



OFFICE OF THE
WATER DEPARTMENT
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Water Commission Minutes
Tuesday, February 27, 2018

Approved: 3/27/18

Chairman Karl Huber called the meeting to order at 6:00pm
Members present: Scott Wilkins and John O'Brien
Meeting held: At the Dunstable Town Hall, 511 Main Street, lower level
In attendance: Town Administrator Tracey Hutton

Reviewed & Signed:

- Monthly bills
- Monthly payroll
- Reviewed Breakdown for FY18 Finances
- Reviewed Amounts Due to Water Department

Water Project Update

Ms. Hutton reported on some work being done with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) regarding the system and trying to lessen what is being required by DEP as part of the eventual consent order. Mr. Huber inquired about a letter sent to DEP. Ms. Hutton briefly reported on the matter, noting that she has confirmed it was received but hasn't otherwise heard back. Discussion then shifted to where Advisory Board stands on the proposed project. Ms. Hutton reported that Advisory Board remains in support of a water project. There was then some ensuing discussion of the Advisory Board's next meeting. It was noted that the water department's budget will be discussed. There was then discussion regarding how to educate the public as well as other relevant bodies like the Advisory Board and Board of Selectmen on what needs to be done. Ms. Hutton noted that what is important is doing things right, not doing things fast. The proposed project will be for what the town needs, but also allow for some expansion in the future.

Mr. Huber agreed noting that there has to be some room for growth. Mr. O'Brien reminded that at this point, the town doesn't have much of a choice given the position of DEP. Ms. Hutton agreed elaborating on DEP's regulatory compliance requirements and the eventual consent order. Mr. Huber noted that being small doesn't mean that the system can avoid DEP requirements. There was then some ensuing discussion about possible regional municipal partners that could help with shared resources, cost savings, and the possibility of being able to avoid having to continue hiring an outside water operator. Mr. Wilkins noted that regional partners will charge far less than private contractors. Mr. Wilkins then briefly turned to one of the biggest bills the department has, that being the electrical bills. Part of any project should be addressing the matter.

New Operator & General Operations Update

The Commission reviewed the outline for how the Water Department will now work. White Water will now provide the licensed operator and day to day equipment and system management and maintenance. Water fees will be received by the Treasurer/Collector, with the software and processing of fees and accounts by the Town Accountants office. White Water will report regularly to the Town Administrator who will report to the Commission. The Commission expressed a desire to

see regular reports from White Water. Ms. Hutton responded that White Water's operator is willing to attend meetings on occasion at request of the Commission to report directly.

Mr. Huber noted that the department is going to be rather dependent on White Water for reporting for now. Ms. Hutton then reported that White Water has been operating the system for the town for one month. There was then some follow up discussion about ensuring a clear representation of what condition the equipment and facilities are in. Subsequent discussion revolved around sampling and other testing. Mr. Huber suggested that things are falling into place for the most part. There was then some side discussion regarding the creation of ID's for water department related employees including White Water's operator. This helps citizens know that such persons, when they encounter them, are affiliated with the department.

Well No. 1 Rehab Update

Ms. Hutton updated the Commission on some of the issues and concerns with Well No. 1. This included an explanation of where the system stands and repair work that needs to be done. Mr. Huber noted the third party contractor that did the work has done work for the department in the past. This contractor has been very helpful in the past, including making recommendations to the department about future repairs and needed maintenance. There was then subsequent discussion regarding Well No. 1, as well as the impact on other water facilities. Well No. 1 needs to be regularly exercised and used. There was some concern about not sufficiently using infrastructure. This prompted some subsequent discussion regarding some of the costs of repairs.

The Commission would like to avoid setting any patterns of expensive repairs. There was some discussion regarding what the role of White Water will be in regards to pump stations and Well No. 1. The Commission is determined not to stand idly by on the topic of Well No. 1, but costs have to be controlled. There was some discussion of various ways to control costs while moving forward with any necessary upgrades and repairs. One of the particular issues with Well No. 1 included a variable speed controller that if installed could save costs. There was a brief question from Mr. Wilkins about Well No. 2 and what it turns over and pushes into the system. Mr. Huber noted that Well No. 1 has gradually decreased which is why it has needed to be rehabbed, and that will stabilize the system. Well No. 2 is in a similar range normally, but all the steps need to be gone through to fine tune the system to improve efficiencies.

