

Board of Health Minutes
March 26, 2009

The meeting opened at 6:00 P.M. with Ms. Devanney, Ms. Meehan, Ms. Ryan, Ms. Perrault and Mr. Mellen present.

Proposed Trash Fee

Ms. Ferrari gave the Board an overview of what had been discussed in the town hall to date with Town Administrator Cashman about instituting a trash fee for the new fiscal year. Discussion included financing the BOH budget with the amount requested at town meeting and depositing the fees in the general fund. The Board of Health office would supply the information to the Tax Collector for billing purposes to residents.

Ms. Ferrari spoke with Ms. Cashman in her office and asked her whether she could step into our meeting for a few minutes to answer questions the Board still had on the matter.

Ms. Cashman did come in and told the Board that the fee had been discussed and recommended to the Selectmen by the Strategic Financial Planning Committee but the Selectmen have not made any decisions at this point. She further explained that other options of raising the deficit amount of 1.5 to 2.1 million were to raise the meal tax and charge a pole tax to telecommunication companies. The committee talked about a \$150.00-\$180.00/year fee per household. Since offering trash disposal was not a mandatory service, charging a fee would be a way to continue the service and raise revenue instead of trying to pass a 2 ½ override.

The figure originated using 3900 households not including any 40B projects. It is possible that the condominium complexes may not participate due to them possibly getting a lower figure by working directly with other trash haulers. So the participation rate may drop by 20%.

Mr. Mellen stated that right now there is \$219.00 per household included in the tax rate for trash disposal. The question was; would that amount come off the tax rate? The answer was no.

The Board agreed that \$180.00 was a very steep amount during some very difficult times for many residents and they could not use it for a tax deduction on their income taxes. They also felt that since the fee money was not going directly to the trash hauler but to the general fund, it truly was not a trash fee and should not be called that. Ms. Devaney suggested that it should be called Selectmen's fee.

Ms. Cashman recommended to the Board that they meet with the Strategic Financial Planning Committee to discuss their concerns. The Board agreed and planned to meet with them at the committee's next meeting on April 2nd. They will also write a letter to the Selectmen and Committee members informing them of their views on the matter.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 P.M.

