

Cape-tip selectmen, veterans agent trade charges

By MARY KLEIN
Staff Writer

PROVINCETOWN — Provincetown selectmen said last night they would like to fire veteran's agent Joel O'Brien but are reluctant to dismiss him until he completes a two-year backlog of paperwork.

O'Brien has been accused of negligence which could cost taxpayers

about \$22,000 in state reimbursements. He has confirmed that he has failed to submit financial repayment statements to the Veteran's Service Administration since October, 1976, when he was appointed to the job.

The VSA repays 50 percent of town aid given to veterans, provided that monthly statements are filed.

The only way Provincetown can

receive retroactive repayments, according to Walter Ryan of the VSA, is through a special act of the state legislature.

The selectmen, who took no action on the matter, were furious last night because they had asked O'Brien to attend their meeting and he refused.

O'Brien, reached by telephone after the meeting, said he was told, although not by the selectmen, that the meeting was postponed until after he met with the VSA in Boston this Thursday.

In a letter he wrote Nov. 2 to the selectmen, O'Brien said he had "no intention" of meeting with the board until after he brings his late paperwork to the VSA. The letter was read by the selectmen last night.

O'Brien blasted the selectmen in his letter for the way they have handled the situation. The memo they sent asking

him to attend last night's meeting "should have been addressed to 'Master Joel O'Brien, naughty boy'," he wrote.

"The selectmen's displeasure you refer to 'at my not attending your meeting (last week O'Brien left the meeting just before the selectmen were going to talk with him) is as nothing compared to my displeasure with the matter in which the selectmen have handled this matter.

"I refer especially to the information and misinformation which George Bryant unloaded to the media with the speed of light," O'Brien wrote. "The report carried on radio station WOCB may be actionable."

O'Brien, after last night's meeting, declined to explain his charges against Bryant.

After O'Brien's letter was read, Selectman Frederick Ambrose said it would be unwise to fire O'Brien now.

"We might want to dismiss him, but Mr. O'Brien has us and the public over a barrel," Ambrose said. "There's a tremendous amount of paperwork to be done."

The question whether or not to fire O'Brien may soon become moot, however. O'Brien, in another letter sent to the selectmen last week, said that once he completes the late repayment reports he will resign because he is overworked and underpaid.

Chairman Mary-Jo Avellar said that O'Brien had never complained to the selectmen about his \$30-a-week salary or asked for assistance. He did unsuccessfully attempt once to get town meeting voters to hike his pay, she added.

"I'm really upset," Avellar said. "This is the first time since I've been a selectman that an employee who works

for the town has refused to meet with us."

Citizens have been asking her if O'Brien should repay the money out of his own pocket, Avellar said.

Selectman George Bryant said he has "a lot of questions" for O'Brien concerning his procedure for issuing veteran's benefits. In the past two years about \$44,000 has been paid out to veterans.

The situation with O'Brien is "just a small symptom of the problem," Town Manager Charles Cobb said.

"Something is wrong with any town that has not had financial records (general bookkeeping records) for the past six years," Cobb said.

Ambrose said the blame rests on the shoulders of overly thrifty town meeting voters who have refused to appropriate enough money for fair salaries and adequate help in town hall.

Lower Cape

Covering the towns of
HARWICH • CHATHAM • ORLEANS • BREWSTER
EASTHAM • WELFLEET • TRURO • PROVINCETOWN
Lower Cape Bureau Office:
Cove Road, Orleans — Phone 255-0408



Public must be heard at meetings, counsel rules

By MARY KLEIN
Staff Writer

PROVINCETOWN — The Provincetown selectmen, prodded by John R. Henrique, recently asked the town counsel if the public must be allowed to speak at every selectmen's meeting and have been told yes.

Selectman Henrique, since he began attending meetings again after his summer fishing business ended, has insisted that the selectmen are legally required to put public statements on every agenda.

The other selectmen have maintained that public statements are required only during their regular meetings, held on the second and fourth Monday of each month.

The selectmen do not want to curtail the public's right to speak; Chairman Mary-Jo Avellar stressed.

But public statements often last as long as two hours, and the board is inundated with work it does not have time to complete, she said.

"We need some nights to get work done and

discuss the public statements," Avellar said. "People expect a lot of us, but I don't know when we're going to have time to do everything."

Henrique, on the other hand, is adamant that the omission of public statements from any meeting is a violation of the public's constitutional right to free speech.

"I ran for the office of selectman because people weren't being listened to," Henrique said. "I won't do the same thing."

To resolve the conflict, the selectmen asked

Town Counsel Duane P. Landreth for an opinion.

Landreth ruled on Nov. 2 that public statements must be allowed no later than the second item on every selectmen's meeting agenda.

The selectmen, who did not discuss the matter during their Nov. 6 meeting, did not schedule public statements.

Henrique attended the Monday night meeting but refused to sit on the board. When a motion made by Selectman Frederick Ambrose

concerning the town veteran's agent became locked in a tie vote, Henrique was asked to vote and declined.

Ambrose had wanted to give veteran's agent Joel O'Brien 30 days in which to update his paperwork or fire him.

"I won't vote unless you have public statements," Henrique said.

Avellar said Tuesday that she disagreed with the town counsel, but, "It's his ruling, and guess we're going to have to live with it."

Our Man In Provincetown

How It Looks From Out There

by E.J. Kahn, III

FUTURE SHOCK

Nobody said it would be easy, and Town Manager Charles Cobb confirmed last Friday night that his first year in office hasn't been. "This town magnifies the office of Town Manager more than it should," Cobb told a Provincetown Library gathering. "They think, 'If he's all right, everything's going to go fine; if he's not, it'll be terrible.' That's too much to put on one throw of the dice."

