



*Town of Walpole
Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

*William Abbott, Chair
Glenn Maffei, Clerk
John Hasenjaeger, Member
Patrick Fasanello, Member
John Spillane, Member*

Board of Sewer and Water Commissioners

**Monday, May 24, 2021
2:00 P.M.
Meeting Minutes**

A regular meeting of the Board of Sewer & Water Commissioners was held on Monday, May 24, 2021. The meeting is called to order remotely via Zoom by Board Chair William Abbott at 2:00 p.m. Mr. Abbott recites the Executive Order on Remote Participation.

Present Remotely at the Meeting:

Sewer and Water Commissioners:

William Abbott, John Spillane, Glenn Maffei, John Hasenjaeger, (*Patrick Fasanello was absent*)

Other Participants:

Bernie Marshall, Water & Sewer Superintendent, Rick Mattson, Director of Public Works, Scott Gustafson, Assistant Water & Sewer Superintendent, Mary Timilty, Jodi Cuneo, Town Accountant, Lisa Sinkus, Town Collector/Treasurer, James Johnson, Town Administrator

Abatelements

Motion Made by Mr. Maffei to approve the abatements for Mr. Abbott to sign. ***Seconded*** by John Spillane

Roll Call Vote John Hasenjaeger-Aye, Glenn Maffei-Aye, John Spillane-Aye, William Abbott-Aye.
Vote 4-0-0

Abatelements #1-26 Polley Lane Abatement request from Finance Department regarding foreclosure
Town Treasurer Lisa Sinkus discussed the water charges on this property and explained the charges liens onto the tax bill which is now the Town Of Walpole's tax bill. The Collector's Office is requesting the water lien be abated off the tax bill. Further discussion was had on this foreclosed property and the status.

Motion Made by Mr. Maffei to approve this abatement. ***Seconded*** by John Spillane

Roll Call Vote John Hasenjaeger-Aye, Glenn Maffei-Aye, John Spillane-Aye, William Abbott-Aye.
Vote 4-0-0

Superintendents Report

Mr. Marshall provides an update on the water restrictions and the status of the enforcement of the policy. Mr. Marshall updated the status of the Minebrook 3A Well being down and reported it will be back in service today. They will be able to sample for PFAS during the next round of sampling next week. Mr. Marshall continued with an update on the Delaney filters five and six. Mr. Marshall reported the crew is continuing to work on the ongoing grant program and there have been no water main breaks since the last

meeting. Mr. Marshall continues his update that he is working on the capital projects for both water and sewer for the next five years and provides an update on the crews workload. Gorman Rupp who is the pump supplier for the sewage pump stations have placed Leonard and Chandler on its priority list. They have not confirmed the production dates due to the Covid and we are among other communities waiting for these things to be built. Mr. Marshall commented he has a quote for the Eleanor Road Pump Station and that bid should be going out shortly. Mr. Marshall continues to update on the Septage Facility hours discussed at the meeting on May 10, 2021. Mr. Marshall had conversations with Mike Friscia from the School Department, Deputy Chief Kelleher and has received two letters in support of the facility opening up a ½ hour early which would be 8:00 a.m. and closing ½ hour later at 2:30 p.m.. Mr. Marshall continues the next step is to appear in front of the Zoning Board of Appeals with the support letters to try to make it happen. Mr. Abbott suggests Mr. Marshall gets a vote from the Board to appear in front of the Zoning Board. Mr. Marshall updates the Board that the lead and copper testing is beginning on June 1st and we are going to begin to start scheduling the backflow testing now that the schedule is back open for appointments. Further discussion is had on the Septage Facility hours, revenue and charges.

Motion Made by Mr. Maffei to ask the Sewer Department to apply to the ZBA to extend the hours of the Septage Facility by ½ hour at the beginning and ½ hour at the end of the day **Seconded** by John Hasenjaeger

Roll Call Vote John Hasenjaeger-Aye, Glenn Maffei-Aye, John Spillane-Aye, William Abbott-Aye.
Vote 4-0-0

Mr. Hasenjaeger asked what the work being done on Route 1A by Cobbs Pond today. Mr. Mattson answered the inlet structure was blocked with debris branches and it was raising the level of Cobbs Pond to a point it was flooding into a backyard and the crew went out and removed the debris.

Comment Request #1

Memo from Planning Board Dated May 10, 2021 regarding Alsarabi Estates Definitive Subdivision

Mr. Mattson comments that Commissioner Fasanello likes looping water mains and the only possible loop he can see is through Lot#3 over into Boulder Trail Road. The issue he sees is Boulder Trail is privately owned and does have an inactive water main because the developer never had it tested. Mr. Mattson continues to inform the Board all the houses are on well water and in order to complete the loop, the water main would have to be activated. Mr. Mattson states the board would have to ask Mr. Alsarabi to possibly loop the water main over there and that would help the residents on Boulder Trail. Mr. Hasenjaeger suggests they suggest an easement so sewer and water has the right in the future to make the correct connection and Boulder Trail gets straightened out. Mr. Mattson suggests to make mention it is a low pressure zone and any issues associated with water pressure would be on the developer as opposed to the Town.

