



OFFICE OF THE  
WATER DEPARTMENT  
TOWN HALL, 511 MAIN STREET  
DUNSTABLE, MA 01827-1313  
(978) 649-4514 FAX (978) 649-8893  
waterdept@dunstable-ma.gov

**Water Commission Minutes**  
**Tuesday, July 17, 2018**

**Approved: 8/6/18**

Chairman Karl Huber called the meeting to order at 6:00pm

Members present: Scott Wilkins

Members absent: John O'Brien

Meeting held: At the Dunstable Town Hall, 511 Main Street, lower level

In attendance: Jim Jordan, Town of Pepperell; Richard Protasowicki, James Cray, Wright Pierce;  
Bob Nelson, Advisory Board

**Reviewed & Signed:**

- Monthly bills
- Monthly payroll

**Non – Lead & Copper**

Mr. Huber asked White Water to provide an update on this subject. Unfortunately, a representative from White Water was unable to attend. Mr. Huber is unaware of any updates at this point aside from the further identification of test sites. There are also communications that need to be sent to the rate payers about the situation, the testing, and what it means. He then asked Wright Pierce if they have anything to contribute. Neither Mr. Protasowicki nor Mr. Cray thought there was anything to add from an engineering perspective. Mr. Jordan spoke briefly about the work as he understood it. Mr. Huber then noted that there has also been a new noncompliance issue that has arisen that DEP has informed the town of.

**White Water & Pepperell Contract Update**

Mr. Huber reported that on July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018, there will be a meeting with Pepperell, White Water, DEP and the Commission on site at the wells to talk about next steps. There have been some concerns raised by the various parties. Most of them are small and should be things that can be covered by what the department has budget wise. The transition from White Water to Pepperell needs to be done as smoothly as possible. The intent is to do what makes the most sense and determine what is truly being faced. Mr. Jordan had some thoughts about fixing some issues regarding chemical treatment and related issues. It will be Dunstable's call, but there may be some engineering needs. Mr. Protasowicki stated he would be available for the July 19<sup>th</sup> meeting and Wright Pierce should be able to help. Knowing what is planned and what is needed for the site is important as it will impact the overall water infrastructure project. Mr. Jordan agreed and promised to provide further input and to help bring things up to date on the general overview. Mr. Huber agreed noting that once things are fully handled over to Pepperell, the town shouldn't wait for information to be transferred over to the Commission and then sent to the engineers.

It makes sense that Pepperell have some access to Wright Pierce. Mr. Jordan agreed, but reminded those present that at the end of the day this water system is Dunstable's responsibility. Mr. Huber acknowledged that and outlined the key components for making sure that this endeavor is tightly coupled and works. Mr. Jordan had some thoughts about identifying any further issues and problems that should be addressed as part of the project. He expressed the belief that the wells should be run

independently and the issue with pH needs to be fixed. He also had thoughts about feedback on a related problem that doesn't make sense. It could be the meter, and be as simple as repositioning the meter, but it is indicative of the need for a through overview of the system. Mr. Cray had some thoughts about the location of the pumps and different parts of the system and how they could be moved. Obviously some things have been picked up on and ultimately once the system is fixed things will improve and see a positive effect on operations. Mr. Huber noted that looking back historically at the maintenance of the system; there have always been different conditions. Nothing has been consistent like it should be. This is why the Water Department has put emergency accounts in place and has reserves. Now makes sense to deploy these resources to address as much as can be done to ensure that the system is operating at its best. Mr. Jordan agreed saying that Pepperell doesn't want to take over a system that is doomed to failure in some way.

