

Minutes of 3-10-20 Sewer Commission meeting –DPW Conference Room –520 Chase Road

Attendees: Acting Chair- Carl Luck, Members: Dave MacDonald, Mike Nault, John Reynolds, and Brett Ramsden
Business Manager-Barb Lefebvre, Minutes Clerk- Jane Ranley

Carl opened the meeting at 6:31pm.

ANNOUNCEMENTS – **Town Caucus-** March 16th at 7pm at Turkey Hill Elementary School. Barb passed out the list of openings for the caucus, which included 4 Sewer Commission openings – (2 – 3 yr, 1- 2 yr, 1- 1yr)

PUBLIC COMMENT- Barb received notice this afternoon 3/10 that Small Water Service (SWSS) will be terminating their contract in 30 days, as of 4/9/20. Barb will discuss with Heather on how to proceed and contact Town Counsel. Commission discussed updating the statement of work and options for going out to bid. In the meantime, Dave suggested asking Jack (DPW) to contact Al Packard to see if his company could come in and also contacting Hall Pump. Commission discussed looking at current and old contracts, defining the service terms clearly and involving counsel in the RFP.

Motion: Dave M.

Second: John R.

To have Jack R. (DPW) to put a call out to find a supplier.

Discussion: Carl suggested reaching out to several suppliers and documenting those contacted.

Motion amended: To have Jack reach out to as many suppliers as he can and document findings.

Vote: Unanimous

CURRENT BUSINESS –

Election of Officers-

Motion: Mike N.

Second: Brett R.

To elect Dave M. as Chairman.

Vote:

Unanimous

Motion: Dave M.

Second: Mike N.

To elect John R. as Vice-chairman.

Discussion: John said he will commit to at least May.

Vote: Unanimous

Motion: Mike N.

Second: John R.

To elect Brett R. as Clerk.

Vote: Unanimous

Carl turned the meeting over to Dave as the new chair. Dave returned to the discussion on the caucus openings. The Commission discussed the openings and agreed to assign Brett to the 3 yr term, John to the 2 yr term, and Dave to the 1 yr term. Dave, Carl and John will attend the caucus. Carl will do John Reynolds' nomination.

1170 Mass Ave Betterment- Discussion of possible impacts of 2/11/20 vote and possible motion to rescind-

Carl handed out information on 9 parcels that have similar situations as 1170 Mass Ave and noted concern that Michael Ray's request was based on cost to connect. Since Michael Ray could not attend, Carl asked if the Commission would like to wait to defer discussion to the next meeting. The Commission continued the discussion on how the vote could affect future betterments and costs to ratepayers. Carl added that within ½ mile of the 1170 Mass. Ave. property, there are 8 property owners that have a similar situation, but are not connected. The Commission discussed the parcels and possible impacts on payment of betterments. Mike suggested consulting Town Counsel.

Motion: Mike N.

Second: John R.

To present issue to Town Counsel to see if it is a unique situation, due to lack of frontage and the easement.

Discussion: The Commission discussed the pros and cons of discussing the issue at a televised meeting and the easement/frontage issue for the property. They also discussed concerns about property owners that can't afford to pay betterments and considering each case as it comes along.

Motion: Mike N.

Second: John R.

To amend the motion, to advise Town Counsel that Michael-Ray's issue was the easement restriction.

Discussion: Dave asked Carl what his goal is in having it reviewed again by the counsel. Carl said he thinks it is high risk to our customers. The goal of going back to counsel is to see if Michael Ray should continue paying his betterments. Carl went to open counsel hours to voice his concern that the decision was driven by cost and discuss with counsel how he could request to have the vote rescinded. Carl talked about the Commissioners' ability to use open counsel hours. The Commission agreed to get an opinion from Counsel and add to a future agenda.

Vote on the amendment to the motion: Unanimous

Vote on the amended motion: Unanimous

FY20 Budget status- Dave said we would hold off on the SWSS discussion. Barb passed out copies of the updated FY20 budget and said she had spoken to Karen (Town Treasurer) about pulling from the Capital Reserve Stabilization Fund. As discussed, invoices over \$5,000 would be considered a capital expense. Barb reported that the FY20 budget is at 67% of year, revenues are at 80% and expenses are at 75%. At present, revenues exceed expenses by \$56k. Barb added that Karen said whatever is not spent goes into retained earnings and is not final until the end of the fiscal year. Karen recommended adding the \$35k from the Capital Reserve Stabilization Fund into the FY21 budget to help with the deficit. The Commission discussed moving the capital money from the Stabilization Fund. Barb added that if the money is not used it will go back to retained earnings. .

