

Selectmen Move to Take Canton Dam by Eminent Domain

By Mary Standard , Special to the Sun Journal

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CANTON - Selectmen on Friday voted to file an eminent domain appeal against Lake Anasagunticook dam owner Raymond Fortier of Sabattus and to pay him \$10,000 on advice of their attorney, Jack Conway.

Dwyer and Associates lists the appraised value of the dam and property at zero.

The Board of Selectmen on Friday signed condemnation papers, which will be given to the town clerk on Saturday to file and send to Fortier.

A special town meeting on the issue was scheduled for 9 a.m. Saturday, July 26, at the Municipal Center. The article will read, "To see if the town will approve taking the dam and property by eminent domain."

Board Chairman Scotty Gilbreth said once the town has possession of the dam and gets a permit, work can begin on a temporary dam to keep the water level in the lake constant until a new dam can be built.

Judy Hamilton of the dam committee said people are ready to get started on the temporary dam as soon as they get the permit.

People who own shorefront property on the lake have entered their second summer with a low water level. These residents pay a large portion of the tax dollars in Canton and Hartford. Both towns were seeing requests for abatements on their taxes from lakeshore owners. Should this happen, all taxes would rise.

In May 2007, Fortier was ordered by Commissioner of the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management John W. Libby to leave the overflow sluice gates at the dam open and clear of the water.

This order followed a state inspection on December 4, 2006, which said the integrity, structural stability, function and operation of the dam constituted a threat to public safety. Fortier had repeatedly failed to comply.

He could not be reached for comment Friday night.

The town offered in April to buy the dam from Fortier for \$60,000. He declined, after first saying he would accept the offer.