

MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING OCTOBER 23, 2008

There was a joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee, along with various department heads, held in the Kiva Room at the North Brookfield High School at 7 PM. Those present were:

James Foyle, Mary Walter, and Jason Petraitis from the Board of Selectmen.

James Lovett, Bob Smith, Jim Baird, and Brett Cavanaugh from the FinCom.

School Superintendent Erin Nosek, School Committee Chairman Jeff Hicks, Wiring Inspector Don Doe, Police Chief Aram Thomasian, Town Collector Donna Gauthier, Town Accountant Nancy Nykiel, Treasurer Anne Jannette, Library Director Ann Kidd, CIP Chairman Charles Lindgren, and Assessors Shiela Buzzell, Priscilla Johnson, and Reedy Nealer.

Mr. Foyle opened the meeting by thanking everyone for coming, and explaining that the town's budget is not producing enough revenue to meet the expenses. There is a possibility that the state might cut local aid this year, and almost a certainty that aid will be cut for the next fiscal year. According to Mr. Foyle, the reality is that there is a major financial problem not only for this year, but for years to come.

Mrs. Walter put together an overview of the town's current financial state that shows a shortfall for this year's budget.

Town Collector Donna Gauthier reported that collections are down from past years, normally she would have approximately \$75,000 in outstanding real estate taxes at the close of the last fiscal year; this year she has over twice that amount.

Assessor Sheila Buzzell reported that home sales are down this year.

Finance Committee member Bob Smith noted that the selectmen, at the suggestion of the FinCom, have instituted a freeze on discretionary spending. Mr. Smith stated that it was the intention of the Finance Committee to include everything except salary and benefits.

Mr. Foyle asked that every department go back and review their budgets to see what they could possibly do without, and to be prepared for a 10% - 20% cut in next year's budgets.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 PM.