

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

July 1, 2010
6:40 P.M.

Town Hall
Selectmen's Meeting Room

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

Mr. Roberts said last week was an open session; he would like to nail down some bullet points. He said that they have had two weeks to discuss this with staff and residents and he would like the feedback. Mr. Roberts said that he will be talking to Medfield about their D.P.W. Mr. Ferreira said that he spoke with the Director in Ashland, and he said that was formed so long ago, that he did not have any information. He did say that the Ashland Highway Department and Ashland Water Department are still fighting after 20 years. He said that they did not have an organizational chart. Mr. McColl said that he would get in touch with the Town Manager and get any information that he can. Mr. Roberts said that he will email the list of all the towns that they have been look into. Mr. Ferreira said that at the last Water Department meeting they were talking about a water rate increase, so he did not bring up the D.P.W. He will do that at their next meeting. Mr. Damigella asked Mr. Ferreira, who does the water budget? Mr. Ferreira said Mr. Sharpin does. Then the Water Commissioners review it. Mr. Damigella asked if Mr. Sharpin was doing any forecasting for spending capital. Mr. Ferreira said yes.

Mr. Roberts asked who the D.P.W. Director will report to: Board of Selectmen Board of Water Commissioners, Board of D.P.W. Commissioners? Mr. Damigella said that the D.P.W. Director should report to the Town Administrator. He said that Town Administrator answers to the Selectmen. Mr. Damigella said that there is no need for Water Commissioners. Mr. Ferreira said they are only going to set rates. Mr. Damigella said that the Highway Superintendent reports to the Town Administrator. Mr. McColl asked what does a D.P.W. Commission look like? How many members? He said that it should be bigger than three. Mr. Damigella said that the bigger the number of Commissioners the harder it will be. Mr. Ferreira asked if you can get rid of an elected official. Mr. McColl said that there is a process. Mr. Ferreira said that if the Director reports to the Selectmen, will they set the water rates as well. Mr. Damigella said that the rates would be set by the D.P.W. Director, he would have the knowledge to run that side of the department. If there are any capital items, he would know that as well. Mr. Damigella said that it would be two separate budgets that would be put together.

Ms. Greendale said that she is in favor of the D.P.W. Director reporting to the Selectmen, but not the Town Administrator. Mr. Damigella said that he is in favor of the D.P.W. Director reporting to the Town Administrator. Mr. Ferreira said that he is in favor of the D.P.W. Director reporting to the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Ferreira said that the Town Administrator works for the Selectmen. Mr. McColl (non-vote) said what ever

would be the most desirable to the town. Mr. Conley said that he is in favor of the D.P.W. Director reporting to the Town Administrator. Mr. Conley said that whatever way this will be set up, the D.P.W. Director will have a close working relationship with the Town Administrator. Mr. Roberts said that the Town Administrator deals with all town things. Mr. Roberts said that if there were an issue in town and the Selectmen were not available, he knows that the Town Administrator can handle it. Mr. Conley said that when he was going home last week, that he noticed someone going around something in the road. When he got closer he saw a road plate it had bounced off the hole in the road. He said that he called the Highway Superintendent, and he said that it was not his problem, it was the Water Department's. Mr. Conley said how would that work if the D.P.W. Director was not in town. Mr. Ferreira said that an employee from the Water Department is always on call. Mr. Ferreira said that this is typical. No communication between the Highway Department and the Water Department. The Highway Department paved the street and they paved over water gates and the Water Department had to go looking for the gate. Ms. Theiler, resident in audience, said that there is no communication between the two departments. Mr. Conley said that is why they should go to a D.P.W. Mr. Damigella said that the Town Administrator is the supervisor over the D.P.W. Director. Mr. McColl (non-vote) said that when the Selectmen are not in the building, the Town Administrator is their representative. Ms. Greendale said that the Selectmen have the right to delegate to the Town Administrator. Ms. Greendale said the Selectmen will be responsible for the D.P.W. Director not the Town Administrator. Mr. Conley said that it really did not make a difference; the Board of Selectmen could tell the Town Administrator to find twelve candidates who could be the D.P.W. Director. Mr. Conley asked what is the difference between a Town Administrator and a Town Manager? Ms. Greendale said you could never have both. She said Town Manager is a more powerful position than a Town Administrator. Ms. Greendale said that she is not 100% sure that we need a D.P.W.

Ms. Greendale said that the Water Operators need special chemical licenses. The Highway Heavy Equipment Operators need special licenses. Mr. Ferreira said that it is just a matter of training to make the cross over in the departments. Mr. Ferreira said that utilization of town equipment will be better. Mr. Ferreira said that there is no incentive to move up the ladder.