"Some fundamental institutions," Cobb continued, "have been allowed to fall into an advanced state of decay." He then explained that the separation of the Town Clerk and Town Accountant's posts, funded as a single job throughout the past two decades, has been his greatest accomplishment to date.

What many of the assembled listeners wanted to hear, though, were Cobb's impressions of the town's future, something he admitted being "sorry I acquiesced to discussing." In fact, he shied away from specifics, saying the economic future was troublesome, and observed, "In the last 15 or 20 years, the economy has reached the point where much of the money made here has started to leave."

Cobb said Provincetown's tourist economy may now be "unhealthy", and added, "Creative people can't find jobs the town's reputation would lead them to expect are here . . . Much of the art is simply posters being sold for 30 or 50 dollars in a carnival atmosphere."

The one economic proposal Cobb did give a lukewarm endorsement to was the construction of a local fish processing plant. "We have an import-export economy," Cobb said, "and unfortunately we export too much money. The proposals for a fish plant are one way of doing something about it."

After a couple of questions were raised on the potential effect such a plant might have on resources necessary for attracting tourism, such as an ample water supply, Cobb shrugged. "Well, I think fishing and tourism are separate . . . and to a certain extent incompatible."

MEDIA NOTES

My journalistic alma mater, the **Provincetown Advocate**, has, at least in the past decade, been a proving ground for young reporters, a place where one could cut his teeth for a year or two, then move on. Generally, the turnover has been staggered enough to permit a continuity that kept the paper on an even keel.

Lately, however, reports are surfacing that something resembling a crisis is developing among publisher Duane Steele's minions. It may well be traced back to last summer, when the **Advocate** staff secretly organized and threatened Steele with their forming a union unless he negotiated a new staff contract. Steele agreed, but has since been dragging his heels and that contract has yet to be drawn up. In the meantime, Steve Schwadron — who was assuming most of the chief editorial chores — left for the **Register** in Yarmouth to resume fulltime writing, and Gregory Katz, the paper's top reporter, gave notice this week that he was leaving to take over the **Cape Cod Times'** Provincetown bureau. Schwadron was never replaced to begin with, Steele simply bringing Wellfleet editor Jim Gilbert back into the Provincetown office, and reassigning ad salesman Sue Areson to the news desk. Now with Katz gone, the overworked staff is grumbling even louder.

Things are equally touch-and-go on the production side, where typesetter Gene Fedorke is leaving to run

his own just-purchased business, the To The Lighthouse Press, and taken veteran production staffer Grace Bell with him. Remaining editorial and production staffers say they're feeling a little antsy, too. Meanwhile, editor-publisher Steele has ensconced himself in an apartment above his offices, but rarely takes an active role in the day-to-day editing and writing. "He says it's time we learned how to do it ourselves," one staffer related.

RADIO WARS II

Word from the Federal Communications Commission is Provincetown will have to wait a bit longer to learn if it'll have its own radio station. The two opposing camps, Seashore Broadcasting in Orleans (WVLC and WLOM) and Lower Cape Communications here, are waxing equally optimistic. Seashore thinks the Paul Christo sex case connection (Christo, the station's technical director, had 1977 public sex charges against him continued without finding in Orleans District Court until next summer) will delay licensing at least until the conclusion of Christo's continuance. And Lower Cape Communications people are certain the FCC decision will be made in less than two weeks. A delay until summer could hurt LCC, which first applied for the non-commercial FM license two years ago, and has since struggled to keep community interest alive in the project.



Cobb memo aims to curb Town Hall employes' laxity

In a memorandum last week, Town Manager Charles Cobb chided town hall employes for excessive socializing during business hours and insisted that they stay in the building and at their desks except for "necessary consultation."

"Too much time is being spent on matters related distantly, if at all, to town business," Cobb wrote. "Employees are not to leave the town hall, except on business, without the express permission of the town manager for each departure. Employees should leave their desks only for necessary consultation, not for social purposes," Cobb's memo read.

One employe said Cobb wrote the memo because a few

individuals are abusing their rights to coffee breaks and are taking too much personal time during the day. "He couldn't point a finger at individuals so he issued a general memo," she said. "He wasn't being an ogre."

According to other employes, a lackadaisical attitude toward completing official business has stalked the building for years.

One person said former Town Manager Gardner Benson issued more than one hard-hitting memo with the same intent as Cobb's recent message. She added, however, that none of the pleas to the errant members of the staff have been effective so far.

Another employe said Cobb's message was justified,

fair and well-worded. He said discipline in the building is loose, and that some public servants tend to come and go at will, using a great deal of business time for personal chatting.

He said some individuals don't care about their jobs, and that this bad attitude is contributing to low morale.

Cobb also wrote: "Since coffee is available in the Town Hall, there is no need to go outside for it." One clerk said this phrase led employes to dub the message "the coffee memo," and added that very few people are taking it seriously.

Cobb called the memo "a normal administrative measure to keep things moving." He said, "I don't know if work is not getting done but sometimes a thing takes longer than I expect to be completed."

It's possible, Cobb said, that some employes suffer from low morale. He added, however, that "a lot of people simply don't like to work."

Cobb said he expects people to ask his permission to leave the building for other than business purposes and that someone will be designated to give permission when he is out of the building on business.

Error may nullify P'town meeting

By GREGORY KTAZ
Staff Writer

PROVINCETOWN — The annual town meeting scheduled to begin April 10 may be marred by procedural problems, marking the fourth consecutive town meeting jeopardized by failure to meet all state regulations.

