

Board of Water and Sewer Commissioner's Meeting April 3, 2024.

Agenda items may be taken out of order.

Present: Scott Zajkowski, Jay Spahl, Justin Dolan, Tom Fournier, George Patrinos and Brian Dorval

Absent: Robert Sullivan

In Attendance: John Semchyshyn, Mike Peterson, and John Cunningham

Scott opened the meeting at 6:30 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance and a call to order, the meeting is being recorded.

Accept the Minutes from March 6, 2024, meeting:

Justin made a motion to accept the minutes as written from March 6, 2024, meeting as written, Tom seconded the motion, no discussion, a vote was taken, all in favor, passed unanimously.

Public Hearing – Rate Increase: Scott opened the Public Hearing at 6:32 pm.

Brian presented a revised sheet showing projected revenues and expenses. The rate increase is based on the original Rate Increase Study done by Tighe and Bond, which shows a 10% increase for water to stay on schedule. At the last meeting there was discussion to relieve the increase on the Tier I levels which are the elderly, single adults, and lower income households. Currently Brian's recommendation is the following:

A 5% increase on the Water bases rate for 5/8-inch meter going from \$ 78.37 to \$82.29 which is an increase of \$3.70. for the 1 inch plus meters the increase would be 10% from \$391.86 to \$431.05. The increase for Tier 1 would be 0% and it will stay at \$5.66/100 cubic feet. Tier II and Tier III would be an increase of 10%. Taking Tier II from \$8.49 to \$9.34 and Tier III from \$16.98 to \$18.68. Increasing the rates this way leaves a \$75,000 shortfall for the budget which we plan to take from Water retained earnings to balance the budget. For the Sewer rates there will be no rate increase this year. There is a shortfall of \$200,000 for the sewer budget which we plan to take from Sewer retained earnings to balance the budget. We are hopeful that fixing the interceptor will decrease the flows to Webster, which will decrease the charges. The reason for the increase on Tiers II and III and not Tier I is that Tier I is use you can't avoid. Tiers II and III are discretionary water use.

Jay sums it up by saying that 5% on the 5/8 and 10% on 1 inch meter with very little impact on Tier I and the base rate.

Scott then addressed the social media comments and comments made Monday night at the Selectmen's Meeting:

The Notice for the Public Hearing was posted on the Town's website on 3/7/2024.

This process for Rate Increase occurs annually, it happens every April we have a Public Hearing, and the decision goes into effect July 1st and the information for the increase goes out in the May billing.

The budget we set is 100% dependent on the rates of the users and fees charged.

There is no contribution from the Town's municipal budget. We seek grants when we can and we take loans with the lowest rates and best loans possible.

Scott then asked if there were any questions or comments from the Public.

John Semchyshyn – 16 Country Club Blvd: What will that leave you in your retained earnings if you take \$200,000? Scott explained that retained earnings can be spent on three things. To improve the system, relieve the rates, or at Town Meeting they can vote to use for any means. The retained earnings should build up if we are doing it correctly. Sewer is at \$1.2 million about \$500,000 of that will be used for Capital projects. Mr. Semchyshyn then asked if the increase covers operating expenses, Scott stated yes it did.

Mike Peterson – 9 Catherine Street: Webster has huge problems with a \$10 million dollar downfall, do you see that effecting, Dudley? Scott stated that the current budget for the Sewer Department is \$1.6 million and about \$700,000-\$800,000 of that is sent to Webster for processing. Mr. Peterson then asked if the postcard that was sent out is to check for Lead Service Lines? Brian stated yes it mandated by the state with a grant through the state for compliance. Mr. Peterson then asked you stated that you go after grants? Scott stated yes, we do.

With no further questions or concerns the Public Hearing was closed at 6:47pm.

Discussion occurred: Scott asked what is the pleasure of the board and how do you want to proceed? A small discussion occurred regarding Brian's recommendations.

Jay made a motion to take Brian's recommendation for the Water Rate increase of 5/8 base rate increase 5%, greater than 5/8 increase to 10%, Tier I, 0% increase, Tier II and Tier III 10% increase, and to supplement the shortfall from retained earnings roughly \$75,000, Tom seconded the motion, no further discussion, a vote was taken, all in favor passed unanimously.

Jay made a motion to take Brian's recommendation for the Sewer Rate increase, no increase to the sewer rate and to supplement shortfall from retained earnings for roughly \$200,000, Tom seconded the motion, no further discussion, a vote was taken, all in favor, passed unanimously.

SWC Dispatch Center: Brian stated that there have been a number of instances and disconnect when the Fire Department has been on hydrants or water in basements, we are not getting the calls and the Fire Department is. George stated that he had a conversation with Director Lynskey that we need to be notified and he agreed he will try to get us notified. Tom asked if we could keep in touch and see how it goes. George stated he will be in communication regarding this.

