

Minutes of 4/29/25 Sewer Commission meeting - via Zoom (Video Conference)

Attendees: Vice-Chair- Brett Ramsden, Clerk- Scott Dall, Member: Joe Hurley, DPW Director- Bill Bernard, Sewer Business Manager: Andrew Valliere, Minutes Clerk- Jane Ranley
Brett opened the meeting at 6:03 pm. and did a roll call of attendees. The Commission began the meeting by saying the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT & ANNOUNCEMENTS - none

CURRENT BUSINESS -

---CWMP (Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan) discussion- Bill emailed the Commissioners the Executive Summary and 1st chapter of the CWMP but could not send the whole file because it was too large. He screen-shared a summary of the CWMP which was started around 2005 and last updated in 2016. That update looked at the future of the system up to 2036. The Town determined they needed a plan for 3 factors:

---1.) there are areas of the town that are not well suited to conventional on-site disposal (Title V)

---2.) concerns about population growth

--- 3.) the limited capacity for sending wastewater to nearby municipal facilities (Fitchburg and Leominster).

Phase 1 determined there were 11 areas that needed study. **Phase 2** identified, described and evaluated several alternatives. **Phase 3** included a detailed evaluation of wastewater collection, treatment and disposal alternatives listed in Phase 2. **Phase 4** updated the plan. **The Priority areas were:** Lower Mass Ave, Baker Station, Whalom, Mass Ave/Beal St., Highland St., Rolling Acres Rd. and Pioneer Drive.

Bill stated most people that want to connect are in the Sewer Service Area and they have been following the plan. The Plan also included water conservation, stormwater management, nutrient management and developing a Septage Management Plan (SMP). The plan indicated the majority of sewer be sent to Leominster, which has more capacity and lower cost than Fitchburg. This included sending Lower Mass Ave and Mass Ave/Beal St to Leominster instead of Fitchburg. The plan was evaluated on Public Health, Water Supply Protection, Protection of Surface Waters, Preserving Community Character and Managed Growth. Joe asked if the 11 areas were not suitable for septic due to proximity to lakes. Bill replied the 11 areas studied had unsuitable soils, were near lakes or had lots too small. Joe asked if a Title 5 cannot go in, are they required to find a way to bring sewer there and Bill answered that it does not require them to do that. The report shows the areas to look at first for expansion.

---Commission Vacancies - Bill talked to the town manager about a town-wide letter going out but it didn't go too far. He added that if the Commission wanted to do their own letter, it would be okay. The Commission discussed possible ways to get the word out at Town Meeting, soccer practices and putting a letter together. Bill was able to locate the previous letter sent out and will email it to the Commissioners for edits at the next meeting.

---DPW Director /Sewer Business Manager Updates-

I. Minutes from 3/25/2025 and 4/15/25-

Motion: Scott D.

Second: Joe H.

To accept the minutes of 3/25/25 and 4/15/25.

Roll Call Vote: Scott-aye, Joe-aye and Brett-aye.

II. Quarter 4 FY25 Billing - Andrew reported the bill run was done and going out. He added it was a lot of work going over things, but it should be accurate. Brett thanked Andrew for all

his work and that they appreciated all he did to get it together. Bill noted that Munis threw 14 curveballs at him and they brought in 2 consultants but he was able to work through it all. Andrew stated it took a lot of checking and rechecking. He is hoping when everything goes into the cloud, it won't be so "wonky". Scott asked if they turned on the partial payment process and Andrew replied he will talk to Myleen.

- III. **Manhole Repair IFB** - Bill contacted Insituform and they plan on starting in June.
- IV. **iv. Town Meeting Slideshow** - Bill screen-shared the presentation for the articles at town meeting. Articles 21, 23 & 24 will be part of the Consent Calendar and Article 22 (Budget) will be presented at Town Meeting. They will need to borrow from Retained Earnings but the good news is rates will not increase. He will remind people that clogs are a serious issue and to not flush anything that does not belong there. Bill added that clogs have been down but he will keep reminding people. Bill will do the presentation which will include a summary of the Revenues and estimated Expenses. Scott noted there may be a question about whether the billing is working now and the issue of the 26% delinquency rate. Andrew stated that the demands were mailed and now the quarterly billing is going out. Demands will go out again soon and he will seek help if there are any issues. Scott said it will be a good opportunity to get the word out that things are working now.
- V. **Asst. To Sewer Business Mgr.** - Bill reported they interviewed a woman named Susan and she is going through the HR process. If everything goes as planned, her start date will be May 27th.

Future Agenda Items- Commission Vacancies, Updates from DPW/ Sewer Business Manager, Town Meeting Update, and potential new Assistant update.

PUBLIC COMMENT - Bill urged all to attend the Town Meeting - there will be a lot of important things discussed there and to make your voice heard by voting.

UPCOMING SCHEDULED SEWER COMMISSION ACTIVITIES :

May 13, 2025 @ 7pm - Regular Meeting , Hybrid Meeting

May 27, 2025 @ 6 pm - Regular Meeting, Zoom Meeting

June 10, 2025 @ 7 pm - Regular Meeting, Hybrid Meeting

June 24, 2025 @ 6 pm - Regular Meeting, Zoom Meeting

Motion: Joe H.

Second: Scott D.

**To adjourn at 6:47 pm
and Brett-aye.**

Roll Call Vote: Joe-aye, Scott-aye

Respectfully submitted,

**Jane L. Ranley
Minutes Clerk**