Geneva Cook, town clerk, told the selectmen last night that copies of four charter amendments placed on April's ballot by town meeting voters last year were not available for public review 35 days before the election, as required by the Massachusetts General Laws.

She said the proposed charter changes were available 33 days before the April 17

town election. After contacting town counsel and the attorney general's office, she concluded the problem was not significant. The selectmen agreed and voted to include the charter changes in the warrant despite the possibility they may eventually be ruled invalid even if voters adopt them.

The proposed charter revisions would eliminate the fall town meeting and change the spring town meeting from April to March. Cook said nomination papers for elected offices were received on time and are not in question.

"The error was insignificant and without malice," said Selectman Fred Ambrose. "The intent of the regulation is to make

sure wool isn't pulled over the voters' eyes."

Selectman Munro Moore characterized the problem as strictly technical. He said the revisions should be included on the ballot. He said if they are approved and the attorney general feels they were voted on improperly, they will simply be thrown out. He made a motion placing them on the warrant despite the timing problem.

Selectman Dick Henrique challenged Moore's position. He said he couldn't vote to include the revisions until he had a written statement from town counsel or the attorney general's office waiving the 35-day requirement.

"It may be just a technicality, but it's still

a state law," he said. "Town meeting has tremendous importance, and I don't want to see it messed up again." He was outvoted 3-1.

Selectman George Bryant said he is tired of having Provincetown's town meetings questioned because of bureaucratic problems. "No one is to blame, but everyone is to blame," he said.

The state legislature is reviewing a bill to validate the results of Provincetown's November, 1978, town meeting because the warrant was improperly posted. A meeting last October was cancelled because of improper advertising and a meeting last July was ruled invalid by bond counsel because it was also posted incorrectly.

Our Man In Provincetown

How It Looks From Out There

by E.J. Kahn, III

FAMILY FEUD

On Tuesday morning, as the Provincetown municipal employes' bargaining group sat waiting in the Judge Welsh memorial meeting room, Finance Committee chairman Paul Christo and FinCom member Bob Martin stood outside in the Town Hall hallway, pondering their next move. Martin, who sells real estate for a Truro firm for a living, had been appointed by Christo's board the FinCom's representative at the negotiations between the town and its union employes. But because Martin has two brothers and a half-brother in that union, he had been accused of conflict of interest in the bargaining by both selectmen chairman Mary-Jo Avellar and Town Manager Charles Cobb, and Christo had been asked to replace him. Christo had refused, claiming the accusation "a ploy to get Bobby politically."

Then on Monday night, accompanied by Christo, Martin had attempted to document—in open session at the weekly selectmen's meeting—charges stemming from a FinCom investigation that one selectman, Fred Ambrose, had knowingly violated Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations while working on a HUD-funded housing rehabilitation program. As a selectman later put it, "They . . . hit the fan." Selectman Munro Moore first demanded Martin produce his evidence—consisting mostly of correspondence between the Town Funding Coordinator's office, the Town Manager's office, and the selectmen suggesting that the selectmen had known as early as December 1977 that HUD regulations were being ignored—in executive session. Ambrose's reputation was at stake, Moore argued. Martin and Christo refused, saying all their documentation was already public record. Nevertheless, the selectmen cut Martin off halfway through his presentation, and voted 4-0 on Ambrose's motion to refer the FinCom investigation to the district attorney's office.

That was not that, either. The board then voted to kick Martin out of the negotiations. A bit more than 12 hours later, Martin and Christo were back in Town

Hall, trying to decide whether to crash the negotiations, trying to figure out the legal standing of the selectmen's vote, and telling their side of the story to whomever would listen.

"They cut me off when I began to give information that would have pointed the finger of responsibility at Ambrose," Martin said. "You could interpret that they were trying to protect him."

Martin then turned to Christo.

"Remember, according to last year's union contract, the Town Manager appoints the town negotiators, not the Board of Selectmen," Martin said. "That vote might not mean. . ."

"I said that last night," Christo reminded him. "And the Town Manager said he couldn't find it in the contract."

Martin and Christo agreed the only solution was to get the contract. Just then, another FinCom member, Carol Days, appeared, contract in hand. The three eagerly turned to page 20. "There it is," said Christo, "The Town Manager and his selected delegates or other Town officials."

"That's it," exclaimed Martin. "His selected delegates."

"Couldn't it be read, 'his selected delegates?'" offered a reporter.

Neither Martin nor Christo bothered to answer as they strode through the door closed a few minutes earlier by Avellar, who with Town Manager Cobb and a labor lawyer made up the negotiating team for the town.

Ten minutes later, the door reopened, and a stern-faced Cobb, with lawyer, Martin and Christo, left the meeting room, and disappeared into Cobb's office. In the Welsh room, a handful of bewildered town employes sat uncomfortably, wondering how long it would take Provincetown to negotiate its negotiation committee, so it could get on with its negotiations.

RADIO WARS, AGAIN

Christo, before he entered the Tuesday fray, paused to say he felt the Provincetown non-commercial radio license would be issued in two months, and that a

DPW Road Work
Contract For
Harwich, Orleans

Senator John F. Aylmer (R-Centerville) has announced that the Department of Public Works has awarded a contract of \$158,644 to Reynolds Brothers, Inc./Reynolds Equipment Corp. of Canton for work on various safety improvements at three locations in Harwich and Orleans.

The work to be done in Harwich will take place on Route 39 at Route 137 where the existing roadway will be widened and traffic channeling islands constructed.

Similar work will be undertaken at two locations in Orleans. One site will be on Route 6A at Eldredge Park Way and the other on Route 6A at Main Street. The construction at the latter site will also include five concrete wheelchair ramps.

