

October 28, 2019

A regular meeting of the Board of Sewer & Water Commissioners was held on Monday, October 28, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. at the Edward J. Delaney Water Treatment Facility, 1303 Washington St.

Present: William Abbott, Glenn Maffei, John Hasenjaeger, John Spillane, and Patrick Fasanello. Also, Bernie Marshall, Supt. of Sewer and Water and Rick Mattson, DPW Director.

Absent: Scott Gustafson, Asst. Supt. of Sewer and Water

Joseph Moraski of Precinct 8, Josette Burke of the Finance Committee and Town Treasurer Marilyn Thompson also arrived for this meeting.

All abatements submitted tonight are reviewed and signed.

Motion Made by Glenn Maffei to accept the minutes of September 23, 2019. Second by John Spillane. Vote 5-0-0.

SUPERINTENDENT'S STATUS REPORT

Mr. Marshall reports that there was one service leak on Woodland Rd. and one ring crack on Rhoades Ave. He says you may have noticed a portion of the parking lot taped off with caution tape and this is because the waste basins are being cleaned. There have been 2 cleaned with one more to go. He and Mr. Gustafson will be going to Wellesley to see the water plant manager as there is a capital item where they are trying to redo the track back system that handles the sludge. The main replacement on Common Street has been completed and there is one service that needs to be tied over and Mick Morgan's and the hotel have been tied over to Sharon. There are still 4 services that will be turned over to Sharon water and our staff will be doing this soon as we are working in the area. P.J. Hayes will be turning services that are on Walpole water over to the new main. Mr. Maffei asks if there is an agreement to pay what they owe to Walpole and Mr. Marshall says they will still be responsible to pay what they owe Walpole. Mr. Marshall reports that he received a Notice of Noncompliance from the DEP for a problem with the Statistical Report he filed. There was an error in the list of operators. He had taken off Mr. Dalton as he retired and he inadvertently took out the lead distribution operator as well. It was brought to his attention and it was a matter of paperwork which was done and he is back in compliance. There are numerous capital projects that are moving forward. Mr. Fasanello asks when the date of completion for Baker St. is. Mr. Marshall explains what has been done to date and what is left to be done. Mr. Fasanello asks if they will be done by December 1st and Mr. Mattson says their contract completion date is January 8th. Mr. Maffei asks if there is an update on the Water Management Permit and Mr. Marshall says he has not heard from DEP. Mr. Mattson says he was contacted by the MWRA, they are doing a large construction project where they are running a redundant water main that will service Norwood. The concern is they are going to be very close to the existing water pipe that services Norwood. They are looking for a contingency plan on an emergency basis should the line be damaged during construction. He says we do not have all the details at this time; it is in the early planning stages. He feels it is a good neighbor thing as the Town of Walpole could find themselves on the other end at some point. There is discussion and he will bring more information as it comes. Mr. Hasenjaeger asks what the location of the connection is in Walpole. Mr. Mattson says it is in Dedham and Westwood and a portion of Norwood. Mr. Abbott asks where in Walpole would the connection be and Mr. Mattson says we currently have 2 connections but they don't believe either of those will work so they are looking at Rustic Road. There is discussion and Mr. Mattson says the details have not been worked out still and he will keep the Board updated. Mr. Hasenjaeger says we should take full advantage of this and then may be able to convince the financial gurus on the FinCom that maybe this is a worthy effort.

7:10 BILL O'BRIEN/DAN MERRIKIN – SEWER FOR FOXBORO MCDONALD'S

This appointment was cancelled after the agenda was posted.

ROBERT & GLORIA DELISLE, 10 COUNTRYSIDE LA. SEWER AGREEMENT

Mr. DeLisle explains that his property sits on the Norwood/Walpole line and he has a failed septic system and has a sewer agreement with the Town of Norwood and P.J. Hayes has agreed to connect him to Norwood's sewer if the Board of Sewer & Water Commissioners agrees. Mr. Mattson explains that there is no need for an intermunicipal agreement; the sewer agreement that Norwood provided is sufficient. The only thing that is needed is the blessing from this Board. We would provide Norwood with meter readings and they would bill for sewer directly. Mr. Maffei asks if there are any examples of this and Mr. Mattson tells of 3 or 4 houses in Walpole that are connected to Westwood. **Motion Made** by Patrick Fasanello to approve the Sewer Agreement provided by the Town of Norwood for 10 Countryside Lane, Walpole. Second by John Spillane. Vote 5-0-0.

