



## 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  
April 14, 2020*

Chairman John Massicotte called the meeting to order at 6:03 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, John Massicotte and Tim Moran. 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 and attendees were well-situated throughout the meeting in the meeting room.

**Public Input** - none

**Approval of Last Meeting Minutes from March 10, 2020:** Motion by G. Closson to *approve the minutes of March 10, 2020*. Second by T. Moran. **Vote:** All in favor except T. Moran (abstained) - *motion carried*.

#### **Report from Finance Director:**

Mr. Stratford distributed year-to-date budgets along with checking and savings account statements through March 31<sup>st</sup>.

*Sewer:* Revenues: Mr. Stratford said at nine months through the fiscal year, as of March 31<sup>st</sup>, at 75% through the fiscal year, have collected 68% of sewer rents - down \$22,000 from last year; noted Russ' Septic has made no payments with a balance of \$8,700; total revenues is \$1.265 million – slipped a little this month but it follows the pattern. Expenditures: Sanitation Plant is at 59% of its budget at three-quarters through the fiscal year; Pump Stations is at 57%; WPCA is at 55% and Debt Administration is at 29%; overall at 54% of the budgeted expenditures at 75% of the fiscal year which will help handle the revenue shortfall; noted the vacuum truck has been ordered, Pump Station 8 has encumbered \$30,000 for an outstanding concrete block purchase order and to finish landscaping, a payment has been made to Cardinal Engineering for the Sewer Plant bridge; no lines are requiring a fund transfer right now; Contracted Lab Services should be closed without a negative at the end of the fiscal year; checking account has \$377,000; \$572,000 in the operating account.

*Water:* Revenues: Mr. Stratford noted currently rents is at 71% of budget compared to 72% last year – tracking about \$30,000 below last year; lost more ground than last year at this time but expenditures are tracking lower as well. Expenditures: Water Works is at 60% of the budget – meter expenses are a little higher but knew that; Water Plant is at 56% of their budget; Administration is at 70%; Water Commission is at 27% - vacuum truck was ordered and the auto flushers were purchased; when comparing fiscal year 2020 to 2019, running \$56,000 difference but very stable – should end the year positive; checking account has \$798,000 and savings has \$572,000.

*The Town of Winchester is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.*

Mr. Stratford said he has one sewer assessment lien release for 640 West Wakefield Boulevard – fully paid the balance. **Motion** by G. Closson **to release the lien**. Second by J. Lemelin. **Vote:** All in favor - *motion carried unanimous*.

Mr. Stratford said he has a refund recommended by the Collector of Revenues in the amount of \$190.83 to Whiting Mills, LLC - \$67.40 for sewer and \$123.43 for water. **Motion** by J. Lemelin **to approve the refund**. Second by B. Hester. **Vote:** All in favor - *motion carried unanimous*. Brief discussion followed regarding account number issues between American Mural Project and Whiting Mills.

Mr. Stratford explained the Town took possession of 508 Main Street as a tax foreclosure. Mr. Rollins explained the location as the former Mexican restaurant and adjoining building; noted there are meters on each side. Mr. Stratford said the property has only been billed the base rate, no usage - \$894 from last year and the year before; asking the Water and Sewer Commission to write it off – couldn't collect the taxes on it. Brief discussion followed regarding plans for those structures, liens on the properties, etc. **Motion** by G. Closson **to table the issue**. Second by B. Hester. **Vote:** All in favor - *motion carried unanimous*.

Mr. Stratford said the Governor issued an Executive Order allowing the Board of Selectmen of each Town to select at least one of two tax deferral programs; explained staff is recommending to the Board of Selectmen the lower interest option rather than the deferral option; explained the difference between the two options including billing in May and then August, impact on cash balances and collections, etc. **Motion** by G. Closson **to recommend to the Board of Selectmen the NO DEFERRAL OPTION**. Second by T. Moran. **Vote:** All in favor - *motion carried unanimous*. Mr. Stratford confirmed the low interest program is the most beneficial to the public as well as the Town.

Mr. Rollins asked for guidance budgeting for next year and keep rolling with the State Revolving Fund for the tanks, Holabird Avenue, etc. Mr. Stratford noted most of the projects are on the water side which is in good shape; suggested building the budget as if there is no pandemic; on the sewer side, build the budget based on a normal year – will refine projections based on assumptions; on the Town side, taking the Town Manager's budget and pulling back on spending rather than adjusting the budget down; no reason not to push ahead with the water projects.

**Funding for Upcoming Projects (State Revolving Fund, Bonding):** Chairman Massicotte asked about bonding. Mr. Stratford said he feels confident we can work with the State without going to bond; this is not a good time to go to the municipal bond market which is looking carefully at each municipality; we need to weather this storm. Chairman Massicotte referenced the list of projects provided to the Commission last year. Mr. Stratford noted the water tanks and water main project is going through the State Revolving Fund with 25% forgiveness. Chairman Massicotte verified the rest of the projects can wait past 2022. Mr. Rollins said still need to keep engineering moving forward so will be ready to pull the trigger when money becomes available.

**Dams Report Repairs through USDA Funding:** Mr. Rollins said still waiting on the process – nothing new to report.

**Initial 6 Ultrasonic Meters Installed at Lake? Invoicing owners for new Meters?:** Chairman Massicotte asked if homeowners are being billed. Mr. Rollins explained homeowners bought the original meters so not being billed for the new Town-owned ones being installed; the replaced meters will be refurbished.

**Discussion on National Register of Historic Places:** Mr. Rollins said the application was scheduled for a hearing in June – not sure when it will take place now.

**Update on Bridge Repair to Sewer Plant. Bid Documents finished? Estimated Cost of Bridge Repair \$150,000** – nothing new

**New Sludge Pump Purchased?** Mr. Rollins said the pump has been purchased but not installed.

**Barkhamsted Payment for Engineering been received?** Mr. Rollins said have an outstanding invoice of \$721 - will not move forward until the invoice is paid.

**Bill Adjustments** – discussed earlier

**Has Billing Letter been Done for Illegal By-Pass which was Discovered? Situation Corrected?:** Mr. Stratford said the letter was sent today.

**Director’s Report:** Mr. Rollins asked for clarification on a check received from Sandy Brook Services for the Jim McCarthy Scholarship. Mr. Stratford explained how to process the check. Mr. Rollins proposed sending a blanket letter explaining measures being taken pertaining to this crisis. Brief discussion followed regarding language of the letter.

**Old Business:**

- Wallens Hill Water Tank: discussed earlier
- Pump Station #8 Landscaping in the Spring, 2020: still on track
- Overlook Installation of Laterals in Spring 2020; still on track
- Update on Water Regulations to Accept Use of High-Density Polyethylene: nothing new
- Tree Harvesting/Housatonic Valley Watershed Association offer: nothing new
- Water Meters: Chairman Massicotte asked for an update on the MIU’s next month. Mr. Cormier said no meters are being installed right now – no one is going into anyone’s home. Brief discussion followed regarding getting the 30+ installations rescheduled.

**New Business** - none

**Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned 6:35 p.m.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted,

/s/  
Laurie Bessette  
Minutes Secretary

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Next Regular Meeting:</b>  Probate Room <b>Tuesday, May 12, 2020</b> 7:00 p.m.</p>
--