



Peter B. Webster
Town Manager

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Selectmen

FROM: Peter B. Webster, Town Manager

DATE: August 31, 2010

SUBJECT: Information for the Selectboard

Communications Study

Our communications study group met yesterday with consultant Norman Bouchard to review his progress to date, go over his propagation maps and findings. We have a complicated radio coverage situation in Norwich—Police, Fire and DPW all have different coverage rates, different needs, and the effort to achieve a 95% coverage system will not be easy or inexpensive. A number of radio coverage maps have been produced that show existing reliable base station, mobile, portable and pager coverage is very spotty, leaving major sections of Norwich without reliable radio coverage. This is a serious problem that affects public safety and the efficiency and safety of our emergency response personnel. In addition, radio coverage maps have been produced based on installing antennas at existing cellular and broadband antenna sites in Norwich and existing radio communications towers in adjacent communities and a possible new antenna location at the DPW site on New Boston Road. To date, no single site has been found to meet the minimum public safety criteria for all three departments. Grant opportunities are being reviewed as well as the possibility of partnering with a cellular or broadband provider to reduce the cost to Norwich. The next steps include reviewing additional antenna locations and developing preliminary cost estimates. The estimate for a single new antenna site in Norwich might range from \$240,000 to about \$400,000, not including the annual maintenance cost of the new system.

Parsonage

We will be having one more public meeting concerning the issue of the Parsonage purchase, Thursday Sept. 9th. This will be the last forum prior to the Town vote on Sept. 14th. At the last forum, the language for three articles was agreed upon, and it was also determined that a committee would be formed, if the vote to purchase was approved, to further study the future use of the building prior to any Town funds being expended.

Article 1—authorizes a bond in the amount of \$580,000 for the purchase of the property, which would include \$36, 900 for site improvements (purchase price is \$543,100, which is also the assessed value). The estimated average property tax cost per \$100,000 of assessed valuation over the 20-year term of a \$580,000 bond is \$4.65.

Article 2—authorizes an additional \$370,000 in the bond amount for a total bond of \$950,000. These additional monies would be used for upgrading and renovating the building to be ADA compliant, and for 'future municipal use'. We will have three years to determine how to spend the renovation fund, if the article is approved, and these funds could even be redirected, by Town vote, for a different capital project. The estimated average property tax cost per \$100,000 of assessed valuation over the 20-year term of a \$950,000 bond is \$7.62.

Article 3—would appropriate \$25,000 from existing funds for site planning, schematic design and cost estimating for remodeling and adding to the existing fire station and constructing a new police station either as part of the addition to the fire station or as a stand-alone structure. This would be at the existing police/fire station location.

The Town-wide informational mailing has been picked up from the printers and will go out next Tuesday.

News from the Norwich Police Dept.

Doug has installed the radar/speed monitoring device (paid from a grant) on the utility pole just uphill from the Norwich Pool on Beaver Meadow Road and it has just been powered up. The new pedestrian/cyclist path has been completed, as earlier reported, between Moore Lane and the pool, and we expect this to result in much safer conditions than previously existed. The initial speed monitoring device located on Church Street earlier this spring has had a very good calming effect on traffic approaching the Marion Cross School and I've received a good deal of positive neighborhood feedback.

News from the Public Works Department

Paving of Union Village Road should begin shortly. BlakTop won the bid. Also being resurfaced will be Old Coach Road, Koch Road to the seam where the previous Willey Hill project ended, the entire lengths of Hazen Street, Cliff Street and Trumbull Lane. The new sidewalk from Turnpike to Koch Road has been completed with granite curbing and is a great improvement. When the new asphalt goes down on Union Village Road this approach into the village will be

substantially completed and present a much more attractive face to those entering Town from the north.

News from the Park & Recreation Council

Jill and her great volunteers have two significant projects in the works. The first is to provide an online registration/payment system for all their varied programs. She has been meeting with several members of her Council for the past several years on this effort, has recently had meetings with both Roberta Robinson and Cheryl Lindberg to discuss just how the online payment system will work, which I've sat in on, and is almost ready for this to be rolled out in time for this fall's sign-ups. This will be a great boon to both families and the administration—coaches, accounts receivable, and Jill. The other exciting project that is just getting underway is the complete renovation of Field #1 at Huntley Meadow (the one closest to Moore Lane) and the replacement of the stairs leading down from the upper parking lot to that field. Andy Hodgdon and his crew are doing all the grading, leveling (the serious undulations of 3-5 feet will be evened out,, the entire field will be crowned for better drainage), spreading of compost (4 trailers, each 45 feet long, about 140 cubic yards), seeding, etc. Seeding should be done within the next ten days. Then we pray for rain! If this job was contracted out it would run well over \$100,000, but with the inter-departmental cooperation it will cost just a fraction of that amount. I urge you to get out there this week to see the progress. As part of this field renovation, we are utilizing a ten man crew from the Southeast State Correctional Facility in Windsor, under the watchful eye of a work crew supervisor, to replace the steps that lead from the upper parking lot down to Field #1. This too will be at a great savings to the Town. All the funding for these projects is coming from funds that were donated almost ten years ago for field renovations. The steps were installed over 20 years ago with financial help from the Women's Club, and are sorely in need of replacement. The field will be out of play at least until the fall of 2011, perhaps spring of 2012.

Junkyard Ordinance

I am putting together a committee of five (myself, two Selectboard members, and two members of the public) to look into and research the issues surrounding some kind of junkyard policy or ordinance. Suzanne is to report back to your Board on her efforts, and I will do my best to move this forward to a conclusion that is satisfactory to as many as possible.