

Board of Water and Sewer Commissioner's Meeting January 5, 2022

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

Also in Attendance: Derek Belanger from Tighe and Bond

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

Accept the minutes of the November 3, 2021, public meeting: *Tom Fournier made a motion to accept the minutes of December 1, 2021, Robert Sullivan seconded the motion, no further discussion, a vote was taken, all in favor, passed unanimously.*

WTP Sewer permission to connect to sewer- Derek Belanger – Tighe and Bond: Derek Belanger from Tighe and Bond stated that the Water Treatment Project is looking to get permission to connect to sewer. The WTP did receive a variance from the State Plumber's Board regarding the number of bathrooms, have been granted a variance to have one unisex bathroom. The connection for sewer would be through Fairview Ave and the easements that are currently pending. Jay Spahl asked if there would be an E1 pump? Derek from Tighe and Bond stated that yes 1 ¼ out to pump and then 2 to line. Bob Sullivan asked if they have checked if the E1 can handle this, Derek stated yes.

A discussion occurred about the GAC filter and discharge and where and if going into sewer system.

Tom Fournier made a motion to allow connection to sewer for the Water Treatment Plant, Bob seconded the motion, no further discussion, a vote was taken, all in favor, passed unanimously.

Update on Easements: Scott Zajkowski stated that emails have been exchanged between Tighe and Bond and the property owners and hoping to have them completed by end of January so that then they can be sent to Town Counsel for review.

Haluch release of final payment for Schofield Ave PFAS blending: Scott Zajkowski asked if the state has signed off yet on the approval of repair of the state road. No, not currently. Bob Sullivan is hesitant to sign off until we hear from Mass DOT that they have approved and signed off. He also stated that this is where if we had Engineering on site, they would have a punch list and catch things like this. This will be tabled until next month.

FY2023 Budget Discussion: Scott Zajkowski states that we have been presented with a rough copy of the budget and the draft copy is due to the Town Administrator by 1/24/2022. George Patrinos asked if the board could please review the budget and any questions about it to email them to Jen and can have the answers prepared for you. This is a complicated budget with a lot of moving parts. Tom Fournier asked about bringing back stipends for elected officials. Scott Zajkowski said let's take this home review and George can try to firm up the numbers from the Treasurer's office and let's have another meeting prior to the 24th of January. It was discussed and decided that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 1/19/2022 @ 6:30pm and concentrate for a short, small agenda. Derek Belanger from Tighe and Bond stated that Tighe and Bond recently found two (2) new grants for PFAS to investigate. A discussion occurred and it was asked for Tighe and Bond to pursue the grants for the Water Department. Bob Sullivan stated he would like to see the expenditures listed for each year on the budget as well. He also stated that meters, radios, pipes, and hydrants should all be in Capital to help

with justification of rate increases and insurance coverage. A discussion occurred as to how Water and Sewer have the largest amount of assets. Bob Sullivan asked stated that the grants were presented to the subcommittee regarding PFAS and we should check with the Town Administrator that they are not pursuing these grants.

Rate Increases: Scott Zajkowski stated that Jeff Faulkner from Tighe and Bond will be attending the 2/2/22 Water Sewer Commissioners meeting to present regarding upcoming rate increases. An invitation should be sent to the sub-committee inviting them to our meeting. Bob Sullivan stated that he would like the revenue for the past three (3) years between the rate increases to see if the increase is getting what was expected.

Accounts Payable response from Treasurer and Indirect Costs: They are still awaiting a finding from Town Counsel; a follow-up email will be sent to Town Counsel.

Policy – Bill in owner’s name or renter’s name: Bob Sullivan stated that standard practice is for the bill to be in the owner’s name because if there is non-payment, we can lien the property, if not owner nothing to place lien on. He stated that he will have a written policy for the 2/2/22 meeting for review.

Exception meters how to proceed with “grandfathered” ones: Bob Sullivan stated he would put something together for the 2/2/22 meeting. We will need to establish a cost for replacement of the meter if they need to purchase a new meter.

Policy & Procedure Reviews: A question was presented if we could put into the Backflow Policy that if there is a failure that an entire new survey needs to be completed at the expense of the owner. Bob Sullivan then explained what a failure can be and that with a failure they have 14 days to correct (repair or allow access) if not we are at risk if not completed. If they did not correct the water can then be shut off. A discussion then occurred what could happen if not inspected and how we become responsible after the 14-day violation. Bob Sullivan stated he would work on this for the next meeting.

Moratorium and Water Ban and By-Laws: Tabled until next meeting. Jay Spahl asked George how the pumpage has been going. George stated that both the PFAS and pumpage has been good and we have been very lucky.

