



BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES

Date: February 16, 2023

Time: 4:30 PM

Location: Norwell Water Dept.
345 Main Street, Norwell

Present: Fred St. Ours, Peter Dillon, Christine McCarthy, Howard Tufts & Water Superintendent
Jason Federico

Prepared by: Donna Snow

Meeting Minutes:

Fred St. Ours motioned to the approve the meeting minutes from 2/2/23; Peter Dillon seconded and all in favor at 4:37pm

Accounting Indirect Expense

The Board discussed indirect expenses with the Town Accountant, Christine McCarthy. The expenses include some estimates, and it was noted that the health insurance cost is much higher than it was last year. Jason Federico explained next year the estimate should be closer to actuals. The addition of an employee in the Town Administrators office also created an increase. Fred St. Ours asked how we got to the 4.6%, Peter Dillon asked about the percentage that the previous Town Accountant came up with; Christine McCarthy agreed that it may be a little high. Jason Federico suggested Christine McCarthy come back at another time when she is not busy to review the indirect expense in more detail. Christine McCarthy suggested coming back in April. Jason Federico expressed interest in having the water abatements considered since the water department abated 28k in the last four quarters alone. Christine McCarthy suggested an allowance for each department and if that is exceeded, they can be charged. Peter Dillon made a motion to approve the indirect expense \$457,150.00; Fred St. Ours seconded; all in favor at 4:50pm. Lastly, Christine McCarthy noted water is not on target for the year however Fred St. Ours explained rates were increased and chemical expenses went up; but the Board feels that the department will be fine for the year.

Annual Town Report

Jason Federico shared the draft of the Annual Town report, 19 new services were installed, and 9 new accounts were added. Jason Federico will verify those numbers before submitting. Sometimes an account will become inactive therefore offsetting the total number of accounts.

Upcoming Meetings:

The advisory Board Meeting is 2/28/23 and Fred St. Ours is unavailable for that date and Steve Ivas is away until 3/6/23.

Update on Jack McInnis Memorial

Fred St. Ours did hear back from Jill McInnis regarding the memorial. Jill McInnis loved the suggestion the Board had for Washington Street. Fred St. Ours noted he always wanted this site cleaned up and this would be a perfect time to have it done. The Board discussed some low water grass options for the site, Steve Ivas would be helpful with other suggestions.

MWRA Connection

Jason Federico explained the connection fee is waived for next five years for the first 20 mgd (million gallons a day). Jason Federico believes the Town must demonstrate acceptance by vote at Town Meeting. Jason Federico will see if we can add an article to the upcoming warrant. Jason Federico noted communities that are interested include: Hingham, Weymouth, union point, Abington/Rockland, and some north shore communities. Peter Dillon noted we need to act quickly. Jason Federico will clarify if it must go to Town Meeting or not. Peter Dillon was in favor since it gives the Town an additional source of water which is excellent.

Well Discussion

Jason Federico discussed fracking plans, pricing and which fracking methods to use. The plan is for two sites on Bowker Street and one at Grove Street. Fred St. Ours reminded everyone to include the land behind Town Hall. The plan will include fracking all sites and Peter Dillon knows exactly where to go at both Bowker and Grove. Jason Federico has prices from Ryder and Peter Dillon suggested to try American Well also.

Discuss 40B Plans

Jason Federico discussed the comments required for the Towns 40b projects. All agreed we have enough water; the main challenge is during the summer due to lawn irrigation. There is no moratorium in Norwell so the Board cannot currently prohibit further development due to water constraints.

Staffing Update

Jason Federico explained Barbara Childs will be advertising for a mechanic/mechanic trainee position. Additionally, the meter reader position was posted internally, however Jason Federico has asked for a new job description to be approved which will reduce hours and remove the installation portion. Jason Federico met again with the Planning Board this week, but Barbara Childs had to leave due to illness, therefore they plan to meet the following week. The clerical union representative did reach out to Jason Federico today and he shared the job description changes and his request for an upgrade to this position. If approved the office would be reduced from two full-time employees to one full-time Executive Assistant and one part-time meter reader/clerk.

Conservation Trails

Peter Dillon looked at the trail map, he noted an area on the map listed as conservation that he believes the water department owns. Peter Dillon would like to connect the trail on water department land with Wampatuck. Peter Dillon would also like to see another trail cut from Bay Path Lane to Wampatuck.

Water Service Lines

Jason Federico discussed new service installations and past practices. Jason Federico wants to amend the policy for new service installations to only include the water meter in residents' homes. In the past the Town had installed both the meter and the plumbing before the meter (street side). Jason Federico would like to make a change for the property owner to be responsible from the curb stop forward. The Board reached a unanimous decision agreeing that the Town is responsible for the meter inside the home only.

Abatement for 10 Fords Crossing

The resident had an irrigation leak with 143,000 gallons of water passing through the meter. A valve popped off while resident was away when the situation occurred. The Board reviewed the typical usage from the billing history report. Fred St. Ours suggested, billing all the usage at the lowest tier, Peter Dillon seconded. The new charges will be recalculated by Donna Snow, and she will reach out to the resident with the amended bill amount.

Items Not Anticipated:

The water main on Laurelwood Drive is being tied in tonight; residents were put on notice yesterday.

Fred St. Ours made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:05 PM, seconded by Peter Dillon.

Accepted: F. H. St. Ours Date: 3/9/23

