

Town Update

Issue 1: Water and Sewer

Water and Sewer funding using Federal Stimulus \$\$\$\$

The water part of our plan was rejected out of hand.

The sewer part of the project ranked 69th and there is almost NO hope that it will be funded.

Issue 2: Police Dispatch

The county Sheriff and the board of County Commissioners added Allentown and Epsom to the list of towns who receive dispatch services from the County. Both towns currently pay Bow for the service thus a significant loss of revenue to Bow.

The Sheriff will charge them almost nothing. Bow asked to be included in the Sheriff's plan but was not selected even though we pay a county tax that funds the cost of the Sheriff's dispatch.

The plan needed the approval of The County delegation (all the state legislators in Merrimack county). The issue was first taken to the delegations executive board where Bow is represented by State Rep. Mary Beth Walz. *She voted to accept the Sheriff's proposal* which did not include Bow.

Later when the recommendation of the executive committee came before the entire delegation only Eric Anderson, Steve DeStefano, and Mary Beth voted against the executive committees recommendation. Mary Beth changed her vote but it was too late as all of the other 40 or so members voted unanimously to accept the executive committee's recommendation..

Bottom line we lost 2 revenue paying towns so Bow residents will have to shoulder the additional cost. The Selectmen have directed our Police Chief to find additional towns or be prepared to adjust the dispatch cost to reflect the reduction in service.

Issue 3: Elections integrity challenged at the School District Annual Meeting

In the hours and days following the school board election I heard from many people who claimed to have witnessed illegal voting at our annual school district meeting. All registered voters had a wrist band. People who did not have the wrist band were observed voting on voice and hand votes. **The problem is that the Districts moderator, Jim Hatem, allowed non-voters to sit throughout the auditorium and mingle with registered voters.**

I recently went to the elections board to get the count of registered votes who attended that annual school district meeting. That number was 552, less then 25% of Bows registered voter. The highest number of votes cast was around 510 votes. Obviously, some folks who were in attendance and registered failed to vote.

Was there voter fraud? Probably some but not enough to change the out come of the budget vote.

There are several solutions to establishing the voting integrity of our school district and town meetings.

1. Separate voters and non-voters.

- Non Voters should be restricted to the cafeteria (the session is broadcast to the cafeteria) and only registered votes should be allowed in the auditorium.
- This would also stop the intimidation factor.

2. Require all votes to be by secret ballot.

- The problem with this option is that *it extends the meeting late into the night or a continuation of the meeting to one or more additional days.*
- Voter turn out will decrease dramatically as the meeting goes late into the evening and a good town meeting only draws less than 25% of the registered voters.

3. Pass SB2 (on the May ballot)

- If adopted SB2 would allow only registered voters to vote because voting would take place at the Fire Station from 7AM to 7PM and only registered voters would be allowed into the voting booth.
- SB2 ends the advantage some gain by prolong town and school district meetings late into the night. (fewer voters at 10PM as opposed to 7PM)
- All registered voters, including those in the military, those out of town on business, the elderly who can not make a meeting that runs until 11PM, students and others would have a vote.
- SB2 would allow for a private vote and thus end the intimidating practice of having to stand up and be recognized by teachers or town employees.
- As for the argument that fewer people will attend the deliberative session and thus will be voting with little to no information I would point out that three years ago at the town's deliberative session (budget committee hearing) there were only 2 (two) town voters present who did not have a vested interest. I know this for a fact because I was one of the two present.

**If you want to hear more of the pros and cons of SB2
please**

**plan to attend the SB2 Public Hearing Thurs. April 23rd
7:00 BMS Music Room**

**If you want to learn more about the proposed Town
budget please attend**

**The Budget Committee public hearing on the Town's
2009-10 at**

7 PM on April 14 at the Bow High School Auditorium.

PS: I am running for the school board and would appreciate your vote any assistance you may be able to offer.

Tom Keane
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