Review of Thursday Night Office hours: Scott Zajkowski stated that since the Selectman restarted the Thursday night office hours prior to Thanksgiving, he has been there on those nights, and he has seen two (2) other people during that time. One was Nelson Burlingame the Building Official, and one was the Town Planner. All other offices on the third floor have been closed. The Selectmen’s Office door has been open, but the gate was down, and the Selectman was in other meetings. Scott Zajkowski states in his opinion it is not necessary to be open, if someone needs off hours it can be done by appointment. George Patrinos stated that he was told the purpose of being open is for one-stop shopping. Bob Sullivan asked if these were all questions that could be answered by phone or email, it was stated as yes it could be. Tom Fournier asked to clarify have there been any customers on Thursday nights, Scott Zajkowski stated none. The consensus was to write up a letter to the Board of Selectmen that there have been no visitors on Thursday nights, and it is a waste of resources to the office.

Administrative Assistant’s Performance Review: Scott Zajkowski stated that he was in the office one day and asked the admin for the status of her review with George and if he could have a copy of it. He also asked for a copy of the job description and asked for both to be send to all commissioners. Scott

Zajkowski feels that the job description is very general, this was created by the consultant that the Town had hired, and the Board of Selectmen voted to adopt this. Bill Conley stated there is not a section that talks about independent judgement, a person who had to interpret and make independent decisions. George Patrinos feels that the job description doesn't fit the department. Bill Conley stated with the work environment at no time does it mention that fact of dealing with angry customers, which is part of the job and there is a risk involved. Scott Zajkowski states that 90% of the admin's job is taking care of day-to-day operations of the department, the only mention of the commissioners is for her to attend monthly meetings. There is no mention of support to the commissioners. Tom Fournier asked how can we change it? George Patrinos stated it's a template that was approved by the town. Scott Zajkowski said I think it needs to be more tailored. Bob Sullivan agreed and said contents should be derived from the department. Scott Zajkowski stated that I believe the opinion that we received from Town Counsel backs up what we are looking to do. Please inquire to the Town Administrator as to what format they would like us to use, but we can make it for the needs of the department. Bob Sullivan then asked if we ever set a rate for George's pay, it was discussed, and a new rate was never set. This should be added to the 1/19/22 meeting along with more information regarding the Administrative Assistant's review.

Superintendent Report: George Patrinos presented his Superintendent's Report stating that one of the main concerns is the problems that have arisen with one of the projects and the projected change orders that will be needed to correct the problems and who is going to be responsible to pay for them. George feels that this is because the architectural plans were not done correctly. Jay Spahl stated in his opinion that Tighe and Bond are big on infrastructure but not on the building code. Bob Sullivan asked did the plans get approved through the Building Department, which no one knew for sure. A further discussion occurred regarding Building Code and Plumbing Code. Scott Zajkowski then stated that any change order would have to come before the board, and we would then approve or deny it. Scott also stated that he had one question on the report regarding Susan Drive and if the issue was repaired and where was the infiltration into the sewer system coming from. George stated the source was ground water which was infiltrating into a through a broken sewer pipe. A camera was used on the pipe and Slims has been called by the homeowner and will get out to repair as soon as they can.

George Patrinos then asked the board to vote regarding the three (3) bids he received for a Kubota zero turn diesel tracker and if you could take the lowest bid and the money would be coming out of Capital.

Bob Sullivan made a motion to purchase a Kubota zero turn diesel tractor not to exceed \$15,000.00 and to go with the lowest bidder, Tom Fournier seconded the motion, no further discussion, a vote was taken, all in favor, passed unanimously.

Bob Sullivan then asked if the issues that were occurring with Barbota Construction had been taken care of? Scott Zajkowski stated that he stopped by the site today and walked around the building. The items of concern are the pipe is just wrapped with a tarp and there is a trench with a trench box sitting in the trench and then trench is then covered with pieces of fence laid on top of. Jay Spahl then stated that we are responsible because we are the owners of the property. Bob Sullivan stated that they are not meeting Jackie's Law and that the Engineers should be notified. George Patrinos stated that he will talk to Bill (the engineer) on site tomorrow and this needs to be corrected immediately. Bob Sullivan stated if trench is left open and it's a safety issue it needs to be taken care of. Fact is they can't leave an open trench. There are temporary fences to secure around it. It needs to be secured. It's on our property but it's not our job to secure the trench, simple we can call OSHA if it needs to be. This is an OSHA violation; we don't want to be on the hood for an injury to someone. Scott Zajkowski stated to George Patrinos that when you talk to Bill (the engineer) let him know I was there, and this is not acceptable.

Public Comments: None

Board Comments: None

Tom Fournier made a motion to adjourn, Jay Spahl seconded the motion, no further discussion, a vote was taken, passed unanimously, meeting adjourned at 8:04pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer Cournoyer, Administrative Assistant