

Minutes of the Board of Water/Sewer Commission
Wednesday, September 27, 2023 at 4:00 pm
16C Perry Way, Newburyport, MA 01950

Present Commissioners: Roger Jones, William Creelman, Paul Suozzo

Staff:

DPS Director, Wayne Amaral

Business Manager, Thomas Watkins

Water Superintendent, Thomas Cusick

Assistant Water Superintendent, Christopher Hood

Office Manager, Karen Bush

1. Appointments/Customer Inquires

Jim MacDougall from Native Plant Trust and a member of the Massachusetts Rare Plant Task Force. He stated the task force asked him to do an inventory of a specific species of plant in the Artichoke Reservoir at the far end. He is seeking permission to drop a canoe into the Reservoir for two or three hours and look for one particular plant and nothing else. He is looking to get out as soon as possible because the window of opportunity is the first week of September and that has come and gone. He would also like to get the Board's approval to do this next year in the first week of September, 2024. Commissioner Suozzo asked that Mr. MacDougall and any other volunteer that comes with him to wear something official—a fluorescent vest, a hard hat so people know that he is there on official business and not for leisure. Mr. MacDougall said he does wear official gear that is yellow and not orange because some people think you are a hunter when you wear orange.

Commissioner Zuoazzo made a motion to accept Mr. MacDougall's request. Commissioner Creelman seconded. Vote: Creelman yes, Jones yes, Suozzo yes

Doug Gove from AECOM presented a power point presentation on PFAS mitigation.

- History of the Water Treatment Plant was given. 2023 the focus is to create a PFAS treatment system concept design.
- History and timeline of PFAS regulations. 2016 regulation was 70 ppt, 2020 regulation was 20 ppt, the proposed for 2023 is 4 ppt. Compliance is expected to start end of 2026.
- Bartlett Pond and Well No. 1 have elevated PFAS concentrations and to utilize these sources PFAS removal is required. Well No. 2 is also a concern.
- Short-term solution would be blending of sources below PFAS limit. Replacement of existing filter media with GAC (granular activated carbon).
- Long-term solution would be PFAS pretreatment processes at the source. New GAC gravity filter adsorbers or new GAC post-filter adsorbers in pressure vessels.
- GAC has an estimated life of 3 years to remove PFAS then you need to change the media. If you want to use it for organic material too you would have an estimated life of 1 year.
- Pilot program has been ongoing at Bartlett Pond using a Novel Adsorbent (DEXSORB). It is a corn based medium. This method only takes care of PFAS and not TOC.
- Mr. Gove explained the flow of the Lower Artichoke pump station and the Bartlett Pond pump station through the distribution system.
- Mr. Gove shared the proposed site plan showing the new GAC building.
- Mr. Gove showed Well No. 2 proposed pipe routing. This would be an added cost to the project.
- Benefits of GAC-removes organics, PFAS, helps with taste and odor and other chemical constituents.

- Benefits of the upgrade to operations-redundancy to filtration, new chemical storage and metering systems, operation amenities, WTR/sludge handling, possible automation.
- Project Cost-approximately \$20 million which does not include the design and permitting for the project. An SRF application was submitted in August.
- Mr. Gove shared the timeline.
- Moving forward with operations-continue blending water to stay below current contaminant level and keep Bartlett Pond offline.
- Moving forward with PFAS Project-need WS Commission backing, need appropriation to fund preliminary and final design, wait for draft SRF intended use plan for Dec/Jan timeframe, appropriation for construction by June 2024, final design completed by October 2024, PFAS compliance deadline anticipated end of 2026.

2. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Suozzo made a motion to accept the minutes from September 27, 2023. Commissioner Creelman seconded.

Vote: Creelman yes, Jones yes, Suozzo yes

3. Business Managers Report

- Mr. Watkins passed around the budget summary. He stated overall, we are on track. All the expense lines are within 25%-30% outside of the upfront insurance costs on sewer and debt service on the water side. He stated on the water expense line, we are up only 4% overall from last month and on the sewer side up overall 5%. Commissioner Jones asked if we are seeing any increase in income relative to our projections. Mr. Watkins said water revenue is up almost \$450,000 from last month and the sewer is up a little over \$592,000 from last month. Water deficit is down by \$186,000 and the sewer deficit is down \$210,000 from last month. Mr. Amaral said we should talk about the budget in more detail in January and February because we don't have enough money to fund 12 months. All DPS departments are always in a spending freeze during the last couple of months of the fiscal year and that is no way to run an organization. It is unacceptable. The group talked about a reserve fund with a comfortable amount of \$100,000.

Commissioner Suozzo made a motion to accept the Business Manager's report. Commissioner Creelman seconded.

Vote: Creelman yes, Jones yes, Suozzo yes

4. New Business

- Artichoke River Woods Parking Plan. Mr. Cusick said as long as they have permitting, it's allowed. He believes the Planning Board did their due diligence.

Commissioner Suozzo made a motion to expand the parking spaces as requested. Commissioner Creelman seconded.

Vote: Creelman yes, Jones yes, Suozzo yes

5. Old Business

- **Water Sewer Bill Adjustment Policy.** Mr. Watkins stated last month's concern by the Commission was they wanted to see that we back charge for any balances up to a year in the case where a customer

owes the City money as a result of being under-charged on previous bills due to errors on the department's part. This is now reflected in paragraph two.

*Commissioner Suozzo made a motion to support this change in policy. Commissioner Creelman seconded.
Vote: Creelman yes, Jones yes, Suozzo yes*

- **Privilege Fee Notice.** Ms. Bush stated she spoke with Jill Brennan in the Assessor's Office and the notice is generated by David Shaw, Collection Systems Supervisor. If there is new development that comes in within the betterment area he sends the information to the Assessor's Office and they put together the privilege fee notice letting the Commissioners know there is a betterment on the property. Jill said they do not put a price on the notice because the owner can pay up front or over 20 years on their taxes.
- **Septage Policies.** There were a few revisions made to the documents that were requested by the Commissioners at last meeting. They are being presented the revised version and voted last meeting on the changes.

6. Confirm Next Meeting: October 25, 2023 at 4:00 pm

7. Warrant and Contract Signing

Commissioner Jones asked about the car cleaning fee. Mr. Amaral said when someone is hired they get one detail cleaning of their City vehicle.

*Commissioner Creelman made a motion to approve the warrants as presented. Commissioner Suozzo seconded.
Vote: Creelman yes, Jones yes, Suozzo yes*

8. Adjournment

Adjourned 5:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted By: Karen Bush