



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
August 11, 2020*

Chairman John Massicotte called the meeting to order at 6:01p.m. The following members were present: Bill Hester, Joe Lemelin and John Massicotte. Also present was Finance Director Bruce Stratford, Director of Public Works Jim Rollins and Consultant/Project Manager Steve Vaill. George Closson was absent. Board member Tim Moran arrived at 6:09p.m. This meeting respected all social distancing rules; attendees were well-situated throughout the meeting in the meeting room.

Public Input - none

Approval of Meeting Minutes from July 14, 2020: Motion by B. Hester **to approve the minutes of July 14, 2020.** Second by J. Lemelin. **Vote:** All in favor - *motion carried unanimous.*

Approval of Meeting Minutes from July 21, 2020: Motion by J. Lemelin **to approve the minutes of July 21, 2020.** Second by B. Hester. **Vote:** All in favor - *motion carried unanimous.*

Report from Finance Director:

Mr. Stratford made available copies of budget reports; also had copies available of checking and savings account statements through August 7th; proceeded to review information. Mr. Stratford explained we don't get a number of invoices by the time this report is generated; no budget has been adopted which is why there is a blank column.

Water: Revenues: Collected \$72,000 compared to \$85,000 last year; current rents are up but past due is down; increased billings by \$22,000 over last year. Expenditures: \$159,000 last year compared to \$176,000 this year. Mr. Stratford noted operating account has \$890,294 and savings has \$573,355.

Directing attendees to the proposed 2020-2021 Water Fund budget, Mr. Stratford said this document is based on recent revisions and discussions; showing revenues of \$1,883,000 – does not have contributions from the fund balance; expenditures for the Water Works division is \$573,000 (down \$17,000 from the department proposed), Crystal Lake Plant expenditures at \$391,000 (down from \$408,000 proposed by the department), Administration proposed expenditures of \$544,000, WPCA is \$373,000 (up from \$154,000 due to the transfer to capital improvement to allow for tracking). Discussion followed regarding capital improvement projects, budget reflecting small surplus of \$561,000, Board has an option to allocate money for revenues from the general fund balance, etc. Mr. Stratford recommended the board adopt the budget; recommended the Board put \$200,000 for the capital spending plan. Chairman Massicotte said he would prefer dollar amounts toward each project than a lump sum. Mr. Stratford noted this system will allow to track each project; verified \$200,000 is adequate for

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Overlook water mains and \$125,000 is adequate for Brookside. Brief discussion followed regarding plans. Mr. Rollins reviewed the capital projects list and prioritized them:

- Update Water Supply Plan - no task order from Lenard Engineering yet; \$20,000; Priority #1
- Emergency Action Plan – out of date; \$20,000; Priority #1
- Chemical Piping Improvements; \$10,000; Priority #2
- Pipe Saw – current saw is not safe – investigating options; \$30,000; Priority #3
- Truck 37 (exclusively used by the Water Department); \$30,000; Priority #4
- Upland – would like to do but it’s a pretty slim chance – will coincide with repair of Upland; \$150,000.
- Re-line Benton Street/Florence Avenue – so many other projects in the works

Discussion followed regarding the unsafe condition of Upland, have to coordinate work with DOT, trying to get DOT to take responsibility for the failing retaining wall, make it Priority #5, still providing water to a customer up there, a lot of work involved even to sub-contract this out, getting engineering done for \$25,000 in case of an emergency, allocate \$119,000, the vacuum truck, Brookside and Overlook work were allocated in the fund balance, funds coming out of savings/ operating account, etc. Chairman Massicotte asked about the Wallens Hill tank. Mr. Rollins said the cost of removal is included in the cost of a new one – in FY 22. Discussion followed regarding the electricity line in Water Works, amount of surplus, etc. Chairman Massicotte verified engineering is included in the Brookside and Overlook projects. Mr. Rollins said no engineering is required. Extensive discussion followed regarding Project Administrator salary allocations, doing the storage tank as part of the State Revolving Fund projects, 2019-2020 collections, heating and generator fuel line items not always being properly allocated, Crystal Lake electricity, Water Plant is making a lot less water due to leak repairs, what’s included in “anticipated”, etc. **Motion** by J. Lemelin **to adopt the 2020-2021 Water Fund budget as amended.** Second by B. Hester. *Discussion:* Mr. Stratford asked to specify Revenues of \$1,883,000 and Expenditures of \$1,882,939. **Vote:** All in favor - *motion carried unanimous.*

Mr. Stratford noted he has a request for a refund to a customer (Montez) in the amount of \$149 (\$60 for water and \$89 for water) due to duplicate payment. **Motion** by T. Moran **to approve the refund.** Second by J. Lemelin. **Vote:** All in favor - *motion carried unanimous.*

Sewer: Revenues: Collected \$73,831 compared to \$84,000 last year (a lot more past due was collected last year); revenues may be down due to COVID and the low interest rate; Russ’ Septic did pay another \$3,000 leaving a balance of \$3,290. Brief discussion followed regarding establishing a policy for Russ’s Septic, billing a regular amount monthly, require a security deposit, etc. Mr. Stratford noted August billings are \$19,000 higher this year than last year. Expenditures: Department spending is close to last year - \$158,000 last year compared to \$152,000 this year; operating account has \$281,000 and savings has \$573,000.

