

**BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS MEETING HELD: February 23, 2016**

LOCATION: 84 Somers Road, East Longmeadow, MA 01028

ATTENDANCE: J. Maybury D. Burack T. Wilson R. Peirent R. Esposito D. Murphy S. Tancredi

ABSENT: B. Fenney

Also in attendance was Mr. Greg Neffinger, Interim Town Administrator.

Mr. Maybury called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m. He asked if anyone other than ELCAT was recording the meeting. Ms. Tancredi stated that she was recording the meeting for the minutes.

**REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES of February 2, 2016 MEETING: Mr. Burack made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of February 2, 2016. Mr. Wilson seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, the vote was taken and was unanimously affirmative.**

**HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT:**

Mr. Maybury introduced Mr. Greg Neffinger, Interim Town Administrator. Mr. Neffinger stated that his purpose for attending the meeting tonight was to discuss a proposal to fund a Human Resources Department and hire a Human Resources Director. He stated it would be costly to the Town but no more expensive than dealing with legal problems that can arise between employers and employees when policies are put into place but not properly implemented. He stated that he has developed different types of job descriptions for the Human Resources Position based on information he received from other surrounding communities. The plan would be for the candidate who will be hired to take a look at the entire Town and ultimately make suggestions for the various Town Departments. Mr. Neffinger then asked if the Board of Public Works members had any questions that they wanted to discuss regarding the proposal.

Mr. Maybury asked Mr. Neffinger if he knew the exact number of people employed by the Town. Mr. Neffinger stated that while he did not have a print out of the exact number at this time, there are approximately between four and five hundred employees working for the Town with teacher positions making up the majority of that number. Mr. Maybury stated if the number of employees is over four or five hundred implementing a Human Resources Department is a good idea. However the Town is a Municipality and not a private industry company, where the CEO or Board of Directors of a company defines for the Human Resources Director the culture of the corporation. Mr. Maybury suggested that the Human Resources Director who will be hired will need to take input and be flexible as the different municipal Town Departments each run separately and there are different types of policies and Union Contracts currently in place.

Mr. Neffinger stated that the Human Resources Director would be there simply as a resource and a guide, especially during hiring and Union Contract Negotiations. Mr. Maybury, Mr. Burack and Mr. Wilson all concurred with this concept.

Mr. Burack stated that a Human Resources Department is necessary in order to ensure compliance and deal with regulations so long as the Human Resources Director was simply a guide and each department still had control over running their separate department, especially when hiring and disciplining employees. Mr. Wilson stated that a Human Resources Department would add value and should have been implemented much sooner.

A discussion followed between Mr. Neffinger and the Board of Public Works in regard to hiring a Human Resources Director as well as an assistant for the new department. Mr. Neffinger stated that the plan would be to hire a Human Resources Professional for the Human Resources Director Position, while the current Benefits Administrator, Ms. Corinne Tranghese, moves into the new department and the Town Administrator would then oversee the Human Resources Department under the Board of Selectmen's supervision.

Mr. Burack asked if funding for the new Human Resources Department will be presented at Town Meeting. Mr. Neffinger stated that the funding is in the proposed budget as the Appropriations Committee felt that the proposal is long overdue and they are looking for feedback from the other departments in Town. Mr. Maybury asked if the Human Resources Department would be under the Board of Selectmen's budget or would it be split among the other departments. Mr. Neffinger stated that the Human Resources Department would be under its own budget.

Mr. Peirent went on to suggest establishing a Personal Policy Committee. Mr. Burack concurred and stated that the Town once had a Personal Policy Committee that ended some years ago. The representatives from each Town Department, with the exception of the School Department, who had their own committee, and a few appointed Town Residents came together to confirm that every Town Department was reviewing their employees' job descriptions and salaries on a regular basis. The committee's job was to ensure that there was continuity between all the different departments based on the guidance of an outside Human Resources Consulting Firm. Mr. Neffinger concurred and stated the Human Resources Director would be available to implement those types of issues and will hopefully organize a new Personal Policy Committee in the future.

**Mr. Burack made a motion to approve the Town's request to hire a full time Human Resources Director. Mr. Wilson seconded the motion. Mr. Maybury asked if there was any further discussion.**

Mr. Peirent recommended that the motion be amended as the proposal is being put forth by the Board of Selectmen and the Appropriations Committee to create a Human Resources Department.

