

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE TOWN OF SUFFIELD
PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION
March 15, 2011**

Commission Members Present: Chairman Guy Boccasile, Tony Roncaioli, Ron Rookey, and George Rodgers, and Al Pastula. Absent: Steve Stoll. Also present was Landfill Superintendent Robert Heintz, Highway Foreman, Mark Cervione, Assistant Foreman Jim Richardson. Chairman Boccasile called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall lower level conference room on Tuesday, March 15, 2011.

Approval of Minutes: Ron Rookey made a motion, seconded by Tony Roncaioli to approve the minutes of February 15, 2011. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Public Works Report: Mark Cervione was present for Jack Muska who was on vacation. The Library roof is on hold until the Referendum is passed. Groundwater got into the duct work at the Library. A contractor pumped it out, but the water got into the heating ducts so the windows fogged up. The conceptual design for the Library is also on hold until after the project is approved at referendum.

Vo-Ag: A meeting is scheduled for today, March 15th which will review the need for a fire pump. Confirmation of the cost for that unit will also be discussed at that meeting.

The tobacco barn that collapsed on the Vo-Ag site is being cleaned up and removed by F.E.B., who was issued a Demolition Permit. All of the tobacco which was stored in the shed is the property of Tom Sheldon which will be being taken out. Mr. Sheldon will also remove his tobacco poles. The rest of the debris is going to Babylon.

Housing Authority Water heater replacement program is ongoing. Barry Associates is the low bidder.

The Town Hall window installation bid will be opened on March 23rd. There were 8 bidders for the window installation.

The Highway Department is upgrading its generator. JTN Electrical was the low bid for this work.

Highway Dept. Report:

Mark also reported that 2-3 men crews are constantly patching pot holes. They are also beginning to prepare the athletic fields and courts for sports programs. The Department is also continuing to work on small drainage problems.

There was discussion over the review and revision of the current snow policy which was adopted in 2009. *Mr. Roncaioli made a motion to recommend to the Board of Selectmen that there be a flat fee for reimbursement of mailboxes that were damaged during snow plowing by being directly hit by the snow plow. A fee of \$30 for mailbox reimbursement*

may be paid out to the homeowner after a valid receipt is received by the Town. No labor by the Town will be provided to replace the mailboxes or poles. Also the Town does not take on any responsibility for pot hole damage done to vehicles as a result of hitting a pot hole. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

The Commission's Secretary will draw up a draft revised document of the Snow Policy to be reviewed by the Commission next month.

George Rodgers suggested that the boy scouts can help elderly residents repair their broken mailboxes and poles. The Commission agreed that it would be a good project for them.

Highway Budget:

Mark Cervione also reviewed the status of the Highway Budget. There is \$120,000 for road salt which has been completely expended. Mark used part of the State Aid Road funds to purchase more salt. That leaves about \$19,000 in State Aid Road funds left. The Over Time Budget has left \$50,000. Paid out through March 10th is \$84,518.00 in over time. The Commission discussed the possibility of hiring more snow plowing contractors to do some of the snow plow routes. Mr. Roncaioli felt the Commission should researching this concept further.

Mr. Roncaioli asked what happened to last meeting's recommendation to the Selectmen that all private organizations mow and maintain their own fields. Chris Koren said this has not come before the Selectmen yet. The Commission should submit this recommendation either directly to the First Selectman, or by a letter sent to the Board. Mark said the problem here is that you have Travel Lacrosse playing on town fields. But the Soccer Club complained because Christian Field which is a privately owned field, is being mowed by the Town. The Commission wants the Board of Selectmen to make a decision on this matter.

Mark said that he did bring up the concept of instituting private Contractors to do some highway department work. Mr. Roncaioli said he requested H.R. work on how to bifurcate the highway department. Mr. Boccasile said he was directed by the First Selectman to put something together by the Commission and then present it to H.R. The Public Works Commission should recommend how the Highway Dept. should be bifurcated into rolls and responsibilities. Mark said this could only be done through Union Negotiations. Mark said he is working with the School Department to hire two high school kids to mow at \$10/hour. There used to be a Labor Grade in the Union Contract but the Town took this labor grade out. Mr. Roncaioli said it will never be renegotiated back into the Contract, once it has been taken out, so it's time to restructure what we call the Department and have job descriptions and then replace people with those jobs. If it takes until employees retire, we still need to have the frame work in place. Mark said that is what the town is trying to do, but cannot until employees retire. When they retire, then a private contractor can be hired to come in for snowplowing and mowing.

Mr. Roncaioli said we can't wait until those things happen we have to lay the frame work now, otherwise it will be another two year battle from that point. Mark said the Town has to commit to that and when the next few employees retire, they must not be replaced. This suggestion was brought to the First Selectman and that it where it presently sits. Ron Rookey suggested that Parks & Recreation field obligations go back to being a Parks & Recreation functions, and be part of their budget and they then can hire grounds people.

The Commission also requested Mark for the actual in-house costs for mowing. Mr. Roncaioli asked why the mowing takes so much time. Ron Rookey asked for the actual number of in-house costs for mowing, not just contractor costs. He wants costs for manpower, labor, repair expenses and supplies. Mark said they looked into bringing in contractors to do in house mowing which is the schools, etc., the problem is the Athletic Director some times require immediate attention to details on the playing fields. The Commission wanted to know why the Department of Public Works mows the school grounds and maintains their athletic fields. They asked how many custodians there are in the school department and why they aren't mowing their grounds. The Commission requested that the facilities manager, Larry Plano from the schools department attend the Commission's next meeting to answer their questions. They also requested that the First Selectman, Tom Frenaye attend the next meeting.

Landfill Superintendent's Report: Bob Heintz

Household Hazardous Waste Day is April 2nd, from 8 a.m. to 12 noon at the Highway Garage. Ron, Tony, Guy and Bob will volunteer. It was assumed that John Woods, the Emergency Management Director will also help out. The Garden Club will supply lunch and help with the publicity.

Mr. Heintz reported that the bulky waste tonnage is down about 80 tons from last year for October and November and December.

The Electronic Collection is going well. The majority of electronic waste is TV's, cell phones and computer monitors. Mr. Heintz is currently having some difficulty contacting the contractor responsible for picking up the electronics. The Contractor will be paid by whatever manufacturer that produced the equipment. NRL is currently disposing of the landfill's batteries and other items.

Other Business:

Although the Commission recommended to the Board of Selectmen not to roll the trash fee into the real estate taxes, the Board of Finance has been forwarded the recommendation from the Selectmen to do that. Mr. Boccasile, speaking for the businesses in town was against this. The Selectmen have also recommended that the Town pick up the trash for the condominiums in town.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, a motion was made and seconded and approved by unanimous vote to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine Koren, Recording Secretary

NEXT MEETING: April 19th.