Motion Made by Mr. Abbott requesting that the applicant loop the waterline out from Lot #3 to Boulder Trail and that the water pressure is somewhat deficient and any improvements would be on the developer. **Seconded** by Mr. Maffei

Roll Call Vote John Hasenjaeger-Aye, Glenn Maffei-Aye, John Spillane-Aye, William Abbott-Aye.
Vote 4-0-0

Comment Request #2

Request from Community & Economic Development Director, Patrick Deschenes for comments regarding Moose Hill Condominiums 8 Unit 40-B

Mr. Abbott comments it appears they are getting their water off Moose Hill Road. Mr. Marshall comments the 90 degree bend on the plan the Town does not care for and they do not show a hydrant at the end of the project. Mr. Marshall is not sure if the Fire Department would be in agreement with that.

Motion Made by Mr. Abbott there is a 90 degree bend connection of water main to Moose Hill Road that is not acceptable and the applicant should see the Water Superintendent to work out an appropriate connection. There also needs to be a hydrant at the end and the Fire Department can decide what works best for them. ***Seconded*** by Mr. Maffei

Roll Call Vote John Hasenjaeger-Aye, Glenn Maffei-Aye, John Spillane-Aye, William Abbott-Aye.
Vote 4-0-0

Correspondence #1

Memo from Bill Abbott re: FY21 Revenue Numbers

Mr. Abbott comments this is the monthly revenue numbers and there are no questions.

Correspondence #2

Memo from Bill Abbott re: Updated Water Production-Current vs Prior Years

Mr. Abbott comment the only notice is that in April we are back to being close to the historical average. There are no questions.

Discussion Item #1

Indirect Costs

Mr. Maffei comments he is always happy to take a closer look at one of the biggest budget items and would like to have some more information. Mr. Abbott comments we have the Town Accountant present for this discussion. Mr. Abbott continues to update that the indirect costs coming from work and it is part of our effort to have the true cost of water. The cost of operating our water system is not just having electricity to pump the wells, run the treatment plants, chemicals, salaries and expenses. There's a lot of other activity that's required which includes what other town departments provide for us, such as accounting, the Collector Treasurer sending out the bills and collecting our money, liability insurance, legal things like Medicare, pensions, unemployment workers comp., building maintenance, occupying part of Town Hall, the engineering comments on projects, vehicle maintenance health insurance and employee benefits. Mr. Johnson comments, we've done a lot of work on this discussion item and Ms. Cuneo did a lot leading up to this meeting and expressed his disappointment that Mr. Fasanello is not here because this item was added onto the agenda at his request. Mr. Hasenjaeger comments that Mr. Fasanello maybe the victim of the power outage and phone outages in town today.

Mr. Johnson updates that about 6 or 7 years ago, we looked at all the indirect costs really did a formal deep dig of all the costs, including how much time is actually spent by the DPW Director, the Town Administrator, The Finance Department and the billing department. We have a lot of percentages to each department and the Sewer and Water Commissioners had a lot of input as they reviewed everything. Mr. Johnson comments he felt we had a good base going forward and it really hasn't come up since then. We continue to keep a close eye on each year and actually this year is the first year he can remember that the indirect cost actually dropped a little bit from one year to the other. Mr. Johnson ask Ms. Cuneo to take it from there. Mr. Mattson clarifies that a lot of the indirect costs are direct costs. Mr. Mattson points out the insurance, the workman's compensation the health insurance contributions, and other employee benefits are direct costs, even though they're all lumped into the indirect cost category.

