

## D.P.W. STUDY COMMITTEE

August 18, 2010  
8:00 P.M.

Town Hall  
Area 014

Joint meeting with the Water Commissioners and the D.P.W. Study Committee. This meeting started at 6:30 in the Selectmen's Meeting Room.

At 8:00 p.m., the D.P.W. Study Committee moved to Area 014 to discuss the meeting.

Present: Charles Roberts, Kevin Conley, Mary Greendale, Carl Damigella and Thomas Chipman. Absent was Dennis Ferreira and Thomas Dumas.

Audience: Robert Nemet

Ms. Greendale asked about the Water Commissioners meeting. Mr. Roberts said that everyone got a chance to read Mr. Weise's email.

Mr. Roberts said that Mr. Weiss said that towns do have D.P.W.'s and they do work. Mr. Weiss's point was after three to four years of study the D.P.W. Committee has not come up with why. Mr. Roberts reply was that they can run the Water, Parks and Highway departments. They were looking for feedback. Mr. Roberts said that Mr. Weise said that the Departments are communicating better now. He said that they are working together. Mr. Roberts said that Mr. Valovcin's point was forming a D.P.W. would create a lot better communication, if they were all under one roof. He said that the Water and Highway were formed to make a D.P.W. they would not get the same level of buildings as the Police, Fire or Schools, he feel that they would get swept under the rug. Mr. Roberts said perhaps they should be under one roof whether they form a D.P.W. or not. They can still work together. Mr. Roberts asked how the Water Department felt toward being under the Water Commissioners or how they would be under the Board of Selectmen. He said that the only real comment came from Mr. Valovcin who said that if the D.P.W. were under the Board of Selectmen they could have a D.P.W. Committee or some advisory Board to help them.

Mr. Conley said they did not state any deficiencies. They did not know why it would work or why it wouldn't work as well. Mr. Conley said that they were status quo, advocates that is the impression he got. Mr. Roberts said that he agrees. He said that it is one of those things that he tends to agree with Mr. Valovcin. He said in the Water Department, you have the Superintendent in the downstairs of the Town Hall and the office staff on the second floor of Town Hall and the field workers at the foundry. Mr. Roberts said that it would work much better if everyone was in one location. Mr. Conley said that regardless if this passes at Town Meeting, the Highway and the Water will need a new facility. Mr. Conley said that they have needed a new buildings for years. Mr. Chipman asked what was in the foundry? Mr. Damigella said that there is one office and a few vehicles. Mr. Damigella said that Mr. Valovcin knows what is going on from day to day. Ms. Greendale said that Mr. Sharpin is not even on the same schedule as everyone else. Mr. Damigella said that the office staff does not even know when Mr. Sharpin comes to work. Ms. Greendale said that he does not check in, he just comes in

and goes down stairs. Sometimes they will call him and he will not answer the phone, so they have to now go down to see if he is in. Ms. Greendale said that at 10:00 a.m. you do not even know if he is in. Ms. Greendale said that it complicates the communication. Mr. Damigella said that there is a person at well #6 all day. Mr. Conley asked what does he do? Mr. Damigella said that he did not know. Mr. Chipman asked how many trucks does the Water Department have? Mr. Damigella said a truck for every worker. Mr. Conley said that they have 6 trucks. Mr. Chipman asked if the trucks go home with the workers? Mr. Damigella said only the on-call employee takes a truck home and Mr. Valovcin. Mr. Sharpin does not take a truck home. Mr. Nemet said that Mr. Sharpin does not have a truck, he has a portable radio. Ms. Greendale said that the radio in the office has not worked since 2008. Ms. Greendale said that the office staff can't get Mr. Sharpin to follow up on the radio. Mr. Damigella said that the communications are cell phones.

