



*Town of Walpole*  
*Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

*William Abbott, Chair*  
*John Hasenjaeger, Member*  
*Patrick Fasanello, Member*  
*John Spillane, Member*  
*Pradeep Mishra, Member*

*Board of Sewer and Water Commissioners*

**Monday, June 21, 2021**  
**7:00 P.M.**  
**Meeting Minutes**

A regular meeting of the Board of Sewer & Water Commissioners was held on Monday, June 21, 2021 at Walpole High School. The meeting is called to order by Board Chair William Abbott at 7:00 p.m.

Present at the Meeting:

**Sewer and Water Commissioners:**

William Abbott, John Spillane, John Hasenjaeger, Patrick Fasanello, Pradeep Mishra

**Other Participants:**

Bernie Marshall, Water & Sewer Superintendent, Rick Mattson, Director of Public Works,  
James Johnson, Town Administrator, Mary Timilty

**Audience Attendance:** Joseph Moraski, William Hamilton and Vidya Ramgopal

**Reorganization**

Patrick Fasanello nominates John Spillane for Chair

**Motion made** by Mr. Fasanello to nominate John Spillane as the Chairman ***Seconded by*** John Hasenjaeger

***Vote 5-0-0***

Mr. Spillane accepts

**Motion made** by Mr. Spillane to nominate John Hasenjaeger as Clerk ***Seconded by*** Patrick Fasanello  
***Vote 4-0-1***(Mishra-abstain)

**Abateements**

**Motion made** by William Abbott to accept the abateements as delivered. ***Seconded by*** John Hasenjaeger  
***Vote 5-0-0***

**Superintendents Status Report**

Mr. Marshall provides an update that the Water Quality report was sent out last week and all the certifications have been fulfilled and an update on the Delaney Plant filter project. Mr. Marshall continues with an update on filters #1 & #2, the Willis Plant Lagoon project, the GIS flushing program and the Route 1A Project. Mr. Marshall updates that the Water and Sewer Capital Improvement Plans are being finalized and he is working with the Public Works Director to discuss and prioritize. Mr. Marshall reports the Washington Well #5 project is complete. Mr. Marshall commented that the bid openings for the Eleanor Road project were last week and they are awaiting Western and Sampson's award letter. Mr. Marshall updated the Board the ZBA is meeting on June 23, 2021 to discuss the increase in hours at the

Septage Facility as discussed and further discussion is had. Mr. Marshall commented to the Board we will be scheduling Badger Meter Systems to present a demonstration to the Board on their metering system. Director Mattson provides an update on our current meter reading system provided by Mueller and what other options the Town has looked at and the costs of these other systems. Director Mattson comments that Mueller realizes they need dramatic improvements to their system and they are working on improving. Mr. Hasenjaeger asks about the Global Infrastructure Program and if this metering system upgrade would be part of that and Director Mattson answers yes. Director Mattson continues to discuss the Global Infrastructure Program funds and projects and provides a history on the current Mueller System products. Mr. Mishra asks questions to Director Mattson on the current system and Director Mattson provides a history. Mr. Spillane asks if our crew will be involved in the new Route 1A project and Director Mattson answers no and they will only be involved for a coordination efforts of utility work. Mr. Hasenjaeger comments on his dissatisfaction with the current pole work on the Route 1A project and further discussion is had. Mr. Fasanello discusses the history of when the Mueller System was installed and the request to the company if it was compatible with the other utility companies and how he believes it would be cheaper if we can work with other utility companies for one house reader to read all utilities and further discussion is had. Director Mattson comments to the Board if we migrate away from Mueller System it is not going to be inexpensive and further discussion is had on different systems. Mr. Spillane asks about the warranty on the current reading system. Director Mattson answers they are now extending it from seven years and it's a prorated warranty and the issue we are experiencing is a collection issue and provided an update on the response from Muller Systems.

