



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
May 12, 2020*

Chairman John Massicotte called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. This meeting was televised and streamed live; callers were invited to call in on 860-738-6958 for public comment. The following members were present: George Closson, Bill Hester, Joe Lemelin and John Massicotte. Also present was Finance Director Bruce Stratford (via telephone), Budget Analyst Caroline Brayne, Director of Public Works Jim Rollins and Superintendent of Water Works Marty Cormier. Tim Moran arrived late. This meeting respected all social distancing rules and attendees were well-situated throughout the meeting in the meeting room.

Public Input - none

Approval of Last Meeting Minutes from April 14, 2020: Motion by G. Closson to *approve the minutes of April 14, 2020*. Second by B. Hester. **Vote:** All in favor - *motion carried unanimously*.

Report from Finance Director:

Ms. Brayne distributed copies of the year-to-date budgets along with checking and savings account statements through April 30th and a worksheet detailing State Revolving Fund Borrowing Scenarios. Mr. Stratford proceeded to review information.

Sewer: Revenues: 83% (10 months) through the fiscal year, revenues are down significantly – down \$71,000 compared to last year, sewer rents are down \$9,000 with no payment from Russ' Septic (remaining balance still \$8,700); starting to see an impact of the pandemic; suggested a transfer pertaining to Russ' Septic. **Motion** by G. Closson to *pay \$270 directly to the Town of Winchester General Fund which will pay water and sewer and deduct \$270 from Russ' Septic balance*. Second by B. Hester. **Vote:** All in favor - *motion carried unanimously*. Expenditures: Each department is below 83% of the fiscal year spending; highlighted Maintenance of Equipment. Brief discussion followed regarding invoices from Walker Wellington and Ball Hopkins. Mr. Stratford noted a pension contribution from the WPCA and a principal payment from debt administration will be made this month; total expenditures are \$1,253,000 compared to \$1,273,000 last year.

Water: Revenues: Revenues have declined as well; collecting January, February and March in May. Expenditures: Highlighted Meter Expenses (currently using contingency (322) for meters), Heating System and making a pension payment in May; year-to-date expenditures are \$1,187,000 compared to \$1,061,000 last year due to the Overlook project and auto flushers. Mr. Cormier requested a line item transfer to Meter Expenses from Bituminous Concrete. **Motion** by G. Closson to *transfer \$2,700 from Bituminous Concrete (317-862-0000) to Meter Expenses (317-859-0000)*. Second by J. Lemelin. **Discussion:** Mr. Stratford suggested transferring \$2,800. *Mr. Closson amended his motion to transfer \$2,800*. Second by J. Lemelin. **Vote:** All in favor - *motion carried unanimously*.

Chairman Massicotte questioned Pump Station 8 in the Sewer Budget. Discussion followed regarding work was entirely budgeted in last year's budget but some appropriations carried over into this year, amount sitting in the fund balance of last year so will come out of fund balance, fixed assets, amount

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reflected in audit, fund balance is only closed once a year, \$200,000 in bank account, anything not spent from the budget is in the bank account, etc.

Mr. Stratford noted the sewer checking account has \$343,000 (amount will swell at the end of June); water has \$783,000 in its operating account; the amount is higher than sewer because it's receiving more money; a reason to consider increasing sewer; have \$1,146,000 in savings (\$572,000 each for water and sewer).

Referring to the worksheet detailing State Revolving Fund Borrowing Scenarios, Mr. Stratford said three projects made the list, the sum of the three projects is approximately \$3,093,000; the Town qualifies for 50% loan forgiveness (25% loan subsidy and 25% as a distressed community) so only have to pay back \$1.5 million; the worksheet shows debt service at 2% will cost \$90,000 per year for 20 years; the water fund has a \$250,000 debt service component; only using \$90,000 of that \$250,000; debt service isn't in this year's budget as that \$250,000 was used to pick up costs for Overlook, Brookside, auto flushers, etc.; going to set aside \$90,000 for debt service; it's good news – getting \$3 million of value for only \$90,000 per year to get those 3 projects completed and paid for; encouraging to make applications for water mains in the next year for the same financing arrangement. Mr. Rollins verified debt service for the State Revolving Fund is separate from Crystal Lake. Mr. Stratford said that project is through the USDA; current water rates allow \$250,000 - \$300,000 for debt service. Brief discussion followed on estimated payments. Mr. Rollins asked if Mr. Stratford had a chance to look into how to purchase a building currently for sale for the Water Department. Mr. Stratford said he has not had a chance to look into it. Mr. Rollins added he has two checks: one from Sentinal Services and one from Lombard Ford for the engineering fees to Barkhamsted bringing that balance to zero.

