



TOWN OF WINCHESTER – CITY OF WINSTED

Town Hall – 338 Main Street

WINSTED, CONNECTICUT 06098

Minutes of Regular Meeting

Water & Sewer Commission

Lee Anne LaClaire Room, Town Hall, 338 Main Street, Winsted

November 10, 2020

Chairman John Massicotte called the meeting to order at 6:00p.m. The following members were present: George Closson, Bill Hester, Joe Lemelin, John Massicotte and. Also present was Director of Public Works Jim Rollins, Superintendent of Water Works Marty Cormier, Selectman Candace Bouchard, Consultant/Project Manager Steve Vaill and Barkhamsted First Selectman Don Stein. This meeting respected all social distancing rules; attendees were well-situated throughout the meeting in the meeting room. Tim Moran and Finance Director Bruce Stratford arrived after the Call to Order was made.

Public Input - none

Approval of Meeting Minutes from October 13, 2020: Motion by G. Closson **to approve the minutes of October 13, 2020.** Second by B. Hester. **Vote:** All in favor - *motion carried unanimous.*

Tim Moran arrived at 6:01pm.

Barkhamsted Sewer Update: Mr. Stein distributed a letter dated November 10, 2020; explained he is asking the Commission to approve the pipe laying only. Chairman Massicotte said he is against laying the pipe in Winsted until our people inspect it; a cease and desist was issued. G. Closson verified an amount of money was supposed to be put on deposit. Mr. Rollins said it arrived today; explained the current activity, communications and progress; we should at least have an idea of what's installed; the quality of work looks good but that's no indication of what's been buried. G. Closson verified it's just the single line. Mr. Rollins said it's 2 side-by-side mains. Mr. Stein noted there is 500' of pipe with no connections at all. Mr. Rollins said need to look at certain things; the inspector did familiarize himself with what's in; the cease and desist was issued and the guy kept going; have to be certain what went in matches the plans but have no plans. G. Closson noted the flexible line but the big thing is coverage – has to be opened up to verify. Discussion followed regarding there are still no plans, haven't inspected what's in Barkhamsted, etc. B. Hester noted he is upset and insulted by this work; felt they should not be allowed to come into Winsted until it's inspected; the Commission has to inspect the map, etc. Mr. Stein reminded attendees Barkhamsted owns the line. Mr. Rollins said he sent a cease and desist and list of issues to Mr. Stein, but work continued. G. Closson asked why we should consider the request if they did not abide by the cease and desist. Mr. Rollins said he's hoping to get what was requested tomorrow; in the past have only gotten partial information; if we don't get what we want when we have leverage, we won't get it later; agree with Chairman Massicotte. Chairman Massicotte stated the Commission is not going to approve the request. Mr. Stein asked when they would. Mr. Rollins stated his own extra effort hasn't gotten him anywhere; as soon as he can get to it and get Dave Battista to also; also need more information. Chairman Massicotte said get the plans approved by Jim Rollins and Dave Battista then

will sign the open road agreement. Discussion followed regarding the number and size of the holes to be opened for inspection/manholes, details in drawing is a definite, inspect random spots to ensure compliance, etc. Mr. Stein verified as soon as plans are to their satisfaction and get the inspector, then will allow opening of the road; verified if satisfy the seventeen points, can go forward. Mr. Rollins said he's concerned with the driveway paving depth (admittedly a minor concern) and flexible line out of the pumps (this was a new discovery) but they do the work before getting the plans approved; just more detail is needed for what is lacking; generally getting half of what is requested; have not been adding things; was okay with the 6' square manholes but they changed it to 5' round; we're trying to accommodate their changes.

Mr. Stratford arrived at 6:15pm.

Brief discussion followed regarding the need for a motion. **Motion by B. Hester to hold off the approval for opening the road into Winchester until plans are approved and the designated inspection points are approved.** Second by G. Closson. **Vote:** All in favor - *motion carried unanimous.*

Update on Sewer Plant Furnace Delivery and Install: Mr. Rollins said waiting on some of the parts.

Brookside Project Complete: Mr. Rollins said all set.

Step Screen Update: Mr. Rollins said nothing new to report.

Report from Finance Director: Mr. Stratford made available copies of budget reports, bank statements and a water and sewer capital improvements worksheet; proceeded to review information.