The scheduled completion date is June 30.

studio would be under construction in the fall. That timetable would put it roughly a year behind what its backers had hoped for before the Federal Communications Commission had held up its license application pending the disposition of a 1977 court charge against Christo, who had been until recently its technical director and a key member of its board.

As soon as Christo finished imparting this news, Town Funding Coordinator Jeff Parker stepped up to tell him that a CETA application for funds for the station's financial administration was being processed. "CETA's changing, and it's gonna die," Parker said, "but before it does, it's gonna blossom on the Cape for six months. Then it'll die."

MORE ON HUD

And finally, one last note. While the brouhaha over HUD, the FinCom, Bob Martin, and the selectmen rowdily continued in one room, adjoining Town Hall offices were all business. Town Clerk Geneva Cook was trying to round up three registrars so she could begin validating the articles for the Town Meeting warrant that closed Friday. "How many? I don't know. They're this thick," she said, spreading her fingers about three inches apart.

And in another office, two HUD auditors were continuing to check out the housing rehabilitation accounts that had raised the ruckus in the first place.

MAR 27 1979

C.
C. J. Turner

In Our View

Let FinCom in

The Provincetown selectmen's decision to bar the finance committee representative from negotiations with town employees' unions touched off a predictable row.

The selectmen rejected vice chairman Robert Martin as the finance committee's observer because he has close relatives on the town payroll. An irritated finance committee then voted not to send a representative to the negotiating sessions. The finance committee has, we feel, cut off its nose to spite its face. Even though the Fincom observer does not participate in the discussions and has no vote, he keeps the finance committee as a whole informed of what is going on. And that essentially is what a finance committee is all about.

In some towns — Bourne, for example — a finance committee member, usually the chairman or vice chairman, attends all town union negotiations to aid the committee in making recommendations to town meeting.

Some area towns, however, refuse to allow a finance committee observer to attend labor negotiating sessions. Such a ban is not in the public interest. It violates the spirit — and possibly the letter — of the law establishing finance committees as financial watchdogs. Chap. 39, Section 16 clearly states that finance committees shall consider any and all municipal questions to make reports or recommendations to the town. Fincoms are authorized to study any town department, and to obtain any information they may request.

Towns where a Fincom member observes union negotiations ought to be better informed about financial matters than those towns where one does not. In any case, a finance committee's right to have a representative at labor negotiating meetings serves the public interest — and that right should be unquestioned.

4/27/79

Provincetown taxpayers follow King's credo

By GREGORY KATZ
Staff Writer

PROVINCETOWN — A taxpayer's revolt hit Provincetown town meeting with a vengeance this year when voters rejected a series of articles calling for improved municipal services.

Spurred by Gov. Edward J. King's plan for a tax cap to limit local spending, voters slashed the school budget, refused to repair dilapidated roads and sidewalks, defeated proposals for new town positions and scrapped the town's adult education program.

The denial of pay raises to the town's non-union

management team was a slap in the face to disgruntled employees who have not received a pay increase in

Analysis

several years. A majority of the group has already signed pledge cards seeking union representation.

To the dismay of the health agent, the water commission and the board of health, voters defeated plans for an additional heavy equipment operator at the sanitary land fill and for a comprehensive study of the town's wastewater needs.

The municipal budget was cut to the bone, and then

some, as voters insisted on reductions from the frugal budget recommended by the finance committee.

"Voters said, 'Enough is enough,'" said Paul Christo, finance committee chairman. "I think the town manager can run the government with the amount of money voted at the meeting, but he'll have to establish strict priorities and follow them."

Others are not so certain it can be done. One Cobb (Town Manager Charles Cobb) supporter said he would quit if he were in Cobb's position. "Cobb won't be able to operate with the fiscal restraints im-

posed on him, and when things continue to deteriorate, he'll be blamed for it," he said.

Some see the three-week meeting as proof that voters are dissatisfied with Cobb, while others feel the town's penny-pinching resulted from pressures of nationwide inflation, not distrust of local officials.

While the meeting progressed, voters were bombarded with media reports of increased inflation due to rising energy costs and the devastating possibility of weekend gasoline closings this summer. The mood to taxpayers was grim and defiant.

"You witnessed a quiet revolution against Cobb's mismanagement," said Dick Henrique, whose term as selectmen expired in the meeting's second week. "The town is completely fed up with him and his free spending approach. If I were him, I would be looking for another job."

Cobb believes voters were reacting to inflation, not problems in town hall. He said he can live with the cuts, although he will seek additional money at a special town meeting which will be called this summer to ratify a union contract with town workers.

Provincetown faces a number of expensive, serious problems in the next decade, including the need for another water source, the need for a wastewater management program and the need to rebuild Commercial Street.

Proposals to deal with these dilemmas were rejected one-by-one, despite the administration's assertion that solutions will become more expensive as prices continue to spiral upwards.

Cobb said this approach forces him to react to problems crisis-by-crisis

Cornflake

To the Editor:

I was moved to read that Paul Christo is considering running for selectman. Paul Christo represents Provincetown in more ways than are at first obvious. He has had to face personal problems that would have turned most of us into mental cornflakes and seared our consciences with a hot poker of shame.

I am happy to say that this is not the case with Paul.

In the boiling confusion that is the political scene in Provincetown do we need someone of Mr. Christo's calibre? Some may say no, but others would say who else could see beyond the normal considerations that restrain mere mortals and plunge ahead to whatever blockage impedes the regular passage of events. We must take the cue from Paul and get from behind the eight ball that we now find ourselves.

As a citizen I say don't let them dump on you Paul. Say scat to any of the narrow minded that would see you flush down the drain of obscurity.

