

Minutes of the Board of Water/Sewer Commission
Wednesday, June 28, 2023 at 3:45 pm
16C Perry Way, Newburyport, MA 01950

Present Commissioners: Roger Jones, William Creelman, Daniel Simon, Paul Suozzo

Staff:

DPS Director, Wayne Amaral

Business Manager, Thomas Watkins

Chief Operator Sewer, Chris Pratt

Office Manager, Karen Bush

1. Appointments/Customer Inquires

None

2. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Simon made a motion to approve the minutes from the last two meetings. Commissioner Suozzo seconded.

Vote: Creelman yes, Jones yes, Simon yes, Suozzo yes

3. Business Managers Report

- The new Business Manager, Tom Watkins introduced himself to the Commission. Told the Commission if there was anything in addition to what had already been being provided by the former Business Manager to let him know. Commissioner Simon asked that he provide some trending reports.
- Mr. Amaral suggested that from time to time each Manager come in individually to a particular meeting to give a report on the projects they are working on.

4. New Business

- Chris Pratt introduced a few policies to the Commission. The Septage Hauler's Permit and the Septage Policy was in one document. He is requesting that it be broken up into two documents. Once someone gets the policy they don't need it again every year unless it changes. If you approve the rate increase, it will change every year to reflect that. The prohibited discharge parameters could change so it would need to be updated. If everyone agrees to the language in the Permit it shouldn't have to change. The Permit will be redone on Water/Sewer Commission letterhead. Mr. Pratt feels that on page 1 of the policy the last line of 2.0 be deleted. Mr. Pratt will bring a new draft of the documents to the next meeting.
- Mr. Pratt presented a septage disposal rate comparison sheet. The sheet tells you that we are in the ballpark. Some are higher, some are lower. Our cost per gallon may seem high but Greater Lawrence, South Essex Sewerage District (SESD), Haverhill can treat sewage a lot cheaper than we can because they are so much bigger. Commissioner Jones asked if they have a lot of people with these permits. Mr. Pratt said they currently have two. The plant helped out the City by allowing Red's to dump because Red's cut their rate for the City knowing they could dump at the plant. The plant no longer takes portable toilets. Mr. Pratt recommended keeping this pay structure rather than charging by the gallon because you need a meter to monitor it. It is very unlikely the plant would get a truck with more than 3,000 gallons. Commissioner Simon asked if a lab analysis was done on every load and Mr. Pratt said they do a Ph analysis (6.5-8.5), check for oil sheen and odor.

- Mr. Amaral said he is aware of inflation and the department needs to adjust accordingly. He stated that we can't hold the rates and still provide a level of service. This is a minimal increase. Mr. Pratt's recommendation if the Commission adopts the pay increase schedule would be to reevaluate every year during budget season. We want to be competitive with the surrounding communities.
- Mr. Amaral suggested taking the rate structure out of the policy and write the policy per the latest version of the rate structure shall be followed. That would allow us to change the rate any time we want. Mr. Amaral stated when we write the permit it should reference the latest version of the policy. The Commission would vote on three different documents.

Commissioner Simon made a motion that Chris Pratt create a new policy document, a new application document and a new rate table. Commissioner Creelman seconded.

Vote: Creelman yes, Jones yes, Simon yes, Suozzo yes

- Correspondence from Town of West Newbury. Mr. Amaral said he spoke with Angus Jennings, the Town Manager. Mr. Amaral communicated that we haven't done any work in the last three or four months on the project. Mr. Amaral wants to have one voice when we meet with West Newbury and Newbury. Commissioner Jones asked if they were using the extra water that the Commission voted to allow. Mr. Amaral said we have not been in communication with them to see what exactly they need and it triggers the need for an updated IMA.
- Turn-on and Turn-off Policy. Mr. Amaral stated the fees did not change. Commissioner Simon said this policy doesn't include the situation that we encountered with the guy not being home and his water was not turned back on. That is the issue that needs to be in this policy. If the owner is not home we are not going to turn the water back on. Mr. Amaral will make the change.
- Meter Tampering Fee. Mr. Amaral presented the policy. Nothing has changed with regard to the fees and it is the existing policy. He just wanted it to be in writing and have an official policy so it could be referenced by the staff to anyone that questions the charges.

Commissioner Simon made a motion that we approve the meter tampering fee as proposed. Commissioner Suozzo seconded.

Vote: Creelman yes, Jones yes, Simon yes, Suozzo yes

5. Old Business

- Signatory Authorization. Mr. Amaral asked about a policy and was told we did not have one but to go ahead and create one. Mr. Amaral created a policy and the Mayor and Finance Director approved the non-highlighted area. Mr. Amaral said this is what we talked about last meeting but wanted the Commission to see it in writing. Board needs to vote on the contract or agreement at a meeting and once it passes only one signature will be required on the agreement or contract.

Commissioner Simon made a motion that we accept the Signature Authorization proposed by the DPS Director. Commissioner Suozzo seconded.

Vote: Creelman yes, Jones yes, Simon yes, Suozzo yes

6. Confirm Next Meeting: August 23, 2023 at 3:45 pm

7. Warrant and Contract Signing

Commissioner Simon asked what the BETA invoice was for. Mr. Amaral said it was for oversight for Philips Drive. He also questioned GEC. It was for survey services to determine where the water lines are on Noble Street.

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

8. Adjournment

Adjourned 4:55 pm.

Respectfully Submitted By: Karen Bush