

Meeting Minutes

Town of Adams Board of Selectmen

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TOWN CLERK

October 22, 2014

Board of Selectmen Workshop Meeting

On the Above date the Board of Selectmen held a workshop meeting at Town Hall at 7:00 p.m. Chairman **Arthur Harrington** presided. Present were **Members John Duval, Joseph Nowak, Jeffrey Snoonian, and Richard Blanchard**. Also in attendance was **Interim Town Administrator Donna Cesan, Council on Aging Director Erica Girgenti, and Building Commissioner Don Fitzgerald**.

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Harrington.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

HVAC Unit at Visitor's Center

Interim Town Administrator Cesan introduced **Mike Trzcinski** of Hesnor Engineering Associates, who was hired by former Town Administrator Butler to look at the HVAC Unit in the Visitor's Center. She advised the Select Board that working on this type of project is something the Town Administrator does and she wanted to keep the Board fully informed.

The HVAC unit has not worked since it was put in, despite an extra \$25,000 used to install the geothermal system, and there has always been trouble with getting appropriate heating and cooling in the building.

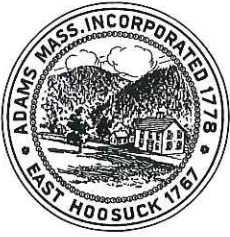
Mike Trzcinski advised he looked at the Visitor's Center building to get away from the wells in the geothermal system, which has been the main source of the problem. The well acts as a heat source or a heat sink, and is piped to the building through 19 heat pipe units, which create individual zones that function essentially like a refrigerator. They have the capability to reverse instead of cooling, in order to heat the building. They draw water that goes through the geothermal system to either heat or cool the building.

Problems with the System

The problems at the Visitor's Center are associated with this type of system being open-looped, which pumps well water through all of the units. Normally they are done with separate, closed loops for both the well and the building with a heat exchanger so the well water is not put through the system. An assessment was done to look at options to convert the system and the focus was to get rid of the well aspect.

Three Options

1. The first option is to install a closed circuit cooling tower that would provide a heat rejection source along with a gas fired boiler to add the heat into the loop, and a heat exchanger that would separate the cooling tower from the building loop. The main reason for the heat exchanger in this system is to have glycol in the cooling tower loop, and to have year-round cooling in the loop so the tower doesn't have to be drained. This option is budgeted at roughly \$100,000.



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2. The second option is more economical, and essentially eliminated the heat exchanger. The down side of this option is that on the "shoulder" seasons of Spring or Fall when there are unseasonably warm days, the tower is drained because of the cool nights and some of the functionality is lost from the first option. The savings of \$17,000 would price this option at \$83,000.
3. The third and preferred option is to keep the geothermal wells, and install a boiler and heat exchanger. The heat exchanger would be needed to separate the well water from the building to keep the debris from being pushed through the equipment. The boiler would be used for heat to add to the loop, but still using the wells for heat rejection. This option would cost \$22,500.

The energy bills show that energy use skyrockets in the winter. This is because 50 degree well water is being heated up with the heat pumps, using a lot of electrical energy, versus rejecting it in the summer. It is important to go with the boiler to reduce the overall energy consumption. Discussions have ensued regarding what options there are to keep from taking on a \$60,000 project right now.

Building Commissioner Don Fitzgerald advised based on discussion and what was observed over at the Visitor's Center, combined with the building's history and equipment installed there, his focus was on what to do short term to make the building usable and able to be occupied. There have been times the building has had to be shut down because it has been too cold to use. There is a wet sprinkler system in the building which could freeze and rupture or sustain other damage. The important factor is to keep the building up and running, and do work that will not be thrown away. This supports Mr. Trzcinski's preferred option of keeping the geothermal wells.

The open loop sucks in sediment from the river and fouls up the equipment. The solution is to put on valves and a filter between the valves. This would require a daily, weekly or bi-weekly maintenance, depending on the amount of sediment trapped by the filter. The procedure would be to close the valves, clean the filter, and reopen the valves.

Ongoing Maintenance

Since January 2013, the facility has required over \$18,000 in maintenance, and will require perpetual maintenance because of continuous debris entering the system. The third option would provide a solid separator (filtration system) and a flush of the system to remove any solids that are within the loop. Compressors are within the zones. Currently four of them are inoperable because they are damaged beyond repair due to the debris in the system, and need to be replaced. Some surrounding units may need some repair to make them operate properly, but this won't be known until the system can be fixed. For the \$22,500, the system can be fixed so it will work and buy time to budget and strategize how to fix it for the long term. This would be a manageable short-term fix to handle inoperable machinery and a debris-fouled loop.

Chairman Harrington inquired if the wells could be dug deeper than 1,000 feet to get beyond the sediment, or if a back flush would be necessary to get out the current sediment.



