

WINDHAM FIRST TAXING DISTRICT

Monday January 10, 2011

Monthly Meeting Minutes

Call to Order:

President Diane Rayhall called the monthly meeting of the Windham First Taxing District to order at 1901 hours.

The following members were present: Diane Rayhall, Jan Mott, Elaine Rogers, Ted Colwell, Mark Herrick, and AnnMarie White.

Approval of Minutes:

Elaine Rogers moved to accept minutes dated December 6, 2010; Mark Herrick seconded the motion, all in favor.

Treasurer's Report:

Jan Mott gave the treasurer's report and read the following information:

Account Balances:

Checking Account Balance:	\$ 3,473.63
Savings Account Balance:	\$ 57,336.54
Grant Match Reserve:	\$ 48,912.00
Grant Improvement Reserve:	<u>\$111,335.90</u>
Total:	\$221,058.07

Bills to Pay:

Chronicle	\$ 144.53
Kepple & Morgan	\$ 1,500.00

Elaine Rogers moved to accept treasurer's report, seconded by AnnMarie White, all in favor.

Public Comment:

Greg Job, President of WYO presented budget report. He asked the board of directors for \$12,800.00. Diane Rayhall asked him if he was asking for the same amount as last year. He replied 'Yes'.

Update on Three Windham Volunteer Fire Departments

Elaine Rogers stated that there was no update to be reported. Diane Rayhall asked if she met with the three Chief's on their budgets at their last meeting. She replied 'Yes she saw their prepared budgets'.

Guilford Free Library / Windham Free Library

David Light stated the budget breakdowns for the libraries were absent. He made an appeal to the Board. He proceeded to provide background to the Board. Both of the libraries are at a fiscal crisis and if they don't receive their additional funding, they would have to power down in June.

It will be the 80th anniversary of the Guilford Free Library and the 115th anniversary of the Windham Free Library. In the last five years they've seen their budgets fluctuate. Both libraries took a hit two years ago when the town reduced their funding by \$10,000 and they lost \$17,000 in revenue in the last two years. The libraries are responsible for taking care of the historic structures and artifacts. They take money toward staffing, and in the past five or six years they have had carryover money, but have nickel and dimed as needed. At the end of this fiscal year in June, they may have \$2,000 in cash. They may decide to go into their investments. They have always kept investments in reserve. They have about \$100,000 in them. The Hunt Office had repairs totaled about \$6,000 that came from their cash reserve. The \$17,000 hit really hurt the libraries. The libraries belong to the town; he made an appeal to the Windham First Taxing District. What they need to keep going for next year, they need an infrastructure, and appealed for \$35,000. They asked for the normal \$15,000 + \$15,000 + \$5,000.

The town has a new process for the libraries grant application. Support is 10% of original budget, and contains wording that they may not get. Last year their budget was \$54,000, 10% is \$5,400. They did end up getting \$8,000 from town. If they ask for \$15,000 from town, they'll need to issue a plan showing this is 10% of their original budget. This will generate a lot of questions from the town.

Ted Colwell got up to speak on behalf of the Guilford Library. He offered an historical perspective. Forty years ago the Fire departments were getting \$3,000 from the town and it suddenly stopped. The Fire Departments met and chose not to close operations. Charlie Dondero and David Light got together and came up with the idea of the Taxing District. They brought the idea to the town; it was voted on and accepted. Forty years ago, all the departments operated with trucks purchased second hand. Now their operation is in Class 5 rating set by the insurance company. The insurance rating for the Willimantic Fire Department that costs ten times more is also a Class 5 rating. Ted thought the town had a heck of a bargain with the volunteer fire departments. Now the libraries are seeking the same treatment from the town as the fire departments received forty years ago, but unlike the fire departments, the Board of Finance gave them a warning. The libraries are required to provide a service to the town's people and anyone with a library card. They have to put in an application in January to the town. Elaine Rogers stated as a member of the Board sees the libraries coming into the district and should say goodbye to the town. Mark Herrick stated the libraries must pick where they have to go. The funding would be truer here, and it may be the time to be district owned. Anita Sebestyen, a member of the Board of Finance stated that the notice David Light received was from the town's Human Services and not from the Board of Finance. Dick Herrick stated that if everyone feels strongly for the District to take on the libraries they should come to the meeting and vote. Afton Seal, librarian of the Guilford Library gave an overview of the services provided by the library. It has six public computers, and most nights they are full. People apply for jobs and they get over 500 people to come in when they are open 21 hours a week. The library provides programs each week. 25% of circulation is to Willimantic and to the State of Connecticut. John Cazowski stated both of his children went to Windham Center School and visited both libraries when they started to read.

