

**March 30, 2004**  
**Board of Finance Meeting with**  
**Board of Selectmen**  
**Marlborough Town Hall**  
**Marlborough, CT**

Chairman Mike Gut called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Present were Mike Gut, Cathi Gaudinski, Bill Secord, Brian Breeden and seated for Joseph LaBella was alternate Donna Mosher. Pasquale Amodeo was also present as well as Selectmen Nancy Bader, Sharon Reiner and Bill Black. Barbara Murray and Nancy Dickson were also present as well as Tom Giola, Jill Ogushewitz, and Peter Hughes.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Helen Scharfenberger of 174 West Road, representing the neighbors on West Road, read a letter requesting the Boards of Selectmen and Finance to honor a commitment the Town made to the people on West Road to border the ballfield on West Road on two sides by burms with bushes and trees. She said this should restore some of the privacy and peace they have lost by having the ballfield in their neighborhood. She also said she was concerned about safety because during game time small children play close to the road without supervision, in the winter months the snow blows across the road causing poor driving conditions, parking along the side of the road and balls flying from the field are other concerns. A shield of trees and bushes will cut down on these safety issues.

**AGENDA:**

Town Clerk Nancy Dickson spoke about filming and indexing in the Clerk's office. The present computer is outdated. As of July 1, 2004 the cost of copying documents will be \$3.30 per instrument, maximum surveys will be 50 cents per line, trade name titles, statistics and probates also will be 50 cents per line. With the new program, the Town will be able to do its own scanning, create its own books, and by signing a contract for a four-year period, the cost will be \$1,194 per month. The Town will have to do wiring and install a dedicated phone line. Considering that the volume of records has increased by nearly double and is expected to continue due to new subdivisions being built in the Town said Ms. Dickson, this system is more efficient. The Town would be able to create their own indices which would eliminate the cost of sending documents to Atkins. The State requires microfilming to be stored in a separate area than Town Hall. Hardware upgrades will be provided. The browser station will be in the vault to provide access to anyone. If this is approved, installation will begin as soon as possible.

Mr. Gut questioned Ms. Murray about trends in prior levies in regard to tax collections. Because Ms. Murray now has an assistant, she can strive for higher percentage of collections on the current Grand List to avoid adding extra at the end of the fiscal year. The amount she has collected already for this year is \$70,000 therefore she anticipates collecting less for July 1. At this point, the prior levy amount for 2004/2005 could be increased to \$82,000.

Mr. Gut and the Board members have requested the Selectmen to provide them with a list of additional Town staff positions and incremental hours for existing positions showing salary and benefit expense ranked in order of importance to the Selectmen. The figures shown on the hand-out that was passed out during the meeting represent nine months of a year, not a full year. The new road crew foreman with a salary increase of \$44,000 was the first on the list, followed by constables with increased hours, costing an additional \$22,844. Discussion followed regarding increases for some positions such as Ms. Bader's secretary who also functions as network administrator who it is hoped will continue on full time after June 30. Road crew, additional summer help is a Public Works request which represents an additional \$11,000. It is necessary to obtain more board clerks due to more meetings being held. The payroll accounts person has an increase in hours. Those were some of the positions listed.

Discussion followed about the Public Building Commission's role in regard to maintenance of buildings as well as the additional help requested at Public Works. This Board sets the policy, direction, and leadership but cannot do the staff's work. Mr. Hughes said that he receives a yearly assessment of condition of buildings in Town. He feels that reorganization is best managed and integrated with board help and is a good approach. Because Mr. Giola is involved and so busy, Mr. Breeden asked if the school project has an end date and where does that put Mr. Giola. Mr. Giola replied that his work is cyclical, and if the money is there the roads will be a priority focus. He will also be involved closely with maintenance of the Senior Center, school, Town Hall and Library. Mr. Amodeo added that if more bodies are required in Public Works, less overtime will be required. Mr. Giola and Ms. Bader suggested that Mr. Giola must be present to manage and assist, especially during snowstorms as the liability to the Town is high during this time.

Joseph LaBella entered the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

Mr. Gut questioned the West Road ballfield situation previously referred to this evening. Mr. Giola explained there is presently a 3-1/2 ft. burm. The request was for an 8 ft. burm. When the trees are planted, there will be a 7 ft. burm. Originally said Mr. Giola, there was no landscaping plan, but he feels it is a priority to keep the neighbors happy. Ms. Bader said there is \$31,000 left in the CNR account for fields, and MYAL has volunteered to help. Mr. Hughes added that a grant of \$5,000 is going to be applied for which would help. Planting must be done in either the Spring or the Fall said Mr. Giola.

Mr. Gut referred to the question of reconciling the Grand List to what was used last year with specific attention to the Board of Assessment appeals number compared to what was used in the estimate. Hand-outs of the Grand List Totals for the years 2002 and 2003 were received. Explanations by Mr. Hughes follow: the change of \$406,143,230 to \$405,707,517 on the Grand List of 2002 was caused by thirteen personal property accounts, fifteen real estate accounts, and one hundred motor vehicle accounts. The amounts of \$1,850,000 and \$5,500,000 are prorates and consist of new construction and new motor vehicles. The amount that was actually assessed was \$2,725,288 and \$6,523,241 respectively. The Board of Assessment Appeals is an estimate number and

was actually a two percent change. An additional assessment or an extra \$40,760 was realized. The total amount of adjustments made from corrections and the Board of Assessment appeals against the 2002 Grand List equates to \$1,458,253. The estimate for 2003 equates to a four percent increase over the 2002 Grand List. Ms. Oguschewitz added the approach taken was conservative. Mr. Hughes said that in Town there are three or four Hummers and the Town has more new cars. Exemptions for the elderly and veterans are also to be considered in the assessment.

