

Members present: Kevin McCormick Christopher A. Rucho
Allen Phillips John O'Brien
Members absent: Steven Quist

Mr. McCormick convened the meeting Board of Selectmen at 7:00 p.m. He explained the purpose of the meeting is to gather public comment on the structure of our DPW Director position. One of the goals established by the Board was hold more public forms on important issues facing the town. In a couple of months the Board will hold a meeting to gain input from our residents so that we can develop a strategic plan for our public lands such as the Mixter Building, landfill, pool and pine grove. Tonight they plan to listen to comment, review the information and make a decision on how the position will be structured at their next meeting on April 6.

Mr. Phillips stated that he is not sold on any one way of doing this or how it should operate. Any ideas that people have will be beneficial and helpful to the Board.

Mr. McCormick noted that the Board solicited comments and thus far, they received two responses. The first is from the Board of Cemetery Trustees. He read the following into the record. "Gentlemen, we are aware of the upcoming meeting to determine the direction the Selectmen should take regarding the duties and responsibilities for the replacement of John Westerling. The Trustees of the West Boylston Cemetery Department are unanimous in their feelings that the present way that our department is organized is the most practical and cost effective for the town. Our full time employee works five days a week, but not necessarily five in a row as he regularly has to work Saturdays to accommodate Saturday funerals. He substitutes another day as his day off as needed. He is also willing to go in when he has to meet a customer that needs to buy a lot. Our part time employee is an as needed and on call person and works mainly Spring and Fall when the weather is conducive to mowing and trimming This would not be possible if they were DPW employees because of the union. We also use Civil Court volunteers for Spring and Fall clean up which in the past has caused problems with other departments. We have a good relationship with the DPW and swap specialty equipment as needed. Please leave us alone so that we may remain praised, low key and uncontroversial. Sincerely, John F. McCormick, III, Peter N. Rotando and Aaron Goodale, III, Trustees.

The Board also received an email from Dick Smith, 46 Prospect Street. He states "it works, leave it alone, and hire John Wilson back."

Winthrop Handy, member of the Municipal Light Board asked if the position had been advertised. Mr. McCormick replied yes. He then asked if the Board could change what was advertised and Mr. McCormick replied yes. Mr. Phillips stated, we do not have to fill it for what it was advertised. We are looking for input on whether we should have it as an administrative position or a working type superintendent, who is out in the trenches with the guys. Mr. Rucho added that it was advertised and the application deadline has closed. Mr. Gaumond noted that Mr. Rucho's statement is correct and we would have to re-advertise.

Denny Smith, Chairman of the Municipal Light Board, questioned what the Board of Selectmen thought about this and why would they want to go differently than they have in the past. He asked if it was a money issue. Mr. Phillips stated that it is not necessarily that we want to change it, however, before we fill the position we want to look at all the options of whether to go with an administrator, a working superintendent, or sharing the position with another town. Mr. Smith asked if was successful the way it was. Mr. Phillips thinks it worked well and is not entirely convinced it should not be a working superintendent. Mr. Smith questioned whether the Board would want to have two superintendents. Mr. Phillips suggested hiring one person into the role and having the Administrative Assistant assist with some of the duties. Mr. Smith asked so when you hire this

person he would work with the Administrative Assistant and all the employees. Mr. Phillips indicated yes.

Mr. McCormick thinks the job works well the way it is. With the amount of jobs the position is responsible for including trash, sewers, parks and rubbish and meeting with engineers and meeting with towns people, the individual does not have time to be out digging in a ditch. In 2004 when we created this position we combined the positions of sewer and DPW superintendents and we are getting a better product. If it becomes a position which works with the employees then we will have a union problem. Also, if we change to an entirely different organization we will have to go back to the legislature which could take six months to three years. He thinks we should stay the way it is, however, he is willing to listen to other ideas. Mr. Rucho feels it is an opportunity to save money. We are always talking about merging services with other towns and maybe we should start merging services in this town. Maybe we should start talking about it now for three years from now. He thinks it is an opportunity to talk about it. Mr. O'Brien agrees with everything said. This is a good opportunity for him to hear what people think and for our budget to work we have to look at this. He thinks it is a good process.

Mr. Smith asked working with other towns, have you had any opportunity to talk with the surrounding towns? Mr. Rucho advised that Mr. Gaumond put the word out and we had no response. He noted that both towns have to agree to the structure and somebody has to give up control. Mr. Smith asked do you feel the previous person was able to do the jobs and be saddled with all the work Mr. McCormick thinks he did a good job and we demand a lot. Mr. Smith commented when you think you can save money by having one person do all of these things. When you overload a person are you getting all the things done you wanted? Mr. O'Brien noted that we just did an evaluation for the previous person and we said he was doing a good job for the town.

