

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SELECTMEN MEETING
TUESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2009 - 7:00 P.M.
SELECTMEN MEETING ROOM

Meeting came to order at 7:00 p.m. with Selectmen John H. Bruno II, Troy E. Garron and Michael J. Schleiff present. Town Administrator Charles Seelig was not in attendance.

The Board acknowledged the passing of resident Dorothy Landry who was actively involved on Town committees; local, state and national elections; and civic organizations.

The following business was discussed:

AGENDA

The Agenda for Tuesday, August 11th, was unanimously approved without revision.

MINUTES

Moved by Garron and seconded by Bruno, Board approved the following Selectmen Minutes:

Selectmen Meeting 05-11-09 - Executive Session

Selectman Michael Schleiff abstained from voting as he was not a Selectman at that time.

Moved by Schleiff and seconded by Garron, Board unanimously approved the following Selectmen Minutes:

Selectmen Meeting 06-23-09 - Regular Session

ABATEMENTS/BILLS/COMMITMENTS/WARRANTS

Moved by Schleiff and seconded by Garron, Board unanimously committed for collection Ambulance Commitment #7B in the amount of \$21,406.00

Moved by Schleiff and seconded by Garron, Board unanimously approved payment of Vendor Warrant #13 in the amount of \$41,071.56

Moved by Schleiff and seconded by Garron, Board unanimously approved payment of the following Selectmen bill:

Jordan on the Job (employee physical/Highway) \$90.00

HEMLOCK LANE LANDFILL MONITORING

The Board met with Health Agent Cathleen Drinan relative to contracting out the continuing monitoring of the Hemlock Lane Landfill. Drinan asked to postpone the discussion until Town Administrator Charles Seelig could be present since he is the Chief Procurement Officer and she relies upon his expertise with regard to what is required in contracting out services in the long term. She noted the Board of Health is very pleased with the current firm doing the work.

Garron asked if the issue of using the site for composting had been resolved. Drinan said warning strips still need to be installed below the surface, but how to accomplish that had not been resolved.

Schleiff said he had requested the meeting to familiarize himself with the issue and what the contract involved. Bruno suggested Schleiff meet separately with Drinan to obtain detailed information about the landfill and the on-gong monitoring. Schleiff agreed to do that. He stated his only issue with the contract was to try to make it for a longer term which might save money in the long run. Drinan agreed that, the longer the contract, the less “buffer” is included in the cost. Drinan said there is confusion amongst municipalities in interpreting what is required by the State when contracting services, particularly with regard to qualifications. That was one of the reasons the Board of Health entered into another yearly contract so that the monitoring could continue while the questions were resolved.

The Board will meet with Drinan in late January to discuss the process for entering into a long term contract for monitoring the Hemlock Lane Landfill.

MONPONSETT PONDS - LYMAN / LYCOTT ENVIRONMENTAL

The Board met with Lee Lyman of Lycott Environmental to discuss issues involving the Monponsett Ponds. Also present were Health Agent Cathleen Drinan and a number of interested residents.

Bruno stated that the Board of Health has been working with the State to make the Monponsett Pond a test case with regard to algae monitoring and testing. He wanted to ensure that work was being coordinated with the work being done by

Lycott. Drinan said the algae on the west lake came up a few years ago at a conference, and the Department of Public Health was interested because the algae can contain toxins that, when released, have adverse affects on aquatic life. DPH was interested in gathering information and wanted to be informed if the water looked green, there were fish kills, etc. Drinan told DPH that west Monponsett looks that way each year. Last summer, DPH took samples. It was so bad the pond had to be closed. Now, the Center for Disease Control has become interested and has offered money to the Board of Health to look at it further. Because the State Boat ramp is located on the west lake and there are public beaches, they chose us. They are collecting a lot of data and looking at many factors. Right now, the beach is open. Drinan only tests for e. coli but notes conditions like dead fish, etc. She can see the algae forming again. Halifax is fortunate to be on the list to get the testing done for free. The State program is gathering information to inform CDC so CDC can improve their protocol and determine what factors cause the algae to grow, the impact on health and how to be more informed so that people can be given more clear information. Drinan said that, when DPH came to take samples, they did not realize the lake went into Hanson and will now be taking samples from Hanson as well. The State will share its test results with the Town; no results have been received to date.

Bruno noted the Board has been trying to bring the lakes to their natural state. The most recent project is working on the algae in the west lake. He asked if that will interfere with the State project. Drinan said she was only concerned if the treatment was going to happen in the summer of 2009 because they wanted this summer to gather the information. Drinan would like DPH to be kept informed.

