

Board of Water and Sewer Commissioner's Meeting April 6, 2022

Present: Scott Zajkowski, Jay Spahl, William Conley, Robert Sullivan, Tom Fournier, George Patrinos, and Jennifer Cournoyer.

In attendance: Jeff Faulkner, Tighe and Bond, Brian Bettencourt, Mark Sutor, Joe Nierodzinski, and Andy Helgersen. Via phone: Hank Naughton and Veronica Vasquez.

Scott opened the meeting at 6:30 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance

Accept the minutes of the March 16, 2022, public meeting: *Bill made a motion to accept the minutes as written, Jay seconded the motion, no further discussion, a vote was taken, all in favor, passed unanimously.*

Public Hearing – Water Sewer Rates: Scott opened the Public Hearing at 6:37pm.

Bill: At this time, we must look at the rate increase as there is no proposed debt exclusion, so we have to start at the proposed 12% rate increase for water. Saying that, I just can't see how we can keep passing this on to the rate payers.

George: Bill is correct and lets just also keep in mind that there may be more grants and hoping there is help from the state, but at this time we must be proactive.

Scott: We have to act on what we know.

Jay: I think that's a good breakdown by Bill and the 12% for FY 2023 is necessary.

At this time Scott opened the hearing to public comments.

Mark Sutor, owner of Twin City Cleaners: Is the 12% increase for each tier or is there different increases for each tier?

Scott: No, it will be 12% increase across the board for all tiers.

Mark Sutor: this affects my business as well so I may now need to consider raising my rates and that will affect the business and customers. This really hits the businesses that use a lot of water, and it is a lot to add to them right now. What is the reason for raising the rates again so soon? It wasn't that long ago that they were raised.

Scott: We are dealing with PFAS problems and infrastructure upgrades.

Bill: There are a number of factors to consider regarding PFAS. We are looking at every possible way but, in the meantime, we need to maintain the system.

Mark Sutor: When will the rates take effect?

Scott: July 1st, 2022.

Jay: A lot of these items are mandated by DEP. Could Jeff come up and explain a little please?

Jeff Faulkner, Tighe and Bond: The rate increases were originally looked at in 2020, we were then asked to do a minor review of the rate study recently. The new recommended rate increase for FY2023 is now less than was originally recommended in 2020. In 2020 the recommend increase for FY2023 was 18%, we are now recommending 12%.

Scott: At the last meeting there was discussion about new connection and change of use fees to help offset the rate increases. Current fees are a flat rate, we are now proposing the fee by 4% of the total cost of the Building Permit costs and this money will be earmarked and dedicated to infrastructure upgrade and future development.

Bob: This is an attempt to relieve burden put on the rate payers.

No further discussion, Scott closed the Public Hearing at 6:49pm.

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Bob made a motion to accept the 12% rate increase per the rate study for water fees for all tiers to take effect on 7/1/22, Bill seconded the motion, no further discussion, a vote was taken, all in favor, passed unanimously.

Bob made a motion to implement a fee for infrastructure upgrades, 4% of the cost based on the total cost of the project based on the Building Permit, the money earmarked for infrastructure upgrades and future development, and this is for any new connection or change of use connection, Bill seconded the motion, no further discussion, a vote was taken, all in favor, passed unanimously.

Bob made a motion to implement the 15% increase for sewer fees as per the rate study, effective 7/1/22, Bill seconded the motion, no further discussion, a vote was taken, all in favor, passed unanimously.

18 Farley Rd-permission to tie into water (separating from 11 Farley Rd): Brian Bettencourt came forward and explained he bought this house a couple years ago and he now trying to separate the water from 11 Farley Rd and have his own meter.

George: The lines run from Dresser Hill from way back in the day. In order to separate properly, need a separate line with 1 meter for 11 Farley Rd and 1 meter for 18 Farley Rd, 2 separate meters with 2 separate shut offs.

Andy Helgersen from Helgersons: When the service was leaking years ago, I replaced, by direction of the Water Department and placed a new curb stop so now 11 Farley has its own shut and 18 Farley has its own shut off. A discussion occurred about how the lines were run years ago and how this is the best way to correct.

Bob made a motion to approve separation and installation of 2 meters, Bill seconded the motion, no further discussion, a vote was taken, all in favor, passed unanimously.

Laws & Nierodzinski Easements and Abatements: (this item was taken out of order) Joe Nierodzinski stated he had received the agreement for the abatement of Water and had a few questions on the paperwork. He is concerned that what if he has life tenancy on the property, but his name is not on the

property or deed? The other concern is the cap on the usage, I have lived alone for the past several years and that is what the usage is based on, what if I have someone move in with me or adopt or have to have a live in caretaker? Bob stated he hadn't given life tenancy a thought but that was a good idea and how much usage did he think was reasonable? A discussion occurred as to how soon this needed to be done and why. Jeff Faulkner stated that it is out to bid on the Treatment Plant and Water Main Projects, and they close on 4/28/2022, DEP will not allow a project to be awarded unless Town Counsel has signed off that all property is free and clear, so the sooner this is done the better. It was decided to add the term on life tenancy on the agreement and to raise the usage to 2200 cu ft per quarter.

