

Town asks Raytheon to pick up expert tab

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WAYLAND - Town officials have asked the Raytheon Co. to pay part of the tab for an environmental expert Wayland retained to examine data related to the toxic cleanup of the defense contractor's old site along Rte. 20.

Wayland officials requested \$25,000 in financial assistance from Raytheon for the independent consultant and related oversight.

Raytheon representatives said the town would receive an answer from the company in seven to 10 days.

Currently, the Wayland Water Department finances the town's consultant, Irwin Silverstein, who is reviewing data provided by Raytheon. The department has paid \$10,000 since October.

Raytheon leased property at 430 Boston Post Road for 40 years. For the past 20 years, the company has been working with state environmental agencies to identify and remove or contain toxins on the site.

The property has been designated by the state Department of Environmental Protection as a Tier 1B site.

Residents and town environmental experts feel that because of the proximity of the polluted site to a potable water source - the Baldwin Pond Well Field - and wetlands near the Sudbury River, the site should carry the state's highest classification: Tier 1A.

Under that classification, a DEP licensed-site professional (LSP) would have evaluated all data collected and overseen the cleanup process.

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Silverstein has helped residents and town officials monitor Raytheon's highly technical presentations. Losing his professional services and expertise would leave the town without a consultant who can focus specifically on the Raytheon site.

Department heads and representatives from the Conservation Commission, Water Department, Board of Health and Board of Selectmen attended an informal meeting Thursday between the town and Raytheon officials.

Executive Secretary Jeff Ritter facilitated discussion.

"Raytheon does not want to be portrayed as the big, bad business that some people think," said Winona Wall, Raytheon's director of environmental, quality, health and safety. "We are very much on board to work with the town to work out some kind of agreement."

The defense contractor was concerned that the town was looking for restitution for past harm. But Water Department Superinten-

dent Don Hollender said, "I think that we are looking more to the future."

Raytheon asked for additional time to review the written agreement, which would give the town the money to pay independent consulting fees. In addition to Silverstein, the officials said they will also use a consultant who specializes in ecological issues, including wetland conservation and restoration.

The town and Raytheon are linked by Public Involvement Plan guidelines, where the documentation of the environmental cleanup must be kept at a repository in the town library so the public has access. Residents have had the opportunity to respond by means of written comment at two public meetings where Raytheon presented Phase II and III reports.

Town officials have argued that the site, a highly complex location with four pollutant "hot spots," needs to be further analyzed to fill data gaps in Raytheon's Phase II findings. Raytheon had said the collection of data was complete

and the cleanup effort should begin.

The DEP also made some preliminary walk-throughs of the site to view testing wells. The state interest was a positive sign to the town, particularly because drought conditions could, potentially, cause the town's drinking water to be drawn from near the site, town officials say.

"I want to assure you that if there is any evidence that anything is going toward the wells, then that will be of paramount concern for us as well. So far our consultant is absolutely certain that is not the case - let's hope he is right," said Robert Luhrs, Raytheon's manager of remedial programs in the office of environmental, quality, health and safety. "We have no interest in impacting a water supply."

"I think that the discussion went very well," said Selectmen Linda Segal after the meeting. "Both parties share similar goals. There is so much information that is so complex, we need to have technical expertise to protect the interest of the town. Any cooperative effort to achieve that would be a step forward."