

WINDHAM FIRST TAXING DISTRICT
Monday April 4, 2011
Monthly Meeting Minutes

Call to Order:

President Diane Rayhall called the monthly meeting of the Windham First Taxing District to order at 1900 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:

Mark Herrick moved to accept minutes dated March 7, 2011; Ted Colwell seconded the motion, rest in favor.

Treasurer's Report:

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

Account Balances:

Checking Account Balance:	\$ 61,530.43
Savings Account Balance:	\$ 57,449.16
Grant Match Reserve:	\$ 48,912.00
Grant Improvement Reserve:	<u>\$111,335.90</u>
Total:	\$279,227.49

Bills to Pay:
None

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

Public Comment:

Diane Rayhall noted each person will have three minutes to speak. Murphy Sewell from Windham Center said if everyone votes on everything, he hopes everyone is happy with the final mill rate. Jim Hanfield asked if people can ask questions before they vote. Bill Rood said he was against the budget. He was upset that it didn't come in with a zero increase. He went on to say the homes in Windham were not worth what they were being taxed on. It is tough times on everyone and the cost of living going up. Wages are not going up and the budget needs to be trimmed down.

Discussion of Proposed Budget

Diane Rayhall asked if there were any discussion of the proposed budget, there was none.

Vote on Guilford Smith Memorial Library Budget \$35,000

Motion made on the floor by Bill Rood to cut 10% from their budget, seconded by Jim Handfield.

Diane Rayhall explained to crowd how to vote by signifying by raising hands. Vote was: 6 in favor, 50 opposed, 1 abstained; motion fails.

Elaine Rogers made motion to vote on Guilford Smith Memorial Library budget for \$35,000, seconded by Ted Colwell. Vote was: 50 in favor, 7 opposed, 0 abstentions, motion passed. Jim Handfield asked what the \$35,000 was for. Librarian Afton Seal gave the breakdown of the budget.

Vote on Windham Free Library Budget \$35,000

Motion made on the floor by Bill Rood to cut 10% from their budget, seconded by Jim Handfield. Vote was: 6 in favor, 50 opposed, 0 abstentions; motion fails. Dawn Niles made motion to pass the \$35,000 budget, seconded by Michelle Duprey.

Bill Rood asked how this library came up to same budget amount as Guilford Smith. He asked if both libraries had same necessities. David Light explained how they came up to the \$35,000 budget. Vote was: 58 in favor, 3 opposed, 0 abstentions; motion passes.

Vote on Windham Youth Organization Budget \$12,800

Elaine Rogers made motion to accept the \$12,800 budget, seconded by Lloyd Niles. Jim Handfield asked for an explanation of WYO's budget. The President of WYO Greg Job explained the breakdown. He stated the ball fields off of Mullen Hill Road were being used for approximately 300 kids. The kids are from Windham, Willimantic, Scotland and Chaplin. Victor Rayhall stated WYO has been around for 50 years and encouraged people to look at the fields to see what's been done. Vote was: 64 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, motion passed.

Vote on Windham Center Fire Department Budget \$144,900

Dawn Niles made motion to accept the \$144,900 budget, seconded by Murphy Sewell. Diane Rayhall asked if any discussion. Barbara McGrath asked if there were any increases. President Joshua Niles explained the \$4,000 increase for gear. Chief John Wylie of North Windham Fire Department gave more detail for the increase in the fire gear. Bill Rood asked if the \$4,000 was the cost of one set of gear. John Wylie stated the \$4,000 cost was for 2 sets of gear. Bill Rood asked how many firefighters he had to cover, and said if he had more than two he would have to take it out of their regular budget. Chief Wylie said they took some out of the regular budget to compensate. Jim Handfield commented on how he wondered how volunteer firefighters did their job 25 years ago. Chief Wylie said things were simpler back then. Mrs. Nate of Windham Center asked Chief Wylie if each department were asking for two sets of gear for \$4,000. He replied there were and this was to be an on-going process. Paulie Oakgel stated she lives in Windham and when she needed an ambulance it used to come from Scotland, now they come from Willimantic and are slow to respond. Chief Lloyd Niles stated the average response time for the ambulance from Willimantic is 5 minutes. Elaine Rogers comments on the budget by saying the firefighters put their lives on the line and it is up to us to keep them safe. Murphy Sewell made a motion to combine the three fire departments budgets and vote on all three. Diane Rayhall stated this motion cannot be made because it goes against the WFTD bylaws. Vote was: 66 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, motion passed.

Vote on South Windham Fire Department Budget \$132,084

Murphy Sewell made motion to accept the \$132,084 budget, seconded by Jim Hanfield. No discussion brought forth. Vote was: 66 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, motion passed.

Vote on North Windham Fire Department Budget \$140,946

Randy Clark made motion to accept the \$140,946 budget, seconded by Murphy Sewell. Chief John Wylie stated besides the gear cost increase, their insurance went up by \$400 and they increased their fuel budget item. Randy Clark mentioned that medical items were going to become an issue. The fire departments supply them and their expenses. Vote was: 65 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, motion passed.

