

BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
SELECTMEN MEETING  
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2009 - 7:30 P.M.  
SELECTMEN MEETING ROOM

---

Meeting came to order at 7:30 p.m. with Selectmen John H. Bruno II, Troy E. Garron and Michael J. Schleiff present.

The following business was discussed:

Bruno announced he would not be a candidate for re-election in May 2010. Nomination papers will be available from the Town Clerk's office in January. Bruno thanked the residents of Halifax for the opportunity to serve on the Board for the past fifteen years. He felt he had accomplished much and hoped he had served the Town well. He felt this was the appropriate time for him to step down. Garron stated he has enjoyed working with Bruno for the past fifteen years, that Bruno's legal knowledge and his dedication have been an asset to the Board and that Bruno always made decisions on what was in the best interest of the Town. Schleiff was heartedly disappointed he would not be working with Bruno for a longer period of time; one of the reasons he ran for Selectmen was the opportunity to work with both Bruno and Garron.

**AGENDA**

Selectman Schleiff added a report on a meeting with Silver Lake and visits with the Water Department and Historical Commission. Selectman Bruno added an Executive Session on collective bargaining issues.

With the above additions, the Agenda for Tuesday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, was unanimously approved.

**MINUTES**

No Selectmen Meeting Minutes were considered or approved

**ABATEMENTS/BILLS/COMMITMENTS/WARRANTS**

Moved by Schleiff and seconded by Garron, Board unanimously affirmed committing for collection Ambulance Commitment #10 in the amount of \$36,532.00

Moved by Schleiff and seconded by Garron, Board unanimously affirmed approval for the payment of Withholding Warrant #36 in the amount of \$105,644.64

Moved by Schleiff and seconded by Garron, Board unanimously affirmed approval for the payment of Vendor Warrant #37 in the amount of \$288,479.95

Moved by Schleiff and seconded by Garron, Board unanimously affirmed approval for the payment of the following Selectmen bills dated 11/10/09:

National Grid (Town Hall electric/Oct) .....	\$682.89
Patriot Ledger (three-ad employment package) .....	\$659.00
Harry B. Harding & Son (envelopes) .....	\$121.30
Michael Schleiff (mileage) .....	\$ 40.70

Moved by Schleiff and seconded by Garron, Board unanimously committed for collection Mobile Home License Fee #11 in the amount of \$5,160.00

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

Payroll Warrant	#38	\$324,313.36
Vendor Warrant	#39	\$ 46,988.32
Withholding Warrant	#40	\$114,645.85

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

Deutsch Williams Brooks (legal services/Oct) .....	\$2,191.41
Gilman and Associates (legal services/Oct) .....	\$ 925.00
Spinale and Spinale (legal services/Oct) .....	\$ 742.50
Malloy Lynch Bienvenue LLP (Fiscal 2009 audit) .....	\$5,000.00
MEGA Property & Casualty Group (worker comp insurance) ..	\$3,978.00
Michael Schleiff (fee - ATFC workshop) .....	\$ 40.00

The Board acknowledged payment of the Selectmen Office Payroll for the period ending November 7, 2009 in the amount of \$6,081.84

The Board acknowledged the following Payments to the Treasurer:

<u>TURNOVER</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
#09	\$ 595.00
#10	\$ 1,395.00
#11	\$ 1,250.00
#12	\$ 30.00
#13	\$ 25.00
#14	\$ 1,900.00
#15	\$ 225.00

**JOAN TOWNE - COUNCIL ON AGING APPLICANT**

The Board met with Joan Towne relative to her application to serve on the Council on Aging.

Towne volunteers at the Senior Center once a week and is the secretary to TRIAD. She would like to get as many programs as possible for seniors and is interested in seeing more senior housing as well as a new Senior Center. She stated that Pope's Tavern has very small rooms, is not handicap accessible on the second floor, and does not have the facilities for certain programs. She was COA's Volunteer for the Year for 2009.

Moved by Garron and seconded by Schleiff, Board unanimously appointed Joan Towne of 55 Pond Street to the Council on Aging to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Beverly Smith, term to expire June 30, 2011.