Mr. Roberts asked about the Highway Department. Mr. Damigella said that the buildings at Highway are in deplorable shape. Mr. Damigella said that the Highway Department leaves some of its equipment outside. They also put some equipment in the salt shed. Mr. Nemet said that they have to fold in the mirrors on the trucks to pack them into the garage. Mr. Damigella said what he got out of the water meeting is not necessarily Mr. Valovcins comments, but it seemed to be we are trying to say if you consolidate resources, it is financially more sound for the Town to do something. He said that the Water Department keeps bringing up the backhoe. Mr. Conley said that the D.P.W. Committee did not bring it up, the Water Department did. Mr. Damigella said that the most important thing that the Water Department could say is that they need to outsource the backhoe. Mr. Damigella said that Mr. Sharpin said that the Town has been so busy, the Town should have two backhoes. Mr. Damigella said that if they sat down and had a concrete plan in place, even though they do not have the finances now, they are moving in that direction. Mr. Chipman said that they could lease one. Mr. Damigella said that the Water Department does not even know how much money they will need for capital improvement? Mr. Nemet said that is how they sold the town on the water meters. They said the \$7.50 per quarter was going to go into a separate account. He said that in ten years, they would have a million dollars and pay cash for new meters. Mr. Roberts said that in all fairness, they said that they did not know all the answers. They knew in the future they would need to be replaced. Mr. Damigella said that the Water Department takes numbers out of the air. Mr. Damigella said that if a company knows how much money the Town has to work with, they will come close to the bid amount. Mr. Roberts said that bids should only be good for 60 days. Mr. Damigella said he would like to see if Mr. Sharpin was going to stay. Ms. Greendale said the he is going to retire. Mr. Damigella said that if he was going to stay or when he was here what he should of done was put a capital plan in place. First, he needed to do an assessment of what they have for pipes in certain areas of Town, and get it down to facts and figures. Ms. Greendale said that they are currently doing it. Ms. Greendale said that if you go back five years, the list of things that they had to do included the meters, changing of the billing and a bunch of

other things. She said that they have done a lot in the past few years. She said that the assessment of the infrastructure was one of them. She said that they really did not recognize how significant that was until they came across the 20% loss of water. Then suddenly, there was no loss of water anywhere except the slight loss of water everywhere. Mr. Roberts said that they were hoping the meters would tell them where the loss was. Ms. Greendale said that they did testing across town to highlight the places that had leaks. She said that it did not amount to 10%. She said that the pipes were made of cheese cloth. Mr. Chipman asked how many gallons of water were missing? Ms. Greendale said 10% of what we use. Mr. Conley said it was 20% of what we use. Mr. Chipman said that it is a lot of water to lose each day. Mr. Roberts said that is why there is all kinds of problems with the D.E.P. not allowing them to do anything until they find that water. Mr. Conley said that in his email that he sent out, he took the Parks out of the D.P.W. He left Highway and Water. He tried to review what has been going on. He put down the shared utilization of equipment. He said that he got it from Mr. Dellicker's report from the last Committee. He said that they would have to hire a competent Director, if they gave the D.P.W. their own Board of Commissioners if Parks were now involved you would have Park Commissioners, the Director will be able to tell the Park Commissioners that the fields will be taken care of. They will fertilize the fields, they will add loam as needed. He said that if they had people from the Water Department on this Board they can protect their turf. He said it should be a three or five member Board. The Selectmen can make an appointment, so that they can have a say. He does not think that the Selectmen want to take anything else on. Mr. Conley said that they will be adding the Highway Department to the Water Department. It is stream-line it is simple. Let Parks appoint a person. But, they can't appoint a current person. He said that the Water Commissioners are going away and they could give them a person. Mr. Conley said that all the Commissioners will be appointed at the start, then they would have to be elected. Mr. Roberts said three should be the commission of five. Mr. Roberts said that if they go to D.P.W. Commissioners, keep all the Water Commissioners they have valuable experience with what has been going on with the wells. He said that it will be useful information to set rates. Then the Board of Selectmen can appoint two people for 2 ½ years. Then when the term ends in the spring, they will be running for a D.P.W. Commissioner position. Then the following spring, is when you would be down to three people. He said that in 2013, the final Water Commissioner's term would be up and then they could run for the D.P.W. Commissioner. Mr. Damigella asked if all three Water Commissioners were going to be D.P.W. Commissioners? Mr. Roberts said yes then add two additional appointed by the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Damigella said that he went along with Mr. Conley and only have a three member board. Have the Water Commissioners appoint someone, the Board of Selectmen appoint someone and the Moderator appoint someone as the person at large. Mr. Damigella said that you will be setting a term that will expire on that board but he is still appointed to that position for two years. Mr. Damigella said that their terms are not all up at the same time. Ms. Greendale said that Mr. Weise is up next. Mr. Damigella said what if Mr. Weise is appointed to this for two years and then he says he is not running again, how would they take care of something like that? Mr. Roberts said that whether he is running or not the

