

Resident feels dumped on

Plows allegedly piling up snow on woman's property

-WARREN-

By Jennifer Robert
Quabog Current Reporter

Emotions at Tuesday night's Warren Board of Selectmen meeting were running as high as the snow piles that allegedly were dumped on a 65 Southbridge Road property following winter storms.

A public hearing was held based on a complaint received from Mary Obertuck-Bellarose, owner of the property, against the town and, more specifically, the Department of Public Works (DPW) employees. The meeting was held in open session as all parties agreed to that format, although employee rights dictated that either Highway Superinten-

dent Tom Boudreau or DPW employee Raymond Blais could have requested executive session to discuss the matter.

"This [complaint] has been going back over six years now," Bellarose said. "The town has been dumping extra sand snow and ice on the property of 65 Southbridge Road. Last February [2013] during a snowstorm I was watching out my window and watched the large front end loader scoop up snow, turn around and then dump the snow onto [my property]. I thought he was then driving away but he did it, again and again. I went out there and yelled to him, 'Hey, what are you doing? You can't dump snow here! And he stared at me for a minute and then did it again.'" Bellarose said that she believes that the driver of that fleet vehicle was Blais, and that when she confronted the operator during the snow removal asking who the supervisor was, the op-

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erator claimed that he was the supervisor. Blais said that it was not him.

In addition to the fact that the property is private property and she has asked the town not to dump snow there, she said that she also discovered, during the last year, that there is a cistern sitting up where the snow has been dumped for the last 10 to 15 years and she was advised by an engineer that the gross weight of the loads has caused the cistern to break. Bellarose said that the ongoing problem has prompted her to call the highway garage and in December 2013 she finally went up there to try to talk to someone about it, and was allegedly spoken to in a very rude manner.

"I'm not asking for the town to fix the cistern, I am asking for an apology," she said. "I was treated rudely." Bellarose also said that she wants the town to stop dumping snow on her property.

"I was told that Mr. Boudreau at the Capitol Planning meeting last week that salt and sand are hazardous materials; for at least six years now, the town has been dumping hazardous materials on 65 Southbridge Road." She also claimed that Boudreau said that Blais was the only operator of the front end loader.

Boudreau said that the Capitol Planning Committee did ask who operated the vehicle, in regards to a discussion about replacing the tires on it, and he responded that while Blais is the primary operator of it, he is not the only one who could have been driving it when the alleged incident occurred.

"Can anyone in the department run that machine? Absolutely," he said. "Has everyone in the department operated it? Absolutely." Boudreau also said that while it did take a few days, he was able to get in touch with Bellarose and told her that dumping extra snow on her property could be eliminated and that he apologized, during that phone call, for any rude treatment she felt she received from the highway employees. Select Chair Robert Downing interrupted the back and forth banter between the parties to "cut to the chase," as he referred to it.

"You want an apology," he said, directed to Bellarose. "Does anyone in this room want to give her an apology?" Blais said that he felt as though he should get an apology for being accused of talking to Bellarose rudely at the highway garage on a day that he was on vacation and not even in the state.

Selectman Robert Lavash said that he has spoken to Boudreau since the complaint was made by Bellarose and Boudreau has since placed stakes on the property to eliminate more snow being dumped in that area and Boudreau said that he has spoken with his crew to make sure that everyone is aware that there is to be no dumping there.

"We are going to discuss this and investigate it," Downing said. "Mr. Delanski is not here tonight and I want him to be able to weigh in on it so we will give you all a call in a few days. I will, however, apologize to you [Bellarose] for any one from our town that has talked to you rudely."