

REPORT ON SELECTMEN'S MEETING OF April 26, 2011

Prepared by Rick Freeman

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(2). These are not official minutes -- -- just notes taken by me. Official minutes will be available from the Town Office and will be posted on the Town web site and at the Town Office and other places following Board approval at the next meeting.

(3). Reports of earlier meetings and some supplementary materials are available at my Town Meeting website:

www.singingbridge.net

THE MEETING: At the start of the meeting there were five members of the Financial Advisory Committee (FAC) and one member of the public present.

The minutes of the meeting of April 12 were approved. Then the Selectmen turned to hearing the recommendations of the FAC for the budget for the fiscal year 2011-12. Since this was by far the most important and interesting part of the meeting, I will devote most of this report to this matter. Before turning to the proposed budget itself, let me describe the budget making process as I understand it.

Process: For the past two months, the FAC has been working with Town Committees, Boards, and Officers to obtain their budget requests for the coming year. In this process they were guided by instructions from the Selectmen laid out in a memo in January of this year. A key part of those instructions was: "In an effort to minimize property tax increases and to ensure that all Town monies, regardless of the source, are utilized as efficiently as possible, we will continue to use a zero-based budgeting process." The results of this process were presented to the Selectmen during the meeting.

After these changes are incorporated in the proposed budget, it will be presented by the FAC at budget hearings on ~~May 17 (School budget) And May 16 (Municipal budget)~~. Any changes as a result of the Hearings will be incorporated in the budget presented to the Town in the Warrant for the Annual Town Meeting scheduled for June 18.

The Budget: The proposed budget is in a document of some 30 pages and is too long and detailed to be covered in full in this Report. I will summarize what I think are the key points:

- Overall, the proposed total requests for spending are lower for the coming year compared to the current year by a little more than \$250,000 (- 5.7%). But the total amount to be raised by property taxes is higher by just more than \$680,000 (23.8%). This is largely because of a substantial reduction in revenues from sources other than the property tax. This reduction has several sources: less tuition revenue at the School, reduced use of funds from reserve funds (eg., Emergency Vehicle Reserve Fund, Five Island Fire Station Reserve Fund), and no borrowing for the 3 year Paving Project that is being completed this year. The net effect of this is that the projected mil rate for 2011-12 is 7.563, up 18.7% from the current year mil rate of 6.370.

- The Proposed School budget is up by a little more than \$160,000. The biggest increases are in

Administration - Special Education, Instruction - Secondary (more students), and Instruction - Special Education. There are substantial decreases in the following categories: Co-Curricular/Athletics; Improved Instructional Services, Student Assessment, and Technology. The School Committee is still looking for ways to reduce costs. So the numbers presented at the School Budget Hearing and at Town Meeting may be different.

- The Town-Owned Property Management Board budget is up by a little more than \$33,000. But this reflects the fact that the Board was unable to carry out the second phase of its three year planned program of repairs to the Town wharf during this year and is carrying that work over into the next fiscal year. Actual spending for the current fiscal year will come in substantially under budget.

- The Harbor Committee budget is proposed to increase by 44%, primarily to increase the contribution to the Harbor management Reserve Fund from \$1,000 in the current year to \$4,500 next year. This is intended to make possible the eventual purchase of a boat for the Harbormaster's use.

- The Road Maintenance Budget is unchanged at \$91,500. One member of the FAC proposed increasing this line by \$5,000 to assure protection of the recent investments in road quality resulting from the three year paving project. Bill Plummer advocated reducing this line by \$10,000. After discussion, the Selectmen decided unanimously to make no change to the proposed budget line.

- The category Health, Recreation, and Social Services includes contributions to the Patten Free Library, Georgetown Community Center, General Assistance, Richards Library, and local charities. The FAC proposed funding this at \$48,310 a decrease of \$500 primarily because one charity had not submitted a request for the coming year. Bill Plummer moved to cut the entire category except for \$4,000 for General Assistance. The motion failed for lack of a second. Bill then moved to cut the proposed contribution to the Patten Free Library. This motion also failed for lack of a second. Finally Dolores Pinette moved to reduce the contribution to the Patten Free Library from \$15,861 to \$6,000 so as to fund free library cards for children only. This motion passed 2 to 1 with Geoff Birdsall voting against it.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Mary reported on correspondence received. For a complete listing of this correspondence, see the Meeting Agenda at:

<http://www.maine.gov/local/towninfo.php?t=166&p=1123>

The most interesting item was:

- A letter from Peggy Kapisovsky and Lisa Reese requesting Selectmen's help in getting Fairpoint Communications to provide high speed internet service to all Georgetown residents. On a 2-1 vote (Plummer opposed) the Selectmen agreed to have Geoff and Mary prepare letters to Fairpoint and others.

OLD BUSINESS:

- On the Aleada Pinkham house, there is a letter from the Pinkham attorney with information on the deeds. The full set of deeds has not been received. And the Town is still waiting for Bill van Tuinen to

visit the house and update the valuation.

- Regarding insurance coverage for the Town in the event that a private individual spills fuel at the Town Wharf, Mary has a letter from the insurance agent stating that the existing policy does not cover it and that the Town probably could not find such coverage at a reasonable cost. There was some discussion of the possibility of prohibiting wharf users from carrying fuel across the dock, whether and ordinance change would be required, and potential problems in enforcement of such a prohibition. The matter is to be referred to the Town-Owned Property Management Board. Also it was suggested that the Harbormaster be asked to see how other towns with public wharfs deal with the problem.

- Regarding an earlier inquiry from a property owner about whether his property was one lot or two lots for purposes of a proposed sale of part of the land, Mary has verified that there are deeds showing that the land was purchased as two separate lots. She was directed to do further research to determine if there were subsequent deeds showing that the lots had been combined.

OTHER ITEMS: Draft revisions to the Building Permit Ordinance and Shoreland Zoning Ordinance had been submitted by the Planning Board. There was concern about one provision in the Building Permit Ordinance. But it was decided to present both ordinances in their present form to the Ordinance Hearing on May 4 and deal with possible changes in the language after the Hearing.

The Selectmen then went into executive session to discuss a general assistance matter.

The next meeting of the Selectmen will be at 7 PM on Tuesday, May 10 at the Town Office.

Prepared and distributed by Rick Freeman