Move ahead and prove once again that the voters of Provincetown truly get what they deserve.

Kevin St. John
Provincetown

House cleaning needed in Provincetown

With regard to your editorial of Jan. 11: "P-town nay-saying." First, it is an affront to the residents of Provincetown for anyone, particularly a newspaper, to use the abbreviated P'town rather than Provincetown. It's like using the improper word 'Frisco rather than San Francisco.

Secondly, stay out of our business unless you're in the business of wanting to understand the crisis within Provincetown.

Voting higher salaries does not help clean house, does not seemingly reduce inefficiency in the highway department, does not get the town manager in the streets to police town employees nor will it improve to close wide schisms because of a simple lack of communications.

The government is not beleaguered

by our voting "no." It has no town-wide direction or purpose with the present set of elected officials and a town manager who continues to stall on issues, evoke vague and uncertain policies.

This citizen will not spend any more hard-earned money out of his pocket without assurances that we are going to clean house and set a policy of fiscal responsibility and good management. Then, I will consider giving a raise to those who follow the will of the people and the taxpayers. Unfortunately, as history will relate, nothing is done "properly" in Provincetown. We might as well give Governor King the money for more lobster.

PAUL A. CHRISTO
Provincetown

Jan 1980

Another View

Provincetown voters acted responsibly

By HELEN M. DAVIS

Please state the credentials of expertise which entitle you to presume to understand Provincetown voters' business better than they do.

The self-serving claim to "logic" in your editorial last week is not supported by your illogical argument which, in effect, as I shall explain below, offers the following faulty formula: Fiscal Irresponsibility added to Fiscal Irresponsibility equals Fiscal Responsibility.

Before attempting to write the editorial, you should have done your homework instead of relying solely upon the town administration's propaganda for its own proposals.

With an open mind you should have studied articles about our town government published in your own paper and in the Advocate. You should certainly have studied the comparative tax rates you published only last week showing that Provincetown has the highest tax rate on the Cape.

You should have attended the Dec. 6 salary plan committee's meeting and witnessed the committee's violation of the open-meeting law in its refusal to disclose its salary plan even after having promised in the press that it would do so and even after being specifically asked by a voter for the salary plan. Why don't you ask to hear the audiotape made at that meeting — that is, if it hasn't been erased! You certainly could have studied (and you can now study) my Dec. 14 letter which you chose not to publish. In that letter you could have learned (and now can learn) that the committee failed to

fulfill its promises to the voters. At the very least, you should have attended the special town meeting last week, where you would have received confirmation of these facts.

Since you do not have all the facts the voters have, how can you presume to be wiser than they are? Do you know that until the evening of the Jan. 7 special town meeting, the only data on the salary plan available to the voters were virtually unreadable without a magnifying glass; those data were printed in infinitesimally tiny six-point-or-less type under the warrant published in the Dec. 20 Advocate. Why don't you examine it yourself to test its readability? (I wonder whether such tiny printing legally fulfills the intent of our bylaw requirement for advertising the warrant.)

If you had attended the special town meeting, would you have been such a paragon of intelligence that evening that you would have been able to read all 3½ pages of the salary plan under Article 1 as adequately printed in the town's official warrant distributed at the meeting and would you have been able to absorb and understand all of its data in the few minutes between your arrival in town hall and the time that Article 1 came up for consideration? Yet, you dare to tell the voters that they should have accepted the salary plan regardless of whether they had an opportunity to read it in its entirety, understand it, question it, and compare it thoroughly with current salary schedules.

Do you know that the salary plan was ill-prepared and ill-explained on grounds too numerous to mention here.

One example is that it contains no comparison column of salaries currently being paid for the various town positions. A second example is that it would grant raises retroactive to last July for proficient incumbents of all positions, but it failed to state how many incumbents are proficient and how many are not. As another example, if you look at Article 4 and compare it with Article 1, you will see that the town management team of 11 employees are willing to settle for raises considerably less than those presented for them in the salary plan; you would also see that the lowest level of the salary plan shows up to 20 percent increases over the present salaries of incumbents of the town management team.

Most important, do you know the most significant fact the voters know — that the town manager was fiscally and professionally irresponsible in asking the voters to commit themselves in January to a salary plan that would require appropriation of funds next March to honor the voters' moral commitment when simultaneously he had not yet submitted his then and now overdue town charter-required Overall Budget. The Overall Budget should include debts, deficits, the town operating budget, the school budget, proposed capital expenditures, reasonable estimates of other expenditures, of abatements, of tax revenues, and of anticipated state receipts. How could the voters relate the impact of the salary plan upon the town's fiscal-year-ending-1981 financial status when the manager was deficient in his duty to supply us with the charter-required information?

Such was the administration's fiscal irresponsibility to which would you would have us add the further fiscal irresponsibility of establishing a salary plan we didn't know whether we would be able to honor. Do you still think that promising raises without confidence that we can pay those raises would improve our town government's chaotic condition? Haven't you heard that other towns and cities go broke and fail to pay their employees? Is that what you want for Provincetown?

For your information, Provincetown voters want to vote for reasonable raises for their employees. But, first, they insist upon having the manager comply fully with the fundamental financial requirements of the town charter. Second, they will probably vote raises of their own choice if the manager does not come up with a commonsense article for raises in lieu of the above-mentioned salary plan.

The town will not accept the present plan's wide range of raises between starting-salary level, proficiency level, and merit-maximum level — with its raises up to 46 percent from position incumbents' current salaries to their merit-maximum salaries — committing the voters to appropriate raises up to the maximum level if so proposed at the manager's discretion. Frankly, the voters have little faith in the discretion of a manager who lacks the very minimum discretion of honoring our town charter.