**Mr. Burack amended his first motion and made a new motion to support the Board of Selectmen's proposal to fund a Human Resources Department and to hire a full time Human Resources Director. Mr. Wilson seconded the amended motion. There being no further discussion, the vote was taken and was unanimously affirmative.**

Mr. Neffinger thanked the Board of Public Works for their time and input.

## **SUPERINTENDENT REPORT**

**DRAFT TOWN MEETING ARTICLES:** Mr. Peirent stated that the deadline to submit the draft Town Meeting Articles to the Board of Selectmen is Tuesday, March 1, 2016. Mr. Peirent stated that the first two draft articles will be for Water and Sewer Enterprise Funding. The wording of the articles will be identical to last year's articles but the figures will be different as they are currently not available. The figures will depend on the department's budget expenses which were submitted to the Appropriations Committee, the development of water and sewer rates for Fiscal year 2017 and input from both the Town Accountant and Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Peirent stated that another possible draft article will be for Chapter 90 Funding, although it may not be presented at Town Meeting as Mr. Peirent stated that last year the Governor's Office wrote two separate letters with the same dollar number, which he accidentally counted twice and then a vote was taken for the double amount at last year's Town Meeting.

Mr. Peirent stated that there will also be a Citizen Petition Request to accept the last piece of Waterman Avenue, which is about four hundred feet long. The petition will be submitted by the resident sponsoring the petition as an article before Tuesday, March 1, 2016 and the Board of Public Works can then make a recommendation.

Mr. Peirent stated that discussions are in progress between the Town and the owner of a small piece of private property that has some waste on it for a possible land swap in regard to the landfill closure. The article will be presented by the Board of Selectmen and not the Department of Public Works due to their responsibility for landfill issues.

**HIGHWAY UTILITY MANAGER POSITION:** Mr. Peirent introduced Mr. Roy Esposito to the Board of Public Works and stated that he has been hired for the Highway Utility Manager Position. Mr. Peirent stated that Mr. Esposito has been working for the department for forty-three years and was the best candidate for the job. The Board of Public Works congratulated Mr. Esposito. Mr. Peirent stated that Mr. Esposito will officially start his new position on Tuesday, March 1, 2016.

Although, not in attendance, Mr. Peirent also took the opportunity to thank Mr. Fenney for doing two jobs and filling in as the Operations Manager for a good part of the last year. Mr. Peirent stated that Mr. Esposito will be responsible for the Highway and Utilities, while Mr. Fenney will be responsible for the buildings, facilities around the buildings and management of the garage, along with the Vehicle Maintenance Program.

**EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AT THE DPW:** Mr. Peirent stated that two new positions have been posted and the internal deadline was for today. The first position is for a Water Division Foreman. This position was originally held by Mr. Esposito. The second position is for 4th Equipment Operator. Mr. Peirent stated that four internal candidates have applied and in the next couple of days selections will be made to fill those positions. Mr. Peirent stated that a Skilled Worker Position has also been posted and resumes have been received but no interviews have been scheduled at this time.

**SPRINGFIELD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION CONTRACT:** Mr. Peirent stated that he and Mr. Maybury met with representatives from the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission last week. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the draft Water and Sewer Contract. Mr. Peirent stated that some progress was made during the meeting but there are still some issues which will need further discussion.

**FY2017 WATER & SEWER RATE EVALUATION:** Mr. Peirent stated that he will be drafting Water and Sewer Rate Information in the next couple of weeks for the Board of Public Works to review before a Rate Hearing Meeting is scheduled in April. Mr. Peirent stated that in order to present the department's articles for the Water and Sewer Enterprise Funds at Town Meeting the water and sewer rates must be established for FY2017.

**APPROPRIATIONS/CAPITAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS:** Mr. Peirent stated that he and Mr. Maybury met with both the Appropriations and Capital Committees last week. It was a joint meeting between the representatives from the School Board and the DPW. The Board of Selectmen was also scheduled to attend but Mr. Paul Federici, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen could not make it to the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Town's Capital Improvement needs and what approach could be taken to address those needs. Mr. Peirent stated that one option is to address the debt service. The Town will be retiring the debt service over the next several years and retiring that debt service will provide opportunities to reinvest in Capital through new borrowing. The plan would be to take money off of the tax rate and use that money to fund new Capital Improvement Projects in order to keep the Town's facilities running. Mr. Peirent stated that another meeting with the Appropriations and Capital Committees has been scheduled for Tuesday, March 8, 2016.