DICK GUISTI, RE: SEWER ENTRANCE FEE WAIVER REQUEST

Mr. Guisti says he was trying to get sewer on Gould Street before it was paved so he rushed but it never worked out. He then went to the Agricultural School who had a manhole 225 feet away from him and they eventually agreed to let him connect there. He says he has been spending a lot of money trying to tie into sewer. Mr. Mattson says based on the minutes of a previous meeting this Board voted to waive I/I fees but there was no mention of the connection fee and he believes that is what Mr. Guisti is looking for a waiver to tonight. Mr. Guisti agrees. **Motion Made** by Glenn Maffei to honor the Board's previous vote to waive the I/I fees and to continue the practice of charging the sewer entrance fee. Second by William Abbott. Vote 5-0-0.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION – AMENDED ORDER OF CONDITIONS 539 MAIN ST BP GAS

Motion Made by William Abbott that this Board has no comments with regard to the above subject. Second by Glenn Maffei. Vote 5-0-0.

BOARD OF APPEALS – SPECIAL PERMIT 235 WINTER ST., THOMAS

This is an application for an in-law apartment. **Motion Made** by John Spillane that this Board has no problem with the special permit application for this address. Second by Glenn Maffei. Vote 5-0-0.

7:30 JOHN TOWNSEND RE: SEWER CHARGES AT RODMAN ARENA

Mr. Townsend says the arena uses town water for their cooling tower and this water is evaporated and does not go into the sewer. He says the owner, Mr. Barletta, would like to get a separate meter to put on this to avoid the sewer charge. It is explained that there already is a deduction taken for this water and Mr. Maffei asks if he would rather install the meter than use the current arrangement. Mr. Townsend says the owner felt the current arrangement was not working. There is discussion on what rate would be used for this second meter and which method would most benefit the customer. Mr. Spillane wants to make sure he pays for the second meter. Mr. Abbott suggests working with the Superintendent to use real numbers to determine which method of billing would most benefit the customer. It is agreed that this is essential water use and should not be charged the irrigation rate. Ms. Thompson says it is merely setting up a new code and charging the same rate. It is decided that Mr. Townsend should crunch the numbers and come back to the Board and then a determination will be made on how it will be charged.

7:45 MATT ABRAHAM, ABRAHAM GROUP – RATE STUDY UPDATE

Mr. Abraham says he is here to update the Board as to where they are on the rate study. He says the last time he saw the Board he gave a financial analysis and told at that time he said he was quite comfortable with it and needed to meet with the Town Accountant for her feedback. He feels the feedback was very positive. He has tweaked his spreadsheet just a bit that were very minor changes. One change was how they were projecting debt. There were 2 projects on the capital plan. These projects were for FY24 for about \$600,000 and were in the retained earnings column; however the Treasurer suggested we do borrowing for this. They were 7 year borrowings instead of using the retained earnings which was positive for the retained earnings balance. There were 2 other very minor tweaks one with indirect costs; the Town Accountant recommended using 5% rather than 4.5% so that was changed and the other was revenue debt subsidies. The last piece was minor change to one of the revenue lines as it we got too comfortable with debt subsidies which was in the revenue line, so the

