

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MARCH 26, 2004  
WORK SESSION MINUTES  
"APPROVED"**

**Present:** Thomas D. Hartnett, Chair; George F. Dillon, Jr., Vice Chair; John L. Saball, Clerk; Peter S. Cunningham (left at 9:17 a.m.), Member; Virginia C. Wood, Member (arrived at 9:06 a.m.); Administrative Officer Jean E. Kitchen and Kathleen Newell, Office Assistant.

The meeting was called to order at 8:10 a.m.

**Work Session with Recreation Department**

Ms. Liza Judge, Recreation Director, Recreation Commissioners Ms. Kerri Strauss and Mr. Neil Cotoni met with the Board of Selectmen to discuss the current financial situation. Also present were Mr. Stuart Shuman, Mr. Win Nordblom, Ms. Val Jenkins and Mr. Jon Strauss.

Mr. Strauss addressed the Board stating he wished to show his support for the Recreation Department, stating for the amount of people serviced by Recreation the amount budgeted was not outrageous.

Ms. Strauss stated she had compiled four (4) budgets (handout enclosed herein). The Board reviewed the budgets. Discussion ensued relative to the membership fee/registration fee. Ms. Jenkins stated she was unaware they were charging a membership fee and using it in the revolving account.

Mr. Hartnett stated the Finance Committee had voted 6-3 to cut the budget in half from FY03 and in effect have six (6) months to show they can operate properly. Mr. Dillon stated there are still three (3) months left in this year to show an improvement.

Discussion ensued relative to the Kids Kick Soccer program. Mr. Cotoni stated if sponsors could be found for the t-shirts there wouldn't be any expenses with the Kids Kick. Ms. Jenkins stated if there were no expenses they would be charging the taxpayers for a deficit. Mr. Cunningham stated the need for a DOR representative to explain. Mr. Jenkins stated, "Everyone around this table needs to suck it up and write off the deficit to free cash and make the Recreation a department without a revolving fund."

Ms. Jenkins stated the Commissioners should know what the costs are per program including advertising and decide if the program should go forward. Mr. Cotoni stated the Commissioners would not go into any program without knowing the cost of the program thirty days before the start of the program. Mr. Cotoni further stated the need to start a "Friends of" society, however if the Recreation Department will not be in existence next year it can't be done.

Mr. Cunningham asked Ms. Judge if she would be able to do what was being asked. Ms. Judge stated it would depend on input from the Commissioners. Ms. Judge asked how she is going to staff the programs. Mr. Cotoni stated he did not think the clerical work should be more than 20% of Ms. Judge's time. Ms. Kitchen asked Ms. Judge if she adjusted her hours to accommodate busier times i.e. 20 hours one week and 40 another not to exceed a 30-hour average. Ms. Judge stated she was unaware she could do that. Ms. Jenkins stated for budgeting purposes she should average 30 hours per week. Mr. Saball asked if school kids could possibly help out to supplement the workload.

Mr. Nordblom stated they were making a good start, however there is a need of monthly reporting to the Board of Selectmen, the Town Accountant and the Chair of the Finance Committee; checks need to be turned in weekly. Mr. Nordblom stated he would like to see checks and balances; the Commissioners need to sign off on anything spent. Mr. Nordblom further stated the Recreation Department has a responsibility to the voters, why should someone trying to pay their real estate taxes subsidize Recreation, and he would like to see more commitment. Mr. Cotoni agreed the turnover should be every week and he stated his desire to meet with Ms. Jenkins. Mr. Cunningham stated he agreed there needed to be tighter checks and balances, but does believe there is a need for the Recreation Department.

Ms. Jenkins asked for a clarification whether there would be no revolving fund as of July 1, 2004. Mr. Hartnett stated that had not been finalized.

*Mr. Cunningham moved that the Recreation Department be handled as a Town Department as of July 1, 2004. Seconded by Ms. Wood. 4 in favor, 1 against (Wood).*

Mr. Dillon stated all receipts between now and the end of the fiscal year will determine the actual deficit.