**COLD WEATHER CONDITIONS:** Mr. Peirent stated that the Town made it through the cold spell a couple of weekends ago with only one freeze problem in a small room at the High School. The hydronic water heater unit failed, which caused a water line in the room to freeze up and a pipe to burst. The plan is to eliminate piping from that room as it is used for storage which will assist with the heating load and prevent any potential freeze ups in the future.

**LED REPLACEMENT LIGHTING FUNDING IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS:** Mr. Peirent stated that on Monday, February 29, 2016, he, a representative from the Board of Selectmen, the Building Inspector, the Electric inspector and the a representative from the School Department will be meeting with Mr. John Alba, the Town's Energy Contracting Consultant to discuss National Grids' plan to fund LED replacement lighting in public schools. Mr. Alba will be discussing the program and its short term pay back over the next two years. Mr. Wilson asked if replacement LED lighting in the High School will help with the electrical load. Mr. Peirent stated yes. Mr. Peirent made the Board of Public Works aware, however, that the pay back will be less for the fluorescent lights that have already been replaced with T8 bulbs, which was the most energy efficient lighting on the market place.

## **TOWN ENGINEER REPORT**

**ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT:** Mr. Murphy stated that the Road Improvement Project for this year will be going out to bid in the next couple of weeks and he anticipates receiving the department's regular Chapter 90 allocation of \$600,000. Mr. Murphy stated that he is working on spring and fall crack sealing along with finishing up the deferred section on Chestnut Street between Holly Drive and Benton Drive. The streets targeted for the Road Improvement Project for this year will be Porter Road from Allen Street to the City of Springfield line, Markham Road, which will need to be reclaimed and then sections of Allen Street. Mr. Peirent stated that the Governor's Office last year distributed the Chapter 90 money very quickly but now they are back to a regular cycle. The Chapter 90 Funding for FY2017 has not been approved. Mr. Peirent stated that he and Mr. Murphy will be ready to receive those funds as soon as they are made available on July 1, 2016.

**INFLOW AND INFILTRATION PROGRAM:** Mr. Murphy stated that investigations on the northeast and northwest sections of Town which were not looked at in the past are still on going for the Inflow and Infiltration Program. Mr. Murphy stated that he is also looking at a metering program. The plan is to install up to eight meters in the next eight to ten weeks providing that there is a rainy spring this year for good ground water levels and detecting leakages.

**LANDFILL CLOSURE LAND SWAPS:** Mr. Murphy stated that he has reached out to the land owner of private property that has some waste on it to discuss a possible land swap. Mr. Murphy stated that he will be meeting again with the land owner this week and hopefully there will be a conclusion so that it can be completed in the spring or possibly the fall of this year. Mr. Peirent stated that the process started with an old land owner seven to eight years ago but discussions stopped and now with a new land owner it has taken the department some time to get him up to speed on the plan.

**BUNDLED NOTICE OF INTENT DRAFT:** Mr. Murphy stated that the Bundled Notice of Intent draft was submitted to the Conservation Commission for review and the draft has received positive feedback from the DEP. Mr. Murphy stated that he and Mr. Peirent will be meeting with the Conservation Commission tomorrow evening, February 24, 2016 to discuss the draft. Mr. Maybury congratulated Mr. Murphy and Mr. Peirent for taking this big step for the department that was a long time overdue.

**COLUMBIA GAS MEETING:** Mr. Murphy stated that he and Mr. Esposito met with representatives from Columbia Gas. The meeting was productive and Columbia Gas has gotten a lot better over time in reaching out and communicating with the Town as to what projects they are currently working on. Mr. Burack asked if discussions about the work done by Columbia Gas on Shaker Road went well. Mr. Murphy stated yes.

Mr. Maybury stated that the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 8, 2016 at 5:00 p.m. at 84 Somers Road, East Longmeadow, Mass.

**Mr. Burack made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:00 p.m. and go into Executive Session and not to return to open session upon adjournment. Mr. Wilson seconded the motion, there being no further discussion; the vote was taken and was unanimously affirmative.**