**VETERANS AGENT DECISION**

Garron was ready to make a decision but understood an additional person has come forward. Bruno recapped the reason for the current Veterans Agent leaving and the process used to fill the position. He noted that, after the Board interviewed applicants last meeting, another individual (Paul Finch) has submitted a resume and has requested to be considered.

Garron felt it might be unfair to those candidates that met the deadline. Schleiff noted that the only reason a decision was delayed from last meeting was to allow residents to provide their input on which individual they felt met what they were looking for in a Veterans Agent.

Paul Finch was present and said he had just heard the Town was again looking for a Veterans Agent. He knew that one had been hired recently and did not know she had given notice that she could not continue. Finch said he has always had a passion for the job. When Harold Pratti was the Veterans Agent, Finch was the Assistant Veterans Agent for two years but could only assist Pratti on a limited basis. At that time, Finch's goal was to be a District Commander for the American Legion. He has now accomplished that goal. Finch has helped veterans and taken them to the health care facility in Jamaica Plain. The service officer's job for the American Legion is very similar to the duties of the Veterans Agent. Finch has lived in Halifax for many years and is computer literate. Under Pratti, he had brought in the color guard for parades, etc. and did some home visits. He has done home visits as the service officer for the Legion as well.

Schleiff stated the other applicants provided paperwork with their resumes including letters of recommendation, etc. Finch said he had recommendations from Pratti, the Assistant Veterans Agent in Hanson and the Raynham Veterans Agent. He did not know he would be interviewed tonight and did not bring the

additional paperwork with him. In response to a question from Garron, Finch said his work with the American Legion would no longer interfere with his duties as the Veterans Agent; his position now is more of a figurehead.

Bruno felt Avitabile was impressive with thirty two years of service. He started as a private and ended up a colonel. However, he did not have any experience with regard to what a Veterans Agent does. Charles had twenty-four years in the Navy, had extensive experience with veterans services, and was the full-time veterans agent in East Bridgewater. Bruno felt he would be a very good Veterans Agent but was concerned that his full-time position in East Bridgewater could interfere with his availability to Halifax. It is clear he would not be here for parades and other ceremonial events. Finch has been in Halifax and has a long history with the American Legion. The Board has interviewed LeBouef twice. In addition to being in the military, he has been a civil employee for the army with duties similar to that of a Veterans Agent and is knowledgeable about the programs. LeBouef would be Bruno's choice.

Garron agreed with Bruno. Avitabile was personable and had the contacts with the American Legion and VFW. Charles was an excellent candidate but Garron too was concerned with the fact he had a full-time obligation in another town. LeBouef was who Garron was leaning toward. Being a disabled vet himself, LeBouef understands the system and how to help someone. Finch worked with Pratti for two years and other people in the field. With Finch, Garron's only concern was being fair to the others who got their information in on time.

Schleiff thought Charles could walk in and do the job immediately. His concern also was the time commitment he had to East Bridgewater and not being available for events in Halifax. Avitabile is involved in his own town (Hanover) and Schleiff felt, if the Agent's job became available in Hanover, he would jump on that. LeBouef seemed more available and flexible and willing to learn the job. Schleiff appreciated Finch coming in. He seemed well qualified, but the other applicants submitted their information on time. In addition, residents would not have an opportunity to comment as they did on the other three. Schleiff would like to keep Finch's name in case the position opens up again.

Bruno stated that LeBouef was both in the military and worked as a civilian for the military. He processed paperwork and dealt with the same things a Veterans Agent does. He thought he would be the best candidate.

Moved by Bruno and seconded by Schleiff, Board unanimously appointed Gary LeBouef of 682 School Street, Pembroke to the position of Veterans Agent, Service Officer, Burial Agent contingent upon his acceptance of the position, term to expire June 30, 2009.

Seelig will contact the current Veterans Agent, Roxanne Whitbeck, as soon as he has confirmation that LeBouef will accept the position.

**TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT - FISCAL 2011 BUDGET**

Seelig reported the Town will have fewer dollars in Fiscal 2011. The bottom line will have to be cut 2-1/2% from the Fiscal 2010 budget. Some line items are set and cannot be cut (i.e. insurance, retirement assessment, etc.) and may increase which results in other areas being cut more than the projected 2-1/2%. This is not a one-year situation. State and local revenues are leveling off. The financial situation is expected to remain the same, at best, for the next several years with possible additional decreases in funding. There will be significant drops in Chapter 70 and state aid - probably 10-15%. If money is available in free cash and stabilization, those accounts will be the sources of funding for capital expenditures. Major projects will have to be funded by debt exclusions. Garron noted the retirement assessment will be going up about 13% because the State will be taking over the Sheriff's Department.

Seelig said he will be meeting with the Finance Committee and delivering the same message to them. The budget letter will be going out in the next few weeks and, at its meeting on November 24<sup>th</sup>, the Board will need to finalize the message going to Departments.

Garron said this brings to the forefront that every possible way to save money must be investigated to avoid cutting crucial services - i.e. energy savings, stimulus money that can be used for highway and roadways, etc. Also, he was not sure what the school was going to do, noting the town has been at odds with the school in the past.

At this point, Schleiff brought up the meeting held with Silver Lake. Kingston and Plympton had asked for the meeting to see where costs could be cut. Schleiff provided the Board with a hand-out given at the meeting on money-saving ideas. Both towns suggested postponing or continuing town meetings until the beginning of June to deal with financial matters when the State figures are more solid. Seelig said the downfall to that is the school will have to send out layoff notices to more teachers who, in turn, will file for unemployment and increase that cost. Schleiff said one suggestion was for retirement age teachers to retire to retain those teachers with lower salaries.

Seelig said that Kingston and Plympton are indicating their numbers are worse than Halifax. It is unlikely that Halifax will be the deciding vote. None of this is surprising to the Superintendent and School Committee. They were aware the Fiscal 2011 budget would not look like the budget this year.

Schleiff believed that, because of the projected harsh winter and illness, the school year will extend into July. He did not feel that holding off until June for town meeting would be as big a deal. Seelig believed this is about as good a picture as there is going to be. A harsh winter means more money needed for ice and snow; one additional special need student substantially increases the special needs budget, etc. In fact, there is a greater possibility the numbers will get worse.

Bruno asked Selig to draft a letter fro the Board to review next meeting.

Schleiff asked if, come May, there are newly elected officials, how that works with regard to the budget. Bruno said the new person will have to live with the budget voted at the May Town Meeting. Once that budget is set, it cannot be changed without another town meeting.

Garron noted the Town's employees work very hard to live within their budgets. It is this reason the Town is in better financial shape than most other towns.

## **REPORTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **A. 2010 Recycling Fee Abatements**

The Board considered the abatements by category and voted its decision based on bill number rather than property address so as to not publicize those homes that are vacant for all or part of the year. Following is the action taken:

#### **VACANT HOUSE**

One of the requests under this category asked for abatement on the basis there was no water usage for twelve months even though the water was not shut off. Schleiff noted that some people with seasonal homes have the water shut off or blow out the lines because they do not live in the area and cannot check on the house on a regular basis. If someone is able to frequently check the house so that it looks occupied, they would not shut the water off and would not go through the expense to have the water shut off and then turned back on. In his opinion, people who are still paying the water bill but can show there is no water usage fall into a different category.

Bruno said the policy from last year was that, even if the house is vacant, it is subject to all fees and can be occupied at any time. Garron said part of that discussion was the owner would have to show that something was shut off such as electricity, water, etc. Bruno reiterated, if it is vacant today, it does not mean it will be vacant tomorrow. Schleiff said that is the same as a new home; it can be occupied at any time. Bruno said it could but it does not happen that quickly. The policy was set to have some way of measuring. If there is no water, then no one is using the house. That is what the Board used as a measure. Schleiff pointed out they could come down and turn the water on and use it. Bruno said that is true but noted the recycling fee was \$50. Schleiff said a lot of people are out of work and every \$50 is important. Bruno said that everyone pays \$50. The fee is spread amongst everyone to be fair. Bruno said to include no water usage as a basis for abatement would require a change in policy. He would rather make changes in policy before the bills go out rather than once they have been issued.

