

Minutes of 7/28/26 Sewer Commission meeting– via Zoom (Video Conference)

Attendees: Chair- Brett Ramsden, Vice-Chair- Scott Dall, Clerk- Dan Proctor, Member: Arthur Katis and Chip Wilson, DPW Director- Bill Bernard, Sewer Business Manager- Andrew Valliere, Minutes Clerk- Jane Ranley
Brett opened the meeting at 6:00 pm. and did a roll call of attendees. The Commission began the meeting by saying the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT/ANNOUNCEMENTS – Aaron Steeves, representing the 100 Laurel Lane project, stated he had a couple of questions. Brett replied that he can give his input later in the meeting when they discuss 100 Laurel Lane.

CURRENT BUSINESS –

---Minutes of 7/14/26

Motion: Chip W.

Second: Dan P.

To accept the minutes of 7/14/26.

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

--- Sewer Business Manager/ DPW Director Updates–

---CTE contract renewal- Bill reported that he put together the new bidding language and the Town Counsel reviewed it. It should be advertised as Mass. General Law 30B, which is a Service Contract. The previous contract went out as a Mass. General Law 3039, which is a Construction Contract. They are doing a 1-month extension on the current contract, to allow time to advertise it. The only drawback is if they have to do something that constitutes construction, they will have to enter into a separate contract to do construction work, such as a scheduled pump replacement. If the cost is over \$10K, he will need to go out to bid. Because there is a flaw in the law, the State could do separate legislation to allow Lunenburg to have a contract for both service and construction. Town Counsel will put together the language, and the Sewer Commission will have to vote to approve. Next it will go before Town Meeting for approval and then to our State Rep. to bring it forward as special legislation. Bill added that under 30B, they can handle and stabilize if there is an emergency. If a pump needs replacement and it is less than 10K, they can get quotes and award work without going out to bid. It would be separate from their contract.

---100 Laurel Lane Bid- Aaron and Gary Steeves -Bill reported they put out an IFB to install 3 pressure lines from the manhole to the property line at 100 Laurel Lane and only got 2 bids. One bid was \$20K but the bidder did not submit the required forms. The 2nd bid was very high at \$50K so both bids were thrown out. They will need to repackage it or find alternatives before sending it out again. Aaron Steves stated they have been working on this for 14 months and trying to figure out how to expedite things, to avoid the winter moratorium again. He noted that he is trying to get his father into the ADU this year. Aaron is a general contractor, and he can go out to find other bidders. His father paid the betterment years ago and thought the work had been done in the street, but apparently not. Bill noted he has 2 as-built drawings but found the lines are not there and they cannot cut the road after 11/15. Gary Steeves asked to clarify they would be putting in 3 lines. Bill replied there would be 1 for the ADU, 1 for the house and the other for the house beyond 100 Laurel Lane. Gary pointed out that the line from the house would be going by the ADU, so they would have just one line to the manhole. Bill responded that he would need an engineer or someone from E-1 to confirm that would be ok. Gary noted that he has been there since 2001 and no one has dug up the street. Dan pointed out that the price of the project is for digging up the road and jack hammering the ledge. Aaron asked what the next steps are. Bill replied he can use the same bid language and find out why the high bidder went so high. Chip stated that Bill controls the cutoff date for work in the road and if the weather is good around 11/15, Bill could allow work to be done. Aaron reiterated that he could get bids from side contractors he works with. Bill will send Aaron a copy of the RFB and agreed the town owes them the stub.

---Upcoming and Completed Pump Station repairs – Andrew reported they just completed a pump replacement at the Francis St. station at a cost of \$7,468. There are a couple more that need to be done, hopefully before the contract expires on 8/26. A few are under \$10K but there are also a couple over \$10K. These repairs are necessary to keep the pump stations functioning without issues.

---Quarter 1 FY27 Sewer Billing – Andrew reported that the Q1 bills have been completed, printed and it took 5 days to do them. Bill added that Andrew needs to go through every customer- over 1,000 – to check the numbers.

Andrew stated that Munis puts in numbers where they do not belong such as charging a customer \$163K for no reason. Chip asked if there is anything that can be done, but Andrew said it is the program that Lunenburg, as well as Fitchburg and many others, use.

---990 Mass Ave Expansion of Use (Sewer Regs) – Bill and Andrew met with Town Counsel to review the regulations. This property is changing a single family into a multi-family which would be charged 2 connection fees and 2 betterments. In this case, they had been charged 1 betterment and 1 connection fee but then added a bedroom, for which they collected the expansion of use fee. Bill said that Dan questioned the charge and they discussed it with Town Counsel. It is still a single family, but the owner is now going before ZBA to get it changed to a multi-family. When that change occurs, they can charge them the extra betterment and connection fees. Town Counsel said they will need to give them back the \$550 collected for the extra bedroom. Bill noted the betterments were charged to cover the cost for constructing the sewer system. They will need to assess how much has been charged so far and Town Counsel advised to be consistent in their charges. Bill noted the bulk of the sewer went in around 2005, with more expansion in 2014. The Commission discussed the betterment charges and connection fees to Leominster or Fitchburg. Bill cautioned they need to be able to justify any increased fees. Dan asked if the fees go into different accounts. Bill replied that the betterments go into their Reserve, from which they allocate into the operating budget. Andrew noted under special assessments, the remaining amount is almost \$2 Million. The Commission will discuss more at the next meeting.

---Future Agenda Items- Betterment vs Connection fee discussion, 100 Laurel Lane. Bill noted that the IFB went out to 20 companies, to include the 10 drain layers that work with the town but received only 2 bids.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Brett thanked Scott for standing in for him for a couple meetings.

UPCOMING SCHEDULED SEWER COMMISSION ACTIVITIES:

August 11, 2026 @ 6pm – Regular (Hybrid) Meeting at DPW

August 25, 2026 @ 6pm – (Zoom) Meeting

September 8, 2026 @ 6pm – Regular (Hybrid) Meeting at DPW

September 22, 2026 @ 6pm – (Zoom) Meeting

Motion: Scott D.

Second: Arthur K.

To adjourn at 6:54 pm.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Jane L. Ranley

Minutes Clerk