



TOWN OF WINCHESTER – CITY OF WINSTED

Town Hall – 338 Main Street

WINSTED, CONNECTICUT 06098

Minutes of Regular Meeting

Water & Sewer Commission

Probate Conference Room, Town Hall, 338 Main Street, Winsted

March 10, 2020

Chairman John Massicotte called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.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. Tim Moran was absent excused.

Public Input:

John Senese of Calco Construction and Ken Traub of Hemlock Directional Boring presented information and details pertaining to a conceptual plan for sewer lines to Lombard Ford, Mallory Brook Plaza and along Old New Hartford Road in Barkhamsted including size and number of lines, use and logistics of directional drilling for the lines, anticipated elevations for the lines, dealing with known and unknown obstructions, troubleshooting the lines in the future, numbers of meters for billing, anticipated residential hook-ups, number and location of E-1 pumps, unused pipe will be filled with water, details will come with the final plans, Commission recently supported directional boring through Regional #7 property, etc.

Motion by B. Hester **to entertain the conceptual idea of directional boring.** Second by G. Closson.

Vote: All in favor - *motion carried unanimous.* Brief discussion followed regarding the final design.

Approval of Last Meeting Minutes from February 11, 2020: **Motion** by J. Lemelin **to approve the minutes of February 11, 2020.** Second by G. Closson. **Vote:** All in favor - *motion carried unanimous.*

Report from Finance Director:

Mr. Stratford distributed year-to-date budgets along with checking and savings account statements through February 29th.

Water: Mr. Stratford noted we are 67% through the fiscal year. Revenues: currently at 67% compared to 68% last year; noted a new line item: NESC Commission – 50% of the commission received goes to water and 50% to sewer; gained \$10,000 in revenue deficit. Expenditures: Everyone is under 67%; noted meter expenses are a little above. Brief discussion followed regarding recent purchases made from contingency. Mr. Stratford added the vacuum truck is ordered; total expenditures are at \$877,000 compared to \$822,000 last year; departments are spending at appropriate levels; checking account has \$611,000 and that amount will go up in March due to collections transferring into this account.

Sewer: Revenues: Mr. Stratford said at 67% through the fiscal year, sewer rents is at \$942,000 compared to \$960,000 last year; zero read meters are helping close that gap; collected \$1,500 from Russ' Septic leaving a balance of \$8,700; revenues are down \$35,000 but made a \$15,000 gain in February. Expenditures: Sanitation Plant is at 53% of its budget – the mild winter has helped on heating expenses; pump stations is at 51% of its budget with four months to go; highlighted several line items in 317 – spending is at \$55,000; ahead of last year; expect the sewer fund to stay

below the budget; checking account has \$254,000; \$572,000 in savings for each water and sewer; don't expect the interest rate to stand.

Funding for Upcoming Projects (State Revolving Fund): Information from Tighe & Bond was distributed placing Winsted in the middle of the pack for rates. Mr. Rollins said will be looking in depth at those towns – population, charges, fees, etc. Chairman Massicotte expressed concern with bonding. Mr. Stratford said the Town Manager will submit the budget to the Board of Selectmen but still working on capital expenditures; towns are limited to \$5 million bonding cap per year (except for the school which is expected in 2023); explained the borrowing master plan for the next 4 calendar years; expect to have a proposal for the Commission by the next meeting. Discussion followed regarding available funding, State Revolving Fund is a priority, etc. Mr. Rollins added the historical review for the dams is moving forward; funding will be through the USDA; project will immediately follow the water tanks and mains. Discussion followed regarding applying for the next round of revolving funds for water mains. B. Hester explained projects in Norfolk and funding. Discussion followed regarding historical pipe lining.

Initial 6 Ultrasonic Meters Installed at Lake? Invoicing owners for new Meters?: Mr. Rollins said we're up to 12.

Quick Discussion on Water Regulations: Chairman Massicotte distributed portions of the existing regulations with his suggested changes. Discussion followed regarding costs charged for installation of water meters, sewer is different, cleaning up the regulations, etc.

Discussion on National Register of Historic Places: Chairman Massicotte noted he shared information by email with Commissioners. Mr. Rollins said they got no useful feedback from the Town; distributed a narrative he submitted; they have now submitted the final draft to Hartford for discussion in March or June. Mr. Stratford verified the purpose of this is to qualify for permits and funding. Mr. Rollins said it will steer the final design. Brief discussion followed regarding the gates.

Update on Bridge Repair to Sewer Plant. Meeting held with Cardinal Engineering on 2/14/2020: Mr. Rollins explained the plans have been completed and submitted; distributed estimated costs of rehabilitation for \$75,000; will finish the bid documents and get estimates. Brief discussion followed regarding lines 2 and 3 (cut off on the copies). Chairman Massicotte asked about access to the plant. Mr. Rollins said the bridge will be closed for no length of time. Mr. Stratford asked how the \$22,000 purchase order to Cardinal Engineering relates this estimate. Mr. Rollins explained the \$22,000 bought the preliminaries and specifications. Chairman Massicotte verified the \$35,000 (originally approved for \$13,000 and an additional \$22,000 for engineering) is in addition to the \$75,000. Mr. Rollins explained how the issues with this particular bridge were discovered. Discussion followed regarding the timeline for construction, cost to replace the step screen, plan to dovetail this bridge with Smith Hill Road bridge to share the full-time inspector cost, etc. Chairman Massicotte verified the bridge work is not critical this year. Mr. Rollins confirmed but added it needs to be planned. Discussion followed regarding construction inspection is not included in the \$75,000 estimate; inspection costs could be \$40,000, etc.

