MINUTES

Joint Meeting-Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, Board of Education

September 9, 2014

A joint meeting of the Boards of Selectmen, Education and Finance along with the Permanent School Planning and Building Committee and Ad Hoc Building Committee was held on Tuesday, September 9, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. in the Wheeler High School Shaw Media Center. Present for the Board of Selectmen was Mr. Mullane, Mr. Donahue, and Mr. Testa. Present for the Board of Education was Mr. McCord, Mr. Carlson, Mr. Karpinski, Mrs. Wagner, Dr. Robert, Mr. Mathwich, Mrs. Buzzee, Mr. Mendolia, and Superintendent Nero. Present for the Board of Finance was Mr. Spring, Mr. Main, Mr. Pavlovics, Mr. Woodward, and Mr. Ratib. Also representing the Ad Hoc Building Committee were Mr. Mathwich and Mr. Carlson. Mr. Mullane began the meeting at 7:05 p.m. He asked for each Board to identify themselves and thanked everyone for coming. Mr. McCord had opening comments. He spoke of some of the agenda items and spoke of the building project process that occurred. Mrs. Wagner read a letter regarding the meeting and what she had hoped would be accomplished. Mr. Spring had comment on the past referendums. He spoke of affordability and had further explanation. He spoke of the financials of the town. Mr. Donahue spoke on the direction of the meeting and getting everyone going in the same direction. He spoke of what seemed to be a disconnect with the voters and hoped to work together.

Mr. Mullane commented on what he hoped to find out from a survey. He wanted to start this process now because he didn’t want it to overlap with the budget. He felt we still needed the public hearings. He wants to focus on the facilities and not the programs. He elaborated and said we have been taking care of our programs. Mr. Nero agreed with Mr. Mathwich. He said he was going to recommend not doing a building project right now. He said if we do it in December or a year from now, we are still going to be in the same predicament. He thought we would be rushing back too fast. He wondered what the affordability is and asked for a number. Mr. Mullane had comment and spoke of altering the project. He spoke about the elementary school. He didn’t agree with not doing anything and had further comment. He could relate to the elementary school project. Mr. Nero said the priority is the high school. Dr. Robert had comment about Representative Urban. He commented about making Wheeler a magnet school. There was discussion. Mr. McCord spoke of the education that our students are receiving and how they are prepared to go forward. He had further comment. Dr. Robert had further comment. Mr. McCord had further comment. Mr. Urgo, spoke of incorrect information being given. He spoke of negative information coming from town. He spoke in favor of the survey and recommended against a comments section on the survey. He spoke of people moving to town for the schools. Mr. Testa commented about it not being fair to speculate on what the townspeople could afford. Mr. Nero had comment about the emergency services project issues and that may be part of the problem with our project. He thought that had to be resolved first. Mr. Mullane had comment on the emergency services building and said it was straightened out. Mr. Mullane said we need to concentrate on a way to move forward. Mr. Nero had comment about the economy and revenue in town in December compared to what it was in May. Nita Kincaid had comment about the tone of the meeting and elaborated. There was discussion of bringing in an outside facilitator. Mr. Ratib had comment on the three Boards being here and how it was a positive thing having them together. He had further comment. He said this is just the beginning and elaborated. There was discussion of finances. Joe Gross, citizen, asked what the Board of Education wanted to do on this building because they are the ones that know what is best. He thought the Board of Education needs to tell the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance where we need to go. Mr. Nero will call CABE about an outside facilitator. Mr. Mullane spoke of a maintenance plan and having that separate from the regular budget. He elaborated. We have to dwell on the positive things of the schools and he hopes we can move forward. Mr. Mullane wanted to try to work on that positive aspect. Mr. Mullane had closing comments. He will get back to the Boards about another meeting date.

The meeting ended at 8:40 p.m. Mr. Mullane thanked everyone