

**WATER & SEWER COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES –August 15, 2017**

5:30 PM – Conference Room B, 63 Main Street Northborough MA

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Meader
David Pepe
Bryant Firmin

ALSO PRESENT: Scott Charpentier, Public Works Director
Tim Davison, Water & Sewer Supervisor
Dave Fox, Raftelis Financial Consultants, Inc.
George Brenckle, 3 Little Pond Road Northborough, MA 01532
Kevin Cashman, 5 Hamilton Road Northborough, MA 01532

Commissioner Meader opened the meeting at 5:30 PM.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JULY 11, 2017 REGULAR MEETING.

Commissioner Meader moved to approve the meeting minutes of the July 11, 2017 regular meeting as amended; Commissioner Firmin seconded the motion; The vote was all in favor.

2. WEST MAIN STREET PUMP STATION DESIGN UPDATE.

Mr. Charpentier reviewed the preliminary design memorandum from the consultant Woodard & Curran. The station improvements are to include new pumps, mixing system, controls, and communication gear. X-drive impellers will be specified for better rag management. The station improvements are designed to maximize the discharge capacity of the existing 4-inch force main. Additional pump capacity is available from the Smith and Loveless skid with an increase force main diameter in the event it is needed. Discussion regarding the pump skid manufacturer flexibility followed and Mr. Charpentier informed the commission that the specifications are performance based and therefore compliant with procurement requirements. He further stated that the budget of \$400,000 is tight but appears adequate to fund the improvements.

3. OTHER BUSINESS:

Mr. Charpentier discussed the Inflow & Infiltration (I & I) status update stating that year one is now complete, and the final program to be submitted to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) by the end of the year. Field work from Crestwood Drive, Cedar Hill Road, Lincoln Street and parts of South Street found minor manhole leaks, adding up to roughly 7,600 GPD. Mr. Davison noted that this section of town has some of the oldest cement pipe in the Town of Northborough. Mr. Charpentier will forward the final report

upon completion and does not recommend corrective measures at this time. The thought is to wait for a viable quantity to warrant a bid package.

A discussion of the Birchwood Community followed. Mr. Charpentier indicated that he will look in to the possibility of adding a flow meter and rain gauge to monitor flow and identify variations that may occur during significant rainfall periods. Commissioner Meader questioned the medical waivers to install irrigation systems that were issued in the past to two properties in the Birchwood Development. Mr. Davison believes that both houses have been sold and the irrigation systems have since been disconnected.

Mr. Charpentier reported that the meter project is still on-going, however installations have slowed since the last meeting and there are approximately 50 meters left to install. Mr. Charpentier informed the Commissioners that he will look in to alternatives such as; painting curb stops, adjusting pressure and sending out letters of non-compliance to the customers who have not complied.

Mr. Charpentier reported that the water model is coming along. The last model was done back in 2008 and since then the software has changed significantly. Updating the water model will assist in the evaluation of the tanks. The next task will be to have a usable, accurate GIS database married to the water model.

Mr. Charpentier reported that the Q1 bills were mailed out on August 1, 2017 with a due date of September 1, 2017.

Mr. Charpentier reported that the part-time office position has been filled and the new hire, Laurie Becker, will start on Monday, August 21, 2017.

4. PUBLIC HEARING **TO CONSIDER A WATER AND SEWER RATE ADJUSTMENT.**

At 6:00 pm Chairman Meader opened the public hearing to consider water and sewer rate adjustments. Mr. Meader read the public hearing notice and introduced members of the Commission as well as staff that were present.

Mr. Charpentier introduced Dave Fox, with Raftelis Financial Consultants, Inc. who gave a brief summary of the water and sewer rate study.

Mr. Fox stated that the rate study recommends a 5% water rate increase for FY2018. Mr. Fox noted that this is the first water increase the Town of Northborough has seen since the base charge was implemented back in 2011. Mr. Fox went on to explain that the water increase is lower than the national average during the last 15 years. The typical customer should expect to see an increase of approximately \$0.45 a day.