Garron said the State does not always share information right away; he felt the Town should be receiving something from them. If that information is given to the Town, it may give Lyman a foundation for his work.

Lyman said Lycott is in the process of restructuring and finishing the Notice of Intent with the Conservation Commission and Natural Heritage. During the last meeting, residents informed the Selectmen the algae had spread to the east lake and the NOI is being changed to include that lake as well. Lyman noted the process on the NOI for the weed mediation was long because of endangered specifiers found in the east lake. Some of the weeds are returning and will need to be addressed in the future. He believed the permits are still in effect to take care of that situation.

For the west lake, Lycott has a permit to clean up the debris in the Snake River in the area of the dam to the outlet. The NOI for addressing the algae will be ready for signature next week; Natural Heritage takes a minimum of thirty days to review. He could not predict how Natural Heritage would feel about using alum. He hoped the project would not require the same studies done in the east lake. Since the process will take two to three months, he felt it was too late to do anything this year. Lyman was glad to see the State was sampling and testing. It would be helpful to get those results to put into the NOI to convince the agency

there is a problem health-wise. It would be beneficial to have this. Lyman had also provided the Board with a copy of the publication "The Nebraska Experience" which featured an article involving algae in waterways in that state and the use of alum to treat the problem. Lyman said it is important to understand this is not new science. While there are other methods, they do not solve the problem.

Lyman said the major food supply for algae is phosphorous; the more phosphorous, the higher the algae count. The alum ties up the phosphorous chemically, sinks it to the bottom and binds it for centuries. There is no adverse affect. The change will not be immediate. The process involves low dosages of alum applied two times a year over many years. Eventually the algae and bacterial counts will go down and the condition of the lake will improve.

Lyman pointed out the source of the phosphorous continues to exist and feed the algae. The Board noted that in 2007, a study conducted by Lycott determine the sources of phosphorous were from the cranberry bogs and the saturated wetlands located in Hanson. In response to a question from Schleiff on discussing the problem with the growers, Lyman said that, since the report, the State has launched into a research study with cranberry growers to reduce their use of phosphorous. In addition, DEP in Worcester spearheaded a study with the Cranberry Grower Association to do a "before and after" sampling which showed a great reduction in phosphorous discharge because of a change in the way they manipulate their water through the bogs.

In response to a question from Garron, Lyman said a system can be installed at the inlet point which will monitor the phosphorous level and inject alum but the system costs hundreds of thousands and possibly millions of dollars.

With regard to the cost of the alum treatment being proposed, each treatment costs about \$40,000 to a total of \$80,000 per year. The current balance in the MTBE fund is about \$300,000. Lyman noted that, while some of the permitting fees are included in the contract, what might be required from Natural Heritage is not. Garron stated, if the lake is poorly managed, the weeds overgrow which will kill off the mussels, etc. Lyman noted the Town is trying to balance the clarity of the water, weed growth and toxins. The alum treatment will increase transparency which will increase plant growth, some of which is needed for aquatic life.

Schleiff understood that, in diverting the water, the algae is being drawn from the west lake to the east lake. Lyman said he has been in touch with Brockton Water Systems Manager Brian Creedon who told him they had to divert the water to alleviate flooding. Right now, the gate into Snake River is wide open. The brook needs to be cleaned out. Without that, there is only so much water that will flow down stream which necessitates diversion at the other end. Garron pointed out that, if the gate were open all the time, the water would flow naturally as it did prior to the installation of the dam.

With regard to the phosphorous, Schleiff stated the Town needs to talk with the bog owners about resolving the problem sooner rather than later, especially if changing their methods of water manipulation can make such a great difference. Lyman will provide Seelig with the name of the person in Worcester to contact.

Referring to a previous meeting with the Board, Schleiff asked if Creedon had received the information he wanted on the alum treatment. Lyman said he will be providing him with the information shortly.

The Board opened discussion to those present. Michael Driscoll of 22 Baker Street opined the bog owners do anything they want and no one is regulating what they do. The level of the west lake has been extremely high since last spring and the dam could have been lowered months ago. They did not seek permission to divert until July which then drew the algae into the east lake, allowing them to draw the bad into the good. He questioned why they are allowed to divert the water. Bruno explained that Brockton has certain legislative authority to draw water during certain months of the year which reverses the flow. When flooding occurs during off months, they are given permission to divert during the off season. Driscoll reiterated that, if Brockton had lowered the dam in May, diversion would not have been needed now. He noted the Town has spent a lot of money cleaning up the east lake and the level of the west lake should have reduced earlier in the year. Lyman said that Brockton's stand is that heavy equipment is needed to remove the obstructions in the river to allow the water to flow down stream.