Chairman Massicotte said an issue at 508 Main Street was tabled last month. Mr. Stratford explained will try to get the water and sewer bills paid when the property sells. ***Continue to carry as TABLED.***

Chairman Massicotte noted he has two sewer assessment lien releases:

- 1) 734 West Wakefield Boulevard. **Motion** by J. Lemelin **to release the lien.** Second by B. Hester. **Vote:** All in favor - *motion carried unanimous.*
- 2) 348 West Wakefield Boulevard. **Motion** by G. Closson **to release the lien.** Second by J. Lemelin. **Vote:** All in favor - *motion carried unanimous.*

Mr. Rollins asked if there was any response to the letter to 76 Hinsdale Avenue regarding the water bypass. Mr. Stratford said have not received anything; the Post Office will hold the letter and return the receipt request.

Mr. Rollins said he has a first draft of next years' budget; will be converting it to a format similar to the Highway Department side.

Pump Station 8 Landscaping in Spring 2020: Mr. Rollins said the project is well underway; excavating for the bottom course; hoping to finish by the end of May.

Overlook Installation of Laterals in Spring 2020: Mr. Rollins said it's done; the road is ready for reconstruction (from the Highway Department budget).

New Sludge Pump Installed? Mr. Rollins said the pump is back-ordered – have not taken delivery.

Update on Bridge Repair to Sewer Plant. Received Any Bids for work? Estimated Total \$150,000: Mr. Rollins said nothing new. Chairman Massicotte asked if bids went out. Mr. Rollins said waiting to coordinate the project with Smith Hill Bridge to share the cost. Discussion followed regarding no timeline, probably get done next year, etc.

Water & Sewer Budget for 2020-2021 Progress? Discussed earlier

Bill Adjustments – none

Director's Report: Mr. Rollins said nothing significant that was not already covered:

- Explained each week the Health Department meets via WebEOC – another step of emergency preparedness.
- Picked two interns – both local (Mike Hall and Tyler Nelson) - had six great finalists.
- A building on the left at the end of Groppo Drive recently came up for sale; a 4-bay garage; 50' x 100' in nice shape; perfect for the Water Department to operate out of; getting an appraisal of the property; would be a good move for the Water Department; asking \$425,000. Mr. Cormier said the Street department is still growing; the Water Department is currently working out of 3 bays at Public Works and leaving equipment outside. Mr. Rollins added the Town Manager said it's worth looking into; looking for thoughts from the Commission. Discussion followed regarding other properties will come in lower than market value due the current situation, advantages of location, nice facility to work out of, building built in 2006, make an offer well below market value, previously housed a tree company, heating system using wood was removed, accessibility, features of the building, etc. ***Consensus is to get an appraisal and more information.***

