



TOWN OF WINCHESTER – CITY OF WINSTED

Town Hall – 338 Main Street

WINSTED, CONNECTICUT 06098

Minutes of Regular Meeting Water & Sewer Commission

*P. Francis Hicks Room, Town Hall, 338 Main Street, Winsted
October 13, 2020*

Chairman John Massicotte called the meeting to order at 6:05p.m. The following members were present: George Closson, Bill Hester, Joe Lemelin and John Massicotte. Also present was Finance Director Bruce Stratford, Director of Public Works Jim Rollins and Superintendent of Water Works Marty Cormier. This meeting respected all social distancing rules; attendees were well-situated throughout the meeting in the meeting room. Tim Moran was absent excused.

Public Input - none

Approval of Meeting Minutes from September 15, 2020: Motion by G. Closson to *approve the minutes of September 15, 2020*. Second by J. Lemelin. **Vote:** All in favor - *motion carried unanimous*.

Barkhamsted Sewer Update: Mr. Rollins explained have come to an agreement on conflicting positions; will see everything on paper before signing the road-opening permit; worked out the details on water meters; received the final check for paving; got all the details ironed out. Discussion followed regarding the laterals will be installed wherever the pavement is disturbed, flow meter will be installed at the town line, etc. Chairman Massicotte asked about the pump station behind the plaza. Brief discussion followed regarding relocating the pump station is a good thing – can flush and Barkhamsted can easily access it. Chairman Massicotte verified everything will be on paper. Discussion followed regarding Clerk of the Works, possible persons capable, insurance coverage in their role as Clerk of the Works, possible conflicts, etc.

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: Currently through 25% of the fiscal year; Revenues: Rents are at 26% compared to 22% last year – work on the meters is bearing fruit. Expenditures: need a transfer from the scholarship to cover the intern expenses and need to revise the purchase order for meter expenses; Water Works is at 22% of its budget, Crystal Lake Plant is at 12% of its budget, Administration is at 28% of its budget (it's higher because of seasonal payments) and the Water Commission is at 4% of its budget (some accounts are in the Capital Fund); year to date is \$393,277 – performing as expected; checking account has \$1,006,000 and savings has \$573,570; the Treasurer moved the money approved last month so will see that reflected next month.

Sewer: Revenues: Approximately \$43,000 ahead in terms of collections compared to last year; Russ' Septic paid \$1,500 leaving a balance of \$1,500 – going to have to put them on a short lease; the Barkhamsted project received \$5,000 in August to cover expenditures; revenues are at

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\$451,000 compared to \$415,000 last year. Expenditures: Sanitation Plant is at 20% of its budget at 25% through the fiscal year – Sludge Disposal Fee line item needs a revised purchase order, Pump Station is at 21% through 25% of the fiscal year – need to revise a purchase order, WPCA is at 23% of its budget – highlighted the Barkhamsted Project line item; total expenses are at \$420,000 - in line with last year; savings has \$573,570 and the operating account has \$291,000 (lower due to a debt payment).

Referencing the water and sewer capital improvements worksheet, Mr. Stratford noted it tracks long-term improvements; one side reflects appropriations and the reverse side relates to water and sewer projects; reviewed each project, line items, encumbrances and unexpended balances. Brief discussion followed regarding the vacuum truck. Mr. Rollins noted there's a lot going on. Chairman Massicotte asked about the water and sewer savings account. Discussion followed regarding paying for some expenses from the savings account, trading operating funds for savings, assigning cash balances to projects, savings to cover step screen, not budgeting capital projects for sewer until there's more money, etc.

Bill Adjustments:

Mr. Stratford noted he has 2 requests to release sewer assessment liens: 878 West Wakefield Boulevard (straightening out confusion on address with the Town Clerk) and 536 Wheelers Point (lien was paid off some time ago but never released). **Motion** by G. Closson **to issue the release for 878 West Wakefield Boulevard.** Second by B. Hester. **Vote:** All in favor - *motion carried unanimous.* **Motion** by G. Closson **to issue the release for 536 Wheelers Point.** Second by J. Lemelin. **Vote:** All in favor - *motion carried unanimous.*

Vac Truck Received: Chairman Massicotte noted it's due at the end of October.

Update on Sewer Plant Furnace Delivery and Install: Mr. Rollins explained the purchase order has been written and most of the parts have been received; waiting on submittals – moving forward; heat will be down a day or two but it's on schedule.

Sentinel Insurance Complaint Outcome: Mr. Rollins said Marty Cormier asked for more information from the homeowner but have received no response yet.

Pump Station 8 Landscaping Complete – Final Cost for Project in: complete

Brookside Project Complete: Water mains are in and buried, services connected, water test should be done by the end of the week.

