

Minutes of the Board of Water/Sewer Commissioners
September 24, 2014
4:30 p.m.
Location: 115 Water Street

Present

Commissioners: Chairman David Hanlon, Commissioners Robert Cook, John Tomasz, Larry Kelley and Roger Jones.

Staff: Tony Furnari, DPS Director; Joe Dugan, Chief Operator; Robert Bradbury, Assistant Chief Operator; Jamie Tuccolo, Sewer Collections Superintendent; Paul Colby, Superintendent Water Operations, Dan Lynch, Distribution Manager; Lisa Valcich, Business Manager; Nick Pepe, Assistant Engineer, Jon-Eric White, Engineer

Guest: Pieter Hartford, OPM; Kent Nichols, Weston & Sampson; Tracy Blais, Newbury Town Hall

Customers: William Desmond – 14 Farrell Street

1. Appointments/Customer Issues

Catherine McKay – 6 Morin Street appealing abatement. Ms. McKay was scheduled to attend the commission meeting but was not in attendance. The Commissioners again reviewed her abatement. Commissioner Tomasz made a motion to deny, seconded by Commissioner Kelley based on no added information to suggest that someone else used her water. Commissioner Jones indicated that contactor should be notified and asked if he did use water at that property. Vote all in favor of final denial of abatement: 5 yes Unanimous

William Desmond – 14 Farrell Street appeared before the commission with his son. Mr. Desmond was appealing his June 15, 2014 bill which amounted to \$277.98. Mr. Desmond cannot offer an explanation as to why his bill was so high. The Commission sub-committee reviewed account and based on history of payments and consumption averages, granted Mr. Desmond abatement in the amount of \$74.39m leaving a balance of \$203.59. Mr. Farrell appealed based on history of usage and past practices. Commissioner Cook motioned to abate based on average past bill, seconded by Commissioner Tomasz. Vote: 4 yes, 1 No

Tracy Blais – Newbury Town Hall addressed the commission indicating that deferred maintenance has led to septic system at capacity and they are trying to address. She asked if the Board would consider the Newbury Town Hall hooking up to Newburyport Sewer System, primary route – top of Marlboro Street. She has been working closely with Dan Lynch and Jamie Tuccolo and they do not have any issues in regards to Newbury Town Hall tying into the septic. It would only be the Town Hall and they are in discussions at this time for a new facility. Jamie Tuccolo indicated that daily flow change would be minimal. Commissioner Hanlon indicated he would want our engineers to design. Jamie Tuccolo recommended someone to Tracy and Commissioner Hanlon is in agreement with that recommendation. Commissioner Hanlon indicated the Board would need something from the Board of Health that their system is failing and there is little to no reserve. Commissioner Kelley asked what the distance between water and sewer. Traci indicated that they are on opposite sides of street and clears 10 foot separation.

Commissioner Cook suggested the Town of Newbury assists and supports the City of Newburyport in bonding help if we are at limits for bonding. Commissioner Cook indicated that the town of Newbury did not participate in the Wastewater Plant bonding. He suggested that a Memorandum for Understanding that benefits this issue. Tracy indicated she would need to get buy in before she commits. The Town of Newbury would pay Newbury Sewer approved rates. Commissioner Kelley motioned to accept proposal with the restriction that it is only the Newbury Town Hall and all requirements and engineering documents are submitted. Vote: 5 yes unanimous

2. Approval of Minutes/Bills/Transfers

July 23, 2014 Minutes – Commissioner Tomasz made a motion to accept, seconded by Commissioner Cook. Voted: 3 Yes, 0 No, 2 Abstained– Motion passed.

3A. Wastewater Treatment Facility Improvement Project:

Contract 1 Status: Pieter Hartford presented report and indicated he was holding \$4,000.00 pending LEED Certification. Leed Certification scored very high points, enough for gold status but the application was denied due to one issue regarding air quality. We can re-submit at a cost of \$800.00.