A White Island Road resident stated it was about this time last year when they noted algae on the east lake and Drinan came down and observed the algae. The resident was concern as to how she will know if it is okay to use the water in the east lake. Drinan said she would err on the safe side. If the water looks like pea soup visually, it is not safe. When the water is green and thick, do not go in. If there has been no algae, it is okay. However, right after an algae bloom, you should wait twenty four hours after it clears because, when algae dies, it turns blue and releases toxins - this is the worst time to be in the water.

Bruno stated the Town is attempting to control the algae. The treatment will not happen this year. In the meantime, the Sate will provide information on the data it collects. Brockton will be asked to use Snake River as the primary source to reduce the level in the lake and not to pump to Silver Lake.

Brockton Water Systems Manager Brian Creedon came into the meeting and said Brockton is working with Lyman, noting the lake needs to be kept at 56'6" or below. At the present time, the water is being sent down stream and they are not diverting. The two-foot sluice gate is wide open. Bruno noted the discussion is not about the level of the lake but about preventing the algae in the west lake from getting into the east lake and allowing the level of the west lake to drop by letting the water flow freely down Snake River. Creedon said a 3" rain creates a 6" rise in the pond. He has a greater responsibility not to flood anyone, so they turned on

the diversion. He provided everyone present with his email address so they could contact him directly with any questions or concerns. He stated that the sluice gate is open to allow water down stream. Lyman has worked on Stump Brook and has removed the weeds that built up and prevented the flow. Brockton is working with the Town.

In closing Bruno said the Town is working on the algae problem. Drinan and Lyman will coordinate their work in this area.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR DEBRA DEJONKER-BERRY

The Board welcomed new Library Director Debra Dejonker-Berry to Halifax. Berry was interested in learning what services the community needed and to work with the Town in attaining common goals. Her goal was to make the library more comfortable, to make it more accessible for technology, and to create quiet spaces. Currently, the library offers very strong children's services. She hoped to offer equal caliber services to adults.

Discussion ensued on the current problems pertaining to the building's roof and HVAC system. Berry was interested in green technologies noting there are opportunities out there for grant money. Bruno informed her that the Capital Planning Committee would be involved in addressing capital planning needs and the Master Plan Committee is currently developing a master plan to incorporate the future needs of all Town departments. Berry said that the Library is part of the larger town and it is important it extends itself to the different boards, etc.

FIRE CHIEF SEARCH

Bruno recapped the search for a new Fire Chief and the process used to arrive at the final candidates. On behalf of the Board, he thanked Captain Henry Bosworth for filling in as Acting Fire Chief, noting he did an outstanding job. Bosworth was present and thanked everyone in the Department who made his job easier and the officers who helped him when he could not be on duty. He also recognized the assistance of Administrative Assistant Patti Fostrom.

Based on the credentials and interviews of the candidates and the feedback from those individuals within the Town that met with them, Bruno said any one of the candidates could be chosen. The issue becomes which one is the best fit for Halifax.

Garron recommended William Carrico. Although he was impressed with all three interviewed, Garron felt Carrico was the strongest in how he answered questions directly, how he would deal with staff, his experience in rising through the ranks, his ability to lead and his military training. Garron felt Carrico gave the best answer to his question on fair, firm and consistent. Carrico was adamant about

wanting to live in Halifax and had become a search for potential homes. He was familiar with some of the firefighter employees because he trained some of them. At Garron's job in Milton, individuals who lived in town and saw the interviews came up to Garron giving him unsolicited references for Carrico. In his mind, Carrico's stature, his mind set and his hunger to achieve makes him the best candidate. Garron liked the other two candidates but noted the Halifax department is still growing and felt the Town needed someone who has grown but has the leadership to move on in his own life. Carrico came from a firefighter family. Garron felt he is very serious in making this his career and in making Halifax a prominent fire department.

Schleiff agreed that all three candidates were outstanding and the decision has to be based on what in particular stood out in any one of them. Carrico stood out to him because of his personality, his enthusiasm, his engineering background and understanding of structures. His father was in the fire service and he is well aware of family and community. He felt Carrico was the better candidates and would make a good Fire Chief.

Bruno was torn between Goodfellow and Carrico. Goodfellow scored highest on the assessment, he is already a paramedic and his military service was particularly useful because it translated into civilian medical experience. While Bruno neglected to ask Carrico about his military experience, he did review Carrico's military service on the resume and felt it made him suited to the job. He agreed with what has already been said about Carrico. His engineering background is helpful with regard to permitting and inspections that have to be done. Bruno felt Carrico made the most of the opportunity to visit ahead of time. Bruno liked his approach in giving direct answers and not shirking questions. Bruno could choose either one.