Step Screen Update: Mr. Rollins said he looked over 3 different specifications; drafting our blend of what we like. Discussion followed regarding preferred design, impact on the plant, man hours catching debris before entering the plant, etc. Chairman Massicotte asked about a portable generator to keep the step screen running in case of electrical outage. Discussion followed regarding the existing generator has the capacity - just not wired, generator should run the entire plant even if not at full power, etc. Mr. Rollins noted they did add a second fuel tank to feed the generator.

Discussion on Sewer Rate Increase for next 3 – 4 years: Mr. Rollins said he still has to get Mr. Stratford a comprehensive list of improvements for the next five years. Chairman Massicotte verified those would be bonded. G. Closson said talking about depreciation. Chairman Massicotte explained

can't anticipate replacing the plant, just parts; capital recovery was supposed to pay for major projects. Mr. Stratford noted in the past, a rate increase has been every several years but not annually; need to get the meter readings issue cleared up; will be getting a good handle on it next month (November) and compare to last year; hope to see a good improvement and refine what we really need. G. Closson added Barkhamsted should boost revenues too. Brief discussion followed regarding the Barkhamsted sewer line should be operational by January. Chairman Massicotte detailed a proposed increase based on his personal bill without increasing capital recovery; felt it won't break the bank. Mr. Stratford agreed a gradual increase will soften the impact. Brief discussion followed regarding the value of money. B. Hester detailed another example of an increase based on his personal bill – reflected a \$.14 per day increase. Discussion followed regarding the cost of operating a sewer plant compared to the water plant, usage base rates, meter sizes, holding a separate meeting to look closer at goals and increases, etc. Mr. Stratford said will work the offered scenarios and factor in costs. Brief discussion followed regarding holding the public hearing virtually.

Discussion on Customers who are Unwilling to Update MIU Meters – Put Back on Fixture Account: Mr. Cormier said will put those customers on a fixture account; it's just a few who refuse or have not responded. Mr. Rollins said the regulations authorize the Town to charge the highest rate and assessment. Discussion followed regarding getting accurate fixture accounting, utilizing as-builts and Building Department records. Mr. Rollins asked why meter accounts and fixture accounts have different billing cycles. Brief discussion followed regarding fixtures are billed currently and meters are billed retroactively. Mr. Rollins said they are different codes, so they should be easily caught. Discussion followed regarding doing the adjustments manually, will effect less than a dozen accounts, rate change will get the customers' attention, making the change before the increases, send those customers base rate bills since not able to read the meters and a fixture billing, etc. Mr. Rollins noted his letter to customers spelled out no refunds or adjustments. **Motion** by J. Massicotte **to move forward moving those accounts to fixture accounts.** Second by G. Closson. **Vote:** All in favor - *motion carried unanimous.*

National Register of Historic Places – Letter from Public Archaeology Laboratory Approval: Mr. Rollins explained he reached out to the people who did the study asking what the letter means; they had no idea and forwarded it to another agency; said David Battista of Lenard Engineering said it's complicated; the proposed work should not change the outside appearance; have to figure out what it means; will work with David Battista and the agency to create a map as a template for future projects then dig deep for the design of the actual project; there's a lot to be learned. Chairman Massicotte asked about lowering the intake. Mr. Rollins said that's not going to get the water low enough; have to use divers; it will go into the emergency plan but that's all at this point.

Director's Report: Mr. Rollins said everything has been covered tonight.

Old Business:

- Sewer Plant Bridge Repair Estimate \$150,000 to be done with Smith Hill Bridge – 2022: nothing to add
- State Revolving Fund Update on Projects: Mr. Rollins said Bruce Stratford and Marty Cormier have the paperwork in process; getting the list of assets; need to verify can afford the investments.
- Dam Repair through USDA Funding: Mr. Rollins said can combine this project with the National Register Historic project.
- Water Regulations to accept High Density Polyethylene: Will work on it this winter

- Tree Harvesting: Mr. Rollins explained issues with consultants. Discussion followed regarding lumber prices, harvest plans, need more time, work is overdue, money should go to watershed management, etc.
- MIU's Installed – Need to Investigate 22 Curious Readings: Mr. Rollins explained he was waiting for an update. Mr. Cormier said have seen substantial savings in rebuilding old meters. Brief discussion followed regarding ultrasonic meters, upgrading the reading devices, etc.

New Business:

- Billing Barkhamsted for Meters and Usage: Mr. Rollins said will do it the same way as any account in Town – drive by and build it as a bill file. Discussion followed regarding payable terms, details in bill file, process might be rough at first, etc.
- Santoro's: Mr. Stratford noted attorneys are involved again – playing hardball; have received no money since last month.
- Commission Minutes Secretary: Chairman Massicotte asked for suggestions to cover the meetings. Mr. Rollins said he will ask Caitlyn.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned 7:17 p.m.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted,

/s/

Laurie Bessette
Minutes Secretary

<p>Next Regular Meeting: Town Hall, 338 Main Street Tuesday, November 10, 2020 @6:00 p.m.</p>
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