Moved by Bruno and seconded by Garron, Board voted as follows to not grant an abatement for Bill #2062, #2495 and #1302 on the basis that the house is vacant:

John H. Bruno II	-	Yes
Troy E. Garron	-	Yes
Michael J. Schleiff	-	abstained

Vote passed by a 2/3 vote.

BUILDING UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Moved by Bruno and seconded by Garron, Board unanimously granted a full abatement for Bill #0752 and #2429 for which the building is under construction and no occupancy permit has been issued.

DO NOT USE SERVICE

Moved by Bruno and seconded by Garron, Board unanimously voted to not grant an abatement for Bill #1470, #0288, and #2231 on the basis they do not use the Town's recycling program. The Board noted the law requires all households to recycle and, unless the owner can show they have use of another recycling program, an abatement cannot be granted.

IN-LAW EXISTS BUT IS NOT USED

Moved by Bruno and seconded by Garron, Board unanimously voted to not abate \$50 from Bill #0053 on the basis that the in-law apartment at this address is no longer used. If the owner can provide verification from the Building Inspector that the in-law apartment is no longer being used and has been dismantled somehow and the special permit granted for the in-law apartment has been surrendered, the Board will reconsider the request on that basis.

PRIVATE RECYCLING

The Board postponed action until its next meeting on whether or not to abate Bill #2329 on the basis the individual is authorized to use another recycling facility. The Board gave the property owner until next meeting to provide written proof he/she has such use through the end of Fiscal 2010.

SALE PENDING

Moved by Bruno and seconded by Garron, Board unanimously voted to not grant an abatement for Bill #2081, #1496, and #1127 based on the fact that

a change in ownership is expected. The current owner is responsible for the payment of the bill at the time it is due. Reimbursement of the fee is between the current owner and the buyer and should be determined between the parties as part of the sales agreement.

SEASONAL HOME - NEED PROOF

Moved by Bruno and seconded by Garron, Board unanimously voted to not grant an abatement for Bill #1413 on the basis this property is used on a seasonal basis. If the property owner can provide proof certain that the home is shut down for at least six months out of the year, the Board will consider reducing the fee to \$25.

SEASONAL HOME - PROOF PROVIDED

Moved by Bruno and seconded by Garron, Board unanimously voted to abate \$25 from Bill #2245, #0520, and #1391 on the basis it is a seasonal home and the owner provided proof certain the house is shut down for six months or more.

Moved by Bruno and seconded by Garron, Board unanimously voted to abate in full Bill #0765 on the basis the owner provided proof the home has been shut down year-round for the past seven years.

B. Traffic Study Safety Update

The Board acknowledged a report from Police Chief Michael Manoogian for the Public Safety Group consisting of the Highway Surveyor, Fire Chief, Police Chief, and the Elementary School Principal. The purpose of the group is to recommend changes to improve the safety of the crosswalks in Halifax. The Group identified several issues that need to be addressed as soon as possible which included eliminating the existing passing lane on Plymouth Street in proximity to crosswalks, diamond style roadway identifiers at each crosswalk and changing existing signage to clearly identify the crosswalks and removal of passing lane zones. Seelig reported the passing lane has already been eliminated and the striping changed. Plymouth Street is a Town road and therefore did not require State approval.

The Board agreed to send a letter to the group thanking them for their good work. Schleiff said has been attending the meetings. The patrols and crosswalk stings will continue. He thought it might be a good idea to have a formal committee. In addition, a program such as "Adopt a Crosswalk" could be used to fund needed changes and upkeep of the crosswalk. Bruno felt it was best to let the public safety people handle the issue at this time.

**GENERAL MAIL BUSINESS**A. Ambulance Abatement - Rescinded

Moved by Bruno and seconded by Garron, Board unanimously rescinded its vote taken on September 8, 2009 to abate the following sums from the following Ambulance accounts:

<u>AMBULANCE ACCOUNT</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
2001	\$102,027.00
2002	\$ 697.28

These amounts had previously been abated.

