

**SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES**  
**December 21, 2010**

Members Present: Lynda Walsh, Chairman  
Larry Harrington, Vice Chairman  
James J. DeVellis, Clerk  
Lorraine Brue  
Paul Mortenson

Others Present: Kevin Paicos, Town Manager  
Leo Potter, W&S Superintendent  
Phil Henderson, Chairman, W&S Commissioners  
Bill Euerle, W&S Commissioner  
Bob Swanson, Highway Superintendent

The meeting was brought to order at 7:00 p.m. by Lynda Walsh, Chairperson.

Water & Sewer Commission Meeting was brought to order by Phil Henderson, Chairman.

**7:00 – Proposed Merger Discussion** - Kevin Paicos opened the discussion with a power point presentation. The revenue picture for the Town is not good; the Town will have to do more with less as the revenues are not coming up to the current expenses. The 2012 budget shows a \$2M deficit. The departmental budgets have been submitted. These budgets will be reviewed in an attempt to reduce the budget. With the retirement of Leo Potter as W&S Superintendent, this is an opportune time to move toward a Department of Public Works. Kevin Paicos pointed out the lack of coordination of projects between the W&S and the Highway Dept. He used Cross Street as an example noting the need to replace W&S lines that run under the pavement resulting in early disruption of road surfaces thus costing the Town a lot of money. He noted that this is not an isolated event. He spoke about the manager/employee ratio and compared that of Highway and W&S vs. Fire and Police Departments. The Town could save some money in these areas. Snow Plowing is an issue that needs to be addressed and could result in significant saving for the Town. In this presentation Kevin pointed out the cost per hour for contract plows when Town trucks stand idle because there are not enough drivers in the Highway Dept. The Water & Sewer Dept. employees plow only on a volunteer basis, this results in an unnecessary cost to the Town and over a ten year period it could be as high as \$200,000.

Kevin Paicos said that no part of this proposal mentions laying people off. He said the impact on employees could be handled through attrition or moves to other departments. He said the proposal is not meant to be critical of anyone

only that these practices have been in place for a long time. The opportunity has presented itself and he feels that the Town should take advantage of it. Further discussion was held regarding the physical reality of putting these two departments together; is there space to accommodate the number of people, particularly bearing in mind Town Hall renovation. It was noted that W&S employees have technical skills that are very different from those employees of the Highway Dept. Leo Potter has extensive knowledge and expertise in his field and holds several licenses. Kevin Paicos pointed out that it would be necessary to have a Professional Engineer on staff (Bob Swanson is a P.E.). The position of Professional Engineer would be open competition. Larry Harrington expressed concern on making sure to have the right person responsible for full oversight on the day to day operations of the whole department. Kevin Paicos would like to have this proposal in place for a trial period of one year

The possibility of sharing GIS technology with other towns was briefly discussed. Randy Scollins pointed out that it is important to have all departments make recommendations as to what they need to see in a GIS system so that the result would be something to be used by all. It might then be an opportunity to seek solutions by possibly sharing with other towns for purposes of consolidating information. Lorraine Brue observed that the ratio of employees to management of 5 – 1 looks “pretty good” compared to other industries. She would look at the sharing of information to bring that ratio to 6 – 1. Lorraine thanked Kevin for taking the time to communicate with the employees of each department. Jim DeVellis expressed concern about the fact that W&S are an elected board and operate with an enterprise fund; the Highway Dept. is directly under the Town Manager’s purview and how that would be resolved.

Phil Henderson, Chairman, W&S Commissioners, commented on the challenges facing W&S employees. He mentioned the unique qualifications necessary for a W&S employee – requiring specific licenses and/or certificates, etc. He pointed out that a W&S employee could do the work at the Highway Dept. but the Highway Dept. employee could not go to W&S. Bill Euerle pointed out that it is a good thing somebody brought this issue up for discussion. He said this has been discussed before but there has been difficulty in just how to accomplish it. Having a Professional Engineer is “key” to this process. Phil Henderson stressed the fact that Leo Potter needs more support; a great deal of his time is spent keeping up with State requirements, including numerous reports, etc. He said “the time has come” but there are a lot of questions on how to implement this proposal. This is going to impact the lives of many people in both departments and it is important to look for the right people for the right job. Leo Potter pointed out that this would take time and people need a period of adjustment.

