

Minutes of 9/12/23 Sewer Commission meeting-- via Zoom (Video Conference)

Attendees: Chair- John Reynolds, Vice-Chair- Brett Ramsden, Members: Mike Mackin, Dave MacDonald and Mike Nault, DPW Director- Bill Bernard, Business Manager-Paula Bertram

Absent: Minutes Clerk- Jane Ranley

John opened the meeting at 6:02 pm. and did a roll call of attendees. The Commission began the meeting by saying the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT- Dave passed on condolences and prayers to Jane for the loss of her husband. In addition, the Commissioners' hearts go out to residents of Leominster who were devastated by the flooding, along with parts of Lunenburg and Fitchburg on 9/11. He thanked all the agencies, volunteers, and restaurants who have helped. Dave also announced there will be a Volunteer Fair at the Senior Center on 9/13.

ANNOUNCEMENTS - none

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD- Election of Officers-

Chair – Dave M. nominated John R. for Chair, seconded by Mike N. Dave thanked John for all his work in the past year.

Roll Call Vote: Mike Nault – aye, Brett-aye, Mike Mackin-aye, and Dave-aye.

Vice-Chair – Dave M. nominated Brett R. for Vice-Chair, seconded by Mike Nault.

Roll Call Vote: Dave-aye, Brett-aye, Mike Mackin-aye and Mike Nault-aye.

Clerk – Brett nominated Mike Nault as Clerk, seconded by Mike Mackin

Roll Call Vote: Dave-aye, Brett-aye, Mike Mackin-aye, Mike Nault-aye and John-aye.

CURRENT BUSINESS -

Minutes of 8/29/23 –

Motion: Mike Mackin

Second: Brett R.

To accept the minutes of 8/29/23. Roll Call Vote: Dave-aye, Mike M.-aye, Mike N.-aye, Brett-aye and John-aye.

Oil Water Separators – Paula reported that she was not able to find sample logs. Jake Fleming (Leominster) was also unable to find one and she had not heard back from Fitchburg. Paula put together a draft, based on ones from other communities. The draft form indicated they will need to look at the sediment, inlets, oil volume, erosion and outlets. If services are required, they will need to fill out the volume of oil removed by the hauler and will need to be inspected once every 3 months. The bottom of the form would note if they needed to take immediate corrective action if there was a petroleum by-pass or separator malfunction. Paula screen-shared the draft and explained what information is being requested. Dave suggested sending the form with instructions. Paula noted she would be sending it out to the property owners, along with a cover letter, copy of regulations and a sample form.

Motion: Brett R.

Second: Mike Nault

To accept the Oil-Water Separator Inspection and Maintenance Log.

Roll Call Vote: Dave-aye, Brett-aye, Mike Mackin-aye, Mike Nault-aye and John-aye.

Emergency Response Plan- John and Paula met with Albe (CTE rep. for the Pump Stations) and he reported that one of the pumps went down at Dana Street. The majority of the sewage flowing to Leominster passes through the Dana Pump Station. While Albe was there, the second pump also went down for a minor issue. The first pump had a check valve clogged with debris and the second pump had a small vacuum leak, which was repaired quickly. John suggested having a plan if both pumps go down because the Dana St., Leominster Rd. and large Mass Ave stations fill up pretty quickly. He added the smaller stations could go a week with 2 pumps down but it is all about preventing an overflow of sewage. Paula stated they need to have a plan detailing how to respond and who to contact if both pumps go down. She researched and found a plan template. Paula screen-shared the outline for an Emergency Response plan and will work on it with Bill, Fitchburg and Leominster. Brett thanked Paula for getting the plan started and Mike N. agreed they needed to plan before if it happens again. Mike M. stated the system is getting older and you need to plan for the unforeseen. Dave asked who would get a copy of the plan and Paula replied each person who plays a key role, including Commissioners, in responding to an emergency. She will send a draft out to

department heads before finalizing it. John will keep it on the agenda until it is finalized and Paula will send drafts out as they get completed. Paula went over the list of recipients and will add the Board of Health, as well as the Water District. Mike M. asked if the DEP needs to be alerted for an overflow and Paula replied they have an SSO form that goes to the DEP if there is any overflow of sewage. She added Conservation would need to be advised if wetlands were involved.