Commissioner Cook asked if we could promote that we achieved enough points to reach gold status without the actual certification. Kent Nichols, Weston and Sampson indicated paperwork is still going back and forth with HVAC designer. There are three limited questions to come back - # of occupants, rooms in lab with balance, and ancillary room about break room. These questions need to be answered before Leed Certification can be achieved. We are very close to finalizing these last requirements that would allow us to be LEED gold certified but the question is whether it is important to the City to acquire certification. Commissioner Hanlon asked what the levels of certification are. Kent indicated they are Platinum, Gold, Silver and Basic. It would cost \$800.00 application fee and minimal costs from Western and Sampson to accomplish last tasks to get certification. Commissioner Tomasz made a motion to move forward with the application for certification at \$800.00 plus W&S cost, seconded by Commissioner Jones. Commissioner Kelley wants clarification on what we get for those additional dollars. Voted: 4 Yes, 0 No, 1 Recused.

Pieter Hartford indicated that the Shed Roof to be constructed over the existing HVAC units. He also indicated they were addressing problematic fire alarm pull boxes that have to be moved.

Contract 2 Status: Fence replacement project advertised, original bid opening scheduled for September 25, 2014 but needed to be moved to Tuesday, September 30, 2014.

Amendment No. 8 needed to be signed by commissioners for 115 Water Street, no increase in budget. Commissioner Jones motioned to approve Amendment 8, Commissioner Cook seconded. Voted: 5 Yes Unanimous

Commissioner Hanlon mentioned Western and Sampson as built and indicated he met with the Mayor and Kent and all ok with \$40,000.00 for Waste Water project to close out project. Commissioner Tomasz made a motion to approve, Commissioner Jones seconded. Voted: 4 Yes, 0 No, 1 Recuse

3B. WTP and Distribution System Upgrade Project:

Pieter Hartford indicated that Phase 1 punch list reduced to \$0, balance remaining for final paving is \$12,000.00. For Phase 2 Status – final paving balance remaining is at \$15,000.00. Total of both Phases money held equals \$27,000.00. Final costs of project will be done the end of October. Pieter indicated the need for signature for AECOM Amendment 1. Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Jones. Voted: 5 Yes, unanimous

Commissioner Cook asked that with all warrants to keep track of Plum Island Legal costs separately. Tony Furnari indicated that the Business Office is already tracking separately.

4. Water Treatment Plant Report –

Paul Colby indicated that for the Reservoir project that the discharge pipe was in, upstream intake is formed, base is poured and walls are pouring this week. Project is on schedule. He is taking samples and analyzing algae in Bartlett Spring at a cost of \$1500.00. If retesting is needed it could be an additional \$750.00.

Paul Colby mentioned upon his retirement on September 30, 2014, Tom Smolski would be the primary contact until Paul's position is filled. Paul will continue on as a consultant as Laboratory Director until a replacement can be found. Commissioner Kelly asked when will they have samples for the reservoir bottom, remove and stock pile. They will sample but will be able to leave on site if arsenic level is low. Commissioner Cook asked if the Wastewater plant laboratory could serve as water plant laboratory. Joe Dugan indicated that the Wastewater laboratory does not need to be certified the same as the water plant laboratory does. They would not be able to combine the two functions.

5. Water Construction Report –

Dan Lynch indicated that the hydrant fixes on Plum Island are on-going and he is currently waiting for material to show up. Dan mentioned his crew are doing a great job on the Jackson Street project and indicated there are two service connections left and tie in to the other two streets. The next project his crew will be starting is Riley Ave. His crew has repaired water breaks on Parker Street and replaced a valve. Can is reviewing plans for CVS as they pertain to Water. He expects city hydrant flushing to start the second or third week of October. The leak detection survey is complete; he will receive final report soon. The city's leak detection survey is performed every other year.

