

TOWN OF SOMERS  
BOARD OF FINANCE  
SPECIAL MEETING  
MONDAY, MARCH 5, 2007

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The special meeting was called to order by Chairman James Persano at 7:03 p.m. Present were James Persano, Michael Parker, Marilyn Provonost and George Warner. Also attending: Treasurer Edward Sullivan, First Selectman David Pinney, Selectman Kathy Devlin, Selectman Joe Tolisano, Assessor Pat Juda, Board of Assessors Co-Chair Bob Loubier and Town Clerk Ann Marie Logan.

**II. GOODWIN DRIVE – SEWER EXTENSION**

Jim Bottelio, Chairman of the WPCA, announced that the contract for the sewer project will go to a Ludlow contractor who offered the lowest bid of \$87,000. There were twenty-two other bids to do the work. The expected cost was previously estimated at between \$75,000 and \$100,000. Construction will begin in April and is expected to finish in mid-May.

The Town's General Fund will loan the \$87,000 to the Sewer Fund. The WPCA plans to award the contract at their meeting on March 6, 2007 and will decide the interest rate at that time. The rate is expected to be 6.1% which will include the cost of the loan administration expenses.

The work will be paid for by the fifteen residents affected. They will be assessed \$5,800 to \$6,000 and will have the opportunity to pay immediately or over a ten year period. The Sewer Fund will repay the General Fund as the money is received from the residents.

**III. BUDGET REVIEW MEETING**

**\*BOARD OF ASSESSORS**

Pat Juda and Bob Loubier discussed the proposed budget for the Assessor's office. All expenditures are expected to remain the same as the previous year except the Computer Service agreement.

Ms. Juda explained that each year Quality Data, who provides the computer services, gives the Assessor a budget letter anticipating the expenses for the upcoming year. Last year they failed to include \$1000 charge. The bill was paid but that amount was not included in the Assessor's appropriation for last year. This years increase is \$1200, however \$1000 of this is due to the omission from last year. The actual increase is only \$200.

The Assessor's Office also requests an additional \$1500 per year for Website access which will allow the public to view property records on-line. Currently, when an appraiser needs this information, they must come to Town Hall and the

1½ person staff of the office must locate the records, make copies, etc. Ms. Juda and Mr. Loubier believe that Website access will save the office much time and will improve service to the public.

### \*TOWN CLERK

Ann Marie Logan discussed her office's proposed budget. All items are about the same except Data Processing. The requested \$2,500 increase in Data Processing would include a search computer. The office has already copied their records dating back to 1986 to a CD in preparation for this computer.

Next year they intend to make the 1986 to 2007 Land Records available on the Internet from the Town of Somers site. This would allow the public to access the land indexes in search-only, so any revenues generated through copies of the records will not be lost.

### \*BOARD OF SELECTMAN

David Pinney introduced Joe Tolisano who was appointed Selectman after Ernie Allsup's resignation. Kathy Devlin introduced John Tshummi who assisted in developing the Selectman's budget.

Ms. Devlin discussed the Town's accomplishments and challenges. During the last three years they have been working on housing options impacting our senior citizens. This includes income assisted and age restricted housing and differential income level townhouses.

Currently twenty townhouses are planned for construction in town. The upper income level for occupancy would be up to 80% of the area median income but most of the housing would be for people with 25% to 50% of the area median income.

In 2005 ninety citizens received tax credits totaling about \$48,000. Last year around \$100,000 went to about 100 people. The tax credits enable elderly people to remain in their homes. David Pinney explained that state statutes allow up to 75% of the property owner's taxes with the maximum income for eligibility in the mid \$30,000 range.

Ms. Devlin moved to a discussion of the rapid repair of the roads after the flooding in October 2005. The work was performed quickly by our Town crew with much gratitude from the Town citizens. The money that was received from FEMA is being used to improve Battle Street and Stafford Road culverts to prevent future flooding problems.

A study committee funded by a grant is meeting to recommend improvements to Main Street in Somersville. The DEP provided \$2,000,000 for an environmental clean-up on Springfield Road.

David Pinney discussed the Town's top priorities. According to Mr. Pinney, three areas in the proposed budget are significantly different.

1. The elected Town Treasurer's position will become an appointed position when Ed Sullivan retires this year. Compensation for the position will need to be increased approximately \$20,000 to between \$70,000 to \$80,000.
2. A full-time Director of Public works will need to be hired when Everett Morrill and Ken Anderson retire this year. For this position the Town would like a person with an

engineering degree so the current \$20,000 expense for an engineering consultant could be merged into the Director's salary.

A Full-time assistant will also be needed to attend to the administrative functions. Currently there is a part-time assistant who cannot keep up with the backlog of recording mandates and inventories. The budget increase for these changes is \$80,000.

3. Joe Tolisano gave an overview of the Emergency Preparedness Plan. The current Plan is effective but showed two shortcomings when the plan was implemented.

Communications were a problem. To alleviate this the Town has a state contract for a reverse 911 system which includes a database, a computer and a GIS system to directly contact residents in an emergency. The system is funded by a Homeland Security Grant but would have a recurring cost.

The other problem is the unavailability of adequate shelter. The Plan calls for sheltering 10% of the population. This cannot be done at the High School, which is the designated shelter because it does not have a generator.

A 400kw generator is needed at a cost of about \$160,000 to \$180,000. For funding the project, CIP can provide \$50,000 and \$38,000 of the Homeland Security Grant can go to the generator project. Additional funding can come from reprogramming part of the school renovation fund. In the future there is a possibility that some of the power from the generator could be sold back to CL&P.

The money and the Grant for these projects must be obligated by April 15, 2007.

#### **IV. CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence.

#### **V. BILLS, TRASFERS AND APPROPRIATIONS**

A motion was made by Mike Parker, seconded by George Warner and unanimously voted to approve the following transfers and appropriations:

From the Fire Department a reimbursement appropriation of \$3,292.85 from surplus to Personal Protective Gear Acct. (20-16-574.1).

From the Police Department a transfer of \$2,500.00 from Acct. Overtime Salary (20-17-503.3) to Acct. Vehicle Fuel (20-17-531.8).

From the Transfer Station a transfer of \$1,500.00 from Acct. Recycling (30-34-588.1) to

Acct. Maintenance & Operations (30-34-589.6).

From the Sewer Fund a reimbursement appropriation of \$87,000 from General Fund Surplus to Acct. Somersville Construction (61-10-390.1).

The Board of Finance recommended to the Board of Selectmen \$87,000.00 be appropriated from surplus to the Somersville Assessment Fund for the Sewer Expansion project on Goodwin Drive at a Town Meeting.

## **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

Jim Persano moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m. and it was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Reed, Recording Secretary

MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVAL AT A SUBSEQUENT MEETING