

***For immediate release from the Woodbury Democratic Town Committee
August 20, 2010***

Contrary to information provided by the First Selectman, Gerald Stomski, at the Board of Selectmen's meeting on August 12th, 2010, there were other, better ways to deal with the \$80,000 cut in the Woodbury town budget than the elimination of two jobs, Park & Rec Specialist and Supervising Foreman in the Department of Public Works. The Woodbury Democratic Town Committee supports statements made by members of the public and Selectman George Hale at the August 12th BOS meeting, that it makes no fiscal or business sense to eliminate the job of someone (the P&R Specialist) who brings revenue into the town's general fund, as well as revenue to town businesses. In addition, contrary to statements made by First Selectman Stomski that public safety was his primary concern, elimination of the position of supervising foreman in the Public Works Department has the potential to negatively impact public safety during the winter months, as there will be fewer experienced personnel to clear ice and snow from roads and areas around town buildings.

During the Board of Selectmen meeting, and in various discussions with the press, Mr. Stomski repeatedly stated that he had no choice other than eliminating two jobs. However, there were other choices, some presented by town employees themselves. Unionized municipal employees said they are willing to discuss better choices, as they did in April 2009, which resulted in \$80,000 in cost savings. Several department heads have offered to cut their own budgets, to help make up the \$80,000 shortage in the 2010-2011 budget. Taken together, these proposals could have resulted in zero job eliminations. The decision to ignore these proposals and eliminate the positions was entirely the first selectman's, since, at his request, the Board of Selectmen (with Selectman Hale absent) granted him the power to hire and fire on his own initiative.

In addition to the loss of two valued town employees, this hasty, ill-advised decision by the first selectman will result in tens of thousands of dollars in legal fees to deal with the challenge that will be brought by the CSEA/SEIU on behalf of the union employees whose jobs were eliminated.

We urge all residents of Woodbury to visit the CSEA/SEIU local 2001 website http://www.seiu2001.org/blog/Default.aspx?p=coming_together_for_the_sake_of_woodbury_s_future for further information and the union's perspective about this matter and the departmental budget reductions that were offered.

We also urge residents to attend the Board of Selectmen's meeting on Thursday, August 26th, 7:30 PM at the Shove Building.

The Woodbury Democratic Town Committee supports sound fiscal management of the town, but also believes the public deserves transparency, honesty, and nonpartisan leadership from its public officials. Clearly, there were better solutions available than eliminating these jobs which impact town revenues and public safety.