Commissioner Hanlon made a motion to accept the Water Treatment Plant report and the Water Construction report, Commissioner Tomasz seconded. Vote: 5 yes unanimous

6. Sewer Superintendent's Report

Jamie Tucculo asked that the commissioners make a motion to accept the Sewer Policy 2.01 amendment in regards to the responsibilities of Plum Island property owner's with grinder pumps. Chairman Hanlon made a motion to approve, Commissioner Tomasz seconded the motion. Vote = 5 yes unanimous

Jamie indicated that he has hired two SLM workers, both started work on September 2, 2014. This is the first time collections has had a full crew in three years.

Jamie reviewed lift station report by BETA indicating that Graf Road lift station is at capacity and he cannot allow any more flow into that station. He indicated that he had discussed four options with the

Mayor and members of her finance team and it was decided at that meeting the option 2 to expand the Wet well would be the best option for the City. Jamie indicated that he would be looking for approximately \$2M to bond and the rest of the project funding could be obtained from internal funds. Lisa Valcich, Business Manager, explained to the Commission that we currently have \$386,496.00 in CIP – Graf Road Force Main Account, we have included a request for \$500,000.00 in grant application with the Mass Works Grant submitted by the City’s grant writer. We are also applying for Chapter 29 Sewer Rate Relief funds, and have undesignated funds we could use for this project. Commissioner Hanlon requested that we slow down on this request and provide a detailed breakout of project costs and associated funds and timelines. Commissioner Hanlon also indicated that before the Mayor considers such options, the Joint Commissioners need to be notified and given the information first. The Joint Commission needs to have the opportunity to do their job. Commissioner Hanlon should be notified first and discussed with Commission. At this time, the Commission does not agree and would like to pick this back up at our next meeting on October 22, 2014. Commissioner Hanlon requested a detailed breakdown in the next Commission packet.

7. Sewer Pretreatment Report

Presented in package by Joe Dugan. Commissioner Tomasz made a motion to accept and Commissioner Cook seconded motion. Voted to accept: 5 Yes unanimous

8. Sewer Chief Operator’s Report

Chief Operator indicated the plant has been running very well in the anoxic mode of operation flow through. He also found that running with the anoxic mode has reduced sludge and saved and dropped on chemical usage. He would like to look into putting mixers in the first tank for slow mixing. The mixers would mix the wastewater slowly and reduce the dissolved oxygen level to below .5 mg/l Today they can’t do that and on good days they only get .7 or .8 mg/l. Tony Furnari indicated he would make recommendations at budget planning. Joe Dugan mentioned that ongoing scum valve needs to be repaired. Commissioner Tomasz moved to accept the Sewer Chief Operator’s report and Commissioner Jones seconded the motion. Voted: 5 yes unanimous

9. Director’s Report

Director Furnari indicated he has advertised quite extensively for the Water Treatment Plant position and has not had a lot of success. Recently he has received a few more applicants and he is interviewing 3 candidates next week. Director Furnari also indicated that he has successfully identified a new Deputy Director to replace Andrew Lafferty who has left the City. The new Deputy Director, Wayne Amaral will be starting on October 20, 2014. Mr. Amaral is currently the manager of traffic and engineering in Cambridge. Mr. Amaral will be dealing with Snow and Ice and sidewalk issues. He also indicated that he filled position for SLM and vacant water position that was open filled Matthew Boucher who starts on October 6, 2014. He is currently interviewing for Truck Driver. Director Furnari also indicated that the Merrill Street Project is complete. Commissioner Hanlon motioned to accept the Director’s report and Commissioner Cook seconded. Voted: 5 yes unanimous

10. City Engineer’s Report

Jon-Eric indicated that the initial 16 hydrants are still in need of repair on Plum Island. He mentions the delay on the City’s part had to do with the CDM design in which he indicated make sure everything is

stainless steel, if it is ductile it will be poly wrapped. He has waited for final design – on July 7th conventional mega lugs in spec which were ductile iron and the plans were rejected. Dan Lynch and Jon Eric reminded them that the need is for stainless steel rods. The aforementioned is why there has been a three month delay as the contractor is not specifying correct material. Jon-Eric mentions that the Attorney General is pointing to the City and the Commission on delaying the project when in reality it is because CDM is not ordering the right material. Commissioner Hanlon asked why CDM is not changing the material and Commissioner Hanlon wondered if there was a breakdown in communication. Are they presuming a compromise?

