

HOLLISTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

September 25, 2013

7:00 p.m. joint meeting with the Water Commissioners

Selectmen's Meeting Room

Town Hall

Present Jay Leary, Chairman; Kevin Conley, Vice Chairman; Jay Marsden, Clerk and Paul Le Beau, Town Administrator. Water Commissioners, Jared Adams, David Keating, Brian Antonioli and Operation Manager Doug Valovcin were also present.

COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD

Mr. Conley expressed the sympathy of the Board in the passing of Emilee Gagnon.

Mr. Leary said that same. He also said that the Gagnon family is a wonderful family.

There were no comments from the audience.

Mr. Leary said that they have a guest speaker-Tom Holder who is the DPS Director in Medway and is a Holliston resident. Mr. Conley said that Mr. Holder has been the DPS Director for four years. Mr. Leary asked Mr. Holder if when he started in Medway, was it a DPS? Mr. Holder said that it was just created. And he is the first Director. He said that he met with all the employees and placed them in different positions. He also brought in outside talent. Mr. Leary asked if prior to his employ was it all different divisions, Highway, Water, Sewer and Park and Recreation? Mr. Holder said yes they were separate. Mr. Holder said that under the DPS are the Highway, Water, Sewer and Parks. He said that the Recreation is handled by Franklin the two Town have joined together. He said that they have a Public Facilities Engineer he also has a Solid Waste Program. He did bring in an org chart of Medway and passed out copies.

At 7:10 p.m. the Board of Water Commissioners joined the meeting.

Mr. Leary introduced the Board of Water Commissioners to Mr. Tom Holder.

He said that under one group the DPS is the Highway, Parks, and Recycling and the other half is the Water Division and the Solid Waste. He then combined both groups into one.

Mr. Leary asked if it was challenging? Mr. Holder said that there are always challenges.

He said that he had come from a DPW so he knew what to expect. He said that change is difficult for some but all he had to do was make it work. Mr. Holder said that it is working well.

Mr. Leary asked if the DPS was all housed at the same location? Mr.

Holder said no they are not. He said that they have a feasibility study that was performed and it is his desire to be under one roof, and it would be very expensive to do that.

He said that the Park Department is in rented space. Mr. Holder said that they have 13,500 residents and they are just a little smaller than Holliston. They have 4 wells and 4 separate treatment facilities.

Mr. Leary asked if the treatment facilities are manned during operations.

Mr. Holder said that they are remotely operated. He said that they are on a SCADA System with alarms.

Mr. Leary said that he was driving through Medway and saw that the new water main project was completed.

Mr. Leary asked if this project was subbed out to a contractor? Mr. Holder said yes. He said that they like to do as much of the work as possible but this project was too big.

Mr. Leary asked how many miles of new piping was put in? Mr. Holder said about one and a quarter mile at the cost

of eleven million dollars. He said that it was very challenging because Main Street is one of the busiest streets in Town. Mr. Leary asked if they were able to get grants or was the project bonded. He said that they went through a SRF project. Mr. Holder said that they have four pipes in the northwest portion of Town that will be replaced through this project as well. He said that they have applied for grants and they have received them. Mr. Leary asked who has been doing the grant writing? Mr. Holder said that it is an Administrative function and the Water Superintendent was the one who initiated this last project. He said that the field staff is very involved. Mr. Leary asked what kind of a budget does the DPS have? Mr. Holder said that they have the general fund, the Water enterprise fund and a solid waste enterprise. He said that all those departments combined is around five million dollars annually. Excluding a fourteen million dollar building they are looking to build.

Mr. Conley asked about the number of grants that you have received. Mr. Conley said that Mr. Holder has done very well in obtaining a large amount of grants. Mr. Holder said that one grant was done by the Planning Department. He also said another was done with the Police and Fire Departments as a joint effort. He said that you can learn on a calendar year when grants are coming up. He said that the engineers are always looking for grants. Mr. Holder said that most applications for grants are now on line. He also said that the Planning Board has a grant writer and that has helped. Mr. Conley said that the struggle that Holliston has had is to bring the Highway and the Water together for a DPW. Mr. Holder said that you would need to bring in a strong Director that may be new to the Town and has no allegiances. He said that is how he got into Medway. He did not know anyone there. He was able to come in and do what he wanted. Mr. Holder said that whoever comes in would have to have a strong background in water and sewer and a roadway background along with an environmental background as well. He said that if you can find a Director that has all those things and surrounds him/herself with a talented staff you can do it and make it work. Mr. Holder said that the Board of Water Commissioners in Medway had their hand in the daily activities.