### **Meeting Minutes of April 26, 2021**

**Motion made** by Mr. Abbott to approve the minutes of April 26, 2021. **Seconded** by John Hasenjaeger  
**Vote 5-0-0**

### **Discussion Item #1**

#### ***Monitoring wells for Pondville Hospital area***

Mr. Fasanello comments to the Commission that adjacent to where the new fields are connected to the land he has heard this land will be developed and along with that development there will be land disturbance. Mr. Fasanello continues to discuss the Pondville Hospital area and the need to have monitoring wells to protect those fields and it should be done quickly and monitored periodically according to the experts to protect our Town. Further discussion is had on the Pondville Hospital area regarding the flow of the water which is directed north towards the center of town and the town border. Further discussion was had regarding present wells and the Pondville area. Joseph Moraski speaks from the audience summarizing a MASS DEP Zoom meeting on June 9<sup>th</sup> which was a public involvement program between GFI (full service Real Estate Company) that wants to develop the Southwood Hospital site and all the homeowners in Norfolk and Walpole who live in that area, some with private wells. Mr. Moraski discusses the cleanup program that GFI is going to use and how detailed the cleanup process was going to be. Mr. Moraski comments the Town of Walpole should be much more involved in this cleanup process and to contact Jacqueline Bart who is the Project Manager of GFI to get on any future programs they have. Mr. Moraski shared the information provided on the Town of Norfolk's website regarding this project. Mr. Moraski comments the Town should be reimbursed for the suggested monitoring wells to protect the water in that area. Mr. Moraski continues to summarize the June 9<sup>th</sup> MASS DEP Meeting. Mr. Moraski reminds the Commission that when Town Meeting passed the Route 1A Fields Project there was a codicil in the main motion that prohibited water expansion beyond the 1A Field Site Parcel. Mr. Fasanello comment the Board was approached about ten years ago from the Caritas Hospital and they wanted the Commissioner to approve a sewer and water connection to that property in order to enhance the sale of the property. Mr. Fasanello continues that the Sewer and Water

Commission's voted no as it would not benefit the Town. Further discussion is had between Mr. Moraski to the Board regarding providing water and sewer to the land and potential benefits. Discussion was had to determine the purpose and wording of the Motion to be made.

**Motion made** by Mr. Fasanello to establish a string of monitoring wells to monitor the water from areas being disturbed. Mr. Spillane *rescinds* his *Second* to the Motion to look in this more.

***No Vote Taken***

### **Rate Hearing 7:45 p.m.**

Mr. Abbott starts the hearing with the Projected FY22 Water Rate Worksheet and discusses each line item and what is included. Mr. Abbott comments the total of the expenses is \$5,746,676. Mr. Abbott continues because we are an Enterprise Account we are self-supporting and all the revenue we collect has to match up to the expense total. Mr. Abbott continues to review the Revenue line items and what is included. Mr. Abbott comments the Revenue items add up to a little over \$900,000 and the remaining amount that has to be raised to meet up to the \$5.7 million dollar expense amount is raised by rates. Mr. Abbott continues that this year they are splitting the calculation into two to be more accurate and the reason is the early bills that go out at the beginning of a fiscal year are really for usage from the prior fiscal year and provides an example. Mr. Abbott explains they start out with a total consumption estimate which is 74 million cubic feet and how he estimated in the past at 73 million cubic feet. Based on the numbers he saw in April which was in line with the normal historical average, Mr. Abbott felt comfortable to raise the amount to 74 million cubic feet. Mr. Abbott continues that taking the amount that he expected from the FY21 rates it amounts to 28,720 cubic feet from FY21 rated water and totals \$1.3 million dollars. The remaining will be billed at the FY22 rates and that amount would be \$65.62 rate and it is a 3.71% increase from the FY21 rate. Mr. Abbott continues that when the amount is added from the fixed revenue to the revenue raised by rates it totals the \$5.7 million dollars that will cover the expenses. Mr. Mishra provides his comments and based on his calculations it does not match the worksheet discussed. Mr. Mishra also discusses his concerns on the bills being late and his opposition to all the block rates being raised. Mr. Abbott responds that the \$6.1 million dollars in revenue is currently correct. The amount the revenue is being based on is the office staff is currently in the process of reducing the billing lag and eight extra cycles worth of revenue was sent out. Mr. Abbott continues that some of the billing cycles had five bills sent in one year instead of four which produced more revenue. Further discussion is had between Mr. Mishra and Mr. Abbott regarding the billing lag, revenue collected, rate increase and excess amounts collected to be added to the Water Retained Earnings. Further discussion is had on the billing dates, shortening the lag time and ways to help it be reduced. Mr. Hasenjaeger asks what the current retained earning amount is and Mr. Abbott answers the last figure he received from Accounting was \$2,296,609 and comments the Capital Budget items will put a dent in that amount. Further discussion is had on the retained earnings amount and amounts needed for Capital Budget item amounts. Mr. Abbott continues to discuss the potential rate increase of 3.7% and the commercial and residential rates being the same. Further discussion is had by Mr. Abbott and Mr. Mishra regarding the rate increase, the block rate tiers and usage amounts. Mr. Fasanello comments he feels the 3.71% is not a good thing and feels the rate should be raised 2.5%. Further discussion is had between Mr. Abbott and Mr. Fasanello. Mr. Spillane asks what the difference in the amount would be if they went to 2.5% and Mr. Hasenjaeger answers \$500,000 and there is \$371,000 of additional retained earnings to offset that and the calculation would be a shortfall of \$130,000. Further discussion is had by the Board regarding the block rates tiers.