2019 CT Water and Sewer Rate Report from Tighe & Bond: discussed earlier

Bill Adjustments

Mr. Rollins asked how far back to charge for the bills with zero read meters. Discussion followed regarding go back a year consistent with PURA guidelines, replacing the meters, homeowner culpability, etc. Mr. Rollins explained the Town has taken considerable steps to address the zero read issue; some people responded right away but now on the 5th round of letters to those who didn't; proposed stages of charges. Discussion followed regarding stages of charges, forgiveness, this is a utility, consistency of

charges for usage, average use approximately \$261.96 per quarter, base rate, etc. Consensus is to follow the PURA guidelines of 1 year.

Has Billing Letter been Done for Illegal By-Pass which was Discovered? Situation Corrected?: Mr. Stratford said the letter is still on his desk.

Mr. Stratford proposed a fund transfer of \$2,000 for the Sewer Department from Chemicals to be applied as \$1,000 to Training and \$1,000 to Office Supplies. **Motion** by G. Closson **to approve the transfer of \$2,000 from Chemicals (315-825-0001) to Office Supplies (315-806-0000) in the amount of \$1,000 and Training & Education (315-811-0000) in the amount of \$1,000.** Second by B. Hester. **Vote:** All in favor - *motion carried unanimous.*

Director's Report: Mr. Rollins reported on the following:

- Replacement of Sludge Pump: Alex Combes has purchased parts to repair a return activated sludge pump; the replacement parts are the same part numbers but don't fit the old housing; would like to purchase a new pump for \$9,500 and use the old pump for parts (have 2 remaining pumps); currently have no emergency pump; suggested taking funds from Moore Avenue Pump Station (317-878-0073) and move to Maintenance of Equipment (315-826-0000). **Motion** by B. Hester **to approve the transfer of \$9,500 from Moore Avenue Pump Station (317-878-0073) and move to Maintenance of Equipment (315-826-0000).** Second by G. Closson. **Vote:** All in favor - *motion carried unanimous.*
- Sewer Assessments: There are still 108 people who are paying their assessments which total \$198,515.70. Mr. Stratford noted we're budgeting to collect \$70,000 per year. Brief discussion followed regarding we're done paying back the Town, thought assessments were done, etc. Mr. Stratford explained each year the assessments are collected and, once a year, transferred into the Sewer Assessment Fund.
- Real Estate Closings: Final readings are requested to settle at real estate closings; sometimes have as little as 30 minutes notice. Discussion followed regarding setting a rule requiring a minimum of 48 hours notice, putting it on the Public Works website, etc.
- Electric Bills: Jeff Rines has been monitoring his electric bills since repairing the leaks; saving \$8,000 per year since the repairs. Brief discussion followed regarding wastewater impacts.
- Crystal Lake Tank Repairs: Received a second opinion on the condition of the inside of the Crystal Lake tank; spalling is not structural or of urgent concern; recommended when convenient, take it off-line and do the clean and repair; will do when the new tank is in place. Brief discussion followed regarding nothing has been spent to date.
- Engineering Invoice: Have an unpaid invoice to Barkhamsted for the engineering review; verified no payment has been received.
- COVID-19: Recently met to start discussions labor-wise; nothing changes on the drinking water or wastewater side; assessing vulnerabilities; have enough chemicals for a couple of months; coordinating manpower back-up lists with area towns.

Old Business:

- PO to Cardinal Engineering for Bridge Repair at Sewer Plant: discussed earlier
- Wallens Hill Water Tank: Mr. Rollins explained 3 firms responded to the Request for Qualifications; will interview each; explained the process moving forward.
- Update on Pump Station #8 completion/landscaping in the Spring, 2020: Mr. Rollins said measured for the retaining wall today.
- Overlook Installation of Laterals; Main line in and operational: Mr. Rollins said work will be done when weather allows.
- Update on Water Regulations to Accept Use of High-Density Polyethylene: discussed earlier

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

- Tree Harvesting/Housatonic Valley Watershed Association offer: nothing new
- Water Meters: Discussion followed regarding the total amount of meters, number of meters installed, number of MIU's updated, down to 400 need to be replaced, following up on seasonal accounts, etc.

J. Lemelin asked for an update on the business customer on St. Onge Road. Mr. Stratford said their attorney made an offer; arranged an 18-month payment plan for outstanding charges with the promise to stay current.

New Business:

Discussion followed regarding replacing Commission vacancies.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned 9:04 p.m.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted,

/s/

Laurie Bessette
Minutes Secretary

Next Regular Meeting:

Probate Room
Tuesday, April 14, 2020
7:00 p.m.