

The Board of Finance held a special meeting on August 26, 2009 in the Media Center of Windham High School, 355 High Street, Willimantic, CT 06226

Members Attending: Barbara McGrath, Jay Handfield, Hanna Clements,
Peter McDevitt, Leo Santucci, and Jeffrey Smith

Chairman, Barbara McGrath called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Public Comment

Teri Santucci commented on the senior center. She supports the bonding issue for the senior center.

Katherine Eves of Willimantic and outgoing president of the Windham Textile Museum commented on repairs that are needed on the museum building.

Jamie Eves of Willimantic and vice president of the Windham Textile Museum commented on the Windham Textile Museum maintenance repairs that have been done. An unexpected repair of the sprinkler system is needed.

Approval of meeting minutes

Upon a motion by Peter McDevitt, seconded by Leo Santucci to accept the meeting minutes from July 22, 2009.

The motion passed unanimously with Hanna Clements and Jeff Smith abstaining.

Discussion and possible action regarding the appropriation of \$5,000,000 for the Senior Center Project and Bond Authorization of \$5,000,000 to finance such appropriation

Tom Pesce presented some information on the McSweeney Senior Center and also on the current debt service of the Town.

Katherine Eves spoke on the necessity of a senior center. The senior center should remain a regional center because of funding issues. A small cities grant and other grants will be applied for. Since there is no guarantee they will receive the grants, they are asking for the full funding of the senior center project. There are four possible sites for the senior center: Jillson Square, Willimantic Lumber and Coal, Access Agency, and one other possible site. The number of seniors in Town is at the highest it has ever been and it is only going to increase.

Jeff Smith questioned if any architects are involved?

Katherine Eves replied that no architects are involved but they are looking to the University of Connecticut and Windham Technical School architectural programs for assistants. The seniors have provided a drawing for what space is needed.

Leo Santucci questioned what the lead time would be for the project?

Katherine Eves replied as soon as the committee finds out about the fourth location, they will vote on a location, submit it to the economic development committee and then to the Board of Selectmen. They will begin talking to an architect as soon as the site is determined.

Leo Santucci questioned if \$5,000,000 is sufficient?

Katherine Eves replied they have looked at some costs and feel it is adequate.

Leo Santucci questioned when will people be using the center?

Katherine Eves replied in nine months to a year.

Barbara McGrath voiced a concern about not having a State budget and what impact it will have on the Town budget. Adding \$5,000,000 in bonding to the budget will add a half mill increase to taxes. If we were not able to do this for the November election, it could be done in April with the budget referendum. There would be more information available at that time. The senior center is on the capital improvement list.

Katherine Eves replied the other senior centers are social only. Windham provides services for other Towns including health and dental services. People from other Towns do come to the senior center.

Barbara McGrath asked if anyone had spoken to small cities?

Jean de Smet replied that she has spoken to them and they are only funding regional senior centers.

Katherine Eves replied they are keeping track of people coming in to utilize the senior center.

Barbara McGrath questioned if they could wait until April?

Katherine Eves didn't want to speak for the committee, but the costs will go up.

Peter McDevitt read an email from Janice Fournier and commented on the senior center.

Jay Handfield commented the budget for this year was tight and can we afford a senior center. Can renovations be done to existing buildings?

Katherine Eves replied they cannot renovate and adding on to the existing senior center would eliminate parking.

Jeff Smith commented the senior center is an important thing to do but we need more information.

Jay Handfield questioned if the senior center has an operating budget?

Katherine Eves replied they do not.

Barbara McGrath voiced a concern about appropriating money for the senior center and would like more information.

Upon a motion by Peter McDevitt, seconded by Jay Handfield to table the appropriation of \$5,000,000 for the senior center until more information is available.

The motion passed unanimously.

Upon a motion by Jay Handfield, seconded by Jeff Smith to move item number ten on the agenda to item number five.

The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion and possible action on appropriation for Windham Textile Museum repairs

Tom Pesce discussed the repairs that are needed at the Windham Textile Museum. The funds for the repairs could be eligible through LoCIP and that funding is 100% reimbursable.

Upon a motion by Hanna Clements, seconded by Leo Santucci to recommend to the Board of Selectmen approval of the appropriation of \$30,000 from the undesignated fund balance of the General Fund for the following:

Repairs to Windham Textile Museum	\$30,000
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The appropriation may be expended on legal, architectural, engineering, construction and other expenses related to the project. The Town intends to reimburse the General Fund for expenditures pursuant to the appropriation to the extent of the proceeds of grants under the Local Capital Improvement Program (Connecticut General Statutes Chapter 116b, as amended)(LoCIP) received with respect to the project. Unless otherwise determined by the Board of Selectmen, no portion of the appropriation shall be expended until such time as the Secretary's designee has approved the application for a grant under LoCIP for eligible costs of the project.

The motion passed unanimously.

Town Controller's Report

Town Controller's report was presented by Tom Pesce.

An update was given from information received from CCM on the State budget. Many programs have been canceled or funds have been withheld until the State budget is passed.

All of the LoCIP projects recently approved at the Town meeting have been approved by the State.

The auditors have been in to do preliminary testing and will return in November.

The actuarial valuation has been started.

We are closing out purchase orders from the prior year.

The pool renovations at Windham High School have been completed.

We have requested additional quotes for the stage curtain at Windham High School.

The Historic Resources Inventory Survey Grant is out to bid and should be awarded in October. The project is to be completed by August 2010.

The State may withdraw funding for the Housing Overlay Zone Grant.
We will meet with the Board of Education on moving to a self insured dental plan.
The police department did not receive one of the grants they applied for and are on a waiting list. They did receive a grant for police overtime and a police vehicle. The police contract has been settled and we will be looking at the payroll projections.
We are in negotiations with MEIU for the department heads.
The status of the current year is very tight and we need the State budget to pass.
The resolution for the purchase of the plow truck needs to go back to the Board of Selectmen to have an amendment done to substitute the vendor name.
There was a water department cd with a bank that closed. A claim was put through FDIC and the funds have been reinvested. A notice was received today and another bank has closed that the water department has a cd with. Another FDIC claim will be filed.

Discussion and possible action on any General Government 2009-2010 budget transfer requests

Upon a motion by Jay Handfield, seconded by Hanna Clements to transfer \$17,000 from 50706-283 to 50120-280 \$10,000 and to 50104-103 \$7,000.

The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion and possible action on any Willimantic Service District 2009-2010 budget transfer requests

There were no budget transfer requests.

Discussion and possible action regarding an energy consultant

It has been decided to use an RFP to select an energy consultant. The goal is to select someone over the next couple of months. The consultant will do an initial assessment on Town buildings and develop a RFP for a performance based contract. This will involve recommendations of energy savings that will pay for what would normally be funded through capital projects.

Discussion and possible action regarding submitting grant for energy efficiency

The deadline to apply for the grant is September 1st but the guidelines have not been set. Once the guidelines are available, the grant application will be submitted.

Jeff Smith questioned if the schools would be included in the energy efficiencies?
The schools were done a couple of years ago but if there is something that was missed, it could be included.

Any other business appropriate to come before the BOF – discussion only

Jeff Smith questioned why the School Business Manager does not come to the meetings? Barbara McGrath replied the Board only has bottom line responsibilities for the school budget. The Board of Education does not usually attend the meetings. The Board of Education does issue a monthly report to Board members.

Barbara McGrath welcomed Jeff Smith to the Board.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Upon a motion by Jay Handfield, seconded by Hanna Clements, the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Attest: _____
Karen Williams, Clerk