

Minutes of 2/12/26 Sewer Commission meeting - Hybrid In-Person

Attendees: Chair- Brett Ramsden, Vice-Chair- Scott Dall, Member: Arthur Katis, DPW Director- Bill Bernard, Sewer Business Manager- Andrew Valliere, Minutes Clerk- Jane Ranley

Absent: Dan Proctor

Brett opened the meeting at 6:48 pm. and did a roll call of attendees. The Commission began the meeting by saying the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT - none

ANNOUNCEMENTS : The Citizen Party Caucus will be March 9, 2026, at the Middle/High School auditorium at 7pm. for candidate voting.

CURRENT BUSINESS -

---Minutes of 12/9/2025

Motion: Scott D.

Second: Arthur K.

To accept the minutes of 12/9/25.

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

---DPW Director /Sewer Business Manager Updates-

--User Rates FY27- Andrew stated that they have to raise rates this coming year unfortunately. He provided and explained several options to the Commissioners. In July 2024, they raised the rates 16% across the board and looking at FY27, it looks like they will need to raise the rates 16% again. Andrew asked the board if they want to increase the minimum rate 16% or keep it at 5%. Bill noted they did not raise the rates for the current year but Leominster and Fitchburg are charging them more. Also the betterment income is declining as they are being paid off which means less money coming in. Bill stated the minimum charge is \$133 and suggested not increasing the charge for those with less usage. The Commission discussed the minimum charge and will not vote on the rate increase until the budget is finalized. Bill added that Fitchburg will be going up 7% for 5 years, of which they are in the 2nd year now and Leominster will be going up 3%. He also pointed out that forecasting usage is difficult due to not knowing how much precipitation there will be impacting usage. Bill explained the proposed budget based on past usage and the Commissioners discussed it, noting they need to keep up maintenance of the system. Bill is hopeful to have the budget nailed down for the next meeting so they can look at the numbers. Scott asked about the delinquency rate now and Andrew replied around 20%. The Commission agreed to keep the minimum low to help those on fixed incomes.

--Annual Report FY25- The Commission discussed the draft of the Annual Report prepared by Jane. Bill noted that there have been fewer clog issues since they have reminded users to only flush water and toilet paper down the system. Scott pointed out that they need to present the change of wording in the bylaw at Town Meeting.

Motion: Arthur K.

Second: Scott D.

To accept the Annual Report for FY25.

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

--Q3FY26 Billing- Andrew reported the Q3 billing was mailed on 2/3/26. Scott asked if they are able to offer a paperless billing option but Andrew said Munis is not set up to do that. The Commitment amount is \$296,299.21.

Motion: Scott D.

Second: Arthur K.

**To accept the Q3FY26 billing of \$296,299.21.
aye and Brett-aye.**

Roll Call Vote: Arthur-aye, Scott-

The Commissioners signed the Commitment.

--Waterworth- Bill explained that a salesman came in to present their cloud program. They would enter all their data along with expenses and the program would come out with rate options. However the cost for a basic service would be \$5,000/year. The advantage would be the program can forecast out future years with various options. Scott pointed out that they need to ask if the \$5K rate saves you more than \$5K in salary. The Commission discussed the pros and cons of the program. Bill stated the Lunenburg Water District and the Town of Concord are using Waterworth so they can get information on how it is helping them. A subscription would not be done now but could be discussed on a future agenda.

--Sewer Bylaw for tie-ins- The Commission discussed the wording and Andrew will do up the verbiage for the next meeting.

--Winter Commission Meeting Times- Brett suggested changing their in-person meetings from 7pm to 6pm.

Motion: Scott D.

Second: Arthur K.

**To change the in -person meeting time to 6pm.
aye and Brett-aye.**

Roll Call Vote: Arthur-aye, Scott-

---Future Agenda Items- adding new commissioners, rate increase, warrant articles, budget, wording for the Bylaw on tie-ins.

PUBLIC COMMENT - Bill suggested that if the public wants to weigh in on their potential rate increase, the next meeting on 2/24 would be a good time to do that.

UPCOMING SCHEDULED SEWER COMMISSION ACTIVITIES :

February 24 , 2026 @ 6pm - (Zoom) Meeting

March 10 , 2026 @ 6pm - Regular (Hybrid) In-person Meeting

March 31, 2026 @ 6pm - (Zoom) Meeting

April 14, 2026 @ 6pm - Regular (Hybrid) In-person Meeting

Motion: Scott D.

Second: Arthur K.

**To adjourn at 7:48 pm.
and Brett-aye.**

Roll Call Vote: Arthur-aye, Scott-aye

Respectfully submitted,

**Jane L. Ranley
Minutes Clerk**