

## **HOLLISTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

July 21, 2014  
2:30 p.m.

Selectmen's Meeting Room  
Town Hall

Present Kevin Conley, Chairman; Jay Marsden, Vice Chairman; Jay Leary, Clerk, and Paul Le Beau, Town Administrator.

### **THERE WERE NO COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD**

There were no comments from the audience.

### **DPW DIRECTOR INTERVIEWS**

Toma Duhani, was present and thanked the Board for the interview. Mr. Conley asked what strengths and weakness do you see in Holliston. Mr. Duhani said that it will be a challenge combining the two Departments. He said that it can be done with adjustments. He said that the two groups need to work together well. He said that they will have to create an environment where there is no controversy. He said you will need a well working crew to accomplish the goals of the department. Mr. Conley asked if Mr. Duhani would be stronger on the Highway side or the Water side. Mr. Duhani said that he has worked on both sides. He has worked on low water pressure jobs and has been able to solve it. He also was part of building a six million gallon water storage tank. He also was part of a water meter contract installment. He also has been involved with water loss. He said that if a resident or a business was using a lot of water they would be able to notify them with this program. Mr. Duhani said that the most important thing on the water side is maintenance. He said that maintenance would be documented and then they would up-date the GIS. He said that flushing of the hydrants is very important. He said that they have to account for water loss while flushing so they would put a meter on the hydrant while flushing so they will know how much water was flushed. He said that testing at the treatment plant is very important. Mr. Conley asked how would you take the two departments and blend them into one. He said he would first observe the operation for three to six months. He said that it could take one year to merge the two. It takes time. He said that there will be cross-training to help with emergencies. He said that an Enterprise fund should be established so that they can be self-sufficient. Mr. Conley asked if Mr. Duhani had any experience writing grants. He said yes. He also said that he applied for Chapter 90 funds through the State. Mr. Duhani said that there is a step by step process to do everything. Mr. Conley said that the DPW Director's position may require emergencies, he asked if Mr. Duhani lived close to Holliston. Mr. Duhani said that he lives 25 minutes away.

Mr. Leary said that he noticed that Mr. Duhani has worked in both the municipal sector and the private. How has it benefitted you to become a DPW Director? Mr. Duhani said that he has spent 25 years in the public sector. He said that there is a difference from the public sector to the private sector. He said that there is a major responsibility in both sectors. He said that mistakes cost money. Mr. Leary asked why would you want to go from private sector to a municipality. He said that he had many years in the public sector. He said that he lost his position so he was looking in the private and public sector. Mr. Leary asked what has been your biggest challenge. Mr. Duhani said funding in the public sector. He said that there are more and more restrictions on what you can do. He also said trying to do more with less

funds. Mr. Leary asked Mr. Duhani if he has any of the licenses that are needed for the Water Department and the Highway Department. He said he does not have any licenses. Mr. Leary asked why did he want to work in Holliston. Mr. Duhani said that he likes Holliston. It is small community and it is a good opportunity for him. Mr. Leary asked what his vision is to set up a new DPW. Mr. Duhani said to provide services that the two Departments do. He said to make sure that they have the proper equipment and replacement of equipment as needed. He said that there has to be capital for improvements. Mr. Duhani said that there has to be proper storage for water supply. He said that snow and ice is very important. He said that it will affect most of the staff. He said that they want to keep the schools open and residents to work. He said that he would like GPS in the trucks. That way they will know where each truck is at any time. He said that it will improve service. He said that a sand and salt mix is much better than just sand. He said that you have to maintain wet-lands and be careful with the restrictions that have been put in place. He said that in the spring is the best time to sweep the streets and clean out the catch-basins. Mr. Leary asked about Mr. Duhani's management style. He asked if he wanted to know what was going on all the time or do you give the foremen the responsibility. Mr. Duhani said that it all depends on what is going on. He said that he can be a hands off or a hands on person. He said that if they need help he will always be available.