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Mike Trzcinski advised the geotechnical documents showed the work was done in 2004 and did not indicate information about the well. Drilling the well would be a major expense. He advised he did not know if they looked for just volume, or also quality of the water at that point. The filtration system will handle the entire volume of water and will need to be dumped out. Once the timing is figured out for quantity of debris building up, the determination will be made for a maintenance schedule. Pressure gauges can be put across the system. The system will be down 1 to 2 days upon the fix, and then chemicals will be put in to clean up the system. Each unit will be flushed separately. There will be no down time when the solid separator is in use, and a bag filter may be put in place. The two wells are approximately 12" in diameter.

Member Blanchard inquired why the loop cannot be closed, an elbow added, and utilization of the ground temperature to cool or heat to the temperature of the ground, thus eliminating sediment.

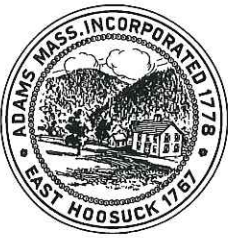
The solution proposed is to close the system and use well water from one side and water in the building on the other side. The expense of doing something with the wells is far greater than putting in the heat exchanger. To close the loop and put on 2 elbows is a far greater expense. If the top of the well is closed instead of the bottom, it is easier to work on. It will loop through and dump through the heat exchanger. All of the pipes supplying to the equipment in the building will be on the other side, and not connected.

By using a separator, it could possibly serve for up to 25 years, depending on the flow rate. The separator is \$6,500, installed, and if the solenoid were to need to be replacing it would cost around \$200.

Member Nowak shared that he had done research on heating and cooling for the building and the problem is the roiling and turbidity of the water that is causing the problem, with possible mineralization. He said he thought there is already a filter in place. The zones are clogged at a high rate all of the time. He noted there are different types of filters and the ones used for this building were not the correct ones for this system. Member Nowak suggests having this system looked at and the parts replaced or upgraded to their proper specifications, and to use the proper model numbers for this system.

The current filter in place is not doing a good enough job, and model numbers were not looked at. Adams Plumbing & Heating looked at the system and can be consulted on model numbers.

Interim Town Administrator Cesan proposed keeping the system, and to explore energy efficiency grants. She advised COA Director Girgenti, Town Accountant Mary Beverly, and she had looked at existing funds to see if there was a way to be more frugal. An outline was prepared for the Board to address this cost, and give information to help direct a better solution and more effective system to keep the building at appropriate comfort levels. The current system doesn't keep up, as it is not designed for the cold area we are in. She advised her goal was to get the system repaired, make improvements so it functions properly and provide a boiler with Option #3. There isn't funding for that but grants would possibly keep from having to do a budget transfer through the Finance Committee.



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Council on Aging Director Girgenti said on cold days the building is in the mid to low 50's for temperature in the building, which is below the 68 degree building code for a place of assembly. There have been some days occupants can see their breath, and seniors have to eat meals in their jackets. There are days the building has to close completely because the temperature is too low to support occupancy. She advises she has \$23,000 in accumulation of money already in the budget to be used for this, but then will not be able to have the money for other uses.

Member Nowak stated he should have been given this information and questioned the technical expertise of the parties making the assessment. He questioned why the right system wasn't put in to begin with, and who judged what was broken. Member Nowak also wanted to find out where the uptake of water is coming in, because the water is coming from the river and not a settling pond.

Mike Trzcinski is a mechanical engineer working for Hesnor Engineering Associates, and has assessed the system to identify what equipment is broken and what needs to be repaired.

Interim Town Administrator Cesan advised that going forward she will check on the existing filter, she will meet with and run this proposal by CTC and Adams Plumbing & Heating, and will try to find out the depth of the water entering the system to see if the roiling river water is a factor. She proposes to proceed with the project unless the information discovered indicates this would not be the proper process.

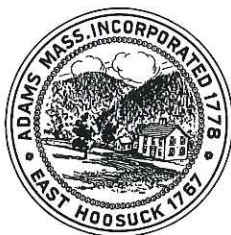
A consensus was reached to go forward with the plan as Interim Town Administrator Cesan proposed.

Renewal of Cable TV License

Interim Town Administrator Cesan advised the Board the Attorney Bill Solomon is representing the communities regarding the Cable TV License renewal process. He could not make the meeting, but provided a report summary for the Board to act on at their October 29, 2014 meeting.