next election in the spring you have one position for a D.P.W. Commissioner, or Mr. Weise can run and become a D.P.W. Commissioner or he could not run and someone else could run or they could both run and who ever gets elected. Mr. Damigella said that you will be staggering the election of the Commission as their term expires on the Water Commission. Mr. Roberts said yes. He said that it is hard to explain. He will put it down on paper and send it around. Ms. Greendale said that once you start talking about moving people around or doing anything, she said that when we had the water emergency all the Board members resigned and then we scrambled and put together a new Board. She said that a lot of information was lost. She said that we have to be careful and try and keep some of that knowledge. Ms. Greendale said that if Mr. Sharpin retires this fall we will lose the institutional capacity again. Mr. Conley said you keep one Water Commissioner on this Board, Mr. Conley said that it will not start until next spring. Mr. Damigella asked if this does not start until next spring when this all takes place and Mr. Weise decides not to run and you have someone new come in that hasn't got a clue as to what is going on how are you going to handle that? Mr. Damigella said that especially if you are throwing him into the fire of a D.P.W. Ms. Greendale said that you do not want to leave it that vulnerable. She said that would mean there would not be anybody that had any water experience. Mr. Roberts said what he wants is to keep all three Water Commissioners to make the D.P.W. Commission a five member board with an appointment of two from the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Damigella asked why don't you establish a Commission from the beginning as an elected board. That way it will not be so confusing. Mr. Damigella asked where would the knowledge come from? He said that knowledge is not coming from the elected officials, it will come from the employees that you hire as the supervisors. He said that the knowledge would come from the director. He said that it will be a tug of war to see who would have the most say and who should have the most attention on the Highway Department side or the Water Department. Mr. Damigella said that if you are going to have a Commission his vote would be to start it from the beginning. Mr. Damigella said that you will get a lot more knowledge that the five people that you are talking about have right now sitting. Mr. Roberts said that he was only talking about the Water Commissioners and the two that the Selectmen would appoint. Mr. Damigella asked what if no one from the Board of Selectmen wanted to serve on this Commission? Are they going to appoint someone at large. Mr. Roberts said yes. Like they did for the Conservation Commission. Mr. Damigella asked how are you going to handle the terms as they come up. Ms. Greendale said that the D.P.W. Director would have the Commission changing constantly for a few years. She said that it would be scary as an employee. Mr. Conley said that you can elect anyone by without any knowledge by a popular vote. Mr. Conley said that eventually this will be an elected board. Mr. Chipman said that this Board would eventually go from a five member Board to a three member Board. Ms. Greendale asked if Mr. Roberts could put this in writing. He said that would email it out to everyone. Ms. Greendale said that Mr. Sharpin was going to retire. Mr. Conley asked how much does Mr. Sharpin make per year? Ms. Greendale said \$81,000 in salary. He does not get benefits because he is a contract employee that can be terminated in 30 days. Mr. Conley said that on the high side this could be \$120,000 with benefits. Ms. Greendale said it could be higher than that. Mr.