Mr. Marsden asked why did Mr. Duhani leave the public sector. He said that in 2001 he wanted to do something different so he started his own consulting business. He said that he did that for two years. He said that there was a dip in the economy and things changed. He went back to the public sector. He said that a family member became sick and he moved closer to help take care of them. He said that he was looking for a new position and then a position became available in the private sector, and he took it. Mr. Marsden said that the enterprise fund has been talked about. Mr. Marsden said that there is always talk of saving water but we can't make money if it is not used. He asked Mr. Duhani how, can we move the Water side forward with less. Mr. Duhani said that in the summer there are always water bans. He said that there is a new well being built in Town, and he is sure that there will be conditions before it is on-line. He said that there are certain fixed costs while running a well and a treatment facility.

Mr. Marsden said that there has been a lot of talk about pipe re-placement is this something that you have ever been involved with. Mr. Duhani said he does not know the cost of replacing pipes but it is expensive. He said that once you start to dig there is always going to be a problem with the existing pipes. Mr. Marsden said that there is technology that we can use to monitor the plants. He asked if that is something that he would like to use. Mr. Duhani said that they always had at least one person at the plant twenty fours and seven days a week. He said that technology is good but it is better to have someone at the plant. He said that there is always work to do at a plant. Mr. Marsden said that there is a newly formed union, he asked if he had experience with unions. Mr. Duhani said that he has worked with union members before.

Mr. Le Beau asked if he had any experience with supplemental work in the department that is out-sourced. He said that most departments do not have the resources to do everything in house. Mr. Duhani gave an example that in one Community that he was working for they started street sweeping the Town he ran the numbers and it was cheaper to out-source the sweeping to a vendor. He said that it was done in less than half the time and there was a huge cost savings.

Tom Holder, Director of Medway asked Mr. Duhani if he was excited about this position. Mr. Duhani said yes he is excited about the possibility and this will be a challenge for him. He said that he likes

Challenges. He said that when he first started as a Highway Superintendent he worked in Wayland and the residents did not like the land fill. So he improved the site and the land fill became a show piece of the Town. He said that the Recycling Center has received all kinds of awards. He said that they sent out a newsletter to the residents telling them how they were going to handle snow and ice. He said that he likes to think outside the box. He also said that when he paves a road he closed the entire road down and brings in several dump trucks at one time filled with hot top and gets the job done fast.

Mr. Holder asked what benefit, would he be bringing to Holliston. Mr. Duhani said he would not come in and make too many changes at first. He said that it takes time to get to know how things are run before you suggest changes. Mr. Duhani kept a list of pot-holes and every time it opened up they would keep track and see how big it gets. He said that they would keep track by street and see where they are more prone. He said that if it got to be too expensive to fix, they would re-pave the street so that the pot-hole problem is corrected.

The Board thanked Mr. Duhani for his time. Mr. Duhani thanked the Board for their consideration.

Mr. Holder thought the Mr. Duhani was a strong candidate. He said that he has all the back-ground to do the position. He lives close to Holliston. Mr. Leary said that Mr. Duhani is technology savvy. Mr. Holder said that Mr. Duhani has put in a few programs in the public sector and they worked well.

Mr. Marsden thought that Mr. Duhani had been out of the public sector for several years. Mr. Holder said he may have been out of public sector but he was up on technology. He knew about GIS that has been around just a few years.

Michael Thoreson was next to be interviewed.

Mr. Conley thanked Mr. Thoreson for taking the time to come in and talking to the Board. Mr. Thoreson said that he has been the Director of Public Works in Brocton for over ten years. He said before that he worked in the private sector. And before that he was in the Army. He said that he is a loyal employee he has only had four jobs in his career. Mr. Conley asked what the strengths and weakness do you see in Holliston. Mr. Thoreson said that he did look at the budget report and he has an idea of what we have. He said that we have one contract for all our employees. He said that can make a strong DPW. He said that the strength would be in unity of the departments. He said that we can build a strong working relationships with the too different departments. He said that when he started in Brocton neither Department would talk to each other. He said that was a challenge right off the bat. He asked if there was a long term plan in place for the Departments. Mr. Conley asked what side would you be stronger on the Highway or the Water Side. Mr. Thoreson said that he does not have any water licenses, however he has a strength on the Highway side. He said that he learned the water side in Brocton. He said that he did a huge up-grade on a water treatment plant in Brocton. Mr. Conley asked how, would you blend the two departments together. He said that first he would talk to each Superintendent and get their ideas and thoughts. He said that a lot would depend on the contract. Mr. Conley asked Mr. Thoreson if he had any grant writing experience. Mr. Thoreson said yes. He has two in the works right now. He said that there are two water ways in the Town of Brocton that they would like cleaned up they applied for a grant and it was awarded to them. Mr. Conley asked Mr. Thoreson if he believes in the process. Mr. Thoreson said you have to have a plan in place. He said that

