

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

Call to Order:

President Diane Rayhall called the monthly meeting of the Windham First Taxing District to order at 1902 hours.

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

Approval of Minutes:

Elaine Rogers moved to accept minutes dated February 7, 2011; Mark Herrick seconded the motion, Peter Bruscato abstained, rest in favor.

Treasurer's Report:

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

Account Balances:

Checking Account Balance:	\$ 67,647.31
Savings Account Balance:	\$ 57,411.02
Grant Match Reserve:	\$ 48,912.00
Grant Improvement Reserve:	<u>\$111,335.90</u>
Total:	\$285,306.23

Bills to Pay:

WSFCA-911 Dispatch	\$ 29,489.00
So. Windham FD	\$ 51,234.00
No. Windham FD	\$ 54,418.00
Windham Center FD	<u>\$ 56,756.00</u>
Total	\$191,897.00

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

Public Comment:

Dawn Niles, Chairperson of the Heartsafe Committee, stated they held successful CPR classes during the Chocolate Festival in February. There were 35 attendees at the Windham Center firehouse, and up to 18 in attendance at North Windham. They had to cancel classes in South Windham because of ice. They had a total of 75 residents who participated. She wanted to thank the fire departments for their help and support. Windham Center Fire Department will be having their Fire & Ice Ball on April 2nd at the Elks club. Contact her if you plan to attend.

Update on Three Windham Volunteer Fire Departments

Elaine Rogers was unable to attend their last meeting, so she had nothing to report.

Windham Free / Guilford Free Library Budgets

Diane Rayhall heard that the Town of Windham were going to propose \$5,675 in funding to Guilford library. Dawn Niles asked the Board if the town reduces the amount further, could the library's amount be changed in the District. Diane said at the time of the annual budget meeting in April, if the proposal is not accepted, then the amount could be changed. Mark Herrick confirmed that this has happened before at a past annual budget meeting. David Light asked Diane, when does the town notify the libraries of final funding amount? Diane said it could be months before the referendum is passed. She explained that all the budgets for the town will be submitted to the Board of Finance by March 15th. The Board of Finance then sends the budget to referendum. As of right now the Windham Free Library is set to get \$5,469 and the Guilford Library is to get \$5,675 from the Town of Windham. David Light was unaware of this. Diane stated that both libraries are set to receive \$35,000 from the District's proposed budget.

Windham Youth Organization

WYO is set to receive \$12,800 from the District's proposed budget.

Fire Departments Report

SWFD- This year's budget has a 3/1% increase, amounting to \$132,084. They could not attend due to an emergency so there is no report given.

WCFD – This year's budget has a 2.5% increase, amounting to \$144,900. Chief Lloyd Niles stated they are working with State Representative Sue Johnson on an EMT bill. This bill will allow someone to take an EMT course for just Connecticut, not national. He asked people to call Sue to endorse this bill. It's house bill #5642. She can be reached at 1-800-842-1902 or at susan.johnson@cga.ct.gov. Her assistant is Mary Alice Hughes. He went on to give the February report.

Director Peter Bruscato asked Diane if he could go back and ask a question regarding the libraries. He wanted to clarify that it's proposed that each library will receive \$35,000. She stated 'Yes'. He said this was a 100% increase. David Light said the reasoning was they had depleted all their monies to keep afloat. Peter replied he is sympathetic to their money problems, and he supports the libraries, but thought the increase was pretty excessive. He is trying to be fiscally responsible to taxpayers. Peter is concerned if this is the right time to take on the libraries.

NWFD - This year's budget has a 3.6% increase, amounting to \$140,946. Donald Potter stated that it's been 2 years since there was a Social Security cost of living increase. He is fighting to save dollars to pay taxes. He questioned why the fire departments getting an increase when he can't get one. Diane stated the budgets were here in December to review and they could have another meeting in March. Chief Lloyd Niles stated one reason of the increase to the fire departments was the new line item for gear.

Chief John Wylie went on to give his February report.

Diane asked the Chief in the final site plans for the Magnet School, if the fire hydrants were placed where he requested them. The Chief said 'Yes' with the exception of two. One was in the front of the building and he wanted to know how the water is to come into the building.

