

Charlton taking new approach in gas contract

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON – The Charlton Board of Selectmen took care of some housekeeping business during a meeting on June 8, selecting the winning bids for the towns fuel services for the new fiscal year.

Charlton participated in the Fiscal Year 2022 regional fuel procurement program through the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission selecting Charlton Oil to provide heating oil and propane for the town and Dennis K. Burke, Inc. for unleaded gas and diesel fuels. According to Town

Administrator Andrew Golas, the selections came after Charlton had to rebid the contracts due to the recent cyber-attack again Colonial Pipeline caused prices to change.

“Due to the recent fluctuation in market prices surging and rates now being at higher than last year we actually had to do a rebid. Our first bid actually came in right during the shutdown of the pipeline down south so that was right in the middle of the surge,” Golas said.

The result saw the town sign on with Charlton Oil at a cost of \$2.35 per gallon for heating oil and \$1.65 per gallon for propane. The gas contract

works a bit different this time around. The agreement with Dennis K. Burke will see the town charged at 45.22 cents above market rate price for unleaded gas and diesel as opposed to a fixed rate.

Golas said this partnership will allow the town’s gas costs to fluctuate properly with the market itself, adding “This is different than last year’s fixed price. It will be based off of what the best available market rate is of the day with a markup.”

According to Golas the new gas deal would be based on when they request fuel and whatever the market value is on that particular day or

month. The town may save money one month but have to pay more in a different month where prices fluctuate upwards. Heating and propane will remain locked into a guaranteed rate for the next year.

This new approach to the gas prices intrigued several selectmen. Board Chair Bill Borowski said he wasn’t opposed to it and was interested to see how it would change the town’s costs.

“You’re dealing with markup minus as opposed to that fixed cost which obviously depends on variables,” Borowski said.

Selectman Stephen Koronis

also thought it was an interesting approach feeling it put more pressure on the town than the supplier.

“It takes the risk off the vender and puts a little more on us. But if we ask them for a fixed price right now, they’re going to pitch high,” said Koronis.

Borowski and Koronis were joined by Selectwoman Barbara Zurowski in approving the bids. Their fellow selectmen David Singer and Patsy Rydlak were not in attendance for the meeting.

QCC invests in community by eliminating student debt

WORCESTER — Today, Quinsigamond Community College announced it will use more than \$2.5 million of the institutional portion of the Federal Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds it received in May to erase college-held debt for students. The debt relief program is exclusively for those students who were enrolled in credit degree or certificate programming during the start of the pandemic (March 13, 2020) through the end of the current Spring 2021 semester.

“Our goal with this initiative is to remove the financial barrier of institutional debt that keeps many students from completing their education and achieving their goals in life. The under-privileged and under-served in

our community were hit hard by the pandemic. These students are often unable to continue their education due to the debt they are carrying. By choosing to invest in our students by removing this barrier, we are investing in our community and strengthening our workforce,” said QCC President Dr. Luis G. Pedraja, Ph.D. “We are leveling the playing field for our students so that they can succeed. This enables our students to realize a better future for themselves and their families, and in doing so, increases our community’s economic prosperity.”

The College is taking this unprecedented approach to eliminate the number one barrier in students’ achieving their goals for a higher education. This program will help put skilled

workers into the workforce, assisting companies that are struggling to find qualified employees. The funding will assist 1,687 students, with an average amount of \$1,525 of institutional debt forgiveness per student. Furthermore, this program is helping those affected the most by the COVID-19 pandemic. Students eligible for debt forgiveness through this initiative represent 52 percent students of color; 58 percent are female, and 48 percent are Worcester residents.

“We know education is the greatest equalizer, lifting people out of poverty and making lasting and positive change to our communities and our nation. By eliminating this debt, we are taking an equitable approach to higher education. We find that stu-

dents with debt are less likely to enroll or stay in college. This eliminates that barrier,” President Pedraja said, adding, “As we recover from the pandemic, we want to give our students in need a fresh start to a better life and a way to enter the workforce with the skills and knowledge they need, and our businesses need, in today’s new world.”

QCC will be notifying students on their debt relief eligibility and is asking that students not reach out to the College directly.

For more information about QCC, contact Josh Martin, Director of Institutional Communications at 508-854-7513 or jmartin@qcc.mass.edu.

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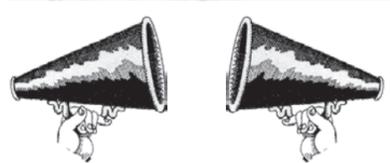
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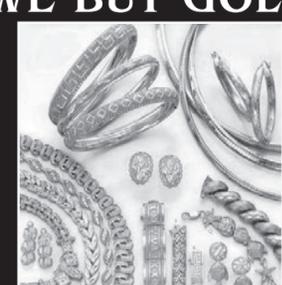
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