other items.

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XIII. ADJOURNMENT

It was the consensus of the Board to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Timmons, Recording Secretary

MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVAL AT A SUBSEQUENT MEETING.