Water: We are 33% through the fiscal year as of 10/31; Revenues: Rents are at \$444,000 - 26% compared to 24% last year; past due is a little behind due to COVID; total collected is \$514,000 compared to \$507,000 last year. Expenditures: Water Works is at 33% of its budget – meter expenses should be in 317-859; that line is slightly over; noted Jim Rollins authorized the purchase of more meters. Discussion followed regarding moving money from Contingency, types of meters, didn't budget enough knowing the Commission is committed to the project, etc. Mr. Stratford said Crystal Lake Plant is at 25% of its budget, Administration is at 32% of its budget and the Water Commission is at 10% (Brookside has purchase orders and purchases which need to be re-classified – same with the Overlook line); total year-to-date is \$502,000 compared to last year which was \$494,000; asked if more meters should be purchased and how much. Brief discussion followed regarding the number of meters in stock. Mr. Cormier noted stock of ultrasonic is okay and rebuilding the 5/8th's; MIUs are a concern but don't need to buy them right away; would rather buy 20 at a time as needed; the battery life is clicking; will piecemeal it as needed. Brief discussion followed regarding the cost of MIUs. Mr. Stratford noted he's comfortable waiting until the end of the year to see how the year plays out and then make a determination. G. Closson concurred.

Sewer: Revenues: Russ' Septic made their final payment – owes nothing; credited Colleen Garrity for collecting the \$35,000 over the last 2 years; suggested requiring a security deposit, pay in advance or don't allow a second dump until the first is paid for. Mr. Rollins said would like their business; suggested COD or a 90-day billing cycle. Brief discussion followed regarding

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setting a maximum amount, have to pay that off before allowed to dump again, requiring COD, etc. **Motion** by J. Lemelin **to not allow Russ' Septic to go over \$2,500 before it's paid.** Second by B. Hester. **Vote:** All in favor - *motion carried unanimous.* S. Vaill said he was reviewing the slips; they all read 1,250 gallons; suggested installing a meter; the guys are dumping a lot more than is being collected; maybe worth the Capital Expenditure. Mr. Rollins noted a card actuated flow meter was considered – cost approximately \$30,000 installed. B. Hester suggested using a scale. Discussion followed regarding checking with area towns for their methods. Mr. Stratford said Sewer Rents are at \$364,000 compared to \$333,000 last year, Past Due is \$21,000 compared to \$36,000 last year and Septic Dumping is at \$51,000 compared to \$53,000 last year; total revenue is at \$483,000 compared to \$479,000 last year. Expenditures: Sanitation Plant is at 29.6% through 33% of the fiscal year; noted the sludge disposal fee is in the negative – had an open purchase order charged to it and needs to be adjusted; Pump Station is at 28% of their budget through 33% of the fiscal year – have to re-classify a purchase order charged to 317-826-0003; WPCA Barkhamsted Interlocal Project had expenses – revenues show up in 878-0071 – at 26% of their budget; Debt Administration is at 17% - all payments have been made on time; total expenditures are at \$535,000 compared to \$527,000 last year. Chairman Massicotte questioned the Barkhamsted payment; asked about invoicing detail. Mr. Rollins explained \$10,000 was deposited; when it's down to \$5,000, will send Barkhamsted an invoice with details. Mr. Stratford verified the \$10,000 is for inspection and engineering costs. Discussion followed regarding verifying it also covers Jim Rollins' and Marty Cormier's time, their time might not be billable until the plans are approved, etc. Mr. Rollins noted Dave Battista of Lenard Engineering is over-budget due to changes also; his expenses should come out of that \$10,000 also.

Referencing the operating account bank statements, Mr. Stratford explained Sewer has \$560,000 (was at \$291,000 but moved \$250,000 from savings); briefly explained monies reallocated from Water; noted both accounts need healthy balances as writing a check for the vacuum truck (should be arriving this week). Mr. Cormier explained anticipated delivery and training procedures; was approached by an interested party to purchase the old truck. Discussion followed regarding possible sale, procedures, options, re-purposing the vehicle, etc.

Referencing the water and sewer capital improvements worksheet, Mr. Stratford said it includes appropriations from the last three years - \$1.4 million; page 2 shows the projects and status of the projects; noted Brookside needs money from another account; briefly reviewed other projects; both water tanks have purchase orders for the design; is part of the State Revolving Loan; running in a negative but don't have to appropriate the entire amount. Mr. Rollins stated we expect 50% to come back to us. Discussion followed regarding the timeline for applications, reimbursement percentages, how the Town is classified, etc. Mr. Cormier added nothing is in writing but expect 50% forgiveness; steps are very convoluted. Brief discussion followed regarding Bart Clark understands the process and will get answers.

Bill Adjustments:

Mr. Stratford noted he has one request to release a sewer assessment lien at 129 West Wakefield Boulevard – was paid in full. **Motion** by G. Closson **to issue the release for 129 West Wakefield Boulevard.** Second by J. Lemelin. **Vote:** All in favor - *motion carried unanimous.*

Sewer Rate Increase for Next 3 – 4 years: Mr. Stratford distributed information; noted he and Jim Rollins worked to refine the last proposal; detailed the proposed increases; will be phased in over a 4-

year period. Extensive discussion followed regarding doing a fixture audit by physical inspection or comparing field cards, usage fee increase, loan for the grinder pump project may have had contingencies but will be paid off in 2 years, research those terms further, substantial overtime calls for aging grinder pumps, depreciation, increase based on usage, increase is over 4 years, increase of 50% for the fixture fee, fixture accounts will want to change and will have an incentive to change to the meter account, etc. Mr. Stratford noted the last page compares area towns; willing to try different configurations but need direction from the Commission; increases won't go in before August. Chairman Massicotte suggested tabling the discussion. Mr. Rollins explained our starting point was to put the sewer base rates the same as water even though sewer infrastructure is much more expensive than water; looked at doubling the Capital Recovery but that was supposed to be temporary. G. Closson reminded attendees the base rate was discussed for increases. Brief discussion followed regarding providing a fact sheet for the public.

