

Board of Water and Sewer Commissioner's Meeting March 1, 2023.

Agenda items may be taken out of order.

Present: Scott Zajkowski, Thomas Fournier, Jay Spahl, Robert Sullivan, Brian Dorval and George Patrinos

Absent: Bill Conley

In attendance: Mary Palazzo, Joe Nierodzinski, Ora Finn, Dean Gajewski and Steve Watroba

Scott opened the meeting at 6:3 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance

Accept the Minutes from February 1, 2023, Public Meeting: *Tom made a motion to accept the minutes for the February 1, 2023, meeting, Jay seconded the motion, no further discussion, a vote was taken, all in favor, passed unanimously.*

Accept the Minutes from the February 1, 2023, Executive Session, vote to approve but not release: *Tom made a motion to approve, but not release the minutes of the February 1, 2023, Executive Session meeting, Jay seconded the motion, no further discussion, a vote was taken, all in favor, passed unanimously.*

Accept the Minutes from the February 8, 2023, Executive Session, vote to approve but not release: *Tom made a motion to approve, but not release the minutes of the February 8, 2023, Executive Session meeting, Jay seconded the motion, no further discussion, a vote was taken, all in favor, passed unanimously.*

Accept the minutes from the joint meeting of the Dudley and Webster Sewer Commissioners on January 26, 2023: There were only two members at the meeting with Webster so these will be entered in as notes from the meeting.

Superintendent Report: The Superintendent Report was taken out of order, in case the Superintendent had to leave for a personal matter. George updated the board with the issue at the GAC Vessel that has been ongoing. Jay inspected the Ball Valve once it was removed and replaced with a new one, the ball valve appeared to be frozen at threaded area which pushed out the seam, causing the leak. A couple days later another leak was found under the GAC Vessel which was allowing water and media to run out. Repairs were made by Barbato and Fall River Electric. DEP was made aware of all and required additional testing. GAC Vessel back online and Barbato should be covering costs. The zero-turn lawnmower came in over price by \$2700.00 due to construction costs and demands. There will be a meeting this Friday with Tighe and Bond, Louis Grzyb the former Sewer Superintendent, the current Superintendent, and the Sewer Department. The purpose of this meeting is to try to find a remedy for the SSO situations that keep occurring on West Main St.

5 Perry Lane – Dean Gajewski – dispute bill: Dean Gajewski came to the meeting to dispute his latest bill. He owns the duplex and the tenants had been complaining about brown water. George stated that this has been an ongoing problem in that area of town especially since the projects that have been occurring. Finally able to flush. Dean stated that this quarter, his bill doubled in price. Brian then explained that we had them flush the house with a garden hose for just under 48 hours to clear the discoloration. A discussion occurred.

Bob made a motion to adjust this quarter's bill to the average normal past usage of 1700 cubic feet, Tom seconded the motion, no further discussion, a vote was taken, all in favor, passed unanimously.

Sawmill Rd Subdivision – Steve Watroba permission to tie into sewer: Steve Watroba stated that the Subdivision Plan for Sawmill Rd LLC has been approved and that he has spoken with the Sewer Technician – Mike – and has a letter from him that was sent to the Planning Board explaining what needs to be done. Steve presented the plan to the board. A discussion occurred regarding the plan. Jay asked is everything gravity fed. Steve stated that yes it was.

Jay made a motion to give approval to allow Sawmill Rd LLC to connect to Sewer for 5 houses and will be responsible for all fees and follow the regulations. Bob seconded the motion, no further discussion, all in favor, passed unanimously.

Public Hearing – Rate Increases: Scott opened the Public Hearing at 6:57pm. Scott then explained the information that will be reviewed.

Brian stated that there will be an increase in the debt from FY2023 to FY2024, \$436,000.00 to \$1.3 million. A discussion occurred about the budget and going over the information Brian provided. Tom questioned about why there was an increase in the overtime line? Brian explained with all the ongoing projects there are constant alarms going off and possibility of increased main breaks again. Bob reiterated due to construction there will have more alarms and new water main construction will most likely have main breaks. The current recommendation is a 20% increase on the Water Rates. Our budget is at \$2.5 million for FY2024, the 20% increase would still not make it to the \$2.5 million and we would have to make some cuts. Bob asked has the revenue increased with the new meters? Brian stated yes FY2022 CYC 1 was \$454,000 and FY2023 CYC 1 was \$492,000, Bob said that is about a 10% increase. A discussion occurred about planning and possibilities.

Scott then opened the Public Hearing to the Public.