Ms. Cuneo comments as Mr. Johnson was saying prior to 2017 there were percentages that were applied amongst all the different departments to charge indirect costs to water and sewer. Ms. Cuneo reiterates what Mr. Johnson said it was Mr. Fasanello who had suggested that we take a look at this, and we spent quite a bit of time with the department heads, doing estimates but also doing actual, like the vehicles costs, the building maintenance expense is based on square footage of the water and sewer area but also of the common areas. Ms. Cuneo comments that probably the idea behind it all is that if you were your own business and didn't have the support of the general fund these costs would be incurred. So in FY17 we redid everything there was quite a big increase and it hasn't been increasing, all that much over the last few years. Ms. Cuneo commented in FY2021, we only increased by .68% and then FY2022 we have a decrease, 1.3%. Mr. Abbott would like to make a note that at Town Meeting an Article Six when all the town meeting members vote for the funding sources, this is where the votes are taken to for these indirect costs because the municipal budget needs revenue to perform these duties. Ms. Cuneo mentions there is a MA General Law that allows us to do this and all cities and towns are doing the same thing if there's an Enterprise Fund. Further discussion is had between Mr. Hasenjaeger and Mr. Maffei regarding the figure calculations and the accuracy of the percentages used for the actual numbers. Mr. Hasenjaeger comments on the year 2016 and how something unusual must have happened for the indirect cost to jump from 3% to 12%. Ms. Cuneo explains that in 2016 we started to charge for OPED. Prior to that we were not charging water and sewer for any OPED costs and we started budgeting in the General Fund for those costs. So between OPED, Norfolk County Retirement and Health Insurance those are the biggest expenses you will see being charged. The employee health insurance benefit is based on actual employees and pension and OPED is based in salary allocation. Ms. Cuneo comments the Commissioners need to realize that there is usually additional money that's allocated for Fall Town Meeting to the OPED Fund and we have not been charging that to the Sewer and Water Enterprise Funds. Mr. Johnson and Ms. Cuneo have further discussion on the OPED contributions. Mr. Mattson comments that it is no different from the service that Sewer and Water provide to the Municipal Buildings as each one get their own sewer and water bills and irrigation bills that they pay. Mr. Abbott comments he will send everyone a copy of the breakdown of department items.

Discussion Item #2

PFAS Report Update

Mr. Marshall updates we have collected our initial round, except for Mine Brook 3A and Washington 4B. We have asked the State DEP to take a look at Washington 4B because 4A and 4B cannot run together. So when we do take samples, they want all our wells that are running to be running at certain time so we're still waiting for guidance on 4B. Mr. Marshall continues that Mine Brook 3A was out of service being rehabbed so that we'll have to have a confirmatory sample. Further discussion is had on the PFAS sampling by Mr. Mattson, Mr. Marshall and Mr. Abbott. Mr. Mattson points out that this is parts per trillion which is equal to one drop of water in 20 Olympic size swimming pools. Mr. Hasenjaeger asks if the Washington 3B that is at 26.5 and if that continues would there be any remediation? Mr. Mattson answers he would remediate that well by shutting it off before spending the money to treat just that one well. Mr. Hasenjaeger asks if the Health Department has any concerns about the PFAS and Mr. Marshall replies there is no reason not to drink the water because we are still underneath the maximum contaminant level. Mr. Mattson comments the Health Department is involved very heavily and anything information that comes from the DEP the Health Department is copied on.

Discussion Item #3

Sewer extension High Street and Ridge Road area

Mr. Hasenjaeger comments he wanted to bring forward a legacy issue that's been out there for quite a while that there has always been an issue with the homes in the area of High Street, Heritage, Homeward

Lane, Countryside, Ridge and Coach and all those streets are on septic. Mr. Hasenjaeger points out that part of town has extremely bad soils or septic and those homes were built in the 70's and 80's. Mr. Hasenjaeger updates that at one point they discussed extending the sewer from Wagon Road and to provide an easement across the town land over to High Street so those different streets along High and Millbrook if they needed to be within striking distance of sewer extension. Mr. Hasenjaeger states what he is proposing is the permission of the Board to have Mr. Marshall explore and maybe the Commission members if they choose, with the Town Engineering Department where they might locate an easements for the infrastructure if it comes along and to hook up that area and make it available to the streets. Mr. Hasenjaeger feels those would be homes that would opt in when their septic systems are failing and they may not have any options then to go to sewer. Mr. Abbott comments after reviewing the Sewer Master Plan he was surprised this area was not a high priority as they are older homes with poor soils. Mr. Abbott reviews his findings in the Sewer Master Plan and would like to have some discussions at a future meeting. Mr. Maffei asks if one of the driving forces is potentially the federal money they have heard is coming and they do not know when and what they should be spending it on and he feels infrastructure would be a good item. Further discussion is had on the priorities of the federal money. Mr. Maffei asks if the 75/25 split exists, would that money go toward lowering, the betterment portion or the amount that we take out of retained earnings or maybe just a little bit of both and asks if Mr. Abbott has an opinion on that. Mr. Abbott uses the example of a project that costs a million dollars and provides lengthy examples and breakdowns. Further discussion is had on past state and federal money projects and new infrastructure. Mr. Marshall provides an update to the Board on the gallons per capita and unaccounted water going forward.

Motion Made by Mr. Spillane to adjourn at 3:04 p.m. and **Seconded** by Mr. Maffei
Roll Call Vote John Hasenjaeger-Aye, John Spillane-Aye, Glenn Maffei-Aye, William Abbott-Aye
Vote 4-0-0

Date Meeting Minutes Accepted July 12, 2021