

TOWN OF SOUTHBRIDGE
A JOINT MEETING OF THE D.P.W. SUBCOMMITTEE and TOWN COUNCIL
MONDAY MAY 1, 2023 at 6:30 PM
Minutes

1. Call to Order 6:30 PM
2. Roll Call DPW Members: Councilor/DPW Chair Michael Marketti - Councilor's Gus Steeves, Joe Daou. Citizen Members: Kevin Splaine.
Also in attendance: DPW Director Richard Benoit, Operations Manager Phil Harding, WWTP Manager James Merchant, Water Manager Steve Gregoire, Town Council Chairman John Daniel. Citizens George Chenier, Rick Pollone, Derek Julien, Michael Pollone.
3. Consider and approve Joint DPW/Town Council Meeting Minutes of April 20, 2023. Approved
4. Citizens Forum: Citizen Richard Pallone asked about the standard disciplinary procedure for individuals at DPW. Kevin Splaine asked about the Operation's Manager position. Splaine asked about paving integrity on the South Street project.
5. Review/Discuss the revised job description for the DPW Deputy Director, and entertain a motion to recommend to Town Council for approval. Motion made by Daou, second by Splaine. Vote 4-0 in favor.
Discussion: Splaine asked who wrote the job description and questioned the requirements, specifically solid waste experience? Benoit said HR wrote the description and he reviewed it.

Councilor Steeves asked questions concerning the changes in the job description. Benoit talked about the removal of the engineering requirement, but thought having a civil engineering background would be beneficial. There was further discussion about the need for solid waste experience and other backgrounds including trash. Steeves asked which position is better to fill first, Operations Manager or Deputy Director? Benoit would like both positions filled.

Councilor Marketti asked about the need for a Deputy Director and spoke about salary range. There was also discussion about cost savings to the town.

George Chenier asked if the Director would have written the description differently than HR? He also thought the Manager previously said he wasn't going to fill empty positions. Benoit said he did work on it with HR and the position is funded in the budget.

Jack Jovan spoke about the position and qualifications needed for the on-going projects in town. He also said the job needs to be posted as there are lots of open positions through-out the state.

Rick Pollone said he thought there are too many administration positions at DPW.

Splaine also spoke about the problems at HR in the hiring process. Benoit said he reviewed the position and the job description is fine, the only question is, do we want a civil engineer or not? Splaine asked how we guarantee the Director is involved with the interview process? Benoit said he would be involved.

Councilor Daou said the Director is the one who hires so he believes he will be involved. He also thinks politics is part of the problem and asked that it be taken out of the hiring process.

Jovan spoke about the Charter language on the DPW Director appointing department positions. He also said the Director has reviewed the position and he is comfortable with the description. He asked that we let the process work.

Peg Dean said she thought adding HR is a great change for the town and a professionalizing that role more. She thinks HR is trying to make sure applicants are qualified.

Benoit asked that this position be posted as soon as possible and that civil engineering be left in the description.

6. Review/Discuss classifying the revised position to Grade A-7 on Schedule 1 I Administrative Salary Schedule for Positions not Covered By Collective Bargaining Agreements, and entertain a motion to recommend to Town Council for approval. Motion by Daou, second Splaine. Vote 4-0 in favor.

Discussion: Steeves asked about the current position, which is a Grade A-6, while this is Grade A-7? There was further discussion about changing it, amending it, or sending it up to council as is. It was decided to send it up to the full council as is.

7. Review FY2024 Department of Public Works Budget in the amount of \$2,090,044.00 and entertain a motion to vote to submit to Council as presented. Motion made by Splaine, second by Daou. Vote 4-0 in favor.

Discussion: Committee reviewed the DPW Budget line item by line item.

8. Review FY2024 Water Enterprise Budget and entertain a motion to vote to submit to Council as presented. Motion to postpone until next meeting by Splaine, second by Steeves. Vote 4-0 in favor.

9. Review FY2024 Sewer Enterprise Fund and entertain a motion to vote to submit to Council as presented. Motion to postpone until next meeting by Splaine, second by Steeves. Vote 4-0 in favor.

Steeves asked for a clarification about a Stormwater Plan and Road improvement budgeted item that have not come before the Committee. Benoit said he thinks it was a mistake and those were encumbered funds from prior years.

Chenier asked about the Road Improvement Program. There was further discussion about road improvement plans and funding mechanisms for this year.

10. Adjourn 8:00 PM

Respectfully submitted by Councilor Marketti