

Poland Town Manager's Report

TO: Board of Selectmen
CC: Town Department Heads
FROM: Rosemary Kulow, Town Manager
DATE: November 10, 2011

Code Enforcement Officer

Robert Folsom is on board as the interim Code Enforcement Officer/Local Plumbing Inspector until a permanent, full-time CEO/LPI is hired. He is fully certified and began working last Friday. The Board of Selectmen's confirmation of his appointment appears on the November 15th agenda. I will interview candidates for the permanent position next week, and the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen and the Administrative Assistant to the Code Enforcement officer will sit in on the interviews.

Water & Sewer Project Update

The installation of wastewater pipe continues along Rte. 26, Rte. 122, and Empire Road, and will continue as long as weather allows. It is unlikely that all the additional work will get done before this winter, but significant progress is occurring, just the same. Filling of the water tower is contingent on the completion of vault construction, which should be completed by the first week of December. Waste water pump stations should be complete by Christmas. The project is waiting for a few easements to be completed before that can be completed. Two easements need to be obtained from the owner of the property, Poland Spring, as the town only leases those properties. The next project status meeting is December 11th in the conference room.

Adams Bridge Update

The construction of Adams Bridge is complete, and I have contacted the Bridge division at Maine DOT about an inspection. Bill Doukas at MDOT did some research about the road and bridge and determined that the state has no stake in the bridge, so a construction inspection will not be done. However, whenever a new bridge is built, it is immediately put on a DOT maintenance list for a *safety* inspection. The safety inspection will most likely be done soon, now that they know the bridge is complete. The bridge will have a safety inspection every two years. Mr. Doukas will provide me additional information by email.

In the meantime, I also learned that the project was a design-build project and that Norman Chamberlain of Taylor Engineering was under contract with St. Laurent to engineer the bridge. Mr. Chamberlain said he conducted frequent inspections throughout construction and assured me that although he represents the contractor, he also kept the best interests of the town in mind as he designed and oversaw construction. He said he is pleased with the product and believes the town now has a very good bridge. Mr. Chamberlain said they used sound erosion control practices for the wing walls and saved time in the concrete curing process by using concrete blocks. Mr. Chamberlain said the bridge has a very sound foundation because more concrete than was called for in the specifications was used to create a sturdy base.

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T & M Mortgage Solutions Litigation Settlement

Last week, on behalf of the Town of Poland and being duly authorized by the Board of Selectmen to represent the Town of Poland in negotiations, I attended a judicial settlement conference regarding the T & M Mortgage Solutions litigation at Superior Court in Portland with the town's attorney, Adam Lee. Negotiations lasted all morning, with the assistance of Judge Donald Marden serving as mediator between the parties. Todd Johnson, president of T & M Mortgage Solutions and his attorney were present, as well. Due to several points of law and other conditions that were relayed and discussed during the conference, the following resolution and settlement of the dispute was agreed to by the parties at the conference:

“In full and complete settlement of the Town of Poland's action against Todd Johnson, Individually, Todd Johnson shall convey to the Town of Poland free and clear title to real estate located on Stanley Street in Bakerton Heights Subdivision in the Town of Poland currently owned by T and M Mortgage Solutions, Inc. and shall pay \$10,000 (Ten Thousand Dollars) to the Town of Poland over 8 (eight) months to be evidenced by a promissory note. The Town of Poland shall not dismiss its suit against Todd Johnson, individually, until receipt of free and clear title to the property and payment of the \$10,000. Disposition shall be by Stipulation to Dismissal. The Town of Poland will forebear collection efforts against T and M Mortgage Solutions, Inc. so long as the above conditions are satisfied.”

Worthy Brook Crossing

At the last Selectmen's meeting, a concern was expressed about protrusions noticed at the crossing of Worthy Brook. The Public Works Director looked into the matter and determined that the area is the responsibility of the State of Maine, and that beavers had built a dam in that location. The beaver dam has since been removed by the state.