Mary Palazzo came forward and has a few questions: What are the purpose of the new meters? Scott responded the new meters are tamperproof. Bob stated that through DEP policy and guidelines meters need to be replaced every 10 years. Jay stated meters are a very small piece of the pie. There are many pieces, and some are much larger. Mary asked how many projects that are being done are needed or are they just wanted. Jay stated most of the projects are being mandated by DEP. Scott explained how PFAS was found, and steps needed to be taken. May then asked if that was already paid for. Jay stated no, it is paid over the course of 20 years. Brian then stated that \$1.3 Million that is the costs of upgrades explained if we don't comply with the state we cannot sustain the needs of the town of water. Mary then asked if we could do things in stages. Brian explained that we are doing the projects in stages and explained the process for the treatment plant.

Ora Finn then came forward she stated that she agrees the Water System has been neglected in past. I understand the Water Department is an Enterprise Fund, but could the town share in the cost of the upgrades? Scott stated the Town Administrator set up an ad hoc committee with one member of the Board of Water Sewer Commissioners who was Bob Sullivan. Bob then stated that the committee met for about 6 months and talked about the rate study and the 3 possibilities for funding. First all on the water users, second was mixed half on water users and half on the town and lastly a debt exclusion for the entire amount. The result of the committee was that the cost of projects should be on the

Enterprise. Ora then asked when you vote will we get a breakdown? Brian stated yes. Ora then stated that she just wanted to say that George and Brian are doing an outstanding job.

Joe Nierodzinski had a question, looking forward to next year do you think it will be another large increase? Brian stated that they are looking forward to a 10% increase next year, assuming there are no problems. Scott states we review the rates every year.

Additional discussion occurred about the rates.
Scott closed the public hearing at 7:58pm

A discussion occurred about the possibility of offsetting the lower tiers with impact on higher tiers. Which then lead into a discussion about the budget and how we are missing information and how can we properly raise rates without all budget information. Consensus of the board is to set another meeting for Wednesday March 15th @ 6:30pm.

Contract with Worcester Community Action Council: The Administrative Assistant attending on training where the WCAC has money from the State to pay towards Water Sewer Bills. This is very similar to the Home Heating Help that is out there. We sign a contract with them, and they send us the names of all who have signed up with them and then the admin would research what monies are owed or due and they will reimburse within the limits. The board though it was a good idea and consensus was to move forward with this.

Warrant Articles for Town Meeting: George stated that at this time we have two warrant articles for Town Meeting, the first being the Lead and Copper Service Line Inventory, again, the second being Sewer Asset Management with Tighe and Bond. There may be a possibility of a couple more articles, as we get closer will have more information.

Sanitary Sewer Overflow discussion: Mentioned in Superintendent Report, will table to next meeting for more information after the meeting with Tighe and Bond.

FY2024 Budget and Budget/Revenue Review: At this time the board feels they are still missing information and cannot complete the Budget. Will table till next meeting and hopefully have information by then.

Vote for Sewer Position and permission to post:

Jay made a motion to allow Superintendent to post the position for the Sewer Department, Jay seconded the motion, no further discussion, a vote was taken, all in favor, passed unanimously.

Credit Card: It is still being worked on.

Webster True Up: Received email from Webster requesting to set up a meeting where at least three members of the Dudley Board can be there and Paul Brinkman. This item was continued to the 3/15/2023 meeting.

Indirect Costs, Bills and Town Treasurer/Collector: A discussion occurred about still not having any information on indirect costs. The consensus of the board was to officially do a Records Request through the Town Clerk for the FY2024 spreadsheet and all calculations and formulas and how arrived at

the values. Scott will also follow up to the email sent by Treasurer Collector, he will respond back to him in the form of an email copying the Superintendent and Water Sewer Office.

Public/Board Comments: No public comments.

George the Superintendent spoke with the Town Planner regarding a proposed industrial park behind the Dudley Courthouse. There will be meeting that George will be attending with the Town Planner, Town Administrator, Highway Superintendent, and an Engineering firm.

Scott stated that he wanted to acknowledge the absences of Bill Conley and let him know we are thinking of him.

Tom made a motion to adjourn, Bob seconded the motion, no discussion, a vote was taken, all in favor, passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:50pm.

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

Posted agenda for March 1, 2023, meeting at 6:30pm Room 315

Minutes from 2/1/2023, 2/1/2023 Executive Session, 2/8/223 Executive Session

Notes from Webster joint meeting

5 Perry Lane Billing history

Sawmill Rd Subdivision Plan

Rate Increases Documents

Worcester Community Action Council Information

Warrant Articles for Town Meeting

FY 2024 Draft Budget

Sewer Laborer Job Description

Budget and Revenue information

Webster True-up documents

Superintendent Report

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer Cournoyer, Administrative Assistant