Lynda Walsh pointed out that this is all about people working together. There are employees with expertise in both fields. She recommended forming a subgroup to get things started with discussions about what the major issues are

as well as employee concerns. Larry Harrington suggested that there seems to be support to move this to the next level as there are many different elements in this move. He would like to have this brought before the Board again sometime in the next sixty days with something for consideration before the ATM. He pointed out that all are pretty much in line with costs and savings.

Kevin Paicos reminded the Board, W&S and the public of what is driving this proposal – having to do more with less. He pointed out that “out of necessity” some of what Leo Potter does in probably not going to get done. A determination has to be made on how to replace all he does with a different structure. He said there will be some shifting and definitely some things will be lost; the challenge is to determine what those things would be. He also said a lot of things would have to be put into the budget. He feels that he does not have the luxury of one or two months to make a decision on this. He realizes that some details are not going to be worked out. The key person working out the details is going to be the new DPW director. Leo Potter has said he will stay on a part time basis to assist with the process. This proposal would become effective July 1, 2011.

Some discussion was held relative to forming an Inter-management Agreement with Plainville with the idea of sharing some engineering responsibilities and thereby realizing some savings. Kevin Paicos stressed the fact that Plainville is waiting for a decision to be made within the next 30 to 60 days. He pointed out that some savings might have to be used to beef up middle management staff. He said he needs to have clarity on this proposal.

Motion by Larry Harrington to direct the Town Manager and W& S to flush out details of the proposal and to move to the next level with the intention that the Board would approve the proposal to establish a Department of Public Works. Seconded by Paul Mortenson.

Discussion – Paul Mortenson expressed concerns about the license requirements by the State, if present personnel would qualify and who would fill in for those people who used to assist Leo Potter. Larry Harrington does not want to rush this through in the next 90 days; he wants to make sure this is well thought out and that everybody is “on board” before 7/01/11. Jim DeVellis would prefer not to make a decision at this time relative to sharing the duties of a Professional Engineer with another community. Bob Swanson said he agrees that Leo Potter really needs expertise in the Water Department. He is not really sure sharing snow plowing with W&S Dept. is going to save money. Mike Walker, W&S employee, said this should be vetted thoroughly before it is implemented. He disagrees with the proposed savings that would be realized by sharing the snow plowing jobs. **Vote: 5-0-0**

Phil Henderson, Chairman, adjourned the meeting of the W&S Commissioners. Seconded by Bill Euerle. **Vote: 3-0-0**

**8:30 – Discussion on Liquor License** – Lorraine Brue said she would be willing to work with Chief O’Leary. She said she would look at what other Towns are doing regarding “best practices”. Paul Mortenson said he would work with Lorraine on this issue. Kevin Paicos suggested contacting the ABCC to find out what other towns may have in the way of good policies. It was noted that Chief O’Leary has quite a bit of information. Kevin Paicos pointed out that there is no system in place to bring attention to similarities of violations. The question becomes when is it appropriate to bring the violation to the attention of the BOS.

**8:45 – Town Warrant Discussion** – Kevin Paicos pointed out that it is a decision to be made by the Board as to whether or not to have a Special Town Meeting. In speaking with Dan Murphy, Kevin said the May Town meeting would be much better for the article referring to the Kraft Group. There is nothing pressing on the Town side. After a brief discussion, Kevin Paicos said he would finalize the Warrant, ask the BOS to review it and to specifically vote on January 14, 2011. He would make a recommendation at that time on a date for a STM.

Motion by Paul Mortenson to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing Collective Bargaining, Personnel Issues and Strategy for Real Property Negotiations and to exit from Executive Session for the sole purpose of adjournment. Seconded by Lorraine Brue.

<b>Vote: 5-0-0</b>	Lynda Walsh, Chairperson	Yes
	Larry Harrington, Vice Chairman	Yes
	Jim DeVellis, Clerk	Yes
	Paul Mortenson	Yes
	Lorraine Brue	Yes

Motion to adjourn by Paul Mortenson. Seconded by Lorraine Brue.

**Vote: 5-0-0** Meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

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James J. DeVellis, Clerk

