

**November 25, 2019**

A regular meeting of the Board of Sewer & Water Commissioners was held on Monday, November 25, 2019 at 7:00 p.m., at the Edward J. Delaney Water Treatment Plant, 1303 Washington St.

Present: John Spillane, John Hasenjaeger, Glenn Maffei, Bill Abbott and Patrick Fasanello. Also, Bernie Marshall, Supt. of Sewer and Water; Rick Mattson, DPW Director; Jim Johnson, Town Administrator; Marilyn Thompson, Finance Director; and Jodi Cuneo, Town Accountant.

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

All abatements submitted tonight are reviewed and signed.

**Motion Made** by Glenn Maffei to accept the amended minutes of September 23, 2019. Second by John Hasenjaeger. Mr. Hasenjaeger says he confirmed with the Fire Department that the two hydrants on this property should be in Walpole and they felt it was a valid point and agreed. Vote on the motion 5-0-0.

**Motion Made** by John Spillane to accept the minutes of October 10, 2019. Second by Glenn Maffei. Vote 5-0-0.

**Motion Made** by Glenn Maffei to accept the minutes of October 28, 2019. Second by John Spillane. Vote 5-0-0.

#### **SUPERINTENDENTS'S STATUS REPORT**

Mr. Marshall reports that the Old Post Road Tank had a warranty issue after it was inspected and was taken out of service and drained as the issue was related to the inside coating. Mr. Abbott asks if we billed for the water since it was a warranty issue. Mr. Mattson says it had to be drained for the one year inspection and there were just minor defects. Mr. Hasenjaeger asks if the tank was drained before or after the deficiencies were discovered as it could be an insurance issue. Mr. Marshall then says the MWRA has finished crossing the pipeline with no threat. Since they last met there has been one service leak and six main breaks. The waste basins have been cleaned however they are still looking to replace them. They visited Wellesley and liked their retrofit idea. The new vac truck is in operation. The Common Street water main is complete and Mick Morgans, the hotel and the six homes in Sharon are connected to Sharon's water now. Mr. Maffei asks about the Water Management Permit and Mr. Marshall responds that he anticipates to hear shortly and it cannot be appealed until the process has started. He expects the Robbins Road Septage Facility project to begin next week. Lastly the Washington Street generator is getting the chain link fence around it.

#### **7:05 JOHN SHALBY, ROJO CAR WASH, WALPOLE SEWER ON PRIVATE PROPERTY**

Mr. Mattson gives the background of the situation where Mr. Shalby was constructing his car wash and part of the construction included 4" pvc sewer. It was discovered that there are 2 force mains on Mr. Shalby's property; one active one not active. There is no record of any easements for these lines and it was confirmed that they belong to the Town of Walpole. Mr. Shalby is looking for consideration in exchange for allowing the lines to remain here with the proper documentation. Discussion is held and Mr. Mattson is asked what he believes would be fair. He felt that a waiver of all fees and the Town taking the responsibility of executing all the proper documents. Mr. Shalby says he is willing to work with the Board but mentions the additional costs he incurred due to the fact that his contractor damaged the sewer line during construction and reminds what it would cost the Town to move these sewer lines. Mr. Fasanello says since he has been on the Board, an easement has never been bought. There is further discussion and Mr. Shalby reminds that he is not opposed to considering any offers. **Motion Made** by Glenn Maffei to offer Mr. Shalby the return of all fees paid, reimbursement of \$3000 for costs to repair the damaged sewer line and the Town will absorb all costs to properly record an easement for the sewer line. Second by John Spillane. Vote 4-1-0, Fasanello against. Mr. Shalby accepts this offer.

### **7:15 SEAN KING, LEXUS GENERAL MANAGER – WATER BILL AND USAGE DISPUTE**

Dennis Parker, Maintenance Man for Lexus is also present. Mr. King tells of the 2 large bills they received which started in May and then in November it appears to have fixed itself. Mr. Parker says he never noticed any leaks or excessive use. It was suggested that there may be a toilet leak however they are all flushometers. Mr. Marshall suggested a meter test and this was done and the meter came back as 99% accurate. Mr. Fasanello says the policy is if the water passes through the meter then you must pay for it. He does not know what Lexus wants us to do. Mr. Mattson says if the usage is back to normal then there was a leak somewhere and he is guessing it was on the car wash system. **Motion Made** by Patrick Fasanello that the account for Lexus stands as billed. Second by Glenn Maffei. Vote 5-0-0.