you are not efficient if you do not have a plan. Mr. Conley asked Mr. Thoreson if he lived close to Holliston if there was ever an emergency. He said that he lives in Brocton and it took him 40 minutes to get to Holliston today. Mr. Leary asked Mr. Thoreson if he went to WestPoint. Mr. Thoreson said yes and he played football for them. Mr. Leary said that you have a position in Brocton why would you want to take on the challenge of a DPW while you have a secure position in Brocton. Mr. Thoreson said that he believes he has the capability to form the DPW. He said that he is at a point where he is looking for a new challenge. He said that it would fit his strengths because he has experience in a DPW. Mr. Leary asked what should a DPW look like. He said that it is a customer service organization, he said that a DPW is in business to service the residents and citizens of the Town. He said that the staff is to provide the best level of service for the residents. He said that the staff sometimes gets a bad rap. The supervisor will get a phone call that there are 5 guys looking at one in the whole digging. He said that is something that should be changed. Mr. Leary asked what is the DPW structure in Brocton. Mr. Thorson said that they have a DPW Commissioner, Superintendent of Utilities and that covers water and sewer, General Foreman of Water and a General Foreman of Sewer and both report to the Superintendent. There is a Superintendent of Operations that includes Highway and Recycling and Refuse. He said that they have an outside contractor that pick up trash and recycling. He said that there is also an Engineering Department. He said the whole Department is about one hundred and ten people. Mr. Leary said that Mr. Thorson has worked in the public sector and private sector and Military how will this help you if you are the DPW Director. Mr. Thorson said that his Military background will give him the discipline and the knowledge to give orders. He said that his public sector gives him a good overview of how things work. It gives him an idea of what a DPW should be doing. He said that Brocton uses a lot of private sector people for snow removal. He said that they have a large up-grade on their water treatment plant and that was done by the private sector. They also did a huge up-grade on the Wastewater Treatment Plant by the private sector. He said that they did not have the staff to do it. He said that he was able to compare bids and the RFP. He said that he can compare the bids and see that the private sectors are looking for the bid do that they can make money. Mr. Leary asked what, is your vision moving forward for the DPW. He said that looking down the road five to ten years you are developing an organization with customer service. He said that we need to have staff in place, have the proper equipment, the proper people in place to service the residents that would be the first goal. He said second goal would be plans, procedures and policies that would make the DPW self-sufficient. He said that they could run them-selves if necessary. Mr. Thoreson asked if there was a five or a ten year plan in place for road rehabs. Mr. Leary asked what kind of a management style do you have. Mr. Thoreson said first he would determine if the staff was in the correct position. He then said that he would have a good working relationship with them. He said that he does not believe in micromanaging. He said that he likes the Foremen to supervise. He said that he does have an open door policy anyone can come in to talk about anything. Mr. Leary asked what would you do if you found out an employee was in the wrong position. Mr. Thorson said he would sit him/her down and find out what their strengths and weakness are. He said that they would talk about it and hopefully it would improve. If not then they will think of something else. Mr. Marsden said that the City of Brocton has more funds than Holliston. Mr. Marsden said that we charge for water that is how the Water Department makes money. What would you do to sell more water? Mr. Thorsen said that when he took over as the DPW Director there was a strict water ban in place. He said that they had strong water restrictions in place.