Update Regarding Coliform Sampling Plan

This matter requires a sampling plan to be implemented. Mr. Huber clarified that the testing should be done at a public place or location that is on the water system. It has been proposed that the testing be done at the Dunstable Animal Clinic which is near the end of the system and should provide a good testing place. The clinic is willing to allow the testing to be done with samples taken on site. Previously testing of this type was done on the private property of one of the nonbusiness users of the water system, but with the retirement of Mr. Hardman and hiring of White Water as the operator it seems prudent to change the site.

Water Department Bills, Payroll, Breakdown for FY18 Finances, & Amounts Due

Ms. Hutton went over the bills with the Commission. These included the purchase of PH balancing solution, some legal bills with Town Counsel, the department's electric bills, and other miscellaneous bills. The Commission also reviewed and signed off on payroll and considered the state of FY18 finances. Mr. Huber then inquired about an update on what is owed for billing. Ms. Hutton responded that she was not updated by Ms. Mann on that yet, but can report back to the Commissions on the topic at the next meeting.

Minutes

The Commission considered its minutes from January 23rd, 2018. Seeing no necessary changes or modifications, the Commission proceeded with adopting them.

A motion was made by Mr. Wilkins to adopt the minutes of January 23rd, 2018. The motion was seconded by Mr. O'Brien and passed without objection.

Additional Topics Discussed Not Noted on the Agenda

Update on Surveying

Ms. Hutton updated on the field work and surveying for the Simmons Parcel where the department hopes to build a water tower as part of any construction on the site for a public safety building. Final plans for that site and elsewhere should be due soon. There was discussion as to how this relates to the larger water project and the consent order with DEP.

GDRSD & Swallow-Union

Mr. Wilkins inquired GDRSD's plans regarding a proposed renovation of Florence Roach that might end up requiring the closure of Swallow-Union. Alternatives might include building an entirely new elementary school near the high school. Mr. Wilkins noted that this would have an impact on the water system as Swallow-Union is a big user on the system. Ms. Hutton agreed and stated that there are some complications for the town, one of which is the costs of participating in the feasibility study for the Florence Roach project. Mr. Wilkins noted some of the issues with water for the high school. Mr. O'Brien outlined some of the logistical issues with that area and why there are water problems at that location.

Public Safety Building

Mr. Huber inquired about the proposed public safety building and the impact it would have on the water system apart from any water related projects that building on the parcel in question might mean. Ms. Hutton reported on where things stand in regards to the proposal, and the design fees that the town is looking at. The design fees are set to be put on the warrant, and eventually rolled into the future construction loan. The survey for the property will be done by that point. The design will not be an inconsequential cost.

Mixed Use District

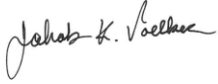
Mr. Huber inquired about where things stand for the MUD. Ms. Hutton explained that until the water system upgrade is done, nothing can be built on the MUD at this point. Affordable Housing is ready to proceed with consideration of a project on the property but it is not feasible until the project is complete.

Water Rate Study

Ms. Hutton reported on a study of rates she has done using similarly situated water systems. She needs a few updates to the figures since some of the information is dated from 2014. There are variables to consider such as annual and quarterly costs. Carver is expensive, Eastham is cheap, and Dunstable appears to be dead center between them. She is seeking more information on Westport's rate. Mr. Huber noted that some questions to consider are various costs, like meter installation, sampling and testing, meter reading, and the like. All of these services have an impact on what is justifiable. Mr. O'Brien noted that knowing that the town is about in the middle will help making the argument on rates. Obviously it will be easier to sell if the town remains relatively middle ground. Ms. Hutton agreed suggesting that there is room for increases while still remaining in the middle. Mr. Huber noted that the overall goal is to cover the costs of operating the system.

A motion to adjourn at 6:45 pm was made by Mr. Wilkins and seconded by Mr. O'Brien. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jakob K. Voelker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Jakob K. Voelker
Administrative Assistant
Dunstable Water Department