The Town's Information Technology person, **Rob Wnuk**, looked at the agreement. There are a number of exhibits on the agreement, and if the Select Board thought any schools or buildings needed to be added, Interim Town Administrator Cesan advised she would add them to the agreement. She noted that the Community Center at 20 East Street should be removed, and Rob Wnuk suggested adding the DPW, Forest Warden's Building, Memorial School, BaRT School, Wastewater Treatment, and Renfrew Park Building. The Train Station should be added to allow for people to see the schedule and other events going on. Renfrew Park Building would allow for the broadcast of games. Plunkett School would be able to broadcast Town Meeting live. Emergency Management and the Old Town Hall are suggested additions.

There will be only three PEG (Public Education Government) Channels. The new PEG Access Studio will be located at 69 Union Street in North Adams.



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If this agreement is approved, it will carry through to Comcast as it changes from Time Warner to Comcast, which is the parent company. Town Counsel has been sent the agreement but has not commented to date.

This item will be put on the Regular Meeting Agenda for the **October 29, 2014** meeting.

Travel Expenses for Town Administrator Candidates

The Town Administrator Search Committee has narrowed down the number of applicants and will begin to interview candidates. One candidate is approximately a 16 hour drive away. The Search Committee inquired whether the Select Board would consider paying travel expenses for candidates, and if so whether there would be a set amount or if they would pay half the cost. If the Select Board waits until the candidates ask for money, the Search Committee will be behind the timeline for getting interviews done.

Member Blanchard suggests a video conference for the first interview.

Member Nowak said he was amenable to paying half of the cost if the candidate submits a voucher for expenses. He inquired where the money would come from, and advised he would prefer to see the person during the interview. Member Nowak noted that sometimes Skype has poor transmission, making it more difficult to get the feel of the person online rather than in person.

Money could come from the Town Administrator budget, coming from the savings on salary. The other option is to offer to interview by Skype.

Member Snoonian advised most first round interviews are done electronically in this day and age, which would save the expense. He did not feel compensation for travel expenses is appropriate.

Member Duval agreed that Skype is a viable option for the first interview, but the final interview with the Select Board would need to be in person.

Town Administrator Search Committee Member Erica Girgenti advised there are 6 people that will be interviewing but additional applications may still come in and there could be more. She advised it is important for the applicant to come see the community. A Skype account has been set up for the Town and there is Skype access at the Visitor's Center as well.

Consensus was reached that the final interviews with the Select Board will not be by Skype, but Skype will be offered by the Search Committee in lieu of compensation for the first interview.



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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sustainable Materials Recovery Program Municipal Grant

MA DEP awarded the Town of Adams a Sustainable Materials Recovery Program Municipal Grant of up to \$750.00 for a targeted small scale initiative. Sandy Totter from the Northern Berkshire Solid Waste District is the contact responsible, and the money can be used for two different categories. The document will be in the office for viewing.

Berkshire Regional Planning Survey

A Survey was sent from Berkshire Regional Planning to the neighbors of the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail to get input on how things are going in Adams, Cheshire, and Lanesborough. The Select Board Members are suggested to go onto survey monkey if they are interested. The document will be left in the office, as there was only one survey sent.

Rail Trail Meeting in North Adams

Wednesday, October 29, 2014 there will be a public meeting in North Adams regarding the segment of the Rail Trail in North Adams to Williamstown. The meeting will be held at Mount Greylock Regional High School at 6:00 p.m. The survey results will be used to show where there are problems, if any. The only problems Adams is aware of so far are rocks placed on the rail trail.

Motion to Adjourn made by Member Blanchard

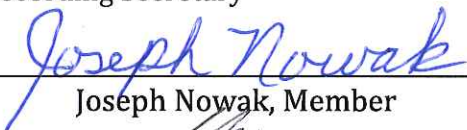
Second by Member Nowak

Unanimous vote

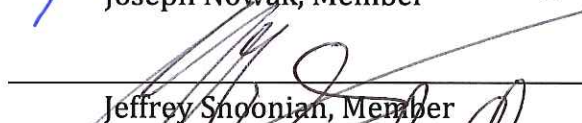
Motion passed

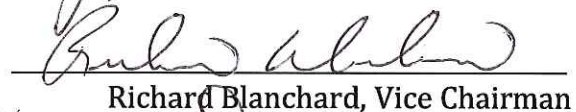
Meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

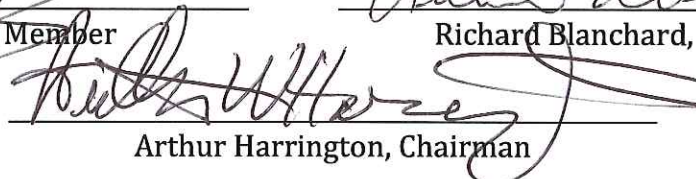
Respectfully Submitted by Deborah Dunlap,
Recording Secretary


Joseph Nowak, Member


John Duval, Member


Jeffrey Shoonian, Member


Richard Blanchard, Vice Chairman


Arthur Harrington, Chairman