

SELECTMEN'S WORKSHOP
Minutes of 8/13/07
4:10 p.m.

Selectmen:

Frank S. Michel, Chairman
Peter F. Brothers, Vice Chairman
Robert C. Flanders
Miller C. Lovett
Colette Worsman

Town Manager:

Carol M. Granfield

Recording Clerk:

Karin Landry

The Workshop was opened by Chair Frank Michel at 4:10 p.m. He introduced the Board and Water & Sewer Department Superintendent Bob Hill. He asked that comments be directed through the Board.

W 07-14 Water Status Update

Town Manager Carol Granfield introduced Bob Hill, who presented a water status update and made his recommendations regarding the water ban:

- A clearwell drawdown test, water storage tank fill test, calibration of raw water meter, replacement of finished water meter, replacement of relay switches for water storage tank level indication, and installation of redundant water storage tank level indicator have been completed.
- A coordination meeting with New England Instruments, KV Partners, and D. Langsfeld was held.
- An evaluation of filter units #1, #2, and #4 has been done and replacements to equipment have been made as indicated.
- There is ongoing training and retraining of personnel, and employees are being reassigned to plant operations on a more frequent basis.
- A seasonal operation protocol has been completed.
- A maintenance schedule for all equipment is almost complete.
- Rebuilding of the raw water pump is ongoing.
- A request has been made for a proposal for independent evaluation of all equipment and critical control and monitoring operations.
- A full capacity test will be scheduled after independent evaluation.
- A leak detection program/meter reading for the last quarter is complete.

Although the investigation identified changes that needed to be made throughout the system, it is pointing at Unit #3 as the main source of the problem. Bob recommended not changing the ban allowing watering two days a week, and will further update the Board and make recommendations once an independent evaluation and a draw down of the tank has taken place in the ensuing week. The Board discussed efforts at leak detection. In response to the water capacity issue, protocols and

maintenance schedules have been established, and the Town will review policies in terms of hookups and usage. It is critical that the Board identify what must be done to allow for reasonable planning on the capital improvement side. Although repairs and improvements to the water treatment plant will solve the critical immediate shortage of water, it will not solve the long-term water shortage problem. The public needs to keep in mind that the long-term problem must be worked on as well. An ordinance amendment workshop is scheduled for August 27.

Chair Michel directed the Town Manager to prepare a memo setting forth the cost to the Town of the investigation to date, including consultants, travel expenses, and costs associated with anyone other than the consultants.

W 07-15 Disposition and Utilization of Town Property

The Town Manager introduced the agenda item. A workshop was held last fall regarding the disposition and utilization of Town property, and no final decision was made. Approval of Warrant Article 15 at the Town Meeting authorized the Board to sell either, both or none of the old Police Station/Town Hall Annex. The properties are being evaluated for the most effective use of space. A comparative market analysis indicates that the Police Station is more marketable than the Town Hall Annex for commercial purposes. She set forth the current assessments and costs associated with both buildings and the Ambrose Building, which is currently being leased by the Town. Although the sale of one of the buildings will generate revenue, the Town needs to consider its long-term needs. She made a recommendation not to sell the Annex building, as it will eliminate options in the downtown area. Sale of the Police Station might be considered by the Board, if an acceptable offer is made. The operational costs of a vacant building need to be considered.

At the request of resident Peter Miller, Director of Administrative Services Brenda Vittner prepared an analysis of savings and cost factors if a building is sold. She calculated interest at the current rate of 4.99% on estimated sale prices. Revenue in the form of property taxes generated through the sale of a building should be considered. If the proceeds of the sale are applied to reduce the bond on the police station, the debt would be shortened by 2 ¾ years with less interest paid.

The goal of the workshop is to identify where the Town stands and provide the Board with information they need to identify a short-term plan. The Town Manager met with department heads and staff to develop a plan for utilization of the various buildings. The current lease of the Ambrose building needs to be renegotiated for a longer term if the Town wishes to continue utilizing that building. Dialogue ensued regarding the advantages of leasing as opposed to owning a building, and the Chair directed the Town Manager to investigate the cost of a 3 to 5 year lease of the Ambrose building.

Selectman Flanders spoke in favor of returning funds realized from the potential sale of the Annex building to the expendable trust fund they were withdrawn from when the building was purchased. The funds would be applied to future repairs and renovations to the Town Hall. Dialogue ensued regarding whether the sale of the Town Hall Annex is a viable option. The Board was in general agreement that selling the Annex would eliminate the possibility of making substantial renovations to the Town Hall and negatively impact the 5 to 10 year plan to alleviate pressures on the building.

Dialogue ensued regarding the sale of the old Police Station. Selectman Flanders believes it is short-sighted to sell the building at this point. Selectman Worsman would like to see the department heads in the same building as their department, but cautioned that moving into the Police Station would allow for further growth of Town employees. Selectman Brothers is not in favor of selling either building. He spoke in favor of making provisions for the future. There are major concerns with employee and customer parking on Main Street that must be taken into consideration. The Police Station location ties well into the downtown as a place to house employees and conduct business. He spoke in favor of an interim lease to house employees until more permanent accommodations can be made. He questioned the wisdom of selling the property in order to pay down the bond debt on the new station and having to spend considerably more to replace it in the future. Chair Michel pointed out the advantages of continuing to lease the Ambrose building and utilizing the Police Station for administrative offices, including delaying major renovations to the Main Street offices.

Dialogue ensued regarding the perception of a promise by the prior 3-person Board to sell the old Police Station and apply the proceeds to the debt of the new station. The members that served on the Board at that time were in agreement that the option was discussed as a way to minimize the indebtedness for the new station, but a commitment to do so was not made. Resident Peter Miller, who served on the Board at that time, supported selling the station, but no promise was made to the public to do so. Mr. Miller is not convinced that the building is critical to the Town's long-term needs. The sale of the station will significantly reduce the bond on the new station and save approximately \$20,000 per year in interest payments. He suggested that more dialogue take place between the Board and public before a decision is made. Selectman Worsman cautioned against not following through with promises to the public, and asked the Town Manager to review the minutes to verify what was said. Chair Michel read Warrant Article 6 from 2005: "See if the Town will raise and appropriate \$500,000 from general fund balance for police expendable trust fund previously established. If and when the current police station is sold at fair market value, monies received will be placed in the general fund unreserved fund balance compensating for \$500,000 that has been withdrawn."

Selectman Lovett suggested a "present value of the dollar" analysis take place to indicate if it is better to stay at the leased property or move to the old Police Station before any decisions are made.

The Chair directed the Town Manager to see that a present value analysis is done and the minutes are reviewed to see if they support the Board's current position. Dialogue took place regarding moving forward quickly on the matter. A follow-up work session will be scheduled and recommendations will be made by the Town Manager on how to best use the facilities.

Director of Public Works Mike Faller told the Board that significant dialogue has taken place regarding the use of the various buildings. A generator was installed at the old Police Station and it is linked electronically to the Town Hall, both of which are advantages for housing the Public Works Department on an interim basis. The ultimate goal for the Department is to have the complete operation under one roof by 2014.

The Board took a short recess at 6 p.m. before moving into a Non-Public meeting.

Respectfully submitted:

Carol M. Granfield, Town Manager

Frank S. Michel, Chairman

Karin Landry, Recording Clerk

Peter F. Brothers, Vice Chairman

Robert C. Flanders

Miller C. Lovett

Colette Worsman