Mr. Conley asked if you broke up the four divisions would it be efficient as to what you have now? Mr. Holder said no, each group would have to have an Operations Manager or a Superintendent with an assistant and then staff. He said that the Superintendents meet on a weekly basis on Wednesday at 1:00 p.m. for two hours and they advocate for their needs. Mr. Holder said that you must coordinate staff that can go from the water side to the highway side. He said that it is a great staffing resource. Mr. Holder said that they have only one backhoe and they have set up a schedule so that each group will know when they have the use of it. Mr. Conley said that it sounds like you are running a business, with one person in charge and the rest of the employees taking direction. Mr. Conley asked about the collaboration with other Town Departments. Mr. Holder said that it is very good. He said that he came from Framingham and they had a strong communication and he has had the opportunity to learn from that. He said that just last year they put in radios and all the departments are on the same channel. He said that it is a huge benefit. Mr. Conley said that there is a value by getting more things done for the Town with the resources that they have because of the combination of departments.

Mr. Holder said that he is the ringleader and everyone is working at the same time. He said that if there is not someone in the center working all the time and directing it would not be as effective as it is now. Mr. Conley asked who did Mr. Holder report to? Mr. Holder said that he reports to the Town Administrator. He did say that he does go to every Selectmen's Meeting because they have a lot going on. He said that the next step that they are looking to do is go single stream for recycling and trash collection.

David Keating said that Mr. Holder spoke about the sharing of employees and resources; how does that work with the enterprise umbrella. Mr. Holder said that they only pay water employees out of this when they are working on a Water issue. If they are working on the Highway side the payment would come out of the Highway fund. Mr. Keating said that Mr. Holder reports to the Town Administrator and then to the Selectmen, do you answer to the Board of Water Commissioners. Mr. Holder said that they have a Water and Sewer Commission and it is a three member body and they meet every two weeks. He said that they are a hands-on Commission. He said that they can abate a sewer billing. Mr. Holder said that he can make that decision as well. He said that the Commission is the one who can make the decision on a betterment. They would have to have hearings and make decisions. Mr. Keating said that they will be looking for a strong DPW Director. What types of licenses would this individual need. Mr. Holder said that it is not necessary to have a DPW Director be fully licensed. He said that the individual's that have been hired or will be hired should have the licenses. He did say that it would be attractive to have them though.

Jared Adams said that you need someone strong to deal with DEP issues.

Mr. Marsden asked Mr. Holder if he would go back to a Water Department or Highway Department if they were separated. Mr. Holder said that he can't think of a reason why you would want to go backwards. Mr. Marsden said that he has been hearing around Town that it is going to cost more. Mr. Marsden also said that there would be an initial investment. Mr. Holder said that he did not see an expense to combine the Departments. He said that the increase in the budgets is for the scope of work that is needed to be done. He said that they have a few major projects that will be starting soon. He said that they have been able to replace equipment and all the trucks are stocked and equipped with whatever they need. Mr. Keating asked if there was a service leak, who would do the work? Mr. Holder said that when they report to work they have people who monitor the wells and then do a system check. He said that others will follow a work order system that was put in place a few years back. He said that every call that comes in is logged electronically and then dispatched to a superintendent and operations manager. He said that all calls are prioritized. All work is presented in the morning. Mr. Holder said that they as a staff take care of 98% of the work for a leak. Then after the work has been done they turn the project over to the Highway and they will take care of the paving and the backfilling of the job.

Mr. Valovcin said that he and Mr. Holder worked together in Framingham for a while. He said that he knows how a DPW works because he was involved in Framingham.

