

WINDHAM FIRST TAXING DISTRICT
Monday February 7, 2011
Monthly Meeting Minutes

Call to Order:

President Diane Rayhall called the monthly meeting of the Windham First Taxing District to order at 1905 hours.

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

Approval of Minutes:

Elaine Rogers moved to accept minutes dated January 10, 2011; Ted Colwell 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:	\$ 52,109.26
Savings Account Balance:	\$ 57,336.54
Grant Match Reserve:	\$ 48,912.00
Grant Improvement Reserve:	<u>\$111,335.90</u>
Total:	\$269,693.70

Bills to Pay:

Chronicle	\$ 131.19
Town of Windham	\$ 8,209.97

Elaine Rogers moved to accept treasurer's report and pay the bills, seconded by Ted Colwell, all in favor.

Public Comment:

None

Update on Three Windham Volunteer Fire Departments

Elaine Rogers stated that there were no new updates to be reported.

Guilford Free Library

Librarian Afton Seal read the budget report. Diane Rayhall asked her for the final amount the library is looking for in April. She stated they applied through the Town of Windham on January 18th for \$15,000. She had heard back from the town that their package was complete. Diane asked if they received the full amount from the Taxing District would they pull their application from the town. AnnMarie White commented that they should go for the town's money since it was stated at the last meeting that many Willimantic residents use the libraries services and it

shouldn't be on the townspeople to pay their whole budget. Diane Rayhall stated that an agreement was made at the last meeting that the library wouldn't take money from both the town and Taxing District. Diane Rayhall asked Elaine Rogers if she could vote on the Guilford Free Library's budget. Elaine stated she could vote on this library.

Windham Free Library

David Light stated the library was put in a fiscal crisis when the town didn't give them the \$15,000, and only received \$7,000. Guilford Library has gone into their cash reserves, and this is difficult to recover. \$15,000 and \$5,000 would keep his head above water. Diane Rayhall asked for clarification of amount requested from Taxing District. Is it \$35,000? David Light asked if the Taxing District gives the \$35,000 do they have to give away any money given from the town/ Diane said 'Yes'. The agreement was the library would bow out of their town application. Diane feels this is double dipping if fully funded by the Taxing District. Diane thinks the town will give between \$5,000 and \$8,000 to the libraries. In April if Taxing District and people vote on the \$35,000, then they could call the town and bow out.

Tom White stated as a taxpayer; if the libraries received any money they could get, they should take it. Diane stated the libraries wanted to be fully funded by the Taxing District. Elaine suggested to remedy this is to say we are not fully funding the libraries, just increasing their budgets.

John Wylie said maybe this is a good idea to do since the economy was bad and if times get worse, this could help the Taxing District in future years.

Diane said to take out words 'fully funded'. David Light mentioned he was looking for help to maintain what he currently has. It's become stressful to him not knowing what they'd be getting and he's like to be back where they were. Diane clarified that they libraries were requesting \$35,000 for both from the Taxing District. David Light said he was not being greedy. Diane said where she stood was to take the libraries under the First Taxing District.

Lloyd Niles asked as a tax payer if they get the \$35,000 and \$5,000 from the town, could he operate. David stated he could operate with less stress. Ted Colwell stated one thing he would consider were raises for the staff. They haven't received one in 2 or 3 years. David Light stated the library will operate on what they are given and recognize the hard-times. The \$6,000 for the Hunt building hurt, they used cash reserves. He also stated the Windham Center program is operating on half of the \$8,000. Windham Center kids go to the Guilford Library for weekend and after school programs that Windham Free can't do. Tom White said the Board of Finance looks at what the Windham First Taxing District gives and they decide from there what to cut from them. Diane Rayhall asked the libraries again if they were requesting \$35,000 each. They said 'Yes'.

Windham Youth Organization

Diane asked WYO, the \$12,800 amount is not going any higher than last year's amount. They said it wasn't and they could function on this amount.

Tom White stated they have a good program out there. Diane Rayhall asked Greg Job when he was going to put up signs. He said with the snow he hadn't put them up yet. Diane offered her lawn.

Fire Departments Report

SWFD- Helene Chapman stated only change to their budget was that they reduced the building maintenance amount and will request the difference from Grantee Improvement fund. Tom White asked why the money was being allocated to this fund. He had talked to Chief Niles and Chief Wylie about this. He asked if the fire departments take money for windows, or doors, would a taxpayer want to recoup the money if fire department building was sold. Diane stated their lawyer said the taxpayer's have no say. Tom White would like to see a clarification if the taxpayer has a stake in the building or not and would like to see it in writing. Ted Colwell said to look up the work 'grant'. This fund was setup to give the money freely. Diane said she would contact their lawyer. The past-president set it up with the understanding that the request had to go before a town meeting and then to a vote to the people. She was not sure if it is in writing. Lloyd Niles said to look at previous meeting minutes to get the original language on how the fund was setup. Diane stated that WYO, the libraries and fire departments are treated the same and each has access to the grant money. It's not a capital improvement fund. Elaine said they could not use 'Capital Improvements' since they didn't own the buildings. Diane will get the clarification.

Helene went on to read the fire department's report.