Mr. Gut asked for an explanation in the area of Public Works, account number 1170. Two separate lists are shown, one indicating "roads on hold due to the proposed sewer system". The second group as "roads that have not yet been done" are listed as those that could realistically be done this fiscal year and they are Flood, Quinn, and Saner. This totals about \$405,000. That money may require short-term borrowing. The other roads in that grouping, Caffyn, Fuller, Myrna, Phelps and West, are going to take longer in engineering and design, planning and permitting and will probably cost about \$705,000 next fiscal year. One-half of Lakeridge should be added to this last list.

Regarding the number of cell phones owned by the Town and the holders of the phones, as well as the costs incurred was another question asked by the Board. Mr. Giola passed out a list of names of those Town employees using phones which included Mr. Joe Reardon and his secretary as well as the assistant principal and principal, Peter Hughes, and the police, Ms. Bader, some Public Works employees and Social Services (Senior Center van driver), and Fire Department staff. Because the Town uses Nextel, there is a radio portion, which works independent of the phone system, and a digital phone system and there are no roaming charges. Each department pays their own charges.

Mr. Gut asked if the lawn mover that was approved last year had been purchased. Mr. Giola answered no, the price had gone up a bit. With reorganization in Public Works occurring, and subcontracting concerns, he is holding off.

Discussion followed about conveyance taxes. Ms. Oguschewitz explained the State allows the towns to increase their fee from .0011 per thousand to .0025, thus giving a 225 percent increase in conveyance fees that can be charged with refinancing or mortgages and that fee can be charged only until June 30, 2004. Thus the fee can be charged for three or four months of last fiscal year and all of this fiscal year and starting July 1, 2004, the rate returns to .0011. Ms. O. said there is lobbying going on at the State Capital trying to continue that higher fee for a longer time.

In regard to recording fees, said Ms. O., these average about \$66,500 annually over the last four years, however the last two years have been about \$84,000 to \$85,000. This amount will probably not continue as building is declining now.

The telephone tax is difficult to estimate. The State Statute reads that municipalities are charged .0047 mill rate to an assessment. The State does the assessment, it is multiplied by .47 and that is the fee. That is based on the value of the equipment that runs through the Town.

Discussion followed about the State grant for the nature trail which has a matching grant of \$16,000. A study was initiated by the school and work has been done with the teachers to integrate the idea into classroom programs. The proposal is to expand and enhance the trail by the Town with a parking lot. Just because there is a grant, the question was asked, does it make sense to go forward for this reason?

Ms. Reiner raised the issue of the Community Center fund amount of \$54,253.64 in line to be closed out. To further explain, said Ms. Bader, the Community Center/Senior Center was the original title. This amount was set aside for engineering and design money although the Senior Center portion only progressed and was built. That money, after three years, according to the Charter, will revert to the Town, and should be brought to a meeting and the dollars would be recovered. It must be reauthorized to a project and must stay in the Capital Project Fund. At this time, Ms. Bader distributed the original summary requested by Parks & Rec. showing under “West Road Memorial Field” a figure of \$53,620 reflected. The Parks & Rec chose this project to be reprioritized. The BOS met and recommended doing the Blish Park repairs only. The repairs to be accomplished are some incidentals to the fields.

Since the Capital Improvement Project Committee met, the Library Expansion Committee has met, painting and carpeting at Town Hall have become an issue, a combined municipal/library building is being considered, or a renovation of same, and money can be put into a feasibility study. That happened at the same time the BOS was looking at an interpretive nature trail and West Rd. ballfield and it was necessary to cut back due to operational costs of maintenance. Mr. Gut questioned the \$31,000 left for ballfields if it can be used for something else and it cannot. The scope has increased from the original plans.

Mr. Breeden said he would like to have current projects finished and then say “no new projects” until new plans are good going forward. Ms. Bader agreed but she said she gets different interpretations about what the term “finished” is. Mr. Black said the scope of the project when first submitted carries an estimated budget and if the estimate is not good, the project will be reduced or cancelled. And the reduced portion becomes the finished project with a new definition.

Mr. Gut pursued the question of doing the feasibility study for the Library/Town Hall, taking into account urgency, funding it from certain accounts, priority and how it interfaces with the Community Planning Group. Ms. Bader answered that the driver of this study is the Town Hall needing painting and having unsafe carpeting areas and the problem of water in the basement – should the Town make a significant investment to fix it up or study to build another Town Hall?

Mr. Hughes discussed the Library saying an addition to it has limited capability. Previously both the Library and the Town Hall had changes made due to budgets. There are 21 acres of land next to the school that is owned by the Town. There are other sites owned by the Town that a building could be put on. There are other sites and if the

decision is made to use other property, or presently-owned property, it should accommodate future needs of the Town government. Long-range options should be studied. If Town Hall and Library are combined, conference rooms, bathrooms, heating costs, bonding can be shared. Mr. Hughes said study time is now. The Library's pursuit has been slowed down now by the Town's new proposal said Ms. Bader as the Library would like to bring their proposal to referendum in November, 2004.

Mr. Gut questioned how the money for the Town Hall painting is being handled. Ms. O. said it is held in encumbrance presently – when a purchase order is deleted, the money will return to the undesignated fund balance. Then it is added to the amount of money being designated for next year's budget. He also questioned guide lines for fund balance – what is the acceptable range for maintaining it. Ms. O. answered 5 to 10 percent, but that amount may rise to 7 to 10 percent.

Ms. Bader spoke about a conference call she had with an analyst from Moody's and concern was expressed by him about the twelve referendums held recently to pass the school budget and the zero fund balance at the end of the year. However, because the Town has the debt management fund available, the situation for the Town is not as serious as it would have been.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Preissner  
Board Clerk