T. Moran arrived 7:03 p.m.

- The Barkhamsted Interlocal Agreement is at the next stage; after all the comments made over the last several months, the developer is considering an open trench; the next step is updating the map at the end of the interlocal agreement; both town attorneys have been through the agreement. Chairman Massicotte noted the engineers have to look through the agreement. Mr. Rollins said the target is a June start; the draft agreement was emailed to Commissioners. Chairman Massicotte asked if a special meeting is needed. G. Closson asked about #3 on page 5 – reads Barkhamsted has to adopt regulations within six months of adoption of the agreement. Brief discussion followed regarding possible changes. Mr. Rollins said Barkhamsted is only going to adopt our agreement - will be copying and pasting their letterhead on the top. G. Closson questioned Article D.1. on page 6 – four lines from the bottom “assist Barkhamsted”. Chairman Massicotte said will be billing Barkhamsted. G. Closson verified it's covered in the billing responsibilities. G. Closson questioned page 6, #3 – asked how that system will interface. Chairman Massicotte said oil/water separators. Discussion followed regarding compliance, fat/oil/grease separators, approvals, etc. G. Closson questioned “all changes” on page 7, #2. Discussion followed regarding regulations changes, capital costs, etc., shared based on percentage, etc. G. Closson verified page 7, #2 is a full sentence. Discussion followed regarding the original plan was 1½” pipe and if the pipe is too small then they carry the burden of the cost to replace it. B. Hester noted #9 on page 2 should read 20 degrees Celsius not 30 degrees Centigrade; the engineers should design the piping to be big enough for expansion. Mr. Rollins said the current thought is 3” pipe rather than several 1½” pipes; want them to run service laterals to each parcel rather than open the road each time. Discussion followed regarding a 10-year sunset policy for tie-in. J. Rollins asked about paving requirements – they'll try to run up the shoulder but have to go into the road; asked to what standard. Discussion followed regarding the policy in use for utility companies, regulations, adding standard specifications to the agreement, trench and paving detail should be included in the engineering plan, etc. Mr. Cormier said have to update the water regulations anyway. Discussion followed regarding paving/trench detail. G. Closson noted Planning includes specifics in their subdivision regulations; suggested working with the Planning and Zoning Commission to have the same regulations. Chairman Massicotte verified still billing Barkhamsted and payment is due upon receipt of invoice. Discussion followed regarding how to bill, Lombard Ford, reasons they decided against directional boring, Barkhamsted can't upcharge, structuring billing for fairness, Barkhamsted needs sewer from Winchester, water is already run to the Town line, same changes in the sewer interlocal agreement should be made to the water Interlocal agreement, surge in system, low pressure system, include details in engineering, preliminary design being reviewed, etc. Mr. Rollins noted Barkhamsted is meeting tonight

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and in a few weeks – should be done any day now. G. Closson asked if a special meeting is needed. Discussion followed regarding possible dates and times, getting comments in, moving the process forward, etc. **Consensus is May 26th at 4:30 p.m.** Chairman Massicotte asked that comments be forwarded to him which will then be forwarded to Mr. Rollins. Mr. Rollins distributed copies of 2 draft documents associated with the sewer agreement.

- The draft budget has a few loose ends; distributed proposed budgets from each department (water, sewer, water works). Chairman Massicotte asked if any impact was reflected from the Coronavirus; advised 10%. Mr. Cormier said Mr. Stratford said to budget as usual. Mr. Rollins added the same guidance was followed on the Town-side; then to spend as tight as can go; will put these budgets into a single document. Discussion followed regarding when the water and sewer budget is due, details in each line, Mr. Stratford's recommendations on sewer rates, etc. Mr. Rollins noted due to improved meter reads, seeing additional billing of \$40,000 on each side; was hoping to extrapolate planned revenues after the May billing but the pandemic interfered; the pandemic interrupted planned meter repairs, installations, back billing, etc.

Old Business:

- PO to Cardinal Engineering for Bridge Repair at Sewer Plant. Estimate cost to repair \$67,000 with \$13,000 already spent on bridge inspection. Complete in 2020? Discussed earlier
- Follow Rules of State Revolving Fund – Water Tank & Water Main 25% Funding? Mr. Rollins said he received the funding commitment letters; the State is requesting additional applications; put together 4 more applications totaling \$3.4 million of work which are ready to be sent out; will be reimbursed up to 80%; will submit and see where it goes.
- Discussion on National Register of Historic Places; hearing scheduled for June 2020: Still scheduled for June
- Dams Report Repairs through USDA Funding – any movement in process?: Mr. Rollins said nothing will happen until the National Register moves on the application.
- Barkhamsted Payment for Engineering received? Mr. Rollins said the check was received; now at a zero balance.
- Update on Water Regulations to Accept Use of High-Density Polyethylene: nothing new
- Tree Harvesting/Housatonic Valley Watershed Association offer: Mr. Rollins said he responded to a bunch of questions asked recently by Housatonic Valley Association.
- Water Meters: Mr. Rollins said the numbers are the same due to all activity being stopped for pandemic.

New Business:

Chairman Massicotte said the colorful inserts in the billing were nice; verified the sludge increase is in the budget.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned 7:30 p.m.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted,

/s/

Laurie Bessette
Minutes Secretary

Next Special Meeting:

Town Hall, 338 Main Street
Tuesday, May 26, 2020 @4:30 p.m.



Next Regular Meeting:

Town Hall, 338 Main Street
Tuesday, June 9, 2020 @6:00 p.m.