I think it is time for you to acknowledge the fact that Provincetown citizens voted intelligently on the salary plan.

3/2/80

It's too bad no one listened to Charles Cobb

WILL BE MISSED — Now that the news of the April 30 resignation of Charles Cobb as town manager of Provincetown is no longer a surprise, and the editorials have been written, perhaps another view can be added.

To be sure, I've never met the man, but I've talked daily to the three reporters who've covered Provincetown during his tenure and I've wondered again and again how the man has kept his cool in that most political of all Cape Cod towns.

My second-hand impressions are of a man who has had to be — as he has been accused of being — aloof in order to function, for if he once lost his cool he would have been lost.

Yet he quietly analyzed the town's most serious problems and offered rational solutions — many of which were subsequently turned down by town meetings.

And he's been constantly — as were his predecessors and as will be his successors — caught in sometimes vicious political crossfire, yet he's kept his sanity, perhaps at the risk of

being perceived as aloof.

Maybe it is just that strain that has prompted his decision to leave Provincetown.

If I were he, I think I'd want to go somewhere for two weeks, possibly a deserted tropical island, and do nothing but scream for two weeks.

But I think Provincetown is going to miss Charles Cobb; and I think that one day it is inevitable the town will see that he was right in the solution he offered.



Peter Hartley

Fishermen protest MacMillan Wharf fee plan

By MARY KLEIN
Staff Writer

PROVINCETOWN — Provincetown fishermen told the selectmen this week that they vehemently object to proposed dockage fees.

About 40 people attended a public hearing on the proposal held by the selectmen Monday night. None of the participants spoke in favor of the fees.

The town presently does not charge commercial fishermen for using the town pier. The local wharf committee has recommended that the town charge dockage fees based on vessel length.

An annual Provincetown taxpayer would be charged \$6 a foot a year for vessels less than 60 feet long or \$8 a foot a year for larger vessels, and a 25 cent a day fee.

The wharf committee also

recommended that an out-of-town fisherman of nontaxpayer be charged an annual fee of \$12 per foot for small vessels and \$24 a foot for large vessels plus the 25 cent a day fee.

During an often heated discussion, fishermen argued that it is grossly unfair to charge dockage fees when pier facilities are atrocious.

The pier lacks fresh water, electricity and adequate space, they said. Vessels are forced to tie up three or more abreast, they explained. The situation is dangerous and causes considerable damage to vessels which often smash against each other during rough seas.

"You expect us to pay and not get anything for it," Capt. Kenneth Macara, owner of the Victory II, said. "I think you're wacky and I'll fight it all the way."

Capt. Kenneth Silva, owner of the Gerda Riva, said that dockage fees

would drive away out-of-town fishermen who land their catch in Provincetown.

"I refuse to be penalized for bringing my business to this town," Silva added. "I'll go elsewhere."

Provincetown, which depends heavily on its fishing industry, does absolutely nothing to support it, George Colley Sr., owner of Sea Food Packers, Inc., charged.

Provincetown landed \$7.3 million dollars worth of finfish and shellfish in 1977, according to a recently completed CETA-funded study. More than \$2 million of that amount was landed by boats from other ports.

The fishing fleet is also a great tourist attraction, Colley said.

Capt. Sonny Roderick, owner of the Shirley & Roland, said the town would be opening a Pandora's box if it enacted the fees. If fees were charged, he and

other fishermen would sue the town for injuries incurred on the wharf, Roderick said.

A crewman of his was injured last winter while getting off the boat at night. The man was climbing up one of the ladders attached to the pier and was jammed between the pier and the boat. "The wooden ladder was rotted and there was no light," Roderick said.

Other ports, including Hyannis, Plymouth and Boston, do not charge dockage fees, according to Capt. Thomas Turner, owner of the Jennifer & Aaron.

Turner's boat recently incurred \$2,000 damage from being knocked by other vessels while tied at the pier, he said. Nearly every Provincetown fishing boat has suffered similar types of damages, he added.

Collecting dockage fees based on vessel footage would be impossible,

Robert Cabral, owner of Fisherman's Wharf Marina, said. "It would take 20 full-time employees to keep track of the boats," Cabral explained. "Also, you'd better send a couple of bodyguards with the fee collector."

Macara echoed the feelings of many of his fellow fishermen when he said: "Give us facilities and we'd be glad to pay for them."

Selectman George Bryant, who has staunchly supported some type of dockage fees, said the town cannot afford to improve the pier.

It costs Provincetown \$150,000 to \$200,000 a year to maintain the pier, Bryant claimed. The only income from the pier comes from \$40,000 a year collected in float fees, he said.

The selectmen voted to take the proposed fees under advisement and to meet with the wharf committee on Nov. 20.

Lower Cape

Covering the towns of

HARWICH • CHATHAM • ORLEANS • BREWSTER
EASTHAM • WELLFLEET • TRURO • PROVINCETOWN

Lower Cape Bureau Office:

Cove Road, Orleans — Phone 255-0408



Provincetown facing decision on fish plant need

By MARY KLEIN
Staff Writer

PROVINCETOWN — There appears to be little doubt that Provincetown would benefit from a successful, modern fish processing and freezing plant.

The town has talked for years about enticing a light industry to locate in Provincetown.

Chances are slim, however, that an enterprising business from another area would move into a geographically-isolated community whose survival depends on a seasonal tourist industry that many businessmen say is slowly sliding down hill, and a fishing industry based on a fleet of small, wooden dragners often 25 or more years old.

