

**Town of Canaan
Board of Finance
Special Meeting
Monday, March 17, 2008
6:30 P.M.
Town Hall
108 Main Street, Falls Village, CT**

Present: Chairman Charles Lemmen, Kent Allyn, Denise Cohn, George Elling, Scott Macchi, Fred Petersen, and Alternate Tracy Atwood.
Absent: Alternate Stephen Koshland
Also Present: LHK BOE members Mary Atwood, Mary Elling, and Beckie Seney, LHK Principal Maria Boulson, First Selectman Pat Mechare, Selectmen Pete Lawson, and Chuck Lewis, Faye Lawson, Ross Grannan, and Terry Cowgill, *The Lakeville Journal*.

Chairman Lemmen called the meeting to order at 6:37 P.M. and introduced all present.

1. The First Selectman's Report from the Regular Meeting of March 10, 2008, tabled due to lack of time, was taken first.

- 107 Main Street Update – The roof is complete, third floor shingles almost complete, insulation complete, and third story glass windows about to be replaced. In May preparation for painting will start, with the estimated overall project end-date for late June.
- Pool Project – The roof shingling on the pool house was completed by volunteers. Next, work on the siding and placing interior stalls and partitions will take place. Mechare will compile a complete list of volunteers. The pool will be emptied mid-May to complete the pool interior, with a July 1st opening expected.
- Mechare received word from Attorney Biggar, State Atty. General's Office, that the extension for the Emergency Services Center STEAP Grant has been approved.

2. LHK Board member Beckie Seney and Principal Maria Boulson were welcomed. They had no further information to add beyond Chairman Andrea Downs' presentation of the 2008-2009 BOE Spending Plan at last Monday's Special Meeting. Questions from the Board of Finance were addressed.

Some initial questions regarded:

- enrollment numbers per grade
- clarification of whether or not the Board Clerk and Board Secretary, line (9) and (10), were paid members of the BOE or **separate employees**, with a suggestion for clearer notation regarding this differentiation
- whether lines (27) through (30) Employees were **full-time** or part-time employees
- whether (39) Staff Development included contractual agreements for graduate school contributions - **yes**
- (71) and (72) a further explanation of travel reimbursement
- (17) a further explanation of the Nurse's health benefit stipend.

There were many questions concerning the proposed hiring of a new full-time elementary teacher for grade three for a one-year period, the rationale for it, and other possible options proposed by

the LHK Staff in light of decreasing enrollment figures. Seney stressed that the Board hopes to “buy time” for a year to develop a well thought-out, permanent plan regarding class groupings which will use the staff more effectively, creatively, and efficiently, and acting upon recommendations that will come from the Long-Range Planning Committee. The Committee began meeting recently. Seney stressed that the Board decision for a dedicated teacher for Kindergarten is unlikely to change back to K-1-2. The Board believes this decision has proved to be educationally sound to deal with the drastic changes in curriculum and full-day kindergarten classes.

There were questions regarding whether the Technology Plan and new budget reflects a need for fewer computers with fewer students enrolled. Bulson noted the number of computers reflected in this budget maintains the current Technology Plan (ends in 2009). A new Technology Plan Committee, involving community members, is about to be re-formed and will revise the plan.

Further questions involved:

- discussion of (14) Athletic Coaching – teacher/coach remuneration **is** reflected in this line
- more history and rationale for the nurse’s stipend in lieu of family health benefits
- the addition of ½ day for the school psychologist
- recommendations of optimal class size from various sources
- discussion of the overall budget percent increase and whether to look at the LHK percent increase alone, or at LHK and HVRHS percentages together
- review of student projections for HVRHS from current LHK classes.

F. Petersen made a suggestion for the Public Hearing in April, that it would be helpful to have a first page summary sheet using current budget pages 8B and 9B, in order to readily view the “bottom-line” figures and percent changes.

There were further questions to Seney and Boulson about hiring another full-time teacher, followed by discussion.

Kent Allyn made the following motion: A recommendation to the Canaan Board of Education that the proposed 5% increase in the 2008-2009 LHK Spending Plan is too high and that the Board reconsider their budget and lower it to an increase below 5%.

F. Petersen seconded. Discussion. Passed unanimously.

The BOE was thanked and Chairman Lemmen asked them for a revised budget proposal before the April 14, 2008 Regular BOF Meeting.

The BOF has a Special Meeting scheduled for Monday, March 31, 2008 at 6:30 to consider the BOS Spending Plan.

Adjournment:

A motion for adjournment was made by F. Petersen. K. Allyn seconded. Passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:35 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Margo B. Lewis, Recording Secretary