B. Live Entertainment Permit - Wood/Pine Street

Moved by Bruno and seconded by Garron, Board unanimously affirmed its approval for Permit #10-23 issued to Bruce Wood of 74 Pine Street for live entertainment on Sunday, October 25<sup>th</sup>, from 2:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

C. Old Colony Elder Services Contract

Moved by Bruno and seconded by Garron, Board unanimously approved and authorized the Council on Aging Director to sign the contract between the Halifax COA and Old Colony Elder Services for the purpose of operating a nutrition program in Halifax.

D. Hemlock Lane Landfill Settlement Agreement

Bruno noted that neither the Board of Health nor the contractor had signed the Settlement Agreement and felt those signatures should be on the document prior to the Board of Selectmen signing off. Seelig will forward to the parties for their signatures.

E. Recognition of Fire Department Personnel

Moved by Garron and seconded by Schleiff, Board unanimously voted to send letters of thank you to those members of the Fire Department involved in a recent ambulance call in which their decisive action saved the patient's life.

F. Flag Event Recognition

Comcast cable operator Bob Staples asked if the Board would present certificates of thanks to the volunteers who created and produced the "The Flag in Our Hands" event at the Country Club earlier this year. He will prepare the certificates but asked that the Board sign them and present them at

a future Selectmen's meeting. The Selectmen will be happy to do so at a date to be determined.

G. Use of Town Seal - Cable Show

Moved by Bruno and seconded by Garron, Board unanimously granted Robert Staples use of the Town Seal as part of the introduction for his new cable show "Spotlight on Halifax."

H. Logan Airport Noise

Seelig stated that previously the Board has been notified by the FAA about possible increases in air traffic and noise over Halifax due to possible changes in flight paths to Logan. The work on this continues and the FAA has contacted the Board again about this matter inviting the Board to choose someone to represent Halifax on the Community Advisory Committee. Seelig will find out when the meetings are being held and report back to the Board. Schleiff asked if the East Monponsett Lake is part of Logan Airport for seaplane landings, noting that markers are set up every year on that lake. Bruno and Garron believed the markers were put up for a slalom ski course and not related to seaplane activity.

I. Alcoholic Beverage License Inspections

The Selectmen reported all inspections had been done and all establishments were in compliance.

J. Inter-fund Borrowing

The Board acknowledged a request from the Town Treasurer for permission to borrow from the Stabilization Fund to the General Fund. As the property tax bills have gone out, this may not be necessary. The Board supported this action and will sign the necessary documents if it becomes necessary to enter into inter-fund borrowing.

K. Flags At Half Mast - Lloyd Wright

The Board noted the passing of long-time resident Lloyd Wright. Seelig stated he will have the flag lowered when the timing is appropriate.

**WATER DEPARTMENT**

Schleiff reported he spent the day with the Water Department and viewed the Richmond Park facility. He was impressed with the operation of the Department and the employees, noting department personnel clean the filters themselves and

monitor operations 24/7 year-round. The certificates received by the Department require a clean record for five years before they are awarded. He expressed his appreciation for the excellent job they do.

**HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

Schleiff acknowledged the volunteers who serve on the Commission which is currently working on the Council on Aging Project. He noted that a man in his late twenties was actively interested in the work of the Commission and it was nice to see a younger person involved with the history of the town.

**VETERANS DAY**

Garron hoped everyone would come out and honor the Town's veterans tomorrow, November 11<sup>th</sup>.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Moved by Schleiff and seconded by Garron, Board voted as follows to enter into Executive Session at 9:50 p.m. to discuss collective bargaining issues:

John H. Bruno II     -   Yes  
Troy E. Garron       -   Yes  
Michael J. Schleiff   -   Yes

Bruno announced that no statement would be made at the end of the Executive Session and the Board would not reconvene in open session.

-----

Moved by Garron and seconded by Schleiff, Board voted as follows to come out of Executive Session at 10:38 p.m.

John H. Bruno II     -   Yes  
Troy E. Garron       -   Yes  
Michael J. Schleiff   -   Yes

There being no further business, moved by Garron and seconded by Schleiff, Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 10:38 p.m.

-----  
Michael J. Schleiff  
Clerk

/bfs