revenues were a little bit lower. He does not foresee any changes to this. With regard to billing he has spent a lot of time to produce a billing file which has a tremendous amount of data. The way the Town does water billing is frequent but is less now that they have gone to quarterly, but the year that he was doing his analysis is when the bills were every 2 months which meant there were 6 bills. He loaded over 100 commitments which took some time and on top of that he had to figure out what bills to use within the data because there was a time span of well over a year to look at. Therefore it took some time to figure out which bills and date range to use. He ultimately came up with the 6 bills to use which was from May 2018 to May 2019 and this captured most of FY 19. What he did was take the first bill and ½ of the next bill, then take the other ½ and the third bill and so forth. This made them quarters instead of every 2 months. Mr. Abraham reminds the Board when looking at the figures that they are not actual bills but rather bills that he created. He then provides a handout and explains the spreadsheet. After reviewing all the data Mr. Abraham tells that based on the information provided we are at 80,500,000 cf. He has excluded the out of town accounts. Ms. Thompson says that they have calculated the rates based on a projected amount of 88,000,000 cf. based on a 5 year average. Mr. Fasanello says it would have been nice to get this information before the meeting as there is a lot of data to just see now. Mr. Abbott says this is what we used for FY 19 where the user fee did not generate the revenue that was expected. If the projected 88 million was not met then this would explain why the revenue was short. He adds that we did meet the overall number because of the entrance fees which is a one-time thing. He would like to better project the numbers. Mr. Mattson tells that Annual Statistical Report has 3 components; what was billed, what was confidently estimated and unaccounted for water. There is discussion on water conservation, wet weather and other measures that affect water usage. Mr. Abraham says based on FY20 rates there are pretty good numbers in there. Mr. Abbott says he is hearing him say that FY 20 rates should be okay in meeting the revenue targets. Ms. Thompson says rates were based on 88 million and not 80 million and she finds it hard to believe they would meet the projected revenue and Mr. Abbott agrees. Mr. Abbott wonders if the rate structure we have is a problem and/or the rates themselves. Mr. Abraham says it sounds to him that the numbers he put together don't really work with what the Town uses. He asks if it makes sense to use the same methodology and numbers that the Town uses. Mr. Abbott responds that he is using the same rates and tiers that are in place now and Mr. Abraham says that his is not the way the Town typically does the rate analysis. It is explained how the Town comes up with their rates. Tiers are also discussed. Mr. Mattson says the 2 ½ % may have worked on a flat rate and not necessarily on the block rate. Mr. Abbott says this Board is looking for guidance on help setting the rates. Mr. Hasenjaeger asks if most of the communities he consults for uses tiered rates and Mr. Abraham responds that a lot do but he wouldn't say most. Mr. Abbott refers to the MWRA rate survey that comes out every year where seventy something percent use an inclining block rate. Mr. Hasenjaeger says he is asking if there is any model that seems to have the right steps. Mr. Abbott explains what and how he came up with the number of blocks. There was discussion on the tiers were figured. Mr. Maffei confirms that these tiers were based on actual annual usage for all the houses in Walpole and Mr. Abbott says yes. Mr. Maffei asks Mr. Abraham if there is a better way to establish a tier to try to capture essential water use. Mr. Abraham says it is best to focus on average use and concentrate on not putting the average user into a higher block. Mr. Abraham asks the Board for the reason that we are using 4 blocks and Mr. Abbott says when he looked at other communities 3 and 4 blocks were used most. Mr. Abraham then asks how the setting of each tier was decided and if we were trying to have certain users hit certain tiers or was it arbitrary. Mr. Abbott says he was trying to establish settings that would generate the same revenue as the flat rate. Mr. Abraham is looking for direction from the Board on the number of tiers they would like to use or some things to look at. Mr. Abbott says he would want to hear if we should not be using 4 tiers. Mr. Maffei says he would like Mr. Abraham to explore lowering the first tier rate without changing the revenue which would probably mean this would be picked up in the second tier. Mr. Abraham reviews the second page of the spreadsheet which shows various tables. Ms. Malieko of East Street brings up her issue of living in a building with 6 units and one meter which puts them in the higher block. Mr. Abbott asks Mr. Abraham if he understands the situation and he says yes. This will also be addressed. Mr. Fasanello tells Mr. Abraham that he gave himself 10 tasks and would like to know which he is on now and the response is number 7. He then asks if he is finished with 7 and the answer is no. Mr. Fasanello then speaks of quarterly versus monthly billing. Mr. Abraham says he has focused on the current scenario. Mr. Fasanello would like a comprehensive rate structure when he is done with task 10. Mr. Abbott would like a model where tiers could be added or subtracted. Mr. Abraham says he has already created this.

