

Cooper Select Board's Meeting
Sept. 29, 2011
Held at the Grange Hall

Attending: Sandra Lyon, Donna Timpe, John Viselli, Micah Perkins, Jeanne Tonizzo, Stuart Shotwell, Karen Holmes, altogether there were 17 people attending

Starting time: 6:37 p.m.

Agenda Item 1: Micah addressed the group to say he wanted to let everyone know the current state of the Town as regards the Fair Point petition. It was started by an individual, and the Town did not want to take it over at this point. He realizes this puts a lot of pressure on Jeanne, and asked for her current thoughts. Jeanne said she is losing sleep over worrying about the people on the petition who have no 911. She asked if Micah had received the letter that Mr. Ballantyne had promised. Micah said no but he was aware that Mr. Ballantyne would be gone for one week. Jeanne has not seen any trucks working on the trees across the lines. Jeanne shared some of the details of people's situations who had signed the petition. There are some people with health issues that require the security of having phone service, which they do not have at this time. Jeanne has called everyone on the list that was not at the meeting. The situations are dire. Jeanne feels that the Fair Point Company does not care. She wants to turn in the petition to the Public Utilities Commission at this time with a diplomatic letter and no hype or fanfare of any kind. The letter would state that the Town is in the process of negotiating with Fair Point. She stated that we need to be sure that the phones are working. Jeanne also told the Select Board that she has asked Mr. Ballantyne why he needed a list, why he can't do the phone line inspections on all phone lines in town. Mr. Ballantyne said they did not have time, he wants a short list. Jeanne feels overwhelmed, how do you decide who goes on the list first? How do you decide whose situation or health put them on the list? Jeanne feels we need to give them the petition, in such a way that it can give us leverage. Everyone's phone line should be inspected, it is a liability issue. She does not know what to do. Jeanne feels responsible.

Micah spoke to the liability issue, and said he wants Jeanne to know that the only entity who is responsible is Fair Point. Jeanne stated that she feels her name on the petition makes it her issue, and so she wants to turn it in. Micah encouraged her to do what she feels she needs to do.

Danny Sullivan asked the Select board if they had any influence beyond this town. Micah replied that he has spoken to Rojean Tulk. Danny said he would encourage Micah to contact the people higher up on the food chain. That would be likely to produce results. Neal Hallee asked what the PUC would do with the petition? He would like to see the petition go to Howard McFadden and to those in Augusta.

Jeanne shared a story about calling Rojean, and said Rojean's issue was that people had only called 2 or 3 times, and some had not called at all. Jeanne said it was probably because they had no phone to call! Rojean was not nice at that point. Rojean was very arrogant. The PUC is paid for by tax dollars, and if we present in a calm diplomatic way, we can perhaps get these lines inspected before winter. Jeanne feels we should submit the petition to protect ourselves.

David Kinney said he thought that we gave them 60 days at the meeting last Thursday. Jeanne said we gave Mr. Ballantyne time to do what he said he would do, and we did not say we would not put petition in. They are two separate issues, Jeanne feels. Discussion continued about the time Mr. Ballantyne was given. Danny Sullivan said we had agreed to give him until Oct. 30. Jeanne said the group that was in the meeting said we would give

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them an opportunity to make everything right, but not all signers were present at the meeting. Danny said he feels that the people here had agreed to the Oct. 30 deadline, so we should wait and give him a chance to do what he said. Arline Flood agreed.

How fast is the PUC? Danny said the bottom line is that we need phones. We don't want to wait and then with the force of a train on Oct. 30. Jeanne agrees that we need to be diplomatic. Jeanne thinks giving them any list is essentially giving them the petition. Micah said it is not the Town's petition, and the Select Board chooses not to get involved right now.

Sandy Lyon offered an idea; provide Fair Point an alphabetical list of all taxpayers. Debbie Kinney said why they aren't doing their own work, they send out bills, so they should be able to find us. Nancy Marsh made some suggestions, and thinks that the list of people on the petition should be given. Jeanne again said it is hard to divide the list to make a "short list", that she also feels we need to send the petition to Fair Point and to the PUC.

Debbie Kinney said we should have everyone who is on the petition on the short list, who had this idea of making a short list anyway? John Viselli said he had phone trouble this weekend. He reported it, it was fixed, and did anyone else have a problem?

Danny Sullivan said he had an interface card that needed to be replaced, everyone might have that. We have a broken town, they need to fix it. Luis Tonizzo spoke in agreement. Jeanne agrees also, and she asked the Select Board to send a letter to Mr. Ballantyne impress the importance of the issues. Danny asked if anyone knew whether Mr. Ballantyne had taken the information from last Thursday to anyone besides himself, knowing that he was going to be gone for 1 week. No one knew. Micah said he had not seen a truck out here on Monday. Micah thinks what people are now discussing a completely different plan than we agreed on at the meeting.