A working ballpark range needs to be determined for the immediate fixes. The costs for immediate fixes that Pepperell wants to see done and Pepperell feels that the numbers figured so far are high and expressed confidence that they will likely be less. At the end of the day, whatever the two water departments think is the right thing, DEP has to sign off on it. Mr. Huber agreed noting that this is part of why the July 19<sup>th</sup> meeting is important as DEP will be there. Everything aside, there needs to be some kind of agreement put in place. No bills have come in yet for this transition. So there needs to be some kind of plan. White Water is now committed to another town, so they can't continue to support Dunstable. So the reliance is on Pepperell. Mr. Jordan responded that if a plan can be identified to meet all the needs, fixes, and obligations with DEP, and there is a firm commitment then Pepperell will be more comfortable with entering into an agreement. Pepperell's Town Counsel had a few concerns that need to be addressed. One is that the Board of Selectmen in each town should sign the agreement. Mr. Huber's response was general agreement suggesting that the language and criteria for approval should be the same in both towns. There are workable solutions, there just need to be commitments in place. This is not unsolvable by any stretch of the imagination. That said, Pepperell doesn't want to jeopardize its own department and needs a clear commitment. There are still a few pieces that need to be put in place, but it is now about ready. Mr. Huber agreed noting that it is up to Dunstable to make things happen. So the next steps are scheduling. Mr. Jordan finished with a few suggestions for ways to make needed fixes more affordable. These might include assistance from the Highway Department and other town bodied.

### **VFD Update**

Everything has been installed properly but there remain some things still left to do on this front. Mr. Jordan suggested a time test. Mr. Huber agreed noting that the department hasn't had an opportunity yet to exercise it to ensure it is turning on and off properly. Mr. Jordan followed by noting that Pepperell likes to see at least one well operating properly rather than worrying about two wells. So the VFD is minor for Pepperell. They would rather focus on Well No. 2.

### **Infrastructure Project Update with Wright Pierce**

Mr. Cray and Mr. Protasowicki started off with an update. They've submitted the corrective action plan for the chemical feed. This can be fine-tuned with DEP on July 19<sup>th</sup>. As far as the project itself, the elevated water storage tank is at 30 percent and that will be submitted for review soon and some input will be necessary. This will be placed on the Simmons's lot behind any public safety building would be placed. There is a memo that has been submitted with some miscellaneous data needs that Wright Pierce has. Things are otherwise in good shape. There will need to be some thought put into pipe layout and some existing services that should be addressed. Mr. Huber then brought up the issue of Complete Streets. It appears that the Water Department shouldn't have to follow on this project given the type of project being contemplated. NMCOG has been consulted and it appears that Complete Streets shouldn't have to apply. Still, Mr. Huber promised to double check with the appropriate parties to be sure. All that's being done is trenching and laying down pipe. So the only concern for Highway is the way that it might rip up the road. Still, it shouldn't classify as a redesign of the roadway substantially enough to justify consideration of bike lanes and sidewalks.

Mr. Huber then asked what the best way for Wright Pierce and the Highway Department to ensure that everyone is on the same page. Mr. Cray felt that direct contact would likely work. Plus, he noted there are still borings that need to occur so Wright Pierce already needs to talk to Highway as it is. Mr. Protasowicki had some follow up questions about Highways standards for the borings. Mr. Huber agreed to contact Roads Commission and ask for contact info for Wright Pierce to use. Mr. Nelson suggested that some of the questions concerning costs and Complete Streets should be worked on with the Board of Selectmen and the Advisory Board as they may be able to help. Mr. Protasowicki noted that the borings are just to determine if there is ledge. They're insurance for the project. So borings could be forgone, but it might not be wise. Mr. Nelson suggested that feedback to all parties involved will help to move forward. Mr. Huber agreed to keep all parties updated. Mr. Cray then spoke about some other elements of the project. There will be a need for new electrical service and a widening of the access road to the well sites. Other fixes are relatively minor. There was a question as to whether or not the pipes in the street could handle both pumps running simultaneously. Mr. Cray had a few thoughts as to what could be done. Mr. Huber went over some of the past history of the system and what has been done in the past to increase capacity. Mr. Jordan noted some of the maintenance benefits that could be realized as part of the project.