Mr. Roberts said that the function of the scheduling for the Parks will fall under the D.P.W. and the revenue generated from the renting of the Parks will go back into the D.P.W. budget. Mr. Ferreira said that the maintenance of the parks would go through the D.P.W. as well. Mr. Conley asked Mr. Ferreira if the Water trucks go out for service? Mr. Ferreira said yes. Mr. Damigella said that one mechanic can't fix the number of vehicles, if the two departments are merged.

Mr. Roberts said they would need to fund the Director of the Public Works for 6 months in order to evaluate the departments and decide whether to level fund or reduce costs of operation the Public Works. Ms. Greendale said that if the interim Director were to spend 6 months evaluating the departments, why not have contracted person come in beforehand.

Mr. Roberts said that they want to hire a D.P.W. Director and give him/her 6 months to get the department going. Mr. Ferreira said that their Water Department Chief Operator is gone, and that position will not be replaced. (At this time it will not be replaced.) Mr. Roberts said that when the Director is hired, he/she will be responsible to make \$80,000 in cuts in the departments to support his salary. Mr. Ferreira said that they have asked the Finance Committee for \$60,000 to get the ball rolling. Mr. Ferreira said that the D.P.W. Director salary will come out of the cuts that he has made. Mr. Roberts said that in the long run, the D.P.W. Director could be making up to \$105,000. Ms. Theiler asked if this new Director came in, he would be responsible for making cuts to support his salary? Mr. Ferreira said yes, it is done every day. Mr. Ferreira said that he thinks that the Director would bring his recommendations to the Selectmen. He said that they will vote on it. Ms. Theiler said that Hopkinton D.P.W. Director resigned and he is being paid through August. Mr. Ferreira said that it is the same as us, Gary Haines retired and he will be paid through August. Ms. Greendale said that all the negative feelings will come out and it could be a nightmare. Mr. Damigella and Ms. Greendale both agreed that there are no qualified employees in either Department to serve as D.P.W. Director. An outsider would have to be hired. Ms. Greendale also talked about a union. Ms. Greendale said that as soon as a D.P.W. is formed, the union will be in touch with the employees. Mr. Ferreira said that personnel that have contracts are the ones who should be looking over their shoulder, not the laborers. Ms. Greendale asked who has a contract? Mr. Ferreira said, Ron Sharpin, Doug Valovcin, Gary Haines and Linda Mann. Mr. Ferreira said that they can be terminated at any time. Mr. Damigella said that Tom Smith and Anne Kellogg have contracts. Mr. Conley asked if there were ways to save on plowing, vehicle maintenance, backhoe jobs? Would that save enough money to fund this position? Mr. Ferreira said that on the Water side, there are a few Operators that are handy. They could help the mechanic if needed. Ms. Greendale has always thought that both the Water Department and the Highway Department have been short-staffed. Mr. Ferreira said that a typical day of the Water Department is; first put chemicals in and that takes about 3 hours, then they have other tasks to follow, checking hydrants or something at the plant. He said that if there were crossover the chemicals could take 1 ½ hours not 3. Mr. Damigella said that he has heard rumors from both Departments and if a D.P.W. is formed, they are all quitting. Ms. Greendale said that she did not get that. Mr. Ferreira asked if she spoke with the “grunts”? She said that she has spoken with both levels. Ms. Greendale said that the “girls” in the Water office are isolated. Ms. Greendale said that Mr. Smith had concerns about the D.P.W. because of the union. Mr. Damigella said that the job descriptions will have to be changed so they include plowing snow and other major things. Mr. Damigella said that in order to keep this position revenue neutral, the funding needs to see about the funding from the Water Department and the Highway Department. He said that the biggest reduction of salary comes from the Water Department. He said that you can’t reduce any more from the Highway side. Mr. Ferreira said that it is not all about salaries. He said that the Water Department pays’ \$3,000.00 per year for grass cutting. He said that every little bit will help. Mr. Damigella and Mr. Ferreira said that any contract can be terminated within 30 days. Mr. Damigella said that if they dissolve the position of Highway Superintendant and Crew

Chief, and just work with a Forman under the direction of a D.P.W. Director it would be a savings. Ms. Greendale asked if they were planning on eliminating the Water Superintendent position? Mr. Ferreira said possibly. She then asked if Mr. Valovcin and Mr. Smith would move to the top. Mr. Damigella said yes. Mr. Ferreira said that is where the funds of \$85,000.00 are going to come from. There will be more discussion at the next meeting.

AT 8:55 P.M., MR. CONLEY MOVED TO ADJOURN. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MR. DAMIGELLA. FIVE IN FAVOR. MR. DUMAS AND MR. CHIPMAN WERE ABSENT.

Donna A. Muzzy

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