**Motion made** by Mr. Fasanello to raise the water rates by 2.5% from FY21 *Seconded* by Mr. Spillane ***Vote 3-1-1*** (Hasenjaeger-abstain, Abbott-no)

Mr. Abbott discusses how in the past we have increased the rates by each block rate by the percentage voted and in this case it would be 2.5%. Mr. Spillane comments he has a problem with 2<sup>nd</sup> water meter rate calculation and it should be more. Mr. Spillane feels the Town could run out of water due to non-essential watering. Discussion is had between Mr. Abbott and Mr. Spillane regarding the 2<sup>nd</sup> water meter irrigation usage.

**Motion made** by Mr. Spillane ***Seconded*** by Mr. Fasanello

***No Vote Taken***

Mr. Fasanello asks about the indirect costs and how much increase over last year. Mr. Abbott answers it is a reduction of 1.29% of what is proposed for FY22. Discussion is had by Mr. Abbott and Mr. Fasanello regarding the Open Meeting Law.

Mr. Abbott discussed the Sewer Rate Worksheet line items and what is included. Mr. Abbott points out that the MWRA who does the treatment on our sewer system has a 4.1% increase and the total to operate the Town's Sewer System is \$5,312,764 approved by Town Meeting. Mr. Abbott comments Town Meeting voted for \$200,000 from sewer retained earnings to lower the rate and of the \$5.3 million dollars of expenses the initial items add up to \$680,241 leaving \$4.6 million dollars to be raised by rates.

Further discussion is had by Mr. Abbott and he explains to cover the expenses the sewer rate increase would be 5.76%. Mr. Fasanello who is the Sewer and Water Board Commissioners MWRA

Representative, summarizes meeting topics and what is paid to the MWRA and feels the Board cannot get around the increase. Mr. Hasenjaeger comments he feels the MWRA needs to refinance their debt.

Mr. Mishra discusses his problem with the water and sewer worksheets is a 3% difference from the previous fiscal year. Mr. Abbott answers that not every account is on sewer. Cycle 9 which is one of the largest billing cycles only 40% is connected to sewer and the amounts will not be identical to the water.

Further discussion is had between Mr. Abbott and Mr. Mishra. Mr. Mishra compares Walpole bills to Boston sewer and water bills and further discussion is had on the differences. Mr. Hasenjaeger asks about the Sewer Retained Earning and Mr. Abbott answers \$2,170,644 of which Town Meeting voted \$200,000 to lower the sewer rate to 5.76% and clarifies the Board proposed that to Town Meeting.

Further discussion is had by Mr. Hasenjaeger and Mr. Abbott regarding the costs and infrastructure grants. Mr. Marshall discusses the Capital Budget projects and the amount he will be asking for is \$900,000.