Garron said his choice was Carrico first and Goodfellow second. Carrico had a strong presence and answered all the questions directly without embellishment.

Garron moved to enter into discussions with Carrico; Schleiff seconded the motion. Bruno said his motion would have been for Goodfellow but he will vote for Carrico. He was satisfied with him and he trusted that the Board together makes a better decision than one person. Any of the three would be acceptable and it is just a matter of personality. He thought Carrico will advance and is going to move forward.

Schleiff said his enthusiasm stood out. Bruno hoped that would translate back into the department. He noted there have been many changes since he (Bruno) came on the Board. He would like to see the department to continue to advance and, when the new chief is in place, that there is an attitude that we intend to do better. Not that we are not doing a good job now but we are always looking to do better. Garron said this is no reflection on the other two candidates. Their education, background and the time they spend in firefighting shows they are dedicated. He just felt Carrico is a better fit.

Moved by Garron and seconded by Schleiff, Board unanimously voted to enter into contract discussions with William C. Carrico II relative to becoming the Halifax Fire Chief. Bruno will talk with Carrico and set up an appointment to meet with him. He hoped that within the next month Carrico can come on board.

The Board briefly discussed organizing a welcoming ceremony for the new Fire Chief once negotiations have been completed.

GENERAL MAIL/BUSINESS

A. Regionalization

The Police Chief and Acting Fire Chief Bosworth had provided Garron with his input on potential regionalization opportunities. Garron noted that no decisions will be made; the group is just putting together a list of suggestions for OCPC to look into.

B. Petition Article - Rezone Portion of Plymouth Street/Alger

Moved by Garron and seconded by Schleiff, Board unanimously voted to submit to the Planning Board a May 2010 Annual Town Meeting petition article to rezone a portion of Plymouth Street.

C. Authorized Signatures

Moved by Garron and seconded by Schleiff, Board unanimously designated Town Administrator Charles Seelig as the primary signature for the Selectmen Office payroll.

D. Use of Town Green - COA Annual Cookout

Moved by Garron and seconded by Schleiff, Board unanimously granted the Council on Aging use of the Town Green on Wednesday, August 19th, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. for the annual senior cook-out.

E. Change in Civil Service Appointment Procedures

The Board acknowledged the Civil Service Commission will begin delegating the civil service appointment and promotion approval process to municipalities effective September 1st. Each municipality will be responsible for (a) contacting candidates, (b) making appointments and promotions from the eligible list and (c) providing bypass and selection reasons to the

applicants in accordance with civil service law and rules. HRD will no longer review and approve appointments and promotions. Bruno noted this covers the police patrol officers and supervisory officers. He had talked with the Police Chief who will advise whether or not someone from the Selectmen's Office should attend a meeting on this change.

F. Bridge Inspection Report - River Street

The Board acknowledged receipt of the River Street Bridge inspection report from Mass Highway which has been forwarded to the Highway Surveyor for review and/or action.

DISCUSSION

A. Recycling Fee

Bruno noted this fee was established at a town meeting and the Board is charged with the responsibility of determining what the fee should be each fiscal year. The Town Administrator and Principal Assessor recommend the fee remain at \$50/household for Fiscal 2010. Referring to data received from the Town Accountant, Garron noted the \$50 fee has proven to be sufficient and provides a slight surplus that will offset unforeseen expenses. The collection rate is 91%.

Schleiff did not have the history but disliked the fee. While he got information from the Selectmen Assistant as to why it was established and the rate seems to create a positive cash flow, he questioned whether the fee needed to be at \$50. He wanted to ascertain information on what revenues were coming in from the commodities collected by the Town.

Bruno provided a brief history that the cost of recycling had been covered by the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund from tipping fees when the BFI landfill was in operation. That fund has now been drawn down and the program had to be funded by a separate fee or from general revenue in which case \$151,000 would be taken from other departments. Otherwise, the program would have to be eliminated which creates other issues for the Town. He suggested meeting with the Highway Surveyor Robert Badore and Recycling Administrative Assistant Susan Johnston to go over the budget.

The Board took the matter under advisement and will meet with Badore and Johnston on September 8th to review the Fiscal 2010 budget as well as the current market for recycling commodities.

B. Liaison List

The Board postponed discussion of the Selectmen liaison list.

There being no further business, moved by Garron and seconded by Schleiff, Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Michael J. Schleiff
Clerk

/bfs