Secondary Water Operator Position vacancy: George stated we had a vacancy and we have had it temporarily filled by a sewer employee. The position was posted, and Tim Galvin from the Sewer Department put his name in for it. He is a senior employee, has his T1 and D1 and is very familiar with the job. George stated that he would like Tim Galvin to be appointed to the Secondary Operator position for the Water Department.

Tom made a motion to have Tim Galvin from the Sewer Department fill the position as the Water Department Secondary Operator, Jay seconded the motion, no further discussion, a vote was taken, all in favor, passed unanimously.

Correspondence from Tighe and Bond: Scott stated they are working on a final change order for the Treatment Plant. There was a kickoff meeting yesterday for the Water Main Construction. The

Contractor, GEG states began work at 7am on Prospect Ave with Police Detail and we were not aware of the work beginning nor was Tighe and Bond aware. The office became aware that buses did not get through and children did not get picked up for school. A discussion was had by all departments regarding this. There was a meeting with Tighe and Bond, GEG, Police, Highway, and the Water Department to discuss that the work will take about 4-5 weeks to finish all items on the roads and connections. The manhole on the easement was moved and the sewer port that needs to be added to the sewer line to be completed by May 1st.

Jay asked where do we stand with the state on the highway? Scott replied that the work is slated for 4/22/24, the application is in, and they are waiting to hear back from the State. Jay with the erratic temps is it suitable for laying asphalt. Scott states the GEG and Tighe and Bond state it will be completed per the contract.

It was discussed to send out a RAVE alert on Friday and Sunday that construction will be occurring from 7am-4pm on Prospect Ave and the surrounding areas.

NEWWAA had their annual conference today and Derek Belanger from Tighe and Bond, he was the primary engineer on the Water Treatment Plant had a presentation at the conference on Dudley's journey with PFAS from the beginning. It was a good presentation and interesting to see, stated Scott. Scott also stated that he would like to bring the presentation here to present to the public and gear it down a little for layman's understanding.

WTP Updates: Brian stated that things are moving forward with the Water Treatment Plant, Winston did a site clean up and the remainder of the SCADA will be completed this week. There will also be a rehab of Well #6 with a new submersible pump. The board would like to have a Water Treatment Plant open house and Tighe and Bond will help facilitate that. Brian, George, and Jen to coordinate, it is to be on a Saturday mid-morning about 4 hours total with a ribbon cutting ceremony with the big scissors.

Job Descriptions – Union Negotiations: Scott - Union negotiations should be starting up soon, we have been told we will have a seat at the table. We are in touch with the Town Administrator's Office regarding this.

Budget/Revenue Review: current water sewer budget presented for review.

Old Business:

B. Indirects: Surveys from Abrahams Group have gone out to all departments and been returned to consultant. The consultant is sitting down with the Treasurer/Collector next week. This should be done by the end of April. The FAA and Town Administrator have been asking.

C. Commodity Negotiations: Justing can talk to an independent broker and will need 3-4 months of Electric bills. A discussion occurred. The consensus of the board is to have Justin reach out for an upcoming meeting.

Superintendent Report: Superintendent report was presented to the board for review. George asked how do respond to an incident if it occurs on Eisenhower Drive? The Town Planner is looking at a betterment package to the Planning Board and Selectman. What do you want us to do if anything is needed? Scott had a conversation with Town Counsel, legally we are not bound to do anything, it is

private property, however there is the public relations side of it as well. Tom stated that I would suggest that we respond to an emergency and send a bill to the town to use the money left in the escrow account. George- so can I respond and take care of an emergency and use the money from the escrow account? A discussion occurred. Tom asked if we needed an easement to cover us from doing work on private property.

Tom made a motion to grant permission to respond to an emergency on Eisenhower Drive and fix the problem, bill for time and materials and send bill to town to use money from escrow account, Jay seconded the motion, no further discussion, a vote was taken, passed unanimously.

It was asked that the Administrative Assistant check on the property and any easements.

Public/Board Comments:

John Cunningham – 62 West Main Street – First want to say thank you for all you do on the rate increases study and it looks like it comes out to only about a \$20 increase per year. The Eagle Drive issue, if we added them to the water system would it help even the budget out? Brian stated that we only get money for the rates and fees for which we pay and provide services. Mr. Cunningham then asked regarding the Lead Service Lines, whether the state is going to give \$100,000? Scott – the survey was paid for through a grant. Mr. Cunningham then asked how the town could grab the money, I thought you were an enterprise. Scott stated yes, we are enterprise, and it could be done at town meeting, and I am not sure if it would ever be done.

Tom made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Justin seconded, no further discussion a vote was taken, all in favor passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45pm.

****Documents physically identified, discussed, considered, or voted on by the Board: ****

Posted agenda April 3, 2024 meeting at 6:30pm Room 321

Minutes from March 6, 2023

Rate Increase Information

Budget and Revenues

Superintendent Report

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer Cournoyer, Administrative Assistant