Suddenly, Provincetown can stop speculating about the type of industry it could lure there. Two competing organizations — Sea Food Packers and the Provincetown Fish Company — each want to build a fish plant.

The question is, does Provincetown really want one?

Provincetown fishermen answer with an unqualified "yes." Provincetown, with its close proximity to rich fishing grounds, is an ideal port for a fish plant, says Capt. Ralph Andrews Jr.

"I'd like to see a fish plant no matter who owns it," Andrews said. "It would modernize the fishing industry." For every species of fish he catches, Andrews said, he throws 10 other species away. A plant that would process "underutilized" fish would be a boon to the fleet.

Cape. Louis Rivers, who recently bought a 50-foot stern trawler, said that a fish plant would release fishermen from the uncertainty of daily market prices.

Capt. Sonny Roderick and other fishermen agreed that other fleets on and off the Cape would either land their catch at Provincetown, or truck it there, supplying enough fish to make a plant profitable.

But they also emphasized that the town wharf cannot accommodate more boats. It cannot even handle the current boat load.

During public hearings recently held by the selectmen on fish plants and their possible locations, the condition of the wharf was cited as a major obstacle to a plant.

The pier, which is dangerously crowded and lacks basic facilities, needs to be improved regardless of a plant, said Jeffery Parker, town funding coordinator.

Town officials have been trying for months to obtain funds Coastal Zone Management funds for a study how to improve the wharf.

Two main concerns surfaced at the hearings: the suggested plant site and a plant's chances of success.

Environmentalists argued that a beautiful, 3.7 acre parcel of state-owned land off Fish Pan Road should be preserved.

It is one resident's favorite walking place; another's prime hunting area. A price tag cannot be attached to invaluable plants, wildlife and wetlands there, a third resident stressed.

It is also possible, though not probable according to several town officials, that a municipal wellfield could be located on the site.

A fish plant is an excellent idea, they all agree, but should be constructed elsewhere.

Sea Food Packers and the Provincetown Fish Company have said there is no alternative site. The planning board has struggled to find another location for light industry, said Parker, former chairman of the board, but it came up empty handed.

News analysis

"The town has to decide if a processing plant would outweigh any damages done to the environment," said planning board member Charles Rogers, "and maybe to a wellfield."

The stormy debate at the hearings on the possible success of a fish plant is irrelevant, librarian Alice Joseph said. "I know these people (developers) are dreaming big and it might fall apart, but it's their money," she said. "They are not asking the town for anything except approval to use the site."

The Department of Public Works will not sell or lease the land to a private business without the town's firm consent.

Patricia Schultz of the fish company attempted to ease fears that if the plant failed, the town would be stuck with a white elephant or a massive condominium replacement. Use restrictions and other conditions could be put on the property deed, she said.

The two potential developers have pleaded with the town to understand that a fish plant would provide year-round jobs, broaden the tax base and boost the general economy.

"The future of Provincetown cannot remain resting on expanded tourism" Nancy McNulty said. "We have to start planning 20 years ahead."

The time is long overdue for Provincetown to transcend personality conflicts, emotionalism and petty jealousies, another resident said. "I've heard a lot of talk about a plant," he said, "but nothing ever becomes of talk here."

Many people have said that a professional, comprehensive study is needed to determine the impacts on the community of a fish plant. The history of Provincetown is cluttered with the remains of such ideas.

Provincetown and its fishing industry are going to change no matter what happens. Those changes can occur haphazardly or be directed through sagacious planning.

"Provincetown is at a crossroads," Joseph said. "Fishing is its last hope to continue as a blue-collar, working community. The time is right for a fish plant because you can no longer depend on the fresh fish market."

"But whether Provincetown is psychologically ready for that much of an influx of economic energy . . .

"There's going to be a fish processing plant on the Cape," she continued. "It's just a matter of where."

Does Provincetown really want a fish plant? Residents can either make the decision, consciously, or let the decision be made for them.

Provincetown fears loss of proposed fish plant

Officials blame environmentalists, each other

By GREGORY KATZ
Staff Writer

PROVINCETOWN — Officials here are dismayed that George Colley, president of Sea Food Packers, may build a fish processing plant in Brewster instead of Provincetown.

Colley, who has been seeking local approval for construction of a fish plant in Provincetown for more than a year, met with the Brewster Economic Development Commission last week to discuss building the estimated \$3 million plant in Brewster.

Colley's efforts to find a site in Provincetown have been opposed by environmentalists who fear a plant would pollute and take up too much of the town's undeveloped land. After months of divisive debate, Provincetown arrived at a complicated plan to ask the state Department of Public Works for land for industrial use, which could include a fish plant.

Town Manager Charles Cobb and the entire

board of selectmen expressed disappointment with Colley's possible relocation. They want Colley to wait to see if Provincetown's attempt to get state-owned land is successful.

Provincetown's preliminary application for the transfer of land for industrial use is being reviewed by DPW officials. Construction of a fish plant is seen as a tremendous boon to the sputtering local economy.

"As far as I'm concerned, I would be unhappy to see Colley relocate," Cobb said. "We're in the middle of fairly complex negotiations with the DPW, and it's a time-consuming process."

"I'm sorry that Colley has been offered another opportunity before we've had a chance to work it out," Cobb said.

Colley is tired of waiting for Provincetown to resolve its ambivalent attitude about fish plant construction. Although the selectmen's plan asking the DPW for acreage received endorsement from five town boards, there is still strong

community resistance to construction of a plant.

Colley said Tuesday he hasn't reached the point where he can decide which location to choose. He mentioned Hyannis and Wareham as other possible sites. Colley said Brewster officials contacted Sea Food Packers to discuss construction of the plant.