Tour of ecomaine

Monday morning I toured the ecomaine recycling facility and waste-to-energy plant in Portland. The Town of Poland sends its unsorted recyclables to ecomaine for processing, so I needed a first-hand understanding of their process. I was very impressed with the operation and how the sorting technology sorts the different types of waste material. Of course, a certain amount of human sorting is still required for materials that are missed by the sorting process; but overall, the process is very efficient, with 90% of all material sorted mechanically. Receiving this type of education myself made me more aware of the need for all Poland citizens to have a clear understanding of the service they receive and how the process works. We plan to have more public education provided to Poland citizens by ecomaine personnel in the near future. I encourage the local schools to arrange student tours with ecomaine, as they provide that service on a regular basis.

Town Office Furnace

Yesterday when staff reported to work at the town office, it was discovered that the furnace wasn't working. Brian Kimball called Nason Mechanical Systems to make repairs, and they replaced a blower fan on the furnace. I understand that \$8,400 was budgeted in the FY12 CIP budget to replace the furnace based on a cost quote provided by Nason. The town office building also needs to have insulation installed to prevent significant

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heat loss that has been shown in a study done by WYDEVUE two years ago. It is unclear to me at this point whether adequate funding is in this year's budget to do this project, but it should be done as soon as possible to enable the furnace to work at maximum efficiency and improve working comfort for town office staff. I will research the matter further to determine if funding is in this year's budget for the project. Any historical information selectmen or staff can provide to me will be most helpful and appreciated.

Staff Subdivision Review

When subdivision applications are submitted to the Planning Board, copies of the application are distributed to various town staff members for their review and comment about the impact of the proposed development from their department's point of view. I believe that the most efficient and effective way to obtain adequate input for the Planning Board is for staff members to assemble to discuss the project and its impacts from each other's points of view. The first such meeting was held yesterday, and it was attended by the Fire Chief, Public Works Director, planner Bob Faunce, Interim Code Enforcement Officer, CEO's Administrative Assistant, Captain of the Sheriff's Dept., Vice-Chairman of the Planning Board, and Road Commissioner.

Those present exchanged valuable ideas and information and presented concerns, interpretations, and opinions about the proposed development. Each department head filled out the form provided with the application and attached additional explanations, as appropriate. The forms are submitted to the Planning Board for its consideration at a meeting when they review the application.

Staff decided to continue this practice for each subdivision development application and welcome applicants to the meetings, as well. Planning Board members will not be invited to future staff meetings, however, as their involvement should be restricted to Planning Board meetings.

This type of preliminary discussion may help applicants become aware of any shortcomings in applications earlier in the process, so they can be addressed before the application reaches the Planning Board, thereby saving time in the application process. The point is to generate thought and discussion among staff, and present sound information to the Planning Board for its deliberations. A more streamlined process should enable Planning Board consideration of applications to be more organized, user-friendly, and swift, as well as provide valuable help and timely information to applicants.

Donations & Grants

I need to ascertain the process the Board of Selectmen uses to accept non-tax revenues the town receives from grants or donations that help reduce the tax burden. Article 15 on this year's annual town meeting warrant authorizes the board to accept such funds, but I need to know the process the board uses to accept them. Is there a formal acceptance at Selectmen's meetings, or are donations and gifts simply accepted by approving the warrants?

Budget Account Format

Upon review of the Town of Poland's budget and its format, there are several things I see that, from my point of view as a manager and budget analyst, need changing. There are many improvements to the format and

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accounting process that can be made that will enable greater efficiencies among departments and easier understanding by those who make decisions about the budget. It is my goal to increase transparency in the municipal budget process and town finances overall, while at the same time reduce duplication of efforts among town staff. Therefore, I will spearhead a process to standardize budget account line items across departments that will more clearly show the true cost to operate each town department without getting into too much minutia. I will also ask that the employee benefits and health insurance costs associated with each department's personnel be shown in that department, instead of combining all health insurance in one bulk appropriation.

The downside of the process for THIS ONE YEAR is that it will take some extra work for staff and Finance to separate and identify the costs associated with the expenditure categories for each department, and it will be more complicated for decision-makers to compare next year's budget proposal with this year's adopted budget, due to the variation in budget accounts. Staff will help decision-makers understand the differences along the way, and I hope that everyone will bear with the transition process this year. The end result will allow for easier comparison of more realistic operational costs from year to year and help us analyze costs and identify and implement greater efficiencies in our departmental operations. I intend to ask Ron Smith for his opinion about my idea to reorganize the chart of accounts, as it should receive his approval as the town's auditor. I will be available to explain the plan and end result in further detail as we move through the budget process.