Discussion on Customers who are Unwilling to Update MIU Meters – Put Back on Fixture Account: Mr. Cormier said he doesn't see this happening; would like the fixture account to be a thing of the past; maybe have a penalty account. Mr. Stratford said if the customer refuses to let the utility system maintain the equipment in-house, have the right to increase the fee under the rules to charge the maximum amount in the regulations. Mr. Cormier suggested cutting off the water; Caitlyn is making progress. Brief discussion followed regarding the amount of man hours and attention given to the issue, maybe shut off service in the spring so the house doesn't freeze up over the winter, etc.

Minutes Secretary for the Commission: Discussion followed regarding replacing the current secretary.

Director's Report: Mr. Rollins said the Crystal Lake Emergency Action Plan was updated in 2017; an executive decision was made that if there was a break in the dam, Route 263 would act as a secondary dam; DEEP doesn't like that; they want an actual inundation map; in lieu, we agreed to evacuate 4 homes in that area; the previous map by Fuss & O'Neil was terrible; have a task order from account 3-322-851 to Lenard Engineering for \$1,500 to talk some sense into DEEP. **Motion by J. Lemelin to spend \$1,500 from 3-322-851 for Lenard Engineering.** Second by B. Hester. **Vote:** All in favor - *motion carried unanimous.*

Old Business:

- Sentinel Insurance Complaint Outcome: nothing new to report
- Sewer Plant Bridge Repair Estimate \$150,000 to be done with Smith Hill Bridge – 2022: nothing to add
- State Revolving Fund Update on Projects: discussed earlier
- Dam Repair through USDA Funding: discussed earlier
- Water Regulations to accept High Density Polyethylene: nothing new to report
- Tree Harvesting: nothing new to report
- MIUs Installed: Mr. Rollins explained there are 269 MIUs left; only 12 uninvestigated zero reads and 10 new occurrences (battery, wiring, etc.); 108 total (vacant and seasonal properties); updated 351 meters/MIUs and 220 were repaired; Caitlyn did an insane amount of organizing and the guys did a huge amount of work.

New Business:

- Sewer Plant Concerns: Mr. Vaill explained he checks on the progress of several items to help out Alex Combes and Jim Rollins; he has several concerns:

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- The first part of the Sewer Plant is not run by the generator; Alex is getting prices.
- Shared a picture of the clarifier – reinforced the need for the step screen; the second clarifier hasn't been done yet; if the generator keeps it running, should be better.
- Two of three blowers are working; will be approximately \$60,000. Discussion followed regarding VFD (Variable Frequency Drive) cost included in Capital Improvement, impact of changing the vanes in the blower, looking at the whole system, re-wiring the blowers, one blower is not variable speed, variable frequency, only one is variable speed, do them one at a time, have to run the fans one at a time so they wear at the same rate, etc.
- Vendors are not responding to issues with a frozen valve in the Potable Water Pump. Mr. Rollins said West State said it won't be a big deal.
- Have not had internet there in 3 months – have to go across the street.
- 15hp non-potable pumps run whether using water or not. Brief discussion followed.
- There is a broken PVC pipe – currently glued and taped together; in the deepest part of the Plant; getting a price from West State.

Mr. Vaill said he wants to get the little things done but one at a time.

- Sewer Service Area map: G. Closson said the Plan of Conservation and Development is reviewed every 10 years; indicating the Sewer Service Map provided prior to the meeting, he doesn't see any major change; would like the Commission to review the map for incorporation into the POCD. Discussion followed regarding if Barkhamsted and Colebrook are included, future connections, etc. G. Closson asked for a letter from the Commission if it feels this is consistent and compatible. Mr. Rollins noted any calls for possible development have always been in the areas proposed. G. Closson said this map is just guidance – always take variables into consideration. Discussion followed regarding the cost of running water along a State road. **Motion** by G. Closson **to send a letter supporting the Sanitary Service Area map.** Second by B. Hester. **Vote:** All in favor - *motion carried unanimous.*
- New Commissioner: Tim Moran is planning on leaving December 18th.
- Santoro's: Mr. Stratford said it's in litigation – have received no recent payments.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned 7:52 p.m.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted,

/s/

Laurie Bessette
Minutes Secretary

Next Regular Meeting:

Town Hall, 338 Main Street
Tuesday, December 8, 2020 @6:00 p.m.