Roberts said that when Medway hired a D.P.W. Director, it was not including benefits. It was between \$80,000. and \$105,000. Mr. Roberts said that he came up with a list of benefits from the Highway that can help the Water Department. He said that these are things that they have talked about in the past, like stock piling material for a better price. Ms. Greendale said that there is no place to store extra material. Mr. Nemet said that the Town is already under contract for that material. Mr. Damigella said that they buy on a group purchase. Mr. Roberts said that is the kind of feedback he has been looking for. Mr. Roberts said that the Highway Department has bigger trucks to work with. The Water Department has pick-ups. Mr. Nemet said that Danny Berthelette had \$8 a five ton truck all day. Mr. Roberts also said that the mechanic can help with the Water Department trucks. Ms. Greendale said that the Highway Department has complained that they can't even keep-up with the work that they have now. Mr. Conley said that Medway is looking to out-source all repairs on small vehicles. Mr. Nemet said that the Town of Bellingham has three full time mechanics. Mr. Chipman asked what does the Highway mechanic do? Mr. Damigella said that he does most things, some has to be sent out. Mr. Roberts said that the grounds for the Water Department are taken care of by a private contractor. Ms. Greendale said that Mr. Valovcin said that he would like all the personnel under one roof. The vehicles and the materials can come at a later date if needed. She did say that they could put everyone at well 4. Mr. Chipman said that they should have taken over the Flagg building. Mr. Chipman said that Mr. Adams (Water Commissioner) said that there was no heat at Flagg and that the roof leaked. Ms. Greendale said that we used the building as a Police Station. Mr. Damigella said that we used it as a Town Hall. Mr. Damigella said that Mr. Valovcin is talking about using the upstairs of the Flagg building for the Water Office. Mr. Chipman said that it would have to be handicap accessible. Mr. Chipman said that they may want to put an office downstairs, there is room for one. He said that someone from the billing office could be down stairs. He also said that if they need a meeting room they can use the one that the Park Commission uses. He said that it has a rug on the floor, heat and air conditioning. Mr. Damigella said that they could put job trailers at Flagg. Mr. Damigella said that there is an environmental issue as to why they can't have trailers at the foundry. Mr. Chipman said that they are temporary trailers, but they can be made permanent. Ms. Greendale said what about well 4. Mr. Roberts asked where is well 4. Mr. Damigella said that it is beside Weston Pond. Mr. Conley said that he needs a tour, he has never been to a well. Mr. Chipman said why not build at well 2 there is a ton of land. He said that the Town owns the corner of Ruth Ellen, Maple and Annemarie. Mr. Nemet said that the Parks used to run programs there in the summer. Mr. Damigella said how about the golf course, there is 90 acres. Mr. Conley said that the hockey rink is going there. Mr. Damigella said not now. Mr. Roberts said that any building will be shot down. Mr. Damigella said that if the Town owns the land they could rent trailers and put them on the property. Mr. Damigella said that they even close something. Ms. Greendale said that to go to the Finance Committee and ask for money, we are already behind the eight ball. Mr. Chipman asked if there was any CPC funds available? Mr. Nemet said that it would have to be historical or recreational if there were funds. Mr. Chipman said that we just put in a police station and we are still paying for it and now there could be another

building to pay for. He said that it is too much. Mr. Damigella said that who ever is going to be the Director of the D.P.W. will have to go from place to place and check on his staff. Ms Greendale said that the Water Commission does not see it as a problem if Mr. Sharpin stays in his office. Mr. Damigella said that to compare the knowledge part of the Water Department, he would have wanted to keep Gary Haines instead of Mr. Sharpin, at least Mr. Haines knew what was going on. Mr. Damigella said that when they were talking about sewers, the Water Department went out and marked the mains, because they were doing test holes. Mr. Damigella said that they found most of the mains, because they were marked incorrectly and they drilled into the pipe. Mr. Damigella said that the Water Commissioners do not know what is going on in Town. Mr. Damigella said that Sam Corda would make a great D.P.W. Director. Ms. Greendale said that he was a Water Commissioner for a while. Mr. Damigella said that it was always a two to one vote. Mr. Conley said that Paul Saulnier would be a great candidate for the D.P.W. Directors position. Mr. Roberts asked why did the Commissioners quit? Mr. Damigella said that they thought that they should have been keeping a better eye on things. Mr. Damigella said that the person that was responsible for the water incident was not fired and he should have been. Mr. Roberts said that he has been in touch with Mr. McColl about the meeting with the Selectmen next week and he said that the comments were not too favorable. He said that the information did not get to the Highway Department. He said that he did not want to go to the Selectmen's meeting and not have the comments in front of him to go over. Mr. Chipman said that the Parks has had a discussion about the merger.

Tape ran out.

Donna A. Muzzy

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