Tighe and Bond SSO – new requirements with Mass DEP: Jeff Faulkner from Tighe and Bond, George asked me to come here tonight regarding a couple Sewer topics. First you are a co-permitter with Webster which one requirement for that is for each community to do an Operation and Management Plan for the system. The first part of the plan is due 6/1/22 and the second part is due in two (2) years.

Bob: I am aware of this information and recommend we get assistance from Tighe and Bond to George on this because of so many other projects that are going on. The reason behind this is that they are looking to prevent Sewer overflows and backups.

Jeff Faulkner: The second item is the SSO Public Notification Plan which is a new DEP requirement. Each system needs to be ready to enact in the event of an SSO. The plan is due on 7/6/22.

George: We have a lot of information, but these are all new requirements.

Jeff Faulker: George also has stated that he would like our assistance with the private inflow work with Nichols College. The I & I construction work is essentially done and currently working on the punch list.

George: I am asking for a waiver from DEP to see how we fair now with a good storm after all the I & I repairs. This is for the area on West Main Street near Marty's. I would like to see if it works before starting to go further with more investigation and replacement of pipes.

Bob: Are you aware of any manhole monitoring devices?

Jeff Faulkner: I am aware, are you interested in them?

Bob: I think it would be a good idea, this would be continuous monitoring and could check at any time. It is a good tool to gather data. If we can catch an event prior to happening and prevent an overflow. A discussion occurred as to where would be a good placement for a monitoring device.

Scott: Sounds like a good idea.

Jeff Faulkner: Overall we are talking about general help with I & I items.

Bob: A question, at Nichols are we doing this, or are they?

George: Nichols is doing it.

Bob: Is Nichols paying for it?

Jeff Faulker: We are meeting with Nichols and directing Nichols on behalf of the Town for what Nichols needs to do. Lastly, just a heads up that the last round of the SRF Asset Management grants is coming out in July and due in August. We would recommend having Sewer Pump Station plans.

Bob: I would recommend pursuing SRF on Wastewater side.

Scott: Yes, I think it is a good idea.

Jeff Faulkner: Lastly on the water side, \$150,000 grant on Blending Water Main Project. A discussion occurred about that grant.

Hank Naughton PFAS Litigation: Hank Naughton and Veronica Vasquez were called in via conference call to discuss the complaint filed on behalf of the Town of Dudley Water Department. Scott stated that the complaint filed was for the AFFF foam, is there more to come? Hank explained that if you were good with the complaint then we would go to litigation. Scott stated your target on this was the foam are you targeting other possibilities? Hank stated that they are targeting the 6 PFAS. Bob then asked you targeted the AFFF foam manufacturers, we have textile companies are you targeting them and are there other defendants? Hank stated yes if the textile manufacturer were using this substance, then it came from one of them. Scott stated that this then answered our questions. Bob then stated we just wanted to make sure it was covering all the manufacturers. Hank, confirmed. Bob then asked do you know how many plaintiffs? Hank stated 620 nationally and 20 plus from Massachusetts. Scott then thanked them for their time.

Webster True-up: Scott received an email from the Webster Sewer Commission Chairman Earl Gabor regarding the true-up and process and would like to set up a meeting with both boards of Commissioners. Bob asked if we could get a copy of the IMA to review and was there an expiration date on it? No one sure if there was an expiration date and they thought a copy should be in the office. Tom suggested that if we have a joint meeting, we should invite Paul Brinkman to it. Then consensus was to send the email received to Paul Brinkman and ask what his thoughts are on it.

Seasonal Employee: George stated that he thought a seasonal part-time employee might be a good idea to do general maintenance, such as, mowing lawns, painting, and cleaning, so the full-time employees can concentrate on the big items. Bob stated that his concern with hiring a younger person is that they may not be able to work the hours year-round if you needed. Bob recommends a 19 hour a week position. George stated he was looking for a consensus on pay and starting date. Bob stated the pay would be dictated by the budget, you should meet with the Town Administrator on the position and hours and at next meeting discuss further and budgeting of the position.

Indirect Costs: Indirect Cost breakdown was received tonight from Treasurer/Collector, board will review, and item is tabled until next meeting.

Cortis Rd and PFAS Well testing: George stated he is looking at pursuing Cortis Rd for test wells for additional water source and additional PFAS Well testing.

Superintendent's Report: George presented his report for the Board to review. A few discussions occurred. One was the delay of a project as the result of miscommunication between the contractor and vendor and now having to wait for parts. The second was the discussion of the paving of Mason Rd and that being delayed now due to the project of putting sidewalks on Mason Rd. Haluch was scheduled

to start paving in May and concerns that paving won't be done until next year and who picks up that extra cost? Bob stated that I would speak with Haluch get the cost from him and go to the Highway Superintendent and state here is the cost to pave it now, you take this over and all the liability or we are paving now. George to speak to Haluch and then pursue.

Public/Board Comments: Scott stated that the next meeting for Policies and Procedures and any selective time sensitive must haves will be on 4/20/22 @ 6:30pm. He also stated that the water main break on Oxford Ave was a 9-hour break, and he is pleased to see that the Gas cards have a very detailed breakdown on them. Bob then stated he would like to come up with a standardize booklet regarding supplies and we should have written specs. This should be added to our regulations.

Tom made a motion to adjourn, Bob seconded the motion, no further discussion, a vote was taken, passed unanimously, meeting adjourned at 8:26pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer Cournoyer, Administrative Assistant