

**TOWN OF HOLLISTON  
D.P.W. STUDY COMMITTEE  
AMENDED**

July 29, 2010  
6:45 P.M.

Town Hall  
Selectmen's Meeting Room

Present: Charlie Roberts, Mary Greendale, Tom Dumas and Thomas Chipman. Carl Damigella, Kevin Conley and Dennis Ferreira were absent.

Mr. Roberts said that this meeting is being recorded.

Ms. Greendale said that Liz Theiler gave the Committee a letter. See attached.

Mr. Roberts said that they have drafted a letter to all the Departments that will be included in the D. P. W. He said that he is looking for feedback from the departments.

Ms. Greendale said that by vote at Town Meeting 2007, the Town Moderator was given the authorization to appoint a Committee to investigate the formation of the D.P.W. She said that this Committee is the one that decides if the Town needs a D.P.W. or not. She is interested in the language of the motion. She said that some of the language that was in the original motion was not in the final vote.

There was also discussion about what the name of the Committee is.

Mr. Roberts read:

Historically, the Town of Holliston has had a separate Highway Department, Water Department and Park Department each governed by a separate elected board. In May of 2007, by a Town Meeting vote was to have the Moderator appoint a Committee to determine the impact of establishing a Department of Public Works. That Committee issued a report in February 2007, and recommended that the Highway and Water Departments be merged to create one D. P. W. This report was never presented and accepted at Town Meeting. In 2007 Town Meeting voted to have the Moderator appoint a public works and organizational committee. This committee is charged with defining how a new D.P.W. will be structured if a vote at a future Town Meeting were to choose to create a D.P.W. This Committee will recommend whether the Town should or should not have a D.P.W. and if so, how a new D.P.W. it would be structured.

We expect two separate votes at Town Meeting if the Committee's report is accepted.

One to vote to create a D.P.W. and the second to implement the final recommended structure. Ms. Theiler, Norland Street, said that the language says to investigate the formation, not whether you should or should not have one.

Ms. Greendale, said that there was a vote based on some discussion and then the Board of Selectmen had the Chairs of the different departments and the Chair of the Study Committee all meet together to start and offer a charge.

Mr. Roberts said that this Committee has done extensive research on other D.P.W. Departments. Ms. Theiler said that the Study Committee will report back to the Selectmen and the Water Commissioners on their findings.

Ms. Greendale said that she has investigated to see if the Parks can be put under the D.P.W. because they were not included from the beginning. She said that they need to be prepared in case that question came up.

There was also discussion about the Assistant Park & Recreation Director doing 5 hours per week on field scheduling with the Highway Department.

Mr. Chipman asked if the accounting process established to track fees that were paid by the Recreation Department, as the fees were to be shared by the Highway Division, would this be included with the 5 hours per week for the scheduling for the Assistant Director.

Mr. Roberts said that the field rental will go to the D.P.W. for the up-keep. Mr. Roberts said that the billing of the fields will fall under the 5 hours per week for the Assistant Director. Mr. Chipman said first it was only going to be for scheduling, now we have billing going on. Ms. Greendale said that would be part of the Director's responsibility. Ms. Greendale said that 50% will go to the Highway the other 50% will go the Park & Recreation Department. Mr. Roberts said that the reason that they placed the number of hours as 5 is because it will go up and down.

Ms. Greendale asked who was going away from the organizational chart. What position are we eliminating? Mr. Roberts said one of two positions would go away.

Ms. Greendale said that the Water Department has a Superintendent in the new chart. She also said that the Water Department has a Chief Operator which is an operations manager. Ms. Greendale said that we are eliminating the Head Foremen position on the Highway side and the Superintendent position in the Water Department. Mr. Roberts said that they do not need all those levels of management. He said that it was too management heavy for the level of the D.P.W. Director.

Ms. Greendale wanted to confirm that the only staff reduction would be eliminating at least one position from the top two levels of management in the Highway Department and the Water Departments since policy reporting and general over site would fall to the D.P.W. Director for all divisions? Mr. Roberts said that the chart was written to cover the salary of the D.P.W. Director by eliminating one position. Mr. Roberts said that the Water Superintendent is paid over \$80,000. per year. Mr. Roberts said you could replace that position with a D.P.W. Director and nothing else would have to change.

Mr. Roberts said that he is not claiming that he knows how to run the departments and the politics inside the departments. He is not trying to say that, that is why he is looking for outside advice. Ms. Greendale said that if we remove the Head Foreman in the Highway Department, the D.P.W. Director's salary would not be revenue neutral because that salary level is lower than what we are paying the Water Superintendent. Mr. Roberts said then he D.P.W. Director would have to eliminate more than one position at least.

Robert Nemet, Robert Road, said that there was one too many “grunts” on the Highway side (operators) according to their chart. He said that they have 6 Operators and there are only 5. He said back in budget time in January Dan Berthelette from the Highway Department was hired by the Water Department otherwise there would have been a lay-off on the Highway side. Ms. Theiler said cross training.