**Motion made** by Mr. Abbott to set the FY22 Sewer Rate at \$97.16 per 1,000 cubic feet ***Seconded*** by Mr. Hasenjaeger

***Vote 3-1-1*** (Fasanello-abstain-Mishra-no)

Mr. Abbott discusses the Fee Schedule and the first page water charges would be changed with what Chairman Spillane discusses with the Collectors Office and in the sewer section the in town sewer rate would be changed to \$97.16 replacing the \$91.87 rate and the out of town sewer rate would be the same 5.76% increase as the in town sewer rate. Mr. Abbott asks the Superintendent if any of the other fees need to be changed. Mr. Marshall comments they are not used very often and in line with other towns.

**Motion made** by Mr. Abbott to change the water fee chart to what was voted on and the town sewer charges to in town sewer \$97.16 and out of town sewer \$142.34 ***Seconded*** by Mr. Hasenjaeger

***No Vote was taken after discussion***

***Discussion*** Mr. Fasanello asks Mr. Marshall is the Septage Facility is functionally economically and Mr. Marshall answers yes. Mr. Mishra asks who the author of the block rate is. Mr. Abbott answers the rates will be changed by Mr. Spillane on how the Board voted and he made the block rate. Mr. Mishra asked Mr. Abbott about the process. Discussion is had by the Board on the block rate structure, the process and the history. Mr. Moraski from the audience discusses his issues with the Tier 3 & 4 for the out of town

residential and out of town commercial and why they were not the same. Mr. Abbott answers the increase was applied to the prior rates and only the in town commercial was discussed at the prior rate hearing and they only focused on matching the in town. Mr. Moraski and Mr. Abbott discuss the out of town commercial account and the amount of out of town residential accounts. Mr. Moraski expresses his concerns of the difference of the rates and discussion is had. Mr. Moraski asks if all the Commissioners are satisfied with the information presented and if they are in agreement. Mr. Abbott comments there was a meeting with the Town Accountant to answer any questions and Mr. Fasanello's questions were answered. Mr. Moraski asks if there are any opportunities for cooperative purchasing programs with other Municipalities or "piggybacking" on their contracts to get reduced rates. Mr. Mattson answers the chemicals are what comes to mind.

**Motion made** by Mr. Hasenjaeger to close the Rate Hearing at 9:12 p.m. ***Seconded*** by Mr. Fasanello  
***Vote 5-0-0***

## **Discussion Item #2**

### ***Sewer and Water Connections Reporting***

Mr. Fasanello commented he found out at the new ball park there is a water and sewer connection the Board did not know about. Mr. Abbott said he was aware and Mr. Marshall commented it was discussed on different occasions.

**Motion made** by Mr. Fasanello that The Sewer and Water Commissioners are to be notified to approve and water and sewer connections to any governmental entity ***Seconded*** by Mr. Hasenjaeger  
***Vote 5-0-0***

## **Discussion Item #3**

### ***Capital items for Fall Town Meeting***

Mr. Marshall comments he and the Director will be meeting tomorrow to discuss the items to be requested and updates the Board with the items to be discussed. Mr. Abbott comments the reason he put this item on the Agenda was to make the Board aware the Warrant closes **August 24<sup>th</sup>** and they want to have the information to vote on. Further discussion is had on the cost of materials going down and Mr. Marshall continues his discussion on what will be discussed with Director Mattson.

## **Discussion Item #4**

### ***Billing***

Mr. Mishra proposes a meter to cash report be added to the agenda every meeting. This reports tracks the number of bills generated and the revenue being collected every 90 days. Mr. Abbott comments it is slightly different from what he provides. Mr. Mishra comments this will track when we have the meter reading to when the bill is generated and when the payment is received. Mr. Mishra continues to discuss the meter to cash report he is requesting.

**Motion made** by Mr. Mishra to monitor the meter to cash report at every meeting ***Seconded*** by Mr. Fasanello  
***Vote 5-0-0***

**Motion made** by Mr. Fasanello that the Town Administrator restore the Board Secretary position of the Sewer and Water Commission in title and in deed within 90 days ***Seconded*** by John Spillane  
***Vote 3-1-1*** (Abbott-no, Hasenjaeger-abstain)

**Motion made** by Mr. Fasanello to adjourn at 9:28 p.m. ***Seconded*** by Mr. Abbott  
***Vote 5-0-0***

***Date Meeting Minutes Accepted: August 16, 2021***