Referring to the Proposed 2020-2021 proposed Sewer Fund budget, Mr. Stratford explained the proposed budget shows revenues of \$1,828,000 (\$100,000 more than we realized this year – expect the correction of the zero read meters to be reflected); expenditures for the Sanitation Department are at \$749,000 (a decrease of \$47,000 from the department proposed), \$343,000 (decrease of \$18,000 from department proposed), \$1,111,000 for the WPCA (\$839,000 was proposed) – capital spending accounts for the increase, Debt Administration proposed at ***The Town of Winchester is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.***

\$239,847; total expenditures proposed at \$2,296,425 to revenues of \$1,828,000 (deficit of \$468,425); need to adjust – reductions in spending or increase in revenues. Mr. Rollins proceeded to review anticipated capital spending: Vacuum truck – 2nd payment (taking delivery in September), Sanitation Plant Bridge (can put off to 2022), Sanitation Plant Boiler (this is an additional \$100,000), Step Screen (final payment), Moore Avenue Pump Station (can postpone – not a priority compared to other capital projects), Primary Tank Collection Equipment (there's 5 of them and they're as old as the plant – do one per year). Extensive discussion followed regarding boiler component prices, timeline for repairs, reducing scale of work, impact of deficit on rates, step screen lead time, moving \$90,000 from FY 20 to the step screen purchase to reduce the cost for the step screen to \$10,000 in this year's budget, fund Moore Avenue in the future, capital recovery fee was intended to be used for emergency and capital projects, etc. Chairman Massicotte questioned maintenance of Structures and Electricity in Sanitation (315). Discussion followed regarding moving \$15,000 into Maintenance of Structures from contingency and increased electricity costs. T. Moran expressed concern with the deficit; suggested covering the deficit with savings. Mr. Stratford said these budgets are based on cash receipts; if you want the Sewer Fund on the same footing as Water, projecting a substantial rate increase over a number of years; suggested forming a sub-committee to review information and present it to the Board; remaining \$178,000 deficit and rate increase this fiscal year; a portion can be used toward the deficit and toward capital projects. T. Moran liked 1% or 2% per year over several years. Mr. Stratford suggested of the \$178,000, take \$28,000 and add a rate increase; \$150,000 remaining of the deficit would come from capital; proceeded to review the FY Proposed Rate Increase worksheet; noted the shortfall has to be addressed with a rate increase – usage fee increase and/or base fee increase. Brief discussion followed regarding additional customers, additional activity, etc. Mr. Stratford proceeded to review the Annual Fee Comparison worksheet to neighboring towns. Brief discussion followed regarding Norfolk's plight. Mr. Stratford noted even if rates increase 60%, rates would still be less than Norfolk or New Hartford; not recommending that much increase, but that's the direction; explained the proposed different rate structures; need to gather more data; explained the data on the Impact Sample Customer worksheet. Brief discussion followed regarding the number of years to phase in increases. Mr. Stratford noted the sewer rate is currently the same as the water rate; it's a lot more to clean a gallon of wastewater versus ground water; at this point, the Board could say take \$150,000 from the fund balance and bump up rates; change capital projects to \$161,000. Chairman Massicotte said he would rather take \$150,000 from savings and \$28,000 from line items to balance the budget and then discuss an increase; won't vote on the Sewer Fund budget until have a clean copy. Mr. Rollins noted departments consistently come in under budget every year; can recommend reductions but will have to shift money through the year. Mr. Vaill said work stops dead on the furnaces if the Board doesn't approve a budget. Discussion followed regarding put the furnaces out to bid, hold a special meeting to pass the budget, plans to replace both furnaces, considerations made pertaining to methane, Mr. Stratford and Mr. Rollins will work on the budget to call a special meeting, etc.

Water & Sewer Budget for Proposals for 2020-2021 - discussed earlier

Update on Sewer Plant Furnace Repair/Replacement- discussed earlier

New Sludge Pump Received and Installed? Mr. Rollins confirmed it is in place

Pump Station 8 Landscaping Complete: Mr. Rollins confirmed the landscaping is done except the plantings.

Bill Adjustments – discussed earlier

Director’s Report: Mr. Rollins provided the Secretary with the original signed Interlocal Sewer Agreement with Barkhamsted (Secretary filed copy with the Town Clerk’s office 8/12/2020).

Old Business:

- Sewer Plant Bridge Repair – planned for 2022
- State Revolving Fund Update on Projects – nothing to report
- National Registrar of Historic Places – waiting on a decision
- Dam Repair through USDA Funding – pending decision from Registrar of Historic Places
- Water Regulations to accept High Density Polyethylene – nothing new to report
- Tree Harvesting – nothing new to report
- MIU’s Installed – Need to Investigate 22 Curious Readings - nothing to report

J. Lemelin asked for an update on the proceedings pertaining to the business on Groppo Drive. Mr. Stratford said the issue is with the attorneys – waiting for a status report. Discussion followed regarding no payments.

New Business – none

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned 7:55 p.m.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted,

/s/
Laurie Bessette
Minutes Secretary

Next Regular Meeting:
Town Hall, 338 Main Street
Tuesday, September 8, 2020 @6:00 p.m.