

To: Hubbardston Board of Selectmen

From: Raeanne Siegel, Interim Town Administrator

Date: May 02, 2016

Re: Town Administrator's Report

- 1. Charter Cable License Renewal Negotiations:** Unfortunately, Charter's proposal to merge with Time Warner is stalling our renewal process. Tom Cohan from Charter does not think that he will be able to get the Charter hierarchy to approve the new license until late May, maybe later. I have asked Bill Hewig from Kopleman and Paige what the ramifications would be if the license is not renewed prior to the May 30th deadline. He stated that as long as both sides agree that it is mutually acceptable to work past the deadline, there should be no issues. I have added this to the May 16th agenda, in the event it is able to move forward at that time.
- 2. Remote Participation for Boards and Committees:** It has come to my attention that there are several boards and committees that are using remote participation, which is currently in violation of open meeting law. Use of remote participation must first be approved by the Selectboard. The minimum requirements for remote participation are that a physical quorum be physically present, and one or more factors must be present to allow remote participation, including personal illness, personal disability, emergency, military service or geographic distance. Remote participants may vote, and shall not be deemed absent. Does the board wish to allow remote participation going forward?
- 3. Dog Issue on Mt. Jeff:** The parties involved in the dog attack that took place on Mt. Jeff have been informed that there will be a discussion on the board's agenda for the May 16th meeting. I have asked Chief Perron to be in attendance as well, to discuss protocol in regards to reporting dog incidences. Since the airing of the April 25th board meeting, there have been several other residents that have come forward to complain about dog attacks that were never follow up on, or reported.
- 4. Vacant Board/Committee Seats:** The ballot for the annual town election has been finalized. There are several boards that unfortunately have vacant seats with no current candidates. The finance committee is looking for two members, cemetery commission one member, and the housing authority needing three members. Issues at times cannot be addressed if there are not enough members. If anyone is interested, or if you know of anyone interested, please have them contact Joyce Green. They could either be a write in candidate for this election, or be considered for appointment by the board after the election on the 14th.
- 5. Auditing Firm:** It is good practice to change auditing firms every few years. The amount listed in the FY'17 budget is the one presented by Scanlon & Associates. If auditing firms were to be changed now, it may be an additional increase to the budget. If the change does not take place for this coming audit period, it is recommended that the board look into changing the auditing firm for the following year. If desired, I can look into what other firms would be charging, so that you have an idea of the increase.
- 6. Borrego Solar Discussion:** The Assessors, Jeff Williams and I met with Zak Farkes from Borrego Solar in regards to the solar projects on Gardner Road. One item that must be decided is does the board want to have an escalator similar to the one negotiated with Tru Green, or keep the number consistent throughout the 20 years. Zak stated that he would be able to attend the May 16th meeting in order to present the agreement.

- 7. Request for letter to Mass DOT:** DPW Director Tim Kilhart is requesting that the board approve a letter being sent on behalf of the Selectboard against Chapter 90 being level funded by DOT for the next five years. Public comment is now open, and while Tim agrees with several of the items in the Mass DOT 5 year Capital Investment Plan, it also calls for level funding Chapter 90, which would hurt future town projects. Will the board approve of a letter being sent on behalf of the town not supporting level funding Chapter 90 for the next five years?
- 8. Country Hen Scholarship:** The deadline has passed for the Country Hen Scholarship, and we have received two applications. The board has the option to either split the scholarship amount between the two applicants, or have a committee review the applications, and choose one recipient. Which approach would the board like to take with the two applications?
- 9. Meeting on June 1st:** This is the same evening as candidate's night, held in the senior center at 6:30. We currently have a meeting scheduled for that evening, as it will be the last board meeting prior to town meeting. If the board would like to review town meeting article assignments on the 16th, we could cancel the meeting on the 1st, so that the two members up for re-election can attend the candidate's event.