



Peter B. Webster
Town Manager

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Selectmen

FROM: Peter B. Webster, Town Manager

DATE: January 24, 2011

SUBJECT: Information for the Selectboard

Solar Project

The Energy Committee has continued to meet, going over the proposals for two different sized projects (180 kW and 250kW). They have come to the conclusion that neither of these sized projects is financially viable, so a request to the two low bidders has been sent out to recalculate for a 75 kW and a 100kW system. The \$220,000 CEDF grant is still available, but will be scaled down to roughly \$170,000 for a smaller system in the 100 kW range, and these numbers are still being worked over. The Committee wants to be absolutely confident they've anticipated all costs involved in the project going out 25 years, and are exploring the best method of financing (either public or private offering). The Energy Committee has committed to bringing a proposal before the Selectboard and the Town but only if it makes sound economic sense for our taxpayers, one that is based on very conservative projections and assumptions. Assuming a smaller project makes sense, it will not be voted on as part of the Town Meeting in March. It may come before the voters in early April, with a May construction start if all is approved.

Communications Study

As you have heard previously, we were turned down in our initial grant application for funding for a new communications network (Brattleboro was awarded around \$1,000,000) but the Police, Fire and Public Works Departments

have continued to meet to plan future funding applications. Neil continues to coordinate this effort, meeting with Doug, Andy, Steve and me.

Parsonage

As you are probably now aware, the Parsonage was purchased January 20th by Realtor Cheryl Hermann for \$470,000, about \$70,000 less than it was offered to the Town by the church. The church did redraw the property lines, reducing quite a bit of acreage that was in their offer to the Town. I have no doubt we took the appropriate action in negotiating with the church and presenting an opportunity for the Town to vote on.

News from the Public Works Department

The past few weeks have been difficult ones for Andy and his crew, with multiple storms requiring significant sand and salt applications, not to mention much overtime. Our budget is still in good shape, but this may be the year we overspend our budgets for sand and salt. We are still one man down, which makes it more difficult to meet the needs for our sidewalk network and 100 miles of roads during these almost constant storms. We continue to study the issue of the second grader being replaced with a used grader, which will be on the January 26th agenda.

News from the Recreation Council

Jill, with great help from Lars Blackmore and others on the Recreation Council, has just submitted their grant application for the proposed new trail around Huntley Meadow. If successful, they should receive some \$8,000 to go with their matching investment of time and labor to make a new multi-purpose bike path around the perimeter.

Town-wide Reappraisal

Letters have gone out to the two unsuccessful bidders informing them of our choice to go with New England Municipal Consultant as our appraisal company, pending voter approval at Town Meeting. I sat in on all the interviews and was also in agreement that Bill Krajewski of NEMC was the right choice, and am confident we will get a good job from his company.