As for the sewer rates, Mr. Fox noted that accurate projections are difficult with the potential for a significant assessment coming from the City of Marlborough due to the expired

Intermunicipal Agreement. The rate study recommends another 20% sewer rate increase in FY2018. He added that declining increases will follow in subsequent years.

Mr. Fox explained that these are essential services and there is a cost associated with providing clean, safe services. Ultimately, he explained that we would like to get away from the volatile rate increases and have enough retained earnings to pay the anticipated Marlborough debt service.

No questions or comments were voiced from the Commissioners at this time. Chairman Meader asked if there were any questions or comments from the audience. Mr. Brenckle sought confirmation that the rate study was posted on the Town's website. Mr. Charpentier confirmed that the rate study, which is fairly comprehensive, has been posted to the Town's website. Mr. Kevin Cashman of 5 Hamilton Road discussed the sewer rate increase for FY18 (20% increase), FY19 (10% increase projected), and FY20 (5% increase projected) and questioned if the sewer rate was only being paid by those who actually use the service? Mr. Charpentier explained why the sewer rates are in flux given the expired agreement with the City of Marlborough, not to mention the recent Marlborough Westerly Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) upgrades that were completed, and confirmed that only the people who use Town sewer pay the sewer rate.

In conclusion, Mr. Charpentier added that the rate study was presented at informational meetings to the Board of Selectmen last month on Monday, July 17, 2017 and to the Water and Sewer Commission on Monday, July 11, 2017. This Public Hearing was advertised twice in the Telegram & Gazette newspaper. If the new rate structure is adopted by the Commission, the rate payers will be notified by postcard mail indicating the rate changes to take effect with the 2nd quarter bills that will be due on December 1st (a stuffer will also be included with the 2nd quarter bill mailed out November 1, 2017.)

Chairman Meader closed the public hearing at 6:15 pm.

Commissioner Pepe moved to approve the water rate adjustment as presented to the Commission tonight at the public hearing. The new water rates effective on the December, 2017 quarterly bills are as follows:

Water		
Usage/quarter	Current Rate (per 1,000 cf)	New Rate (per 1,000 cf)
0 - 2,000 cf	\$42.76	\$44.90
2,001 - 6,000 cf	\$51.25	\$53.82
Over 6,000 cf	\$63.16	\$66.32
Water Service Base Charge		
Service Type	Current Rate (per quarter)	New Rate (per quarter)
Residential	\$10.00	\$10.00
Commercial	\$30.00	\$30.00
Industrial	\$45.00	\$45.00

Commissioner Firmin seconded the motion; All members voted in favor.

Commissioner Firmin moved to approve the sewer rate adjustment as presented to the Commission tonight at the public hearing. The new sewer rates effective on the December, 2017 quarterly bills are as follows:

Sewer		
Usage/quarter	Current Rate (per 1,000 cf)	New Rate (per 1,000 cf)
0 - 2,000 cf	\$90.00	\$108.00
2,001 - 6,000 cf	\$93.46	\$112.16
Over 6,000 cf	\$97.64	\$117.17
Sewer Only Accounts		
Service Type	Current Rate (per quarter)	New Rate (per quarter)
Flat Sewer	\$270.00	\$324.00

Commissioner Pepe seconded the motion; All members voted in favor

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 19, 2017 at 5:30 pm if necessary.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Pepe moved the Board vote to adjourn at 6:21 pm; Commissioner Firmin seconded the motion; The vote was all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Jean
Administrative Assistant

Documents used during meeting:

1. August 15, 2017 Agenda
2. July 11, 2017 Regular Meeting Minutes
3. Copy of public hearing notices
4. Rate Study from Woodcock & Associates dated June 2017
5. West Main Street Pump Station Preliminary Design Findings