David Light stated the Guilford Library opened 21 hours a week and the Windham Free Library opened 24 hours a week. Kids come from Windham Center North Windham and South Windham; they are exposed to history and excitement of having a library card. The potential of the libraries is coming together. The Hunt Office's outside repairs are good for four or five years, and the inside has needs, but it is a gem. They want to report to the Board like the Fire

Departments. They provide mutual aid. He asked the town residents to step up and do the right thing. Paul Siege, the treasurer of the Windham Free Library, stated there is no space for fundraisers and they lack a bathroom. If they don't have a funding plan by 6/30/11, of the \$101,000 of investment funds, \$57,000 earmarked for preservation of the building. They get revenue in August and September from the Jazz in the Park, there's not a lot of wiggle room. AnnMarie White asked for budget breakdown for the additional request. Paul said he will provide it. Dawn Niles asked if still going through town for funding. David Light said "Why not?" Dawn said they should be treated as the same as the Fire Departments. David Light will leave it up to the Board to decide.

Ted Coldwell said he would have to see what the Windham First Taxing District does before going to the town.

Dawn Niles said if Board decides to pass the \$35,000 funding request, the libraries would be strongly obligated to withdraw request from town.

Lloyd Niles stated the libraries are a true interest in the District and to not put them in dire straits. Diane Rayhall said the libraries were asked by the town to come in with a budget amount.

Fire Departments Report

NWFD- Chief John Wylie read the December report. Diane Rayhall asked Mike Licata, the Fire Marshall about the Magnet school. He said they sent him a list of minor changes. Diane said she'll draft a letter with Chief John Wylie about the changes. John stated there was a problem with the fire hydrant. Paid by the town or project, and if there will be an alternate hydrant. If to lose the alternate, won't be a problem.

Chief Wylie read the budget breakdown. It came to a 3.1% increase.

A new line item was added for new gear replacement. On the 10th year from the manufacturer's date on gear, it will need an inspection. If gear is not inspected and someone got hurt, the insurance will go up. Chief Wylie continued to say they have 25 sets of gear and cannot have gear sit on shelves because that is taken into account. For a full head to toe gear it costs \$3076 for one man per quote from Firemax. Much of their gear purchased in 2004 and in ten years they go to inspection. If the gear passes inspection, they get inspected very year after that. The Fire Departments are trying to look ahead and plan for when the mandate takes place in 2012.

Diane asked Elaine Rogers if she was at the Chief's meeting and if this item came up. Elaine stated she was at the meeting and thought it was a good idea because it kept firemen safe, and we need to do.

WCFD – Chief Lloyd Niles started with saying there was an accident with a truck during the last snowstorm and no one got hurt. North Windham Fire Department also had an accident when going into a parking lot, they hit a truck. Chief Niles contacted Mike Gorgler to inquire about the Driving Training Program because of the two recent accidents. He went on to read the December report. He mentioned they are tracking the calls from the nursing homes and will do a 4 month study.

Josh Niles, the President of the department, presented the budget. He noted the current budget was not officially voted on by the department. Chief Niles wanted to clarify on the new gear line item that there is two levels of gear, one for a firefighter and one for a non-firefighter who doesn't enter a building.

SWFD - Chief John Chapman read the report for the month of December. Their budget was presented by Mike Licata. He stated their building was 40 years old and that they need to upgrade the windows and painting is needed. Diane Rayhall said she would rather have the

department reduce their building maintenance budget item and ask for the money from the contingency fund from the Board. Diane went on to say she was looking for a 2.5% to 3.5% increase. A 6% increase is too high and she didn't want an increase in the mill rate. Mike Licata said he would go back to department and discuss the change. He'll get three quotes for the window cost.

Old Business

No old business to discuss.

New Business

Diane Rayhall asked for volunteers to form a committee for Board of Directors slate. Victor Rayhall and Dick Herrick will form the committee. Diane will put an ad in the newspaper for the open position of a director.

Public Comment

David Light wanted to thank the Board for a kind ear and thank the Fire Departments for their support. In February he'll have the library budgets and if anyone has questions they can contact him at Dlight@snet.net. He said good decisions are based on good information.

Diane Rayhall said to be on the safe side the libraries should meet the town's process. He'll know in February if Board approves taking over them and then they could withdraw from town. Dawn Niles said on April 2nd is the Windham Center Fire and Ice Ball. The Heartsafe Committee wanted to remind the Fire Departments they volunteered for CPR courses in February at the festival. She'll have flyers at the next meeting. All schools including St. Mary's have AED's. The libraries are next. Suggest they look at classes and will look at liability issue. Sunday January 16, Tip a Politician fundraiser at Fred's to benefit the No-Freeze Shelter. John Chapman noted a zero increase in the switchboard budget.

Adjournment

Motion made by Mark Herrick to adjourn at 2026 hrs, seconded by Ted Colwell, all in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
AnnMarie White
Acting Clerk