Ms. Greendale said that they will be asked what is the benefit of doing this? She said that at Town Meeting, they will be asking if this is going to cost any more money?

Ms. Greendale said that this is not accurate, in the way that Mr. Roberts is looking at it. She said that it is not forthright in the way that she would be inclined to do it.

Mr. Roberts said it doesn't want to be forthright at this point.

Ms. Theiler said that she hopes that is on the tape, that you do not want to be forthright.

Mr. Roberts said that she misinterpreted what he said. He said that at this point we do not have enough information to make a decision like that. Ms. Greendale said he is not trying to decide for us or the Water Commissioners which positions would go. Mr. Roberts said that he is not here to say how a department can or can't run. He said that this letter is for information. If this is not going to work, the departments need to come back to the Committee and tell us why.

Mr. Roberts said that he likes the wording and they are not trying to hide stuff in words. He said that there is an organizational chart that represents what is there right now. Ms. Greendale said that if we are not prepared right now to say we believe that if you eliminate the Superintendent of the Water Department and the Foreman's position on the Highway Department, you will have enough money to be revenue neutral. Then we should not say anything about the elimination of positions.

Mr. Chipman said that when you read this letter, it looks like you are letting two people go. Mr. Dumas said we believe this approach will be revenue neutral. He said that there may be some positions that will be evaluated to be eliminated. He said that way we are not saying one or two of the top management. Mr. Roberts said we are.

Mr. Dumas said that we are getting caught up in one of the two people. He said that if the Superintendent looks at this, he will know that he is out of a job. Mr. Dumas said not to be so specific on who will go. Ms. Greendale asked Mr. Roberts if he was prepared for the fact that people are going to talk about the positions. They are going to ask you if you are eliminating the current Water Superintendent position and the current Highway foreman's position. Ms. Greendale said that this is how the conversation is going to go. She said that there have been conversations in the Committee about ways to save money and without firing people. She said that we could go back and say that we believe this restructuring will be revenue neutral by either eliminating one or two positions in upper management and/or savings in resources and improved management and equipment.

Mr. Dumas asked if that was reasonable. Ms. Greendale said she is hoping so, that it is what Mr. Ferreira has been saying. Mr. Dumas said that if it is reasonable he likes it but is it just language to try and make this more acceptable. Mr. Roberts said he is looking at this with an organizational chart for management. He said that there is not “A typical model” for everything. He asked if we needed three levels of management to organize? He said that he is not looking at the conflicts that the departments have. He said that if

he was an outside consultant looking at this, he believes that with the organization that we have recommended this should be able to work. Mr. Roberts said that they will be expecting feed back from the departments involved. Then they can address the needs and make changes.

Ms. Theiler asked if this Committee has voted to eliminate the Superintendent of the Water Department? Mr. Roberts said no. Ms. Theiler asked if this Committee is considering eliminating the Superintendent of the Highway Department? Mr. Chipman said that we have not voted to eliminate any one. Ms. Theiler said that the Committee is looking to do away with the Water Superintendent. Ms. Greendale said that if you look at the way Mr. Roberts described it, you do not put titles, you take two levels of management. She said to call them what you will. She said you can call level one, the head of the Water division, Chief Operator is level two, the Highway Department, you have the head of the Department, Crew Chief are level two. Ms. Theiler said that in the conversation that she heard, the Committee was talking about getting rid of the Water Superintendent so that this D.P.W. position would be level funded. Ms. Greendale said that was an option. Ms. Theiler asked again if this Committee was considering eliminating the Highway Superintendent? Ms. Greendale said that they are two different levels of positions. Ms. Greendale said that the Highway Superintendent is the equivalent of the Chief Operator. Mr. Roberts said no, they are close to the same salary. Mr. Dumas said that they have not voted to say who would be losing their job. He said that the D.P.W. Director will be slotted for this amount of money \$80,000 to \$105,000. It is in the same range of what the Superintendent makes. Ms. Theiler said that over the last three meetings it looked like the Superintendent was going to lose his job. Mr. Roberts said that they have not voted on that. He said that they are eliminating positions. He said that if they go forward with a D.P.W., they want to bring in someone and give that Director six months to make those decisions. Mr. Chipman said that the D.P.W. Director can pick and choose who he is going to eliminate and move people around to cover his salary. Ms. Greendale said that you are leaving that up to him or her as to whether or not the Water Superintendent was going to go. Mr. Roberts said that's the way the Committee has gone.

Mr. Dumas asked what date will the Departments get back to the Study Committee.

Mr. Roberts said August 26, 2010 at the Study Committee meeting.

**AT 7:45 P.M., MR. DUMAS MOVED TO ADJOURN. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MS. GREENDALE. FOUR IN FAVOR. MR. DAMIGELLA, MR. CONLEY AND MR. FERREIRA WERE ABSENT.**

Donna A. Muzzy

approved\_\_\_\_\_

