

Minutes of the Board of Water/Sewer Commission
Wednesday, September 21, 2022 - 4:00 pm
16C Perry Way, Newburyport, MA 01950

Present Commissioners: Roger Jones, William Creelman, Sandy Friede, Daniel Simon

Staff:

Deputy Director, Jamie Tuccolo

Business Manager, Julie Spurr Knight

City Engineer, Jon-Eric White

1. Appointments/Customer Inquires

- Debra Metivier, 9 Hutchins Road, Newbury – Ms. Metivier came before the Board to get permission to sell her stubs to a builder on a vacant piece of land. She brought with her an old site plan that did not clearly and accurately show the lot location and size of the parcel in question. Mr. Tuccolo suggested she come back with that information and she will appear at the October meeting.
- David Shepard, 6 Pine Street, Newburyport – Mr. Shepard appeared and summarized the information that he submitted with his two abatement requests. He stated that due to unforeseeable circumstances he was not able to repair the toilet until he came back from Florida. Commissioner Friede asked to see the prior usage and Ms. Knight produced a consumption report that showed that he had just bought the property so there was no prior usage to speak of.

Commissioner Simon made a motion to deny the abatement. Commissioner Friede seconded.

Vote: Creelman yes, Jones no, Friede yes, Simon yes

- Thomas Tormey, 4A Chapel Street, Newburyport – Mr. Tormey appeared and explained that his leak was due to the irrigation company presumably not closing a valve. They came back and closed it but only after a significant amount of water being lost. Commissioner Jones felt that the responsibility with the water loss was with the irrigation company. Mr. Tormey said he has repeatedly contacted the company but has not received a call back or response to the e-mails.

Commissioner Creelman made a motion to approve the abatement. Commissioner Friede seconded.

Vote: Creelman yes, Jones yes, Friede yes, Simon yes

2. Business Managers Report

- Ms. Knight informed the Board that an irrigation abatement request came through that was approved for 1 Market Square. This building is City property and is leased by the Firehouse and Sea Level Restaurant. She will be reviewing the lease to see who installed the irrigation and who is responsible for maintaining it.
- Ms. Knight reviewed the Water and Sewer Budget Summary. Water is 21% expended with total expenditures at \$1.9 million and total revenue at \$877 thousand. Water is running in a deficit but that is expected at the beginning of the year. Sewer is 21% expended with total expenditures at \$1.6 million

and total revenue at \$1 million. Again, Sewer is running in a deficit but that is expected at the beginning of the year.

- Ms. Knight shared a chart showing consumption. For the month of August consumption was up. Consumption in 2022 was 11.4 million cubic feet as compared to 9.3 million last year at the same time.
- Commissioner Smith asked Ms. Knight how do we know we are on balance for expenses and revenues. He asked if that can be shown in chart form. Ms. Knight said she could produce that as well as share the debt schedule as requested by Commissioner Jones. She noted that it would be a percentage of usage by water for the revenue figure.
- Ms. Knight presented the Board with the Water and Sewer bill and asked them to review and make changes. She shared with them a bill from her Town of North Reading and pointed out the features she liked.
- The Board was presented with the Water construction fees and requested they review and make the changes based on the Environmental Partners study that she will send to them again. She would like the Board to take a vote at the next meeting. If approved the new rates could be shared with residents through reverse notification or an insert with the quarterly bills.
- Ms. Knight asked the Board to sign the contract for inspectional services between BETA Group and the City which they had received in their packets.

Commissioner Creelman made a motion approve the Inspectional Services contract. Commissioner Simon seconded.

Vote: Creelman yes, Jones yes, Friede yes, Simon yes

3. Old Business

- Mr. Tuccolo gave an update on water resources and reported for the month of September there was 4.7" of rain, 10" shy of last year. We are still in a Level 3 drought and Mr. Cusick, Water Superintendent recommended staying with the restrictions and making no changes. Commissioner Friede asked if the restrictions had an impact on revenue. Mr. Tuccolo said residents can still water within the scheduled hours—it is not a water ban so there won't be a hit to revenue. Commissioner Jones asked about the algae issue in the Upper and Lower Artichoke. Mr. Tuccolo reported that Mr. Cusick reported it was under control.
- Jon-Eric White, City Engineer was present to discuss the Lower Artichoke dam proposal from Tighe & Bond. He reported that test borings would take place to determine if dam is solid. He reported that during those tests if they came across a problem they would address it. The dam is inspected on a regular basis and inspection reports are provided. Tighe & Bond is also designing a new dam. There are trees that need to be removed. If they aren't removed they will fall and leave a void. Tom is in contact with DCR regarding how high a tree trunk can be after tree cutting. It is not recommended that a trunk be left for more than five years because it will rot and then leave a void. DCR will tell us how long it can stay. Reconstruction will grub and remove all those trees. Commissioner Friede stated she felt the meetings outlined in the contract should be in person as much as possible as she felt public opinion was important. Commissioner Simon referenced Section 6.2 of the Agreement and asked if the City is free and clear to use all the documents. Mr. White said that section was a catch-all. He does not anticipate any problems with Tighe & Bond giving us all the documents as this is a

contract for conceptual design. We will be certain with the final design we get all the documents. Commissioner Simon referenced Section 8-Remediation and stated if Tighe & Bond makes a mistake it states we have no remedy except mediation. Mr. White said that this was a conceptual design and there is a very low risk for needing remediation but will work with agencies to find out what we can and cannot do. Ms. Knight stated that the contract goes to the Commission, then Finance, then the Mayor and Finance decides if it needs to go to legal. Mr. White asked Ms. White to include liability language.

Commissioner Friede made a motion approve tasks 1, 2, 4, and 5 of the Tighe & Bond proposal. Commissioner Simon seconded.

Vote: Creelman yes, Jones yes, Friede yes, Simon yes

- Mr. Tuccolo gave an update on the Amesbury Interconnection IMA. He reported that he is contacting Amesbury to see where it stands and will bring them up to date regarding Tony Furnari's retirement as he was the contact person.
- Mr. Tuccolo gave an update on PFAS reporting the Mr. Cusick was meeting with Brian Sadowsky from AECOM on Friday, the 23rd. Mr. Tuccolo said he would give an update next meeting. He said Mr. Cusick was prepping for the skid and scope of approval from DEP.
- Commissioner Friede reported that our abatement policy is unclear and she researched other towns policies. She sent a few examples to the Board members. She felt the Town of Hamilton's policy was very clear. She asked the Board to look at the examples sent and prepare for comments at the next meeting.

4. Confirm Next Meeting.

Wednesday, October 19, 2022 at 4:00 pm

5. Warrant and Contract Signing

Commissioner Creelman made a motion to sign the warrants. Commissioner Simon seconded.

Vote: Creelman yes, Jones yes, Friede yes, Simon yes.

6. Adjournment

Commission Jones adjourned the meeting at 5:43 pm.

Respectfully Submitted By: Karen Bush