CDM Grant – Round 2 Sea Level Rise – need for Commissioner Support.

DPS Administrative Building – Jon-Eric will be project managing the project with the departure of Andrew Lafferty. Jon-Eric expects the final design to be complete in a couple of weeks. Mr. White would like for Commission to understand that he is a professional Civil Engineer specializing in Civil Site not structural HVAC Building Engineer and he is not qualified to make decisions regarding HVAC but he will project manage as DPS has no budget to hire someone, we will need to rely on CSS. Director Furnari mentioned he would bring in a consultant to help with HVAC and electrical

West End Easement – Jon-Eric mentioned no formal Easement and a design for easement was created. He indicated the need to look at sewer access for construction vehicles and a layout of the road to get easement – the engineering firm that was looking at this was let go as Jon-Eric believed his team (Nick Pepe and himself) could take over. The previous engineered road would have undermined property and now there is a need to move the road and have it surveyed. His team is redesigning the whole project. Nick Pepe presented a new view of the survey – purpose of road was to get access to existing sewer, utilize manhole and now City Engineering team is proposing a new sewer line will tie back into the existing system. Commissioner Hanlon wanted a recap of original design. Commissioner Cook mentioned team had strayed from original intent. He wanted to know why team was leaping ahead. Nick Pepe explained that there was a need to shift the road away from three houses that would have undermined their properties. Next steps are to close Con Com hearing, final design and change in scope. Jon Eric needs to look at the numbers – can we piece meal south road, north road. Project might not be all at once. North Road is the oldest and most corrosive. Very likely to have issues. Jon-Eric needs to come back to commission with updates and look at need for budget. Motion on verbal made by Commissioner Cook, seconded by Commissioner Jones. Voted: 5 yes unanimous.

11. Business Manager Report

- Lisa Valcich reviewed fiscal year to date numbers for August. As of 8/31/14, we are at 17% through the fiscal year. As of month-end, the funds had used the following percentage of their FY2014 operating budget:
 - Water Enterprise Fund: 29%
 - Sewer Enterprise Fund: 24%

Operating budget showing higher percentage spent than percentage through the year and deficit balance based on several factors which include early charges to budget that are one time annual charges such as Appropriated Retirement, Workers Comp, and Municipal Insurance. In addition, debt principal and interest is paid semi-annually at beginning of fiscal year and at midyear. As we move through the fiscal year, the budget against expenses will level.

Lisa also reviewed the issue the department had regarding the Billing Vendor sending out leak notices to 4000 customers that were NOT supposed to receive them. Within a couple of days, the issue was addressed and customers received leak retraction letters as a follow up. The business office will be looking alternative options of Billing Services. Commissioner Hanlon made a motion to accept Business Manager Report, seconded by Commissioner Tomasz. Voted 5 Yes unanimous

Bills Payable: Commissioner Tomasz made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Kelley to accept August 1, August 15, September 1, and September 15th bills payable as presented. Vote: 5 yes unanimous

12. New Business

Director Furnari presented a contract for AECOM to provide on-going technical support, assist with grant writing applications, engineering response reports on a time and material basis. Commissioner Kelley motioned to accept contract, seconded by Roger Jones. Voted: 5 Yes unanimous

Contract submitted to Commission for MPH Environmental for Plum Island Area – Pilot program; hydrant band and other metallic component repairs. Commissioner Jones motioned to accept MPH contract, Commissioner Tomasz seconded. Vote: 5 yes unanimous

Commissioner Kelley asked if there has been any consideration on water usage at the new harbormaster facility scheduled to be built that will offer services to boaters that include showers, etc. The harbormaster is an enterprise account within the city, the same as the water and sewer enterprise accounts. Commissioner Kelley asked that it be put on the next agenda for discussion.

Next Meeting:

October 22, 2014 @ 4:30 p.m. – 115 Water Street

Submitted by:

Lisa Valcich