Mr. Marsden said that that a Director can set the water rate. He said that he is not in favor of keeping the Water Commissioners. He said that if the time comes and we need it

they may reconsider it. Mr. Conley said that the DPW Director should report to the Town Administrator, then the Selectmen. Mr. Conley said that the Water Commissioners could set rates and do the abatements. He also said that he would like the Water Commissioners to be appointed. He said that way they can have quality people to help the department. Mr. Conley asked Mr. Keating if he thought that by voting in a DPW do you think staff would be fired? Mr. Keating said they would not have to be fired but they would not be able to replace them. Mr. Keating said that he is more concerned about replacing staff than being fired. Mr. Conley asked Mr. Keating if his payroll was the same this month as it was last month. Mr. Keating said that they want to create a position of Water Superintendent, Chief Plant Operator who would be in charge of the treatment plants and wells. He also would like to create the position of Forman for the distribution and one more operator. Mr. Keating said that the study called for four people to operate the plants that they had in 2006. They have added a plant so there should be another person there to operate it. Mr. Keating said that he does not have the background to run a DPW, he is not an expert in water or in Highway. Mr. Conley said that he thinks that we will see benefits the first year. Mr. Keating said that he does not think that we will see benefits for the first two or three years. Mr. Conley said that they are not going to hurt the quality of the water in Town. Mr. Conley said that they are not going to hurt the Highway Department they only want to form a DPW. Mr. Conley said they want one department working together. Mr. Conley suggested that Mr. Keating go to Town Meeting and put your support behind forming a DPW. Mr. Conley said that Brian Antonioli said that he is in favor of a DPW, Mr. Conley said that Jared Adams has said no and David Keating has not made up his mind. Mr. Keating asked Mr. Adams why would you say no to forming a DPW. Mr. Adams said that he does not feel that it has been appropriately planned. He said that the studies that have been done and Henry Dellicker did a study and he said that we can't afford it. Mr. Adams said that he agrees with what Mr. Dellicker said. Mr. Leary asked with the current system now what is the affordability. Mr. Marsden said that we can't afford not to form a DPW. Mr. Leary said that the Town is one water main break away from having a big problem. Mr. Leary said that this past summer we had major water issues. Mr. Leary said that the Water Department can't account for up to 20% of the water in town. Mr. Leary also said that the Water Department is looking for a \$50,000 vehicle but they can't afford it. Mr. Leary said the Water Department just had a rate increase by 15%. Mr. Leary said that more times than not every time we pave a road a water pipe breaks and then it needs to be dug up to be fixed. Mr. Leary said that we need the right person to come in and make sure that all the bases are covered before any road work is done.

Mr. Keating said that the motion that he would put before the Board of Water Commissioners would be to support the idea of a DPW with the expedition at this point from now into FY15 the budgeting process for FY15 that we are not reducing the current salary dollars allocated to Water Department operations to fund additional personnel for a DPW at this point and then in FY 15 budget that they would look at adding the appropriate usage percentage from the Water Departments rate payer and rate structure Mr. Keating said that would be his motion. Mr. Leary asked for a simple motion, yes I

support a DPW or no I do not support a DPW. Mr. Leary said that the Selectmen are going to Town Meeting asking the voters to vote for a DPW with or without the Water Department's support.

MR. LEARY MOVED TO IMPLEMENT A DPW FOR FY2015 WITH OR WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF THE WATER COMMISSIONERS. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MR. CONLEY. ALL IN FAVOR.

MR. KEATING MOVED THAT THE BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS SUPPORT THE CREATION OF A DPW TARGETED AT FY2015. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MR. ANTONIOLI. TWO IN FAVOR. MR. ADAMS APPOSED.

Mr. Keating did express his concern about the Selectmen setting water rates and appeals. He also said that he is concerned about the workload for the Selectmen. Mr. Leary said that the DPS Director is the one who makes the abatements in Medway.

AT 9:00 P.M., CONLEY MOVED TO ADJOURN THE SELECTMEN'S MEETING. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MR. MARSDEN. ALL IN FAVOR.

AT 9:01 P.M., MR. KEATING MOVED TO ADJOURN THE WATER COMMISSIONERS MEETING. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MR. ANTONIOLI. ALL IN FAVOR.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna A. Muzzy

approved_____