Vote on General Budget

Elaine Rogers made motion to accept the general budget, seconded by John Wylie. Jim Handfield asked if anything could be cut from the budget to bring the overall total down. Diane Rayhall explained the board did reduce some line items at the previous meeting to bring the increase down from \$19 to \$11 per 100k assessment. Bill Rood asked if the 911 dispatch had been discussed. Could we save money if dispatch moved to another district? Chief John Chapman explained that the QV Company was trying to get Windham, but the current dispatch station just recently upgraded and are trying to get towns back to them. Chief Lloyd Niles said they could save money by moving to another district, but you wouldn't get the service you get now, and will put town residents in jeopardy. George Gillette stated QV is a good center, but they have gotten so big that things get lost. Our current dispatch knows the hotspots, QV doesn't. If QV takes over they get all our gear. Sue Bromley is employed at the Willimantic Police Department and feels if the dispatch center were to be transferred to QV it will hurt. QV doesn't know the dynamics of the city and town and they won't have the personal touch. QV's dispatch center is 1.3 miles from the Rhode Island border. Mike Rohand stated he is a member of the Scotland and Windham dispatch centers. He stated the QV dispatch center has 43 fire departments, 14 ambulances, services over 100,000 people and had over 43,000 911 calls last year. In Willimantic, there is 45 square miles to cover and they had over 52,000 non-emergency calls last year. If move to this dispatch center that's close to Rhode Island border it could be a major public safety issue. The current dispatchers know people and places, they know history of buildings. It's not unusual to make 15-20 arrests at the college area. They have stopped 11 suicides in the cell blocks, would QV be monitoring these cell blocks? The current dispatch center recently received one million dollars for upgrades and they are putting more effort to get surrounding towns back. The cost is roughly \$17 per person to keep this service in town. Michelle McClure stated her husband was at a chimney fire and she needed to contact him right away for an emergency. The dispatch center quickly reached him for her. Susan Herrick stated the current dispatchers know many people in town and it's important to have the personal service they provide. John Postemski stated he used to be the President of the dispatch center and they had 8 departments. He noted that you won't get the personalized service with QV and that Windham and Willimantic need to stick together. Randy Clark commented that initially the cost might be cheaper, but in 6 months the prices will go up. Diane Rayhall stated that she, Tom Pesce and the three fire chiefs met with the town to let the town know they weren't in favor of moving to QV. Vote was: 61 in favor, 2 opposed, 0 abstentions, motion passed.

Vote on Mill Rate .00160

Elaine Rogers made motion to accept the mill rate of .00160, seconded by Joshua Niles. Jim Handfield asked why the newspapers said it was going up .01 and not the .00160 as stated. Diane Rayhall replied she told the newspaper the incorrect amount. Vote was: 56 in favor, 2 opposed, 1 abstention, and motion passed.

Recommendation of Nominating Committee

Victor Rayhall stated that the nominating committee consisting of Victor Rayhall and Dick Herrick had the list of nominations for the Board of Directors to present to the President of the WFTD. The list was the current Board of Directors with the addition of Sandra Millerd of Windham Center. Ted Colwell read the names. Lloyd Niles made a motion to accept the nominations, Dick Herrick seconded it. Randy Clark made a motion to close the nominations, Victor Rayhall seconded. Vote was: 41 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, and motion passed.

Election of Officers and Directors

Diane Rayhall made a motion to nominate AnnMarie White as secretary, Peter Bruscato seconded. Jan Mott made a motion to close nominations, seconded by Ted Colwell. Vote was: 43 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, and motion passed.

Swearing in of Officers and Directors

The Board of Directors was sworn in by Attorney John Zaccaro.

Appointment of Attorney Nicholas Keeple

For the 2011- 2012 year the cost would be \$3,000. Elaine Rogers made motion to accept the appointment, seconded by Mark Herrick. Vote was: 42 in favor, 1 opposed, 0 abstentions, and motion passed.

Authorization of Bank Signatures

It was stated that Jan Mott, Ted Colwell and Diane Rayhall were authorized for bank signatures. John Wylie made a motion to authorize the three Directors named for bank signatures, Lloyd Niles seconded. Vote was: 38 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, and motion passed.

Authorization of Auditor from Shane, Navratil, & Co

John Wylie made a motion to authorize auditor Shane, Navratil, & Co., Randy Clark seconded. Vote was: 38 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, and motion passed.

Old Business

None

New Business

John McGrath stated that at some point it would be nice to have someone look at the Windham Center Green and note which house is what because there are no street signs there. Joshua Niles commented that this would be helpful for the fire department and police and these roads were tight for the fire trucks.

Public Comment

Jim Handfield asked when the WFTD meetings were. Diane Rayhall stated they were the first Monday of each month except July and August, and were posted at the town hall and on the website. Bill Rood stated that saying only \$11 to pay for taxes is not a lot, but it is for him. He said to be in business is not fun anymore. Peter Bruscato clarified how the Willimantic ambulance service responds to 911 calls and how long it takes since a Windham resident commented on their response time being slow.

Adjournment

Motion made by Ted Colwell to adjourn at 2038 hrs, seconded by John Wylie, all in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

AnnMarie White
Secretary