### **7:30 MATT ABRAHAM – RATE STUDY**

Mr. Abraham Sr. is also present for this discussion. Mr. Abraham says he focused on FY2020. In FY 19 usage and pumping was down so consumption was down. There was a 10% drop from 2018 to 2019. He feels the projected \$500,000 for connection fees is too high and thought \$100,000 is a better number. Mr. Abraham says there is a \$1.1 million deficit. Mr. Hasenjaeger asks Mr. Abraham if he is seeing the same pattern with other communities and the answer is yes the wet weather was a very big driver. Mr. Abbott wonders if it was notices when the flat rate was changed to inclining block if people say they use less because it costs more. Mr. Mattson says those who fall into Tier 2 and 3 are seasonal users that are being more conservative; those who fall into Tier 4 are those who don't care and have the means to pay more. Mr. Abbott says there is no miracle solution to the \$1.1 million shortfall. There is discussion on a rate change and it is determined that only the April and May bills would be impacted and only affecting ¼ of the bills for FY20. It is determined that a 1% increase would only yield \$7500. Mr. Maffei says a rate increase on January 1 will not solve the problem. Mr. Abraham says retained earnings will have to be used and Mr. Abbott adds that will require a town meeting vote in May. Mr. Mattson suggests holding a rate hearing and putting an article on the SATM. Mr. Abbott mentions another alternative which would be looking at expense lines to see if expenditures could be postponed. Mr. Mattson says they can also look at a per bill charge. Ms. Cuneo says user fees are just not doing it; retained earnings will have to be used. Mr. Mattson suggests reducing the amount to be raised by rates to address the DOR. Mr. Abraham mentions the concept of a service charge by meter size. He says it is a common way to cover indirect costs. There is discussion. Mr. Abbott says if we lower the rate and add a user charge for indirect costs then we would get 0 out of it. Mr. Maffei would like an idea on how much retained earnings would have to be tapped. Mr. Abbott says they would want to leave \$800,000 in retained earnings and come the spring they would have a better idea how much would be needed. Mr. Johnson asks that he, Mr. Marshall, Mr. Mattson, Ms. Cuneo and Ms. Thompson be allowed to work on a proposal. Mr. Maffei would like to hear what Town Administration has to say. Mr. Abbott says it sounds like the plan is to have a rate hearing that would be effective January 1, 2020 plus retained earnings with potential tweaks. Mr. Johnson says we need good reasons and need to get it published and out there prior to town meeting. Luckily we have \$2.1 million. Mr. Maffei wants to know what is needed as he would not want to go to fall town meeting to ask for more. There is discussion on charging twice for indirect costs if there is a service charge. Ms. Thompson says the indirects would be taken out of the rate and recalculated with a new rate structure. Mr. Fasanello says there a lot of developments and we should know how much money is needed short and long term. He does not like the idea of an extra charge. He also wants to know how much the administrative fee has gone up and if it is more than 2 ½ % then he would like it looked at. Mr. Johnson suggests providing 2, 3, or 4 options to the Board. This is agreeable to the Commission. It is decided that a public rate hearing is to be scheduled for December 16, 2019 for water, sewer and inflow and infiltration at which time administration will provide a few options to be effective January 1, 2020. There will also be an executive session on December 2<sup>nd</sup> for litigation purposes.

### **CONCOM ANRAD, OFF DELANEY AND DOVER DR., HIGH OAKS LLC**

**Motion Made** by William Abbott that this Board has no comments with regard to this subject. Second by John Spillane. Vote 5-0-0.

**CONCOM NOTICE OF INTENT, 11 (LOT 6) BOYDEN LA., WALL STREET DEVELOPMENT**

**Motion Made** by Glenn Maffei that this Board has no comments with regard to this subject. Second by Glenn Maffei. Vote 4-1-0, Fasanello against.

**ROLLS ROYCE SITE PLAN AND SPECIAL PERMIT DECISIONS**

Read and noted.

**SITE PLAN DECISION – 623 BOSTON PROVIDENCE HIGHWAY**

Read and noted.

**UPDATE REVENUE SHORTFALL? – PUMPING LESS WATER**

Read and noted.

**UPDATE WATER & SEWER RATE REVEUE – FY 2020 – SHORTFALL**

Read and noted

**NOTICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLING RESULTS – GEOINSIGHT (FORMER METAL BELLOWS)**

It is discussed that the dichloroethane and trichloroethene are showing in the monitor wells only and there is none detected in our wells. No action is necessary at this time.

**BRISTOL BROTHERS DEVELOPMENT CORP. RE: SWC COMMENTS ON SITE PLAN AT WEATHERVANE**

There is no action taken, it is read and noted.

**LIEN FEE INCREASE REQUEST FROM FINANCE DIRECTOR**

The Finance Director is asking the Board to allow her to increase the lien fee from \$30.00 to \$100.00 as there is close to \$500,000 in unpaid FY19 water/sewer bills which will be lienied. Mr. Fasanello would like to know what the Finance Director's costs are. **Motion Made** by William Abbott to increase the lien fee to \$100.00 as requested by the Finance Director. Second by John Spillane. Vote 4-1-0, Fasanello against.

**Motion Made** by John Spillane to adjourn. Second by Glenn Maffei. Vote 5-0-0. Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

*Accepted December 16, 2019*