Discussion ensued relative to the classification of help. Ms. Kitchen stated there should be one classification for seasonal or part-time help for all departments. Mr. Nordblom suggested Recreation submit a new budget. Ms. Wood stated Recreation can budget on the higher end and then if the Personnel Committee says no they may have money left over. Mr. Cotoni asked when the Board wanted the budget by. Mr. Hartnett asked if it could be received by Monday. Mr. Hartnett stated it all hinged on what happens at the meeting Monday evening.

## **ARTICLES**

Mr. Dillon discussed the costs of repairs to the Prescott School building and stated the School Committee was to submit information prior to the meeting. Ms. Kitchen stated Mr. Estabrook had offered to help them. Ms. Wood asked Ms. Kitchen to call the schools and call Mr. Estabrook to find out what he knows about the school.

Discussion ensued relative to the Conservation Fund. Mr. Nordblom suggested zero now and review the article in the fall. Mr. Hartnett stated it could be dangerous to have a motion from the floor and suggested \$50,000. Mr. Bill Miller suggested paying for Gibbet Hill through the Conservation Commission. Ms. Wood stated she was the liaison and would approach the Conservation Commission.

Mr. Hartnett stated he had spoken with Mr. Masalehdan regarding the Gilson Road property. Mr. Masalehdan had stated there could be access granted to the land, however Attorney Lennet said no. Mr. Hartnett stated Mr. Masalehdan had said he does not want the Town to get that land, and will fight for it.

Ms. Kitchen asked Ms. Wood if the CPRC was going to pull the CPA article. Ms. Wood stated they would decide in May.

Ms. Kitchen asked if the Landfill Capping would be addressed in the fall. Ms. Jenkins stated she was waiting for a decision. Ms. Wood stated theoretically there is \$200,000 in the landfill account, which would pay for the articles that have been discussed. Ms. Jenkins stated she didn't know about it being left over or capital stabilization. Ms. Jenkins stated there is \$240,000 left if the fence is \$22,000 and will probably have \$225,000. Mr. Dillon asked how Ms. Jenkins had arrived at that figure. Ms. Wood asked Mr. Dillon what he was showing for a balance. Mr. Dillon stated he did not have a final balance that was why he was asking. Ms. Wood asked if the fence expense was coming out in the fall. Ms. Kitchen stated the fence was coming out of this year's expenses. Ms. Wood stated she would contact Mr. Jamie Greacen. Ms. Kitchen asked Ms. Wood to mention bills for landfill capping. Ms. Wood suggested closing out landfill capping account at this Town Meeting. Ms. Kitchen stated she had emailed CDM stating the need for the bills. Ms. Jenkins stated the money has to go back to stabilization.

Ms. Kitchen asked how the Board wanted to address the Library budget. Mr. Dillon stated an effort had been made to negotiate to add \$5,000. Ms. Wood stated Mr. Cunningham was going to speak with Owen Shuman. Mr. Nordblom stated we shouldn't be increasing the hours unless the Library is willing to cut something else. Mr. Dillon stated he would like to cease calling them Sunday hours. Ms. Jenkins stated the Library is paying a premium for hours worked on Sunday.

Mr. Dillon stated the repairs for the Prescott School would be approximately \$325,000 and if paid out of the landfill capping excess will possibly be \$225,000 towards the total, leaving a \$100,000 balance. Mr. Hartnett proposed bonding the project and stated one benefit would be skipping the expense out of FY05 to FY06. Mr. Dillon submitted a proposed budget for the Prescott School.

Ms. Wood asked to have a representative from the Lowell Transit Authority to come in and explain the services provided. Mr. Hartnett stated he would contact Mr. Paul Routhier and ask him to come in.

*Mr. Hartnett moved to adjourn at 10:32 a.m. Seconded by Mr. Saball. 4 in favor, 1 absent (Cunningham).*

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
John L. Saball, Clerk

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*Respectfully submitted,*  
Kathleen Newell, Office Assistant

Date Approved: April 26, 2004