

**Townshend Selectboard Meeting Minutes – Friday, July 11, 2008
recessed to Sunday, July 13, 2008**

Present:

Alene Evans, Henry Martin & Carole Melis, Joseph Juhasz, speaker phone, Selectboard
Laurie Boyd of NEMRC and Meridith Roberts, bookkeeper, Finance Department
Howard Lott, Lister; Anita Bean, Town Clerk and Robert Crego WR Housing rep.

At 9:15 AM the chair called this specially warned meeting to address: setting the 2008-09 tax rate, review & sign Michael Marquis written proposal, review Wasung's retirement papers from VMERS.

Boyd presented her prepared spreadsheets calculating taxes to be raised:
municipal tax \$.37; residential homestead 1.2277; non-residential 1.2713 plus local .02

Martin moved to approve the above figures in setting the 2008-09 tax rate, seconded by Melis, unanimously carried by the Board.

Confusion ensued as Boyd noted that the Grand List values did not agree with what she had.

Lott, being the sole Lister, was called back into the meeting to explain the new values lodge in the abstracted Grand List.

He spoke about Steven Brown, Grace Cottage Hospital (GCH) FEO letter stating that the Heins Home's new offices were attached to GCH thus reducing the Town's 490,900 to zero. Melis reminded all that at Town Meeting the voters stressed that once the Heins Home was not housing the elderly, it would go back on the tax role, appraised and taxed accordingly. The Listers retained the Heins Home 490,900 value. The Selectboard expressed confusion and needs to know the exact numbers entered by the Listers in the Grand Lists.

Lott explained that the Listers accepted the dramatically reduced appraisal figures of the West River Assisted Living and Housing complex as shown on Robert Crego's prepared spreadsheets. Melis reminded everyone of the Vermont Housing transmittal showing the percentages to use in reducing the structures values. In the meantime, Allie called to ask Crego to attend this meeting.

The Board asked Lott many more questions on all of the different numbers used on different abstracts. Bean then brought in a different Grand List number. The 411's sent to the State had different numbers; how does the Town proceed after the State has these 2 – 411's, etc.

Crego appeared around 9:40 AM with copies of correspondence to the Listers (Boyle), May 8th and 14th & June 19th along with copies of his prepared spreadsheet calculated when he filled in the Act 75 which he downloaded off the Web; thus reducing the value of 2,272,800 to 1,240,800 and 1,353,900 to 394,000. He had informed Lott that he'd received only one grievance notice and Lott's responded, it would be taken care of. Those present select members agreed that the West River complex larger appraisal figures should be used in the Grand List. Why didn't the

Listers share Crego's communiqués and ask for Selectboard input, so we all could have been on the same page, stated Martin.

Crego disagreed with Martin's comment that he assured the Town that the WR complex would pay their full tax. Crego stated that he never said they'd pay the full tax, only paying the tax after implementing Act 75. Evans then telephoned Anne Bernhardt, of B&B appraisers, Bernhardt repeated Bill Johnson, PVR's message, which Lott also heard. Johnson instructed her not to take Crego's numbers. Bernhardt will be leaving for the Town Hall and to call Mark Paulson for his directions on how to proceed. Evans agreed to wait and work with Bernhardt to understand WR Housing's appraisal like: how and what was taxed, the correct amount and figures, etc.

After hearing all the discussions *Martin moved to rescind the original motion to set the 08-09 tax rate, seconded by Melis, carried by those present.* Crego, Lott, Boyd, Roberts left at 10:50 AM

Evans will report to the Board her findings after she meets with Bernhardt, accordingly the select persons agreed to recess this meeting to Sunday to set a tax rate.

The meeting continued with members discussing taxes specifically the **due date of the first payment - August 15th**. *Martin moved to change the date of the first tax payment to August 29th, seconded by Melis, carried by those present.* The remaining 3 scheduled tax payment dates remain unchanged - Nov 4, Feb. 13 and May 15.

Melis presented Martin with **Michael Marquis' written quote**. After reviewing the letter, Martin signed it. He indicated that the Town Barn committee can request, in writing, payment of Marquis' services from the Infrastructure Reserve.

The Board was presented a faxed document from VMERS asked for Michalina **Wasung's compensation**. Davis received compensation figures from Boyd under the direction of the Board not to include Wasung's request for 3 weeks paid vacation. The completed form was given to Finance Department to have the payroll administrator sign and process it.

Evans briefly recapped Garfield's explanation on the two Town Hall grants, A. Monette, Planning Commission chair was also in attendance.

At 11:10 AM Evans moved recess this meeting to Sunday to set a tax rate, seconded by Melis, carried by those present.

Respectively submitted,

Cynthia Davis, clerk for the Selectboard

July 11, 2008 Selectboard Meeting recessed to July 13, 2008 at 10:00 AM

Evans, Martin and Melis met at the Town Hall to set a 2008-09 tax rate.

Martin returned to his house to see if Bernhardt had faxed her summary to him. Evans left a message with Bean to see if Bernhardt's fax was in the Town Clerk's Office.

Evans telephoned Bernhardt, who had forgotten about the arrangement she had with Evans to fax her summary to Martin. Bernhardt also forgot to take with her the appropriate documents to create this summary. Bernhardt told Evans of her conversation with Mark Paulson who stressed that the Town can not appraise the WR complex until it receives must a completed professional audit of the facilities, indicating revenues received and expenses before calculating any appraisal. Select members believe that those involved in calculating the appraisals on WR complex should have known that a professional audit must be performed first. And reiterated this issue could have already been addressed if the Board had received copies of Crego's correspondence.

Martin expressed his concern as how to proceed in setting a realistic or a "legal" tax rate. Evans called Boyd to review the numbers on the new spreadsheet. While others reviewed the numbers Evans was comparing Bernhardt's numbers to those on the spreadsheet and stated that all the numbers were the same. Evans also reminded every one that the school numbers cannot be adjusted.

After discussion *Martin moved to set the municipal tax rate at \$.36 per hundred, resident rate 1.5874 and non residential at 1.6315 seconded by Evans carried by those present.*

Those present believe the State should have been given WR complex numbers to calculate so that those of the WR complex will have to provide burden of proof on their numbers.

They asked that the minutes reflect that the Town's appraised numbers were: WR Senior Housing 2,272,800, Assisted Living 1,353,870 and that Bernhardt had failed to prepare her promised summary, consequently it was not faxed. Davis was instructed will write an invitation to the Board of Listers and B&B representatives to attend a July 29th Selectboard meeting in Executive Session, also noting that the Town will no be charged by those attending.

Evans and Melis noted that the Grand List does not show land acreage or appraisal on GCH's properties.

Melis moved to adjourn at 9:45 AM, seconded by Evans, carried by those present.

Respectively submitted,

Cynthia Davis, clerk for the Selectboard