He said that they suffered a short fall on the water side for the Enterprise Account. He said that the City of Brocton is a poor city, with a lot of low-income families. He said that it is hard to raise the water rates because of this. He said that the City of Brocton purchases its water from an outside source. Mr. Thoreson said that they were able to keep the water ban in place with the help of the "water police" they would go around town checking to make sure residents were not watering outside when they should not. He said that they passed out a flyer about the water restrictions and it was on their website. Mr. Thoreson said that water is not cheap it is expensive and it should not be wasted. Mr. Marsden said about some of the projects that were done in Brocton. He said that they up-graded the Water Treatment Plant and the Wastewater Treatment Plant. He said that they hired an outside consultant. He said that they looked at all the plans that came in. He said that he had the supervisors look at the plans and they agreed on one plan. He said that when it all came together and it was finished everything worked like it should have. Mr. Thoreson said that he believes in technology to help make our life easier. He said that technology can save us money.

Mr. Le Beau said that Mr. Thoreson re-negotiated the trash contract with a savings of over one million dollars per year. Mr. Le Beau asked what kind of things did you change in order to make a huge savings. Mr. Thoreson said that they had a great relationship with trash carrier. He said that they were able to work out a deal with them. He said that they did not change much in the contract. He said that it was a good business move for the trash company. Mr. Le Beau asked what the price break would be to replace the underground water pipes per mile. Mr. Thoreson said every year they put away over five hundred thousand dollars for pipes. He said that they put the funds in a replacement program. He said that after doing that for a few years they were able to get one to two miles of replacement piping. He said it was for main replacement not reconstruction of the road.

Mr. Holder asked Mr. Thoreson what a typical day is. He said he is at work by 6:30 a.m. he will then have several meetings with the Superintendents. He will have outside contractor meetings, he will then go follow up on the on-going projects. He will go check them out. He said that he will also follow up with the utility companies. He said that he could meet with DEP, his day is always busy. He said that he will go over RFP's and the bids that come in. He said that he is involved with the bid openings.

Mr. Holder said that you are currently a Commissioner you are applying for a Director's position that has a lesser authority that what you are accustomed to, will you be comfortable. Mr. Holder said that the day to day routine will be different, how do you think you will do with that big of a change. Mr. Thoreson said that he did not think it would be an issue. He said that he comes from a strong background. He said that there are many ways to run a DPW. He said that he will meet the needs of the residents.

Mr. Conley asked if Mr. Thoreson would be available for night meetings if it were needed. Mr. Thoreson said yes.

Mr. Leary said that Mr. Thoreson said that his ten-year was coming to an end in Brocton. Mr. Leary asked if this was something that he wanted to do or was it the City that make the decision for him. Mr. Thoreson said that he has been there for ten years and there was a change in administration and does not see eye to eye with them. So it is time for him to go. Mr. Leary asked if Mr. Thoreson was asked to be the new DPW Director, when could you start. Mr. Thoreson said when-ever you wanted him to. Mr. Thoreson thanked the Board for their time and consideration. He said that his resume stands alone he said that he can handle the forming of a new DPW and would enjoy doing it.

Mr. Thoreson asked what would be the time frame be in making a decision. Mr. Conley said soon. Mr. Marsden said with-in two weeks.

Mr. Conley said that this interview was totally different from the first one. Mr. Conley said that Mr. Thoreson is very confidant. He said that he takes pride in what he does. He talked about a 5 year plan. He said that he likes challenges. Mr. Conley said that he loved the fact that customer service is important to him.

Mr. Holder said that Mr. Thoreson has great authority he does not report to anyone. He has the power to set policies. Mr. Holder said that for the past ten years Mr. Thoreson has had control. Mr. Holder said that this would be very different position for him. Mr. Holder said that he thinks this could be a difficult transition for him. Mr. Holder said that Mr. Thoreson is a politician.

Mr. Marsden said that Mr. Thoreson talked about his enterprise fund coming up short. Mr. Marsden said that he is concerned about that. Mr. Marsden said that Mr. Thoreson said that it would take him about 40 minutes to get to work if there were an emergency. He said that it would take over one hour.

Mr. Le Beau said that Mr. Thoreson is in charge and does not report to anyone. It would be difficult for him to have to report to the Selectmen.

The Board thanked Mr. Holder for taking the time to help with the interview.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna A. Muzzy

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