Mr. Smith – was surprised that he was sending his notice to move on after a glowing report. The fact that he got a good report does not mean that he can do all of the things he was assigned to do. He does not know if that is the best thing for the town. Mr. Phillips would like to keep this more towards what we could do as it is not fair to discuss the previous individual in the position. He would like to keep the discussion more towards the position. Mr. Smith thought it was a lot of work for one man.

John DiPietro, 43 Campground Road, has lived here for 41 years and he gets around town often. He has seen a lot of superintendents come and go and the only ones who did an outstanding job were those born and brought up in town or had strong roots. For the rest of them the position was a stepping stone or retirement. We had a superintendent who used to be out plowing and others who stayed at home. Our roads were plowed well this year. He suggested taking a union member and raising him to Superintendent and he could freeze his union book. Then look for an engineer who could work with boards and save the town a tremendous amount of money. The foreman we have now can do drainage, catch basins and plow and he can do anything assigned. He believes he was held back. Leave the DPW as it is until we can get the highway functioning, the highway department has always been a problem since a certain superintendent left. He thinks we have the answer down for now put him on trail for one year and look for a good engineer.

Mr. John McCormick- Chairman of the Cemetery Trustees. Reports that they are entrusted to take care of the most valued things people have, our loved ones after they pass away. Mt. Vernon runs very well because all we have to worry about is our cemetery. Before you start to think about combining you have to know what each of these departments do and how they function. We are self-supporting except the Superintendent's pay the town gives us that and the rest, fertilizer and machinery we pay for. We are non-union and if Cemetery runs into trouble we can hop onto the tractor because we are not breaking union laws. We job out digging graves as it is much cheaper. We are open year round. Our person would not be much help to the highway department when they are plowing in the winter

months. It takes four hours to plow the Cemetery for a small storm and 8 or more for a heavy storm. Last winter we buried 18 plus folks, and we began doing winter burials three to four years ago. Because we are a one-man operation, burials are handled by the Superintendent. We operate a lot of Saturday, as it is a preferred date for burials. Record keeping is a big problem for us and is done by the Superintendent. He has to process all the deeds, make a lot card, keep two lot books, one for Town Clerk's Office and we keep the other. Record all sales of lots, turn in the money regularly, and prepare bill schedules. The Superintendent sells lots and has to go and show them to people. Our equipment is not in good shape and we are still using carbon paper my father donated 20 years ago. When the Board of Selectmen was getting rid of their old chairs, Mrs. Lucier called to let us know and we took them. The Trustees voted to keep our salary at \$1. If it is not broke, please do not try to fix it.

John Wilson, Chairman, West Boylston Water District. He states as a resident I appreciate the Board of Selectmen taking the time for this type of forum for input. From my perspective there are quite a lot of questions that need to be answered. Does the Board feel they want to create a department that wants to do projects or be a maintenance department? I have been a public works professional for 18 years. Every town has the same issue of money and streamlining. We have a small town, very spread out, difficult town for workers to be able to get out there and do a good job of snow plowing without the proper equipment. They key is about all you plan to have them do. When I was involved we proceeded to have some of the employees trained as sewer operators and because of our political tug of war it was thrown by the wayside. Now you are faced with contract operations and spend a lot of money. That person has to be an administrator, deal with the public and somebody who will pitch in when needed. Experience in getting into the trench, it is a clearly different role. Is the person going to be a public works director versus a working superintendent. A lot of the administrative function can be done by different people. The Administrative Assistant for the department can handle things. You do not need an engineer as Chapter 90 money will pay for engineering. Given the size of the town the town needs somebody who is working foreman, superintendent, and grass-roots level. Help the guys and also plan. He thinks the way he town is split, Water District superintendent, Parks, Cemetery it speaks to the home town atmosphere of West Boylston. He does not think we should look at creating the City of Worcester. Things get much more complicated, more equipment, more people, better facilities the volunteer type atmosphere of elected officials do an excellent job. The Water District is very proud of the quality of the water in West Boylston. It does not happen by getting lost in a big public works department. He thinks the Water District does an excellent job. We have extended efforts and willingness to work with the town as far as the sewers are concerned. They are willing to help, however, if it involves costs to the district the cost has to be paid for. We had initial discussions with the two boards on billing and monitoring. You cannot expect all the rate payers to foot the bill as not everyone in Wet Boylston has sewers. Willing to sit with the Board of Selectmen and Sewer Commission to look at ways of being creative. West Boylston is a small community. We have a pretty heavy burden with the water and the Wachusett Reservoir we should look towards tapping into the cooperation with DCR and create common ground. He feels we should gain assistance from the state and he also thinks it is a good idea to have a forum.