FY21 Budget—Barb passed out updated copies of the FY21 budget. Barb noted that there is \$20K for general infrastructure and Jack's suggestion for a pump station evaluation. The last one was done in 2011 and cost was \$9k. Carl suggested looking at recommendations from the Wright Pierce maintenance plan. Mike suggested looking at recommendations from the 2011 evaluations. Dave said that the priority is to get the budget done for the presentation and to talk to the Leominster mayor. Commission agreed to add \$35,838 into capital. Dave confirmed that Barb will come to FinCom presentation on 3/19. **Flow Meters:** Barb anticipates Flow Assessment will require the Commission to purchase or lease new meters, for an estimate of \$4k. The Commission discussed figures under infrastructure. Barb said **I/I remediation** was bumped up to \$60k at past meetings and in FY20, they spent \$10k plus \$40k that was encumbered from FY19. The Commission discussed the figures for outsourcing (\$166k), legal and engineering. They also discussed the revenue figures and the current shortage of \$311,891. Carl noted that in FY20, they over-budgeted Fitchburg and under-budgeted Leominster. Leominster budget of \$542K would include 4% increase and meter-based bills. The Commission discussed the comparison figures for flow to billing for Fitchburg and Leominster, including percentages for I/I, along with the estimated figure for Leominster usage for FY21. The Commission also discussed the calculations for the budget increase. Barb noted that the rate increase needs to be in place by April to realize a full year of the rate increase. Commission agreed that when a new contractor is checking the pumps every day, repairs will go down. The Commission discussed calculations for a rate increase and agreed they need more actual figures before deciding on the increase. Barb will send out the revised budget and the Commission agreed to an extra meeting on 3/17 to talk about the budget presentation to FinCom and the O&M contract. Mike said they are still waiting to hear back from the Leominster mayor regarding a meeting.

Articles for Town Meeting approval—FY21 Budget, Stabilization articles – The Commission discussed the articles - #1- Budget Article, with figures defined in the motion at Town Meeting. #2- Commission the transfer \$29,000 into Stabilization Fund. #3- OPEB transfer of \$656.

Motion: Carl L.

To approve the 3 articles as presented and modified.

Second: Mike N.

Vote: Unanimous

Leominster IMA billing changeover to flow meters—discussed already. **Inflow/Infiltration (I/I) 3rd Party**

Review status— Carl reported that Woodward & Curran picked a dry week and looked at Dana St. station. They said the measurements at the Dana St. station and the Graham St. meter matched. Carl said that W&C still need the manhole inspections data from Jack. The Commission discussed and agreed to read the W&C reports at the televised meeting to let users know what they are doing to find I/I. Barb said Jack is talking to Kellie (W&C) and Carl reiterated that they need the data on the manholes. Carl added that he talked to Pat Cotton at Weston & Sampson and he cannot find the CCTV video. If the video cannot be found, they will need to use the written report.

Q3 Commitment- Barb will have for the next meeting.

Minutes for 2/18 Joint Meeting with Board of Selectmen-

Motion: John R.

To approve the minutes for 2/18 joint meeting with BOS.

Second: Carl L.

Vote: Unanimous

Minutes for 2/25-

Motion: Carl L.

To approve minutes for 2/25.

Second: John R.

Vote: Unanimous

Business Manager Report –Privilege fee 10 Whiting-- Barb said the document was signed at the last meeting. Barb had revised the Schedule A remove the recording fee of \$105 subsequently received, still liening the \$11,551.47 and no action by Commission was necessary. **33 Elizabeth St. status-**Barb talked to Counsel during open hours, who advised to send a 1st class letter. She also received the certified letter back the same day as undelivered. **Grease Trap interceptor program** – Il Forno and Lunenburg Gas & Market have submitted their grease trap permit applications. **Invoices** for Legal services from Mead Talerman & Costa for \$2,279.76. They are getting close to the \$5k budgeted for FY20. **Meter import project-** Barb does not have enough time for meter data importing and may need to hire a subcontractor to enter the data. **Irrigation Meter fee** still did not go on Q3 billing and Barb may need to do a special billing. **57 & 63 Cross Rd.-**Barb reported the properties are on the planning board agenda and they are working on taking them out of chapter. She noted that their properties are not fully contained in the Sewer Service Area(SSA) and that they may be connecting to septic, but it is something to be aware of. Carl said he believes that they were not charged betterments. Barb said that she would take a closer look at whether they should be in the SSA at all.

Maintenance plan and Roles & Responsibilities -Heather can't attend the 3/31 meeting. Carl suggested having Heather's written input on the Maintenance Plan and sending her comments to members.

Dave suggested giving everyone a copy of the working agenda.

Member Agenda Inputs for Future Meetings- 3/31- Maintenance Plan discussion, 3/17 rate increase discussion.

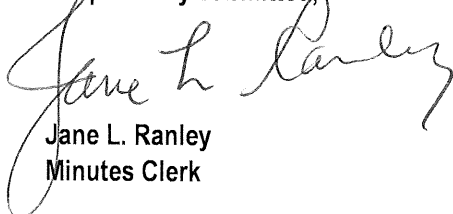
Motion: John R.

To adjourn: 9:39pm

Second: Mike N.

Vote: Unanimous

Respectively submitted,



Jane L. Ranley
Minutes Clerk

Handouts:

- List of term openings for the caucus
- Email from Deb Trumball (SWSS) with termination notice
- Carl's data on other betterment properties near 1170 Mass. Ave.
- Barb's updated FY20 budget
- Flow to Meter comparison chart for 7/2016 to 10/2019
- Draft of sewer articles for Annual Town Meeting on 5/2/20
- Invoice from Mead, Talerman & Costa for \$2279.76