WCFD – Chief Lloyd Niles noted that at the last snow storm their canopy that covered trailers collapsed. There was minor damage and the insurance adjuster was there to look at. Diane asked if Lloyd was present when the adjuster came and he was not, but member Randy Clark was. Peter Stockel of Wilcox and Reynolds came out and took pictures. The tech rescue trailer is now at South Windham.

The previous accident with the engine will be fixed next week. Diane asked him if the budget was staying the same. He said 'Yes, with a 3.5% increase. Chief Niles went on to read the December report.

NWFD - Chief John Wylie noted that he increased the fuel amount in his budget. He didn't want to remove the gear because it would be hardship and will be a rollover factor. Diane asked if he will create a separate line item for this. He replied it would be on his side and not the treasurer's. He will keep track of the item separately for the Board. He went on to read the December report. He saw Tom DeVivo and didn't get the information on the Magnet school he was looking for. Diane Rayhall said she got the answers. AnnMarie White asked what SCBA stood for in his report. It means Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus.

Old Business

Tom Pesce provided a check to the Taxing District. Diane told him the town was not in compliance with the District. He replied that since the budget referendums didn't pass, they money was not coming in as it should which put the town behind in their payments.

New Business

Diane Rayhall met with the town, Tom Pesce and Shane & Navratil to discuss the workers comp that the town paid, but hadn't billed the District for.

Diane Rayhall said for the Magnet School hydrants on Tuckie Road and Carriage Lane; we need a letter from the Town Fire Marshall, Michael Licata, stating that fire hydrants need to be in these locations and the state will pay for them. Tom DeVivo and Diane will draft up the letter and give it to Mike Licata to sign. It must come from the Fire Marshall. Chief Wylie said the blasting will be starting and he wanted this done.

Diane Rayhall asked each Chief how many fire hydrants were in their areas. She was told the following: South Windham – 72, Windham Center – 4, North Windham – Chief Wylie was not sure, he stated around 100.

Diane was speaking with Jim Hooper of the Willimantic Water Works, and he requested the Windham First Taxing District buy red flags to put on fire hydrants so they would be more visible to anyone who is plowing snow. Chief John Wylie stated the first e-mail from Jim Hooper to all the Chiefs to clear the snow around the hydrants, and the second e-mail went to the business owners to clear them. Diane spoke to Brad Wojick briefly about this issue. She said the District needs to be proactive and give flags to Chiefs to put on hydrants. Chief John Wylie said the flags are \$80 each. Diane Rayhall said if someone's life was dependent on these flags, and it was a onetime cost for the flags, then it would benefit the District to do this. Chief Wylie asked her if Jim Hooper will allow the Chief's to put the flags on the hydrants and when they do the hydrant testing, who will put the flags back on. Diane said she would go before the Public Safety Committee and ask.

Chief Wylie went on to ask who was responsible for Route 6 hydrants, the state or town. He can't get a straight answer from Jim. Per Neal Beets there's no town ordinance. Who enforces the clearing of the hydrants on private property? The Chiefs believe the flags are a good idea, but the manpower is an issue. You have to dig around the hydrants at least 4 feet for the hoses. Chief Wylie heard it was the responsibility of the Water Department and Jim Hooper wanted the Chiefs to clean around the hydrants. Tom White stated he saw the city fireman clearing around the hydrants in the city. Tom suggested going to the commission and tell them you want to put them up and if the commission approves of them, it should be done by the water department and they oversee Jim Hooper.

Lloyd Niles asked the Board when the tax abatements are due from the fire departments. Helene Chapman thought they need to go to Board in March. Diane Rayhall thought the paperwork came from Wilcox and Reynolds, but Helene clarified the length of service information came from the departments.

Diane Rayhall asked Jan if he ran the numbers from the grand list to give to the town. Jan said if add the \$35,000 for each library and the fire departments estimated increases, the percentage will go to 1.62 which equates to \$13 per \$100,000. Historically such an increase was not a significant change. He also stated it depended on the grand list. He heard from Neal Beets there was a town wide increase.

Public Comment

David Light asked Dawn Niles to speak at the libraries regarding the Heartsafe committee. He said Dawn did a good job of clarifying the risks because there were concerns of liability issues. He asked Lloyd Niles when the CPR classes were. Lloyd gave him the dates and times.

Ted Colwell and David Light were getting the libraries together to socialize. They reached out to the Willimantic library and the social will be held March 5th.

Tom White asked Diane Rayhall if she was approached by Bunny Lescoe on relocating voting places. Diane heard from Dawn Niles that there's a possibility of having South Windham residents vote at the Elks Club instead of the Windham Center Fire Department. There would be a separate set of machines setup for South Windham residents at the Elk's. Diane was going to contact Bunny to get a clarification. Diane didn't want the voting area moved from Windham Center. It only gets congested every four years.

Tom White stated that the back gates at the Elk's will be open for the additional people coming to vote for easy access.

Diane said since she had Tom White at the meeting she stated she hadn't heard back from the trustees at the Elk's about Heartsafe. Tom had met with the trustees and they told him after they had met with their insurance company their answer was 'No' to Heartsafe. They thought the liability was too much of a risk to them. Tom went on to say a new Board of Trustees will be taking over shortly and thought Heartsafe could try again with them.

Adjournment

Motion made by Elaine Rogers to adjourn at 2029 hrs, seconded by Ted Colwell, all in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
AnnMarie White
Acting Clerk