Doug Blank is a summer resident and he thinks we should send the petition to the PUC. Doug has a friend who works for the PUC in another state, and explained his understanding of the way the PUC works. It makes service availability equitable for everyone, it is a slow process and the PUC will take months to move on our petition. Doug also thinks there should be a cover letter attached to the petition and also a copy of the minutes.

Micah summarized: send in the petition, a cover letter, and a copy of the minutes. Then can Jeanne sleep tomorrow night? Jeanne said yes. Then the petition has done what it was designed to do. Then the town can do what it needs to do. We should not be afraid to send it. Doug agreed, it might make Mr. Ballantyne take action a little quicker. Jeanne said she believes we are not trying to go back on our word.

A vote was taken by a show of hands to see what those present thought. 15 people voted they would like the petition to be sent. This vote was to see what the will of the Town's people was.

Neal Hallee suggested we send a copy of the cover letter to Fair Point, the PUC and to Howard McFadden. Jeanne agreed, and asked who would mail the petition? Micah said the Select board will do the cover letter, and mail the petition.

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Next week's Select Board meeting will be on Wednesday. Luis Tonizzo said this is an upfront way to do this, and Danny Sullivan agreed. There should be a Fair Point truck seen somewhere soon. Danny checked with the Select Board: he wanted to be sure we send a physical letter, not email. Micah said absolutely.

Jeanne said for a committee to look into the Connect ME Grants, Danny Sullivan has wonderful credentials, and it was her opinion that he would be a fantastic chair for a committee. Danny spoke, he has done his research, and DSL is actually on its way out, it is only a patch for now. Danny feels we should wait to see how close the service gets to us, and then proceed for there. Micah said we have Cooper Hill, it is definitely the high point, several towers, and he is surprised Internet Service is not there already. Danny Sullivan said he would like to see where the money from the Connect ME Grants has gone? Danny also said mentioned writing grants, and Debbi Kinney said we should ask Marjory Withers, she is excellent.

Agenda Item 2: Stuart spoke about Marion Transfer Station. They have a major recycling project underway. The other big change coming is that the landfill for construction debris will be closing by the end of November, or so. It makes money and helps offsets the cost of our household trash. Stuart has a letter from Dean Preston who is the Supervisor of the Unorganized Territories; he is concerned with keeping costs down, for obvious reasons. Preston, who oversees trash removal for the Unorganized Territories, has a proposal package of ideas on how to change things over the next year. Stuart will take our decisions back to the meeting on Oct. 14.

Same as Stuart's email, items #1-5, and dated 9-21-2011. [Please see the attached email.](#)

Debbie Kinney asked if we could pick one of the 5, or is this a package deal? Stuart said yes, it isn't a package deal, but he would like to know our feelings. The five proposals are not actually a package deal. We can pick and choose from that menu, rejecting one or rejecting all. Stuart wants to represent our opinions. Donna Timpe said she was in favor of a flat fee for loads less than 100 pounds. Micah asked how they will weigh more accurately, he wants Stuart to ask about that.

Sandy spoke of her concern that the haulers be better supervised. Under the current guidelines, haulers pick up trash in various communities, then "estimate" how much of the load to charge to Cooper. Stuart replied that there are no guidelines, per se, that allow haulers to estimate how much trash comes from a given town. The proposal he read to the meeting is a first step toward doing away with the practice of the haulers doing guesstimates; but to stop this we will have to supply muscle from our end at the same time that the MTS supplies it from the station end. Stuart will definitely be talking to the MTS about this problem.

Doug Blank said we should have a hauler paid to pick up only the trash in Cooper. Then the entire load would be accurately charged to us.

Micah mentioned that Ohio Brook is paid by Meddybemps to do their Town. Micah has already checked on the possibility of dumpsters. This is an issue to take to the voters, he feels.

When requested, Stuart read #5 again. John Viselli asked if Stuart knew of their ideas for recycling. Stuart replied that they are looking at doing a start-up grant, very professional. It will be built in Marion and include a large storage area. John wants to see a more serious approach to recycling. Stuart said it takes volume to make it

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viable to recycle, and everyone (cities & towns) does their own thing at this point. It took one facility 5 years to collect enough milk jugs to be able to recycle them.

Deb Kinney asked who does the recycling: she was told it is the hauler. Who empties the haul? Stuart said it is dumped on the floor of a building and then sorted. John said that if everyone is on board, it would not take so long. Stuart said it is almost impossible to make money on it with such a small population. Arline said she thought Calais was making money with theirs; it appears to be well run. Stuart said they may be. Stuart's responses were concerned with future recycling, not the present system, which depends solely on the citizens. One idea is that recycled material (all mixed together) that comes to the station (in the future) would be dumped on a sorting floor and broken out into separate streams of recyclables there (glass, plastic, metal, etc.). That is more attractive to the haulers than other methods, which require them to keep separate recyclables in separate bins on their trucks.