Old Business

Diane will attend the Planning and Zoning meeting to keep us informed of how the Magnet School is progressing. Nominating Committee noted current WFTD Directors are staying, but still missing one. There will be a notice in Chronicle on March 15th. If anyone knows of someone, they should contact Vic Rayhall or Dick Herrick.

New Business

The Directors were given the proposed District budget. Jan Mott went through the budget items. David Light asked if the increase to the budget was all due to the libraries. Jan was going to look at the calculation. David asked if questions by public at the April meeting, will the Board carry the ball, or will the libraries answer the questions. Diane will have him and Ted Colwell respond to any questions that may come up. She recommended making the answers short and sweet, no more than a three minute response. David Light was concerned that the public will come down hard on the libraries. Mark Herrick wanted to make an educational point that the libraries were original paid half from the town and half from the District, now it will be a shift in the funds that the District will be picking up the full amount. The library staff is concerned that there will be a big out cry from the public. Elaine stated when fire departments went through this for the first time; the meetings were 3 to 4 hours long. Dawn Niles suggested maybe having a fact sheet to handout to public. Diane stated if public was concerned they should have come to the December budget meeting and stated their opinions.

Chief Wylie asked if grant match fund account could be decreased to make up some of the funds. Jan Mott said the increase to the budget was broken down as 76% from libraries and 24% from the fire departments. Diane asked if decreased fund to \$6-\$7,000 for each department, if that would be alright. They agreed to this. She also asked about improvements. North Windham's were done and they could hold off on an exhaust system. Windham Center's President Josh Niles said they had no projects coming up. They may request site plans for a new building in the future. AnnMarie asked if any money could come out of the Contingency fund. Jan stated that fund has to be held at a certain amount and couldn't be reduced. Mark Herrick suggested cutting back the Matching Grant Fund and cutting the Improvements Fund in half. Both WYO and the fire departments were OK with these cuts. Mark Herrick made a motion to decrease the Matching Grant Fund to \$5,000 and to reduce the Grantee Improvements Fund to \$25,000, resulting in a savings of \$35,000. Elaine seconded the motion, and all in favor.

Diane asked Jan to recalculate and it came to 1.6% increase to overall budget.

Diane wanted to thank the South Windham fire department on their well attended 100 year anniversary dance that was held on Saturday.

Public Comment

Dawn Niles stated she was concerned with a proposed legislative house bill #59-53. The bill proposed by Kevin Ryan says that you would be able to register your vehicle even though your town taxes aren't paid. She asked everyone to contact our State Representative Susan Johnson and ask her to vote 'No' on this bill. Windham collects much of its taxes when the residents have to register their vehicles. This would have a terrible impact on our town. Dawn also noted a couple of upcoming meetings- a CHRO meeting on March 21 at 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. in the courtroom of the Town Hall to discuss the complaint process and anti-bullying in schools, and on March 30 at 7:00 p.m. a town hall meeting with Governor Malloy.

Lloyd Niles heard that there have been consolidation discussions between the Town Manager and the Town Council. He went on to warn the Board to be prepared because this information has gotten back to Bill Rood.

Diane Rayhall stated she had the opportunity to discuss with State Representative Susan Johnson about the process of moving the town line in North Windham. She was told by Susan that this process didn't go through the legislature, but through the Town Charter.

Diane also discussed with Chief Bolduc the cost of Willimantic police coming to the town. The Chief said initially it would cost \$300,000 for three officers because it was \$98,000 per officer for required training. The second year it would drop to \$70,000 for each officer. Diane said she was going to approach Town Councilman Kevin Donahue since he represented the town.

George Gillette said when the Taxing District started, they were told by the state that there was no way the city could come in and take over the District. He suggested someone should check the records. Diane was going to talk to Sue Johnson and do research on how the town would become their own district. Jan Mott thought it would be better to go through the legislature for this change.

Dawn Niles reminded everyone that you have to take a town vote to disband the district. The Town Council could change the charter because we don't have police in the town to protect the citizens. Diane said the Magnet School would be the key to get the police out in the town.

Windham Heights would lose their trooper if the Willimantic police come out to the Windham's. Diane stated it was important to get Windham representation on the Charter revision committee.

Adjournment

Motion made by Elaine Rogers to adjourn at 2025 hrs, seconded by Mark Herrick, all in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
AnnMarie White
Acting Clerk