Mr. Protasowicki noted that Wright Pierce didn't draft the original scope for the project and it might be wise to redevelop it. Mr. Wilkins noted some of the strengths of the system and ways to build upon them and save money. Mr. Huber suggested that the collaboration that is happening now on this project between all parties will truly help move things forward. Mr. Wilkins then had some questions about the access road and what would be fixed. Mr. Cray went over some of the reasons for widening and straightening the access road. Mr. Huber agreed noting how the access road can be problematic in its current state. Mr. Wilkins felt that some conduits could be put in as part of that for future needs. Mr. Huber suggested taking everything into consideration holistically. Modernizing the system will also have some advantages like knowing precisely where everything is, and the contingencies for future improvements. It was then noted that the tank is the primary thing for DEP, but the upgrades and fixes that need to occur should probably be considered. So some decisions need to be made by the Water Commission. Mr. Jordan felt that road improvements should not be dropped from the scope. Mr. Protasowicki then reported on where things stand with USDA. Mr. Huber followed by speaking about the SRF which is a program of MassDOT. That program may help reduce what might have to be financed from USDA. The consent order with DEP could actually help with SRF. Mr. Protasowicki spoke about the SRF program noting that it is a loan on construction, but not on design. So what Wright Pierce is doing for design, won't be reimbursed.

USDA does reimburse for design, so both have their pros and cons. He then outlined the various procedures and how each works for funding and what the expected timetables would be. SRF has a longer more prescriptive process, and may not be conducive for the town's needs. USDA is a bit quicker. It would be a straight loan with USDA. Mr. Huber asked for Wright Pierce to provide the explanations for both to be given to Advisory Board and Board of Selectmen. There was some brief discussion regarding the interest rates and length of loans. Mr. Jordan then briefly elaborated on his experience with SRF projects. From there Mr. Nelson noted that even if the town has to jump through more hoops, a better interest rate may be worth it. Really, a vehicle has to be chosen and things should move forward. Discussion then shifted to the timetables and what would be ready for town meeting. Mr. Huber felt that the more information and detail that can be provided for voters to consider and for the appropriate boards, it will help. Mr. Cray then asked if the project is on hold or moving forward. Mr. Huber expressed the belief that the town is moving in the right direction and the project should not be at a standstill. There are a few milestones that need to be done and the collaboration between all parties needs to continue. Mr. Cray then finished by going over the things that need to be done on Dunstable's end in order for Wright Pierce to proceed. The designs won't be done until the fall of 2018, but theoretically breaking ground should hopefully happen in early 2019.

### **Route 113 Project Update**

Mr. Huber was unaware of where things stand with this project currently and stated he would meet with the Roads Commission to discuss the matter further.

### **Authorization of Accounts Payable & Payroll**

Mr. Huber started off by briefly outlining the bills he's signed for the department. These included bills for Wright Pierce, National Grid, and FM Generator. From there, Mr. Huber opened the floor to Ms. Leonard. Ms. Leonard began by noting the main issue for Water Department's budget is one with Personnel. The department was left with a line budget that was approved at the Annual Town Meeting. The budget should be bigger than the previous budgets in the past. She went over some of the different figures, specifically noting that in the past the Water Department's budget had \$19,000 for personnel. There are some holes in the department in FY19 which are mostly for clerical. Currently the Assistant to the Town Accountant is doing the billing and the Treasurer/Collector is collecting the payments. It has been proposed that a clerical position be restored to the department as it had in the past in Ms. Mann. The current proposal is to add hours to the hours that Assessors has, in order to establish a better position. The hours would then be added to the Assistant to the Accountant who is willing to take on Assessors and Water. Ms. Leonard then went over the hourly rates permitted under the Wage & Compensation Chart and the costs. It would likely involve close to 15 hours a week and a cost around \$15,000 to \$16,000 for FY19. Mr. Huber felt that the department definitely could use clerical support. There needs to be a person in the Town Hall for rate payers and other parties. This wouldn't be a big expense out of the budget. Otherwise the Commission is in agreement to the idea. The cost is sustainable to the department's budget. Ms. Leonard noted ways she can support the position given her own experience with water departments and touted the benefits of the position. She then went over some of DOR's concerns and needs for the budget. One of the things to consider for the budget is that the rates have been increased so; the money collected may come in lower than projected. She will also have to go over the budget further with Water Commission for building out the budget more. But a simple motion should cover the clerical.