Micah asked Stuart to go over the 5 item list and give his opinions. Stuart feels it is unreasonable to have people pay on weekdays because some people cannot go on Saturdays. However, the time study says fewer hours will work. Stuart thinks we should encourage neighbors to get together to haul trash, not hire a hauler. Stuart agreed with Sandy that the haulers need to be better regulated. He shared the story of Harrington, how they saved \$100,000 the first year by having a town employee haul trash. Ours would not be so dramatic, but we should see a savings. Micah thanked Stuart, asked him to take our ideas back to MTS, and also to look into having bins here in Town. Doug Blank asked a question about construction debris. Stuart said it will be going up substantially.

Agenda Item 3: Micah is sending around a list to ask for email addresses. It would be an inexpensive way to share information within Town. Many people added their addresses.

Agenda Item 4: Stuart asked for a round of applause for Jeanne. As a resident and concerned citizen, she really made things happen, and we thank her for her efforts.

Agenda Item 5: John asked if we were ready to do the snow plow contract now. Sandy replied she had asked Ronnie to attend the next meeting, and he will bring a copy of his contract. Sandy asked if anyone had seen Jeff to get his copies of the last contract and other Selectman materials. John said he had called, but there was no response. John has an older contract for someone else that can be used as a guide. At the Oct. 5th meeting the snow plow contract will be discussed as agenda item 1.

Agenda Item 6: Sandy shared the information from Ann Marie that \$300 was the amount paid to Chub Cove to help maintain the road for the last 2 years. The Select Board agreed to have Ann Marie pay the \$300 to the Chub Cove road committee.

Agenda Item 7: Sandy shared information from the Washington County Council of Governments that a Dental outreach clinic is coming in October. Three copies were shared in the room. Donna Timpe asked John about the key Terry had to the bulletin board outside: John is not sure where it is. Donna said that would be a good place to post items like this notice. John will look for the board key, or ask Terry.

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Agenda Item 8: Sandy called the Sunrise County Veterinary Clinic: David Cobb is officially retired. The Bay View Animal Hospital is operating out of their facility. They only do 2 rabies clinics a year, and they are at the Ark Animal shelter. Sandy will continue to try to set up a rabies clinic for Cooper, maybe with Alexander doing theirs on the same day. Little River Veterinary Clinic was called, Sandy left a message, but they have not replied yet.

The meeting next week will be **Wednesday October 5, 2011** at 6:30 p.m.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

From Stuart Shotwell, email to the Select Board:

Proposed MTS Operations Changes

9/21/11

Dear Friends,

At the MTS meeting yesterday, a proposal was made concerning future MTS operations that I need to bring to your attention for feedback. If you object to the proposed operating schedule and fees, let me know so that I can convey your disapproval to the MTS board. Further discussion will take place at the November MTS meeting.

This is ONLY a proposal, not a change in the current operating procedure.

The components of the proposal that are in question are:

1. The station will be open on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 7:30 to 4:30, and on Saturday 7:30 to 12:30. This will give the MTS a 32-hour payroll week instead of a 40-plus-hour payroll week, with savings to the station. A time study covering thirteen months of data has been made, and it seems as if the station can comfortably operate within the reduced hours.
2. Commercial (hauler) business will be encouraged on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday, and discouraged (though still accepted) on Saturday.
3. Individual business will be on a pay-as-you-throw basis at 6 cents per pound on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Individual business will be charged to towns as usual on Saturday. The point is to encourage Saturday use by individuals.
4. Any weight under 100 pounds will be treated as pay-as-you-throw on any day, including Saturday. This will put an end to the towns having to carry the heavy cost of the \$6.00 flat-fee charges for individuals who don't use commercial haulers or consolidate with others.
5. All commercial haulers will have to be recognized by their respective towns and receive a permit or sticker from that town. In other words, any Joe Schmoie can't just show up at the station and declare that he is a commercial hauler in order to avoid the pay-as-you-throw rate for individuals during the week.

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As you know, CCD (construction demolition debris) will rise to the regular MSW rate as soon as the demo site in Marion is closed. This MAY happen as soon as the end of November. (2011)

This proposal seems to be viewed as fairly radical by most board members, many of whom are Selectmen and could anticipate having a tough time explaining these rules to their townspeople. But there are some aspects of it that would save Cooper a lot of money.

It would encourage a transition to the use of commercial haulers. While such a change would save the GOVERNMENT of Cooper money, it would cost the individual taxpayers more in hauling fees. Cooper's many summer residents would probably not be able to use a commercial hauler because their presence at the lake is so erratic; so unless they could go to the station on Saturday, their costs would increase.

I'll try to attend a Selectmen's meeting to get your feedback, but I thought I'd give you a head's up.

Thank you all for your service to the town.

Stuart