IMA – John noted that Leominster will be increasing their rates and hook-up charges. They do not have the final numbers but he wanted the public to be aware of the increases. Dave, Mike N., Bill, Heather and Paula will continue to meet with Leominster. Paula sent the Commissioners the red-lined updated IMA from Leominster, which included a summary chart. She also put together a worksheet to look at the impact of what the rate increases from Leominster and Fitchburg will do. She added the Commission will need to start discussing a rate increase. The worksheet will show how different rate increases will affect homeowners and businesses. Paula noted the current Connection Charge of \$2,000 will need to increase based on Leominster's increasing cost. Dave stated they will try to keep the rates under control but there will be an increase. Paula will contact Jake (Leominster) regarding any impacts and increases in debt service due to the flooding. (Dave M. left the meeting.)

ARPA Funding – Manhole Repairs – Paula sent out the priority list of manholes they want to work on. John said it appeared the Select Board was allocating money to Sewer. Bill clarified that the money has been allocated for manhole repairs and they will need to put out a contract, which could take a month or 2 to set up. Paula noted the Town Manager emailed a list of allocations and Sewer was given \$100K to address manholes. They will need to write up an IFB and she is waiting to find out when the money will be available. Mike M. asked how they will determine which manholes to target. Paula replied they targeted Mass Ave in the ARPA funding and have recently done some repairs to address making the manholes flush with the roadways. Paula and Bill will go through the list to make sure all internal repairs were corrected and she noted Richard's Way is a priority. All the manholes on Mass Ave were inspected by two of the DPW personnel and they highlighted the critical ones. Everything on the list is an issue and they informed the Select Board that they will address Mass Ave, along with roads directly off of Mass Ave as a first priority. John added that in 2016/17 every manhole in town was investigated by Wright Pierce and they developed a priority list. Some of those manholes have been repaired and Paula sent out a priority list based on that report. Mike N. stated he wished the Select Board had taken the request more seriously and given more money for the repairs. Whatever repairs still need to be done to address I/I will need to come from Sewer funds and will be reflected in the rate increases. Paula added the Commission had requested \$300K to bring the pump stations up to snuff. They are working on Capital Planning and will get more information from CTE when they are done with their inspections. She stated there is a lot of work that needs to be done and with rising costs from suppliers, it will be difficult to put money into the system without seriously impacting the rate payers. The Commissioners agreed. (Brett left the meeting.)

Town Meeting Articles- Paula reported the 2 articles have been submitted. She added Town Counsel has suggested some possible modifications to the wording of the regulations but that will not be ready for the Special Town Meeting.

Business Manager Report – Update on System Maintenance & Upgrades – Alarms/Clogs- Paula reported there were a couple of alarms at Dana Street and she sent out a tracking report for when CTE comes out, along with what they have done. She will send out the reports each meeting so Commissioners know what is happening with the system. Anything highlighted in yellow indicates an alarm. Albe (CTE) and the sub-contractor generator company will be touring the pump stations and looking at all the generators on 9/13. **Inventory & Acquisition of Pumps & Rebuild Kits**- Paula, Albe and John went to the storage shed and she reported they currently have 3 pumps in storage. They have installed a vacuum pump at Mass 1 and have purchased a spare pump for that location. CTE has also rebuilt the pumps at 6 stations. The cost for the spare pump and the rebuild kits was \$10,281.27. **Line Jetting**- Clean Basins is back up and running. Bill did not have a date yet but Clean Basins will send 2 trucks soon to get it done quickly. **Exterior Maintenance**- Paula reported they hired Katie Forester to take care of the overgrowth at the stations and she has done a fantastic job. The gates will be operational at Dana Street when she is done. Paula can

send out before and after pictures. **Assistant to the Sewer Business Manager Position-** Paula noted they received several resumes and have 1 interview set up for 9/14 and she hopes to have a couple more interviews scheduled.

PUBLIC COMMENT – none

UPCOMING SCHEDULED SEWER COMMISSION ACTIVITIES:

September 26, 2023 @ 6pm – Regular Meeting, Remote Participation

October 10, 2023 @ 6pm – Regular Meeting, Remote Participation

November 14, 2023 @ 6pm – Regular Meeting, Remote Participation

November 28, 2023 @ 6pm – Regular Meeting, Remote Participation

Motion: Mike Mackin
To adjourn at 6:56pm.

Second: Mike Nault
Roll Call Vote: Mike M.-aye, Mike N.-aye and John-aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane L. Ranley
Minutes Clerk

Handouts:

Paula screen-shared: Oil/Water Separator Inspection & Maintenance Log Draft
Emergency Response Template