Val Pruneau, 29 Pinecroft Ave. states that he had the privilege when he served on the Board of Selectmen to work with Leon Gaumond and the highway department. We lack the experience of a contractor who has the background for road building and maintenance and works directly with the men. We have the lowest amount of personnel ever and we do not have anyone left on there with years of experience as we have been fortunate in the past. We need somebody who can lead them along. You can hire somebody with engineering background and not with a stamp and they get the same job done. Mr. Phillips asked if he is talking a combined administrator/working superintendent? Mr. Pruneau replied yes, he has to work hand in hand with the man and that is what we really need.

Stan Szczurko, 24 Woodland Heights, Vice Chair, Water District. He believes that the Water District and the departments as they are organized right now are working well. The Water District is running efficiently and we as Commissioners feel we have accomplished quite a bit. On the position, he is an engineer by profession and feels you do have to have some leadership to assist Leon Gaumond with the engineering aspects of the town. Engineer, manager general background is what we should look at and a civil engineer requirement. He is not sure where the town is with the Stormwater Protection Act. On issues with road maintenance and so forth an engineer can propose bids and run them by Mr. Gaumond. There are bids that are required to be looked at when contracts are bid. The town is running well at this time. With the loss of John Westerling somebody has to come in to assist Mr. Gaumond. His personal view is somebody with an engineering background, and 8-10 years municipal government.

Winthrop Handy, Municipal Light Plant, asked if there are some long range budget projections you have looked at as you look at what you are going to put in place? He added that it seems with DCR and MWRA and that business model that the town is headed for disaster in addition to inflation and fuel going to \$5 or \$6 a gallon. He would like to see trash bags not quite so flimsy and feels DCR and MWRA have to have a bigger responsibility as they own half of the town. They should plow more of the town. The MLP works with Boylston Light Department. We shared a street sweeper with Boylston in the past and maybe we could share an engineer with them. The state it not going to bail us out any more. We could call on other towns for use of equipment. With the light board, the new solar panels we are trying to keep the ratepayers money. Since they went up we provided power for 288 homes a month. We are trying to approach DCR because we need more land. The sewer rates in Worcester are increasing and the sewer line done in 1930 will need to be redone. He thinks we need to develop financial projections and meet with MWRA and say you are bankrupting the town. We should tell them to take our sewer system back or give us some kind of relief and not force other people to have added expense. He thinks this meeting is very important as we do have to reach out to these other department. He walks the Cemetery in the morning and they do a good job. We have a business plan that is going to put us in a very bad place.

Peter Rotando, speaking as a private individual. He has always felt water and sewer belong together and he thinks the town needs an engineer but not a head engineer. We have young people in the Water District who are well trained. The highway department when I was young had 10 people. We have \$800,000 worth of equipment and we are constantly working to keep that running. When it comes time for snow they are behind the gun if the trucks are down as they are responsible for snow and road safety. We should decide whether we are going to be a construction or a maintenance operation. Now we have limited staff. He questioned how much have we used in state aid – we have available in the Worcester office probably \$400,000. Some times the highway can do cross drains. To ask the highway department to do all these tasks and no man power puts us on the edge we should have either construction operation or a maintenance program and keep the rolling stock going. When they have to worry about catch basins, tree dump and street sweeper. We do not have the crew of 25 years ago. Maybe we should go towards combining water and sewer department and keep highway separate.

Mr. McCormick states that he we appreciate all the comments. Mr. Wilson, understands we are under a time constraint, however, he asked if there any thoughts about creating a committee to report back to the Board of Selectmen for the long range. Mr. McCormick stressed the need to get somebody in place because we have a lot of road projects coming up and they need to be completed. We need somebody here for that. He thinks we should be doing sewers ourselves, however, for now we need the guy in who can analyze that and give us input. It is not as easy to combine sewer and water. Mr. Rotando suggested hiring a Clerk of the Works for some of the paving operations. Mr. McCormick

feels we have a need for somebody to do more than that.

Mr. Phillips will not be here on April 6th. He thinks we heard a lot of good comments and discussion. He also recommends reviewing this with a small group individuals with the expertise in this area and hire a temporary person or somebody for a one-year contract and have a group look at this whole issue. He would hire an administrator/superintendent or somebody with engineering background, for one year and have two members of the Board of Selectmen serve on a committee to review this. Mr. McCormick appreciates all the comments and thanked everyone.

With no further business to come before the Board, motion Mr. Phillips at 8:00 p.m. to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Rucho, all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved: April 6, 2011

Nancy E. Lucier

Kevin M. McCormick, Chairman

Allen R. Phillips, Vice Chairman

Christopher A. Rucho, Selectman

John J. O'Brien, Selectman