

Here is the latest town update;

There were two meetings of the Select Board last week.

The first meeting focused on finalizing the police dispatch fees to be charged to Dunbarton, Epsom, Pembroke and Allenstown. Last year the board adopted a policy that each town would pay the percentage of their town calls averaged over a three year period. Prior to that those towns were charged a flat rate that left the taxpayers of Bow paying for most of the annual \$400,000 cost. However last year the new method produced significant increases in some towns that were used to paying a very small amount and the Board decided to phase in the new method over two years. The Police Chief, Town Manager and Selectman Judd again expressed their concern that the new rates were too high for the other towns and that Bow taxpayers ought to pay more because Bow had the use of a 24 hour manned station.

The compromise was for Bow residents to pay one time extra fee of approximately \$18,000 and let the other towns know that this is really the last year of Bow subsidizing their Police Departments. The motion passed 4-1 with Selectman Judd casting the dissenting vote.

**The appointment of residents to boards reminded everyone that the town needs more residents to step up and volunteer to help on Bow's various boards and commissions.**

**I can tell you from experience this is a great way to experience how the town works and meet many great Bow folks.**

**Email the town manager or me if you have any questions about serving as a volunteer. (boards/commission usually meet once a month for a couple of hours and cover topics like energy conservation, water protection, recycling, the commentary issue and I believe we still have an appointment to the Trustees of the Trust fund that over sees town investments.)**

The next night there was a joint meeting of the School Board and the Selectman. This happens once a year and is a general discussion of the state of the town.

In general it can be said that everyone is concerned about taxes and the tax base (residential vs. business). The school building bond will be paid off in a few years and some are already identifying new building projects such as a new safety center, water and sewer and a couple of possible other future projects.

The yet to be determined major issue is the steep decline in school enrollment in the very near future. Births are down and the migration into Bow by families with school age children has slowed considerably. The cost of housing and the tax cost are seen as discouraging young families from moving into Bow. It was stated that in the past Bow schools reputation as the only first class public education system was a motivating factor in selling homes in Bow but now there is competition from towns like Merrimack, Bedford and Hanover. The issue of revisiting the towns master plan was raised but no action was taken to pursue anything beyond what Dr. Casscaden is collecting regarding future school enrollment projections. The idea of opening Bow High School to students from other towns is a possibility under consideration.

The School board also reminded everyone that they are in negotiations with the teachers union.

Selectman Judd mentioned his desire to move the date of town meeting back from our current May date to a March date. He also mentioned this at the Select Board meeting. He believes that not enough residents show up at the May meeting (which is exactly the reason the town changed to a May meeting a few years ago). This item will most likely generate a great deal of discussion in future Select Board meetings.

**The next meeting of the Select Board is Wed. Dec. 6 at 5:30pm in the town admin building on Grandview.**

**The next meeting of the school board is Thursday Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> at the High School and starts at 7PM. All meetings of the Boards are open to the public.**

Tom Keane

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