A motion was made by Mr. Wilkins to accept and establish a position for clerical for the sum of \$15,500 out of the Water Departments budget. The motion was seconded by Mr. Huber and passed by majority vote.

### **Minutes**

The Commission considered its minutes from June 26<sup>th</sup>, 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 June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018. The motion was seconded by Mr. Huber and passed by majority vote.

### **Additional Topics Discussed Not Noted on the Agenda**

#### **14 Hillcrest Street**

The immediate problem of the leak has thankfully been resolved for the time being. But work still needs to be done. This prompted some discussion about the curb stop and what next steps should be taken to help resolve the issue permanently.

#### **92 Pleasant Street**

A letter has been received from the owners of 92 Pleasant Street regarding the bill sent to them for water usage after a pipe burst during this past winter. The house was unoccupied and the situation was not discovered until late March. The bill is substantial given the fact that the pipe had been burst for some time by the time of discovery. The home owner is asking whether the bill may be relieved or forgiven in whole or in part given its sum and certain family circumstances relating to why the

house was unoccupied. There was a question about how much of the bill was related to actual water through the meter or the costs for the White Waters services. Mr. Wilkins felt that knowing the makeup of the bill will help determine what the department can do. Services from White Water can't be adjusted, and they have to be paid. But perhaps some of the water supply cost could be looked into. Mr. Voelker agreed to assist in research on that bill for the Commissions next meeting.

### **Annual Service Agreement with FM Generator**

FM Generator is a company that provides the Water Department with much needed preventative maintenance on generators owned by the department. The department has had a long and beneficial relationship with FM Generator and the Water Commission saw no reason not to continue it. There was some brief discussion about FM Generator's next visit and the need to coordinate access for them.

### **Affordable Housing**

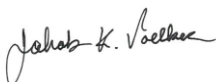
Mr. Nelson had some questions about any expansion to the system such as through the building of Affordable Housing. That project has been delayed for years and it really needs to move forward. Mr. Jordan noted that the biggest restriction is the fact that much of the pipe is 4 inches. Fixing the tank will help obviously, but bigger pipe will be necessitated. Mr. Nelson had some follow up questions as to whether a developer could have bigger pipe put in. Wright Pierce agreed with Pepperell that the biggest issue is the pipe size. A 12-inch pipe would be better. There was a question as to how many customers there are now. Mr. Huber responded 102. An Affordable Housing Project would increase the customer base by about 40 new users. It is a gamble to proceed with the system as it is and the pipe as small as it is. Mr. Huber suggested that if a developer is found that is willing to go forward and is willing to put in the 12-inch pipe that would be fine. But the department has to stay focused on getting the infrastructure project done. Mr. Wilkins suggested that if such a developer can be found, it's not a bad idea. Mr. Cray noted that this project theoretically could be done towards the end of 2019 start of 2020. So if Affordable Housing won't be ready until then, it may be better to wait a little. Mr. Jordan agreed suggesting that if the builder won't be done before 2 years, then it might be better to wait a little. There was then some discussion about the cycling of the pumps as well as ensuring proper pressure of the pumps. If more people are using water, that's where the tanks will come in. Mr. Jordan noted that it isn't supply; it's all in the distribution. This prompted some discussion of the tanks and the backup plans in place for DEP.

### **Special Town Meeting**

There was some discussion of whether or not it would be feasible to put some figures and numbers in front of a possible Special Town Meeting to be scheduled for the fall. Wright Pierce was confident that it would have figures by the end of September. So there should be firm data. Mr. Voelker advised meeting with the Board of Selectmen as there are some deadlines that will need to be dealt with for any ballot related initiatives that might follow such a town meeting. Mr. Huber suggested the Board of Selectmen be updated at their next meeting.

A motion to adjourn at 8:00 pm was made by Mr. Wilkins and seconded by Mr. Huber. The motion passed by majority vote.

Respectfully submitted by



Jakob K. Voelker  
Administrative Assistant  
Dunstable Water Department