"At least they make you feel welcome, which is something I'm not used to in Provincetown," Colley said. "I'm waiting for Provincetown, but they keep arguing over location; it's the same old story."

Colley will meet with various Brewster officials on Jan. 19 to discuss his plans. The selectmen, planning board, conservation commission and others will be represented. Colley is working with John Worthington of Gloucester on the project. Colley said Worthington is acting as a consultant.

It pains Provincetown officials to see another town lure an important industry away from Provincetown because it can offer land for in-

CONTINUED.....>

dustrial development without dealing with strong, well-organized conservationists.

Jeff Parker, funding coordinator, worked overtime trying to forge a consensus on a site in Provincetown. He said it is high time Provincetown became interested in building an economic base beyond tourism.

"It's a shame to watch this community, which has so much going for it, jeopardize itself by not having a positive attitude," Parker said. He said he has known for some time that Brewster officials were pursuing Colley.

Selectman Dick Henrique blamed inaction by his board for the current situation. He said the loss of the fish plant to Brewster would be a tremendous setback.

Henrique said having a plant in Brewster would cause local boats to unload in Sandwich on the Cape Cod Canal, dealing a severe blow to the fishing industry in Provincetown.

Selectman George Bryant agreed with Henri-

que's assessment that the selectmen themselves are to blame. He said he wouldn't blame Colley for deserting Provincetown because of all the roadblocks thrown in his path. Bryant said he would be bitterly disappointed if the fish plant is built elsewhere.

Mary-Jo Avellar, chairman of selectmen, said she would hate to see the plant built in another town but added that the town's hands are tied until environmental questions are answered. Selectman Fred Ambrose expressed similar sentiments.

The Provincetown Planning Board has worked for more than four years to develop an industrial zone to attract light industry to broaden the tax base. Charles Rogers, longtime board member, said he would be crushed if Colley's fish processing plant is built in Brewster.

"It would serve Provincetown right," Rogers said unhappily. "We give him all kinds of trouble, and in Brewster they're bending over backwards to make things easy for him."

Brewster receptive to fish plant proposal

BREWSTER — The reaction here to a proposed fish processing plant in Brewster by Provincetown and Gloucester seafood packers, a plan highly-endorsed by the economic development commission, is cautious optimism.

The plan was brought to the EDC by Geroge Colley, Seafood Packers Inc., of Provincetown, and John Worthington, Ocean Clear Inc., Gloucester, last week.

Colley has been seeking an alternate location for the processing plant for some time, having been unsuccessful in Provincetown.

"The planning board is very much interested in seeing the town's tax base broadened," said Roger O'Day, chairman.

"We must have some industry," said Robert M. Franklin, conservation commission chairman.

"It will be the subject of a water commissioners meeting," said Constance Bragg, chairman.

"The board of health is aware of the proposal. I intend to be there," said Chester Majewski, health agent.

"It could mean a million dollar a year business for Brewster," said Selectman Frederick Krapohl. "The town could use the taxes."

It is due to the recent proposal by the economic development commission that selectmen have decided to publicly air the issue before all town committees and department heads at 7:30 p.m. Jan. 19.

"These people appear to be serious and we (the selectmen) felt that everybody concerned should hear the proposal at one time," said Krapohl.

Krapohl added he had visited such a processing plant in Maine and had been instrumental in building one in Connecticut some years ago. "They use everything. It is a clean business. No waste. Everything that is shipped in is used in some form or other."

Franklin said his conservation commission was not directly involved because the location is zoned for industry and there are no near-by wetlands. "We will be represented at the meeting, however,"

The area under consideration is zoned for industrial use and consists of two adjoining tracts off Freeman's Way. The one abutting the road is about 103 acres and is town-owned. Behind is another 150 acres that is privately owned.

While the town property had once been zoned for a disposal area, that use has long been dropped. When the town built its water system, the state ruled the land could not be used as a disposal area.

Frontage on Freeman's way is 2,000 feet and the entire area is roughly triangular, one side being Freeman's Way, another Rte. 6, and the third side is along the utility electric high line.

The Brewster watershed is across Rte. 6. Tests have been made to learn if any watershed contamination were possible. Milton Shaw, former economic development committee chairman and an active advisor, had said that under some conditions, seepage might occur.

The tests on the town property consisted of a circle of wells with one in the center. Dye was dropped into the center well and with extremely wet conditions, some dye was observed in the other wells. "It probably would not occur under normal conditions," Shaw said.

Majewski termed the soil conditions as excellent. "It is good sandy soil; there is a large sand pit near by. The ground water distribution is good. I understand a hydrologic study will be made."

He said the board of health was as much surprised as any about the possibility. "We don't know enough to comment one way or the other. That's why we will be present at the meeting," he said.

The building department is to be represented by Building Inspector Robert Eddy. He, too, says he would like to see industry in this predominantly residential town. He would prefer some enforceable controls.

"If the plant were to be built, I'd like to see it on town-owned land with a long-term lease," he said. "I think we could maintain stricter controls in that case."

The plant operators would have a choice of leasing from the town or buying or leasing from the owners of the private adjoining tract.

The entire industrial zone is surrounded by a 200-foot buffer strip of trees as a screen. The only way in is from Freeman's Way but the planning board's O'Day foresaw no problems.

Colley and Worthington plan two large buildings — a 150 by 175-foot freezer storage building and a 150 by 150-foot processing building. A small cold storage building, about 50 by 75-feet would complete the operation.

The plant would bring heavy truck traffic to the location but an economic development commission member suggested it could be routed via Rte. 39 onto Rte. 137 and directly into the Rte. 6 (Midcape) interchange.