Mr. Abbott wants to emphasize that the revenue is not in and for whatever reason they will have to adjust the rate. The sooner they do this the less impact there will be so he does not want to go beyond January.

EXECUTED ACCEPTANCE OF SERVICES, 95 WEST ST VS WILLIAM ABBOTT ET AL

Mr. Mattson says there was a meeting with the Town's Attorney, Mr. Marshall, Mr. Johnson and himself regarding ongoing discussions on this subject. It is suggested that Board has an executive session with the attorney.

JARVIS FARM PERMIT APPLICATION, WALPOLE TRAILS COMMITTEE

Mr. Fasanello says he will vote no as administration has not figured an environmentally safe way to park the cars here. Mr. Spillane speaks of the DPW digging the ball field and Mr. Mattson explains that this is typical maintenance where they skim the infields. Mr. Spillane feels the Board should have known this. Mr. Abbott suggests the Board be told in the future out of courtesy. **Motion Made** by John Spillane to approve the permit application for the Walpole Trails Committee. Second by William Abbott. Vote 4-1-0, Fasanello against.

DPW COMMENTS FOR PROPOSED 40B SUMMER ST. THE CEDARS AND CEDARS EDGE

Mr. Marshall says he sent his sewer and water related comments to the Town Administrator and tells what they are. Mr. Fasanello says he would like to get a report with regard to anything legal concerning the infrastructure parameters on this subject. Mr. Abbott asks that when the large documents come in that the Board be notified so that they can look at it prior to a meeting. This is read and noted.

INFLOW AND INFILTRATION AND ENTRANCE FEE PROTEST LOT 1 LOST BROOK TRAIL

This is read and noted.

REVENUE SHORTFALL? – PUMPING LESS WATER

This document is from Mr. Abbott and he explains that it shows what we are pumping. He explains that in comparing the first nine months of the year to the last three, we are pumping 10% or 12% less in pumping and if we are not pumping then we are not selling. This will affect our ability to meet our revenue objective. He has provided a couple of graphs showing 4 years of pumping which is consistently less. He would just like everyone to know what's happening. Some discussion is held on either changing our billing or modifying and/or postponing capital projects.

WATER RATE REVENUE – FY 2020

This document also came from Mr. Abbott. He says the FY 2020 plan was to collect from usage \$5.3 million and that means we should bring in an average of \$442,000 per month. It is understood that some months would be higher than others. He will attempt to continue to provide this information so that the Board is not surprised at the end of the year that there is a problem.

WATER BILLS THAT CROSSED THE FISCAL YEAR BOUNDARY

Mr. Abbott explains that this document is about the issue of water bills that crossed the fiscal year boundary. He just wrote it out so all would understand exactly what he has learned. He has determined how many were affected by this and then should be able to decide what to do about it. He just wanted to make sure we are all aware of what the problem is. Ms. Thompson says the reason for this is because Munis was never notified of the change to quarterly billing and the increase in block consumption and her office cannot give abatements to all those affected by this. Mr. Maffei asks how it can be fixed then. She says her office is working on it, there is a negative bill file that Munis can upload and credit billing charges until the credit is satisfied. Mr. Abbott says he has a lot of the information already available to achieve this and at this point it is a matter of collecting more information and finding out what the capabilities of Munis are.

THIRD REQUEST TO WAIVE FROZEN METER CHARGE – 97 SOUTH ST., GOMES

Mr. Fasanello confirms that this was a frozen frost plate and not a stopped meter. Mr. Marshall confirms this. **Motion Made** by Patrick Fasanello to stand by the Board's original motion and again deny Mr. Gomes request to waive this charge. Second by John Spillane. Vote 5-0-0.

Motion Made by John Spillane to adjourn. Second by Glenn Maffei. Vote 5-0-0. Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Accepted November 25, 2019