

Selectmen follow up on law enforcement issues

by Mary Grow

The August 19 Vassalboro selectmen's meeting was mostly a follow-up to the North Vassalboro community meeting held a week earlier to talk about law enforcement issues.

"The North is rough again," summarized board Chairman Lauchlin Titus, who lives there himself.

He said complaints of noisy late-night crowds, vehicles without lights, vandalism and crime seem to go in cycles. Evert Fowle, District Attorney for Kennebec and Somerset counties, said people from his office, the state police and the Kennebec County sheriff's department joined Vassalboro Police Chief Richard Phippen and at least 125 residents at the August 12 meeting.

Two things will happen as a result, Fowle said. Many people have volunteered for the neighborhood watch that is being organized; and a small committee including law enforcement personnel will meet periodically to talk about keeping tabs on the major trouble-makers. Fowle is optimistic that the problems can be managed, though probably not eliminated.

"We're far from helpless in this. We can do something," he said.

Some of the residents who attended both meetings told selectmen nights are already qui-

eter. Fowle did not support the idea of adopting an ordinance against loitering. Such ordinances are "constitutionally suspect," he said, and besides, Vassalboro already has a curfew ordinance that ought to do the job now that law enforcement officials, aware of problems, will enforce it. Selectmen asked if the curfew ordinance needs changes. Fowle said perhaps minor ones. If so, Town Manager Mary Sabans said, there is time to present amendments to Vassalboro voters on November 2.

Fowle also discouraged the resident who proposed doing bodily harm to some of the trouble-makers. Instead, he advocated measures like reporting license numbers of suspicious vehicles.

Another resident asked for an additional streetlight on Cemetery Street near the entrance to the Vassalboro Sanitary District office. Selectmen unanimously approved, conditional on approval by the town's streetlight committee.

In other business August 19, Vassalboro Business Association President Jackie Reny reported on the group's recent activities and plans, including plans for a Vassalboro Days celebration September 17 and 18. Activities will include a two-day golf tournament, an afternoon of children's events and a chicken barbecue. Reny said the association has helped provide bicycle helmets through the Vassalboro Recreation Committee and spon-

sored a student at a science fair. If Vassalboro Days is a successful fund-raiser, the association hopes to fund a scholarship.

Selectmen discussed two proposals from out of town, welcoming one. The state-wide PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) program will be on the agenda for their September 2 meeting. PACE offers homeowners in municipalities that have joined the program low-interest loans to help pay for energy efficiency improvements. Kennebec Valley Council of Governments' proposal to help town officials write a comprehensive plan will not be on a future agenda, unless the Conservation Commission or some other group asks selectmen to organize work on a new plan to help get grants for projects in town. Selectmen agreed that Vassalboro's strategic plan, which does not include zoning, fails to meet state requirements and therefore handicaps some grant applications.

Sabans reported no progress on two issues board members have discussed at prior meetings, getting owners to improve the road in the Coyote Ridge subdivision and finalizing the sale of the former Chenette property on Webber Pond Road.

Selectmen commended transfer station manager George Hamar for improvements at the facility. "It gets better all the time," Titus said.

Webber Pond draw down resurfaces as hot item

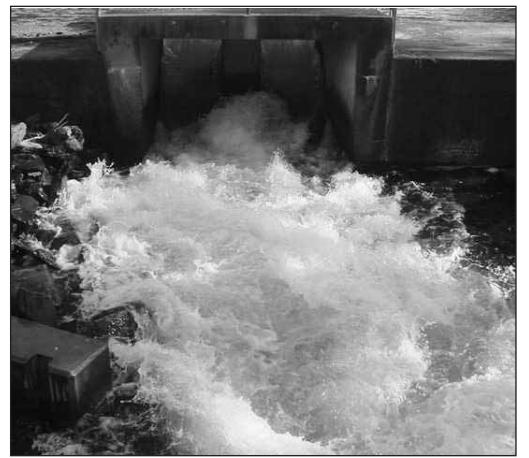
by Roland D. Hallee

After a two-year hiatus, once again the drawdown was a controversial issue at the Webber Pond Association's annual meeting, held on August 21, at the Vassalboro Community School.

The board of directors, at the June 17 meeting, had voted to recommend a September 20 drawdown to the membership. However, due to an unusually dry and hot summer, with water clarity and phosphorus level concerns, association President Frank Richards called for a motion to begin the annual lake drawdown a week earlier, on September 13.

Much controversy and confusion ensued. After a motion by Phil Inness to amend the date to

October 12 failed, the motion reverted to the September 13 date. Another amendment, this time by Roland Hallee, was pre-



Water rushes through the gates at the Webber Pond Dam as the drawdown began in the fall of 2009. File photo by Roland D. Hallee

sent for September 20, the original date recommended by the directors. After four recounts because the vote was so close, the

DRAW DOWN
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