

Minutes of the Board of Water/Sewer Commission
Wednesday, February 28, 2024 at 4:00 pm
16C Perry Way, Newburyport, MA 01950

Present Commissioners: Roger Jones, Paul Suozzo, Daniel Simon, Mark Spencer

Staff:

DPS Director, Wayne Amaral

Thomas Cusick, Water Superintendent, Water Treatment Plant

Business Manager, Thomas Watkins

1. Appointments/Customer Inquires

97 Water St. #2

Commissioner Simon made a motion to approve the abatement. Commissioner Suozzo seconded.

Vote: Simon yes, Suozzo yes, Spencer yes, Jones yes

5 S Street

Commissioner Spencer made a motion to deny the abatement. Commissioner Simon seconded.

Vote: Simon yes, Suozzo yes, Spencer yes, Jones yes

Commissioner Simon asked about the backwater event at the Artichoke and asked if the water came over the dam. Mr. Amaral confirmed that it did and we were ready for it. It was a non-event. Mr. Cusick said they did conductivity readings prior to the event to get a baseline and did readings again during and after and didn't see any change. He reached out to DEP as a precaution. All the water that came back was essentially the water that left so it was basically the same water. Commissioner Simon asked if that was the first time the dam has been breached. Mr. Cusick said that is the first time anyone has recorded a real backwater event.

2. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Simon made a motion to accept the minutes from January 24, 2024. Commissioner Suozzo seconded.

Vote: Simon yes, Suozzo yes, Spencer abstained, Jones yes

3. Business Managers Report

- Mr. Watkins stated revenues are exceeding expenses but our revenue is not where it was at this time last year as you can see on the executive summary. Water revenue is just under \$4.2 M whereas last year at this time it was just under \$4.5 M. Sewer revenue is \$5.2 M and last year at this time it was \$5.7M. Commissioner Simon stated the sewer supplies line is a concern. Mr. Watkins said that is because the chemical funds were encumbered at the beginning of the year as a blanket purchase order. Mr. Watkins feels the expenses are in good shape.

Commissioner Simon made a motion to accept the Business Manager's report. Commissioner Spencer seconded.

Vote: Simon yes, Suozzo yes, Spencer yes, Jones yes

- Mr. Amaral stated to the Commission the budget is underway and he has met with water and sewer and decided what we want for next year. He would like to bring it to the Board next meeting. The finance department will start the workshops in April so he wants to come to them with something the Board is

comfortable with. Commissioner Simon asked to have it sent before the next meeting so they can review prior to the meeting.

4. New Business

- The Commission discussed an article that was published in the newspaper about the history of the water supply to West Newbury. Mr. Amaral stated the IMAs needs to be worked on. Also, there needs to be good communication. He suggested each community needs to be able to come and voice their concerns. Commissioner Simon spoke on the Board's behalf and said they can help with writing/delivering any communication.
- Mr. Amaral said National Grid reached out with an incentive program to update the lighting at the Waste Water Treatment Plant. National Grid did a complete update on all City buildings with the exception of the Water Treatment Plant and the Waste Water Treatment Plant. This upgrade will cost \$12,000 a year that will be added on to the bill to pay for the lighting project. Chris Pratt supports it as does Mr. Amaral and the additional \$12,000 has been put into the electrical line in the budget for next fiscal year. Commissioner Spencer asked Mr. Amaral if National Grid also incentivize major energy consumers like aeration. He responded yes and Mr. Cusick is currently working on one now.

Commissioner Suozzo made a motion to enter into the agreement. Commissioner Simon seconded.

Vote: Simon yes, Suozzo yes, Spencer yes, Jones yes

5. Contract Signing

- AECOM- On-Call Engineering Services contract

Commissioner Simon made a motion to accept the AECOM Services contract. Commissioner Suozzo seconded.

Vote: Simon yes, Suozzo yes, Spencer yes, Jones yes

- Senesac, Inc. – Lagoon Cleaning Services contract. Commissioner Spencer asked if this has to get done on a regular basis. Mr. Cusick said they are removing a lot more solids. The new process will spin it out and dewater it. He is hoping for this to be mobilized twice a year. This act is to clean up what we have plus some legacy stuff that we have in the lagoon. This is a pilot program and once we go through this process the vendor should be able to tell us how many times a year we need to do it. Peter King and Chris Hood have been managing this and have been since before Mr. Cusick got there and have been doing a great job. He said they have outgrown the area they have to work with.

Commissioner Suozzo made a motion to accept the Senesac Services contract. Commissioner Simon seconded.

Vote: Simon yes, Suozzo yes, Spencer yes, Jones yes

- TW Excavating – Emergency Water Excavation Services contract

Commissioner Simon made a motion to accept the TW contract. Commissioner Suozzo seconded.

Vote: Simon yes, Suozzo yes, Spencer yes, Jones yes

6. Old Business

- CIP Draft Ranking. Much discussion took place to prioritize the capital projects. Commission Simon stated he feels as a body people want to know how the Commission determined what amount of money we spent. He feels as the experts and along with the consultants and advisers from AECOM that we determined what the highest risk projects would be. the ranking should be what puts the department at the highest risk. Mr. Amaral stated he doesn't feel everyone in the room would agree on the number one risk. Commissioner Simon said running out of water is risk number one, not having accurate meters is risk number two and having a PFAS problem is risk number three maybe. We prioritize what we think are the highest risks and these are the programs that fix it. Then we come up with a schedule. Then we have done our job as people who consider what happens with the community's money. Mr. Amaral asked what is the matrix to determine the highest risk. Mr. Cusick said something like what we did for the pump station. Weigh your options and score them. Once you score them it is a weighted average. Commissioner Suozzo said his favorite was the Indian Hill Raw Water Line project because if something happened to the lower artichoke you get the water from Indian Hill and during a drought we would be getting the water from Indian Hill. Since that will take years he feels you have to raise the dam to protect the lower artichoke. Mr. Cusick said the Indian Hill line will only help you in a drought when it is fully completed. Mr. Amaral said the department needs to get a consultant AECOM or Tighe & Bond to ask them to prepare a matrix that focuses on risk. Mr. Amaral stated as a Board and as the DPS we should help guide by getting information, giving it to people, then letting them know where we think we should go and tell them how we got there.
- Considerable discussion took place regarding the water rate that we are charging for West Newbury. It was decided the rates for all three communities need to be evaluated.

7. Confirm Next Meeting

- March 27, 2024 at 4:00 pm

8. Warrant and Signing

Commissioner Simon made a motion to approve the warrants as presented. Commissioner Suozzo seconded. Vote: Simon yes, Suozzo yes, Spencer abstained, Jones yes

9. Adjournment

Adjourned 5:45 pm.

Commissioner Spencer made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Simon seconded. Vote: Simon yes, Suozzo yes, Spencer yes, Jones yes

Respectfully Submitted By: Karen Bush