

WATER / SEWER COMMISSIONERS MINUTES / December 11, 2019 at 6:30pm

Community Room, Downstairs, Town Hall, 39 South St, Hinsdale, MA

posted 4pm 1/9/2020

Present: Water/Sewer Commissioners Ray Bolduc, Rich Kardasen, Vivian Mason; Water & Sewer Administrator Larry Turner; DPC Consultants – Dave Prickett & James Rivers

Rich opened the meeting. Ray made a motion to approve the September 11 meeting minutes as presented; Vivian seconded, all said Aye.

Jim Rivers, Staff Engineer showed a presentation about the Phase I and II Infiltration and Inflow Study. David Prickett followed up and congratulated everyone in the room for doing a great job. He said the Town of Hinsdale's Sewer System's net worth is \$40 million. The Sewer department provides preventative maintenance, instead of waiting for a repair to occur, new pipes and parts were replaced so the system could perform without incidence. Larry keeps his paperwork in order, and has a good communicate flow with Massachusetts DEP.

Report from the Superintendent

Larry proposes to not bill residents for the remaining 3 periods for water meters. Currently, there is a surplus in the Water Revenue account. It would relieve them of paying \$62.50 off their next three water bills. He said there is no projected capital expenditure in the near future. The pumps were replaced that were given an "erroneous" reading on the magnesium levels in the town water. DPC Engineering's advice after reviewing Town of Hinsdale's data for 2 years, it was up to the town, to keep the money in a surplus account or to pay down the water meter loan and eliminate a high-interest debt.

Water leak at Camp Emerson was discovered after 2 weeks – discussion followed whether the town should bill the camp in full for 85730.8 cf divided by 100 x \$5.80, \$4,972.39. After asking DPC Engineering's advice, Viv made a motion to charge them the full invoice, with a payment plan arrangement if necessary. Ray seconded the motion, all in favor said Aye.

Discussion of Water & Meter loans –Larry proposes that the surplus will be \$440K at the end of FY2020; we could pay off the water meter payment of \$35K and the loan payment of \$122K to eliminate a \$46K interest charge. Discussion followed and no vote was made until the plan is proposed to the Finance Committee for review.

Discuss future of Water & Sewer Department – Larry announced his retirement within the next year. There is a backup water operator, Nate Murphy within Phase 1 of training. Sewer portion may be given back to the DPW for continued preventative maintenance. There were be more personnel that would need to be hired.

Vivian made a motion to adjourn at 8:03 p.m.; Rich seconded the motion, all said Aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynne Baumgartner

WATER/SEWER COMMISSIONERS MINUTES / September 11, 2019 at 1pm

Community Room, Downstairs, Town Hall, 39 South St, Hinsdale, MA

posted 9:30am 12/13/2019

Present: Water & Sewer Commissioners Ray Bolduc, Rich Kardasen, Vivian Mason; Water & Sewer Administrator Larry Turner

Viv opened the meeting.

Report from the Superintendent

Larry said we have a high Manganese level coming out of the tank. He has been in contact with Deirdre Doherty and Cathy Wanat from DEP. It is harmful to those under the age of 1 year drinking the water. Larry was also in touch with Bob Hoyt from DEP to isolate the problem. The issue may be the pump that brings water back up to the plant. A new pump is going to be installed in a few days. Current pump may have a buildup of manganese in it. Pump runs constantly, pH and chlorine levels are constantly being read. We want to integrate it smoothly with a different type of pump, and replumb it. A+ plumbing, Rick DeGeorgis will install it in the next couple of days. Bernie takes readings on 1) raw water, 2) filtered water, and 3) water coming out of the tank. Going into the tank, manganese level is low, coming out of the tank, levels are high. Notification letters were written last Friday, September 6, mailed out Monday, September 9. No feedback as yet from the letter. To head off any complaints, we will buy a pallet of cases of water, and make it available to the townspeople affected. The water will be stored here at Town Hall. Rich wants us to be proactive. If we have extra cases, we can store it somewhere to avoid freezing in the winter months.

On the sewer side, two pumps were installed and checked for Ashmere. Sewer Department has a control on causeway. Yesterday they cleaned all pump stations, performed twice a year, takes a full day to do all five. All of Plunkett Lake grinder pumps chambers have been serviced. Hopefully we can start on Ashmere Lake, there are 200 altogether. Trying to fix chambers on a few that show cracks, rather than replace, will be taking a look again in the spring. The cracks are above the water line so the sewage stays in the chamber. In twenty years, we found some sediments, but we don't have to clean them every year, every two or three would be sufficient.

Abatement discussion. One hundred thirty-five late notices (25%) went out in the mail (down from previous year which was 170). Total bills = 700 bills go out twice a year. So far this billing period, two abatements totaling \$21 based on the average water usage for six months. In earlier billings, four households got abatements where the people left the water running over the winter, because the water main isn't low enough between the main and the curb stop. Average of the last 3 summer months, and average it over the winter months to be accurate. Five households, one on Robinson Road, would have been paying over \$2,800! He took 3 months of the summer, and looked at the winter months average; came up with an abatement of \$2,049. Larry discussed this over with Bob. The household was told they would have to pay it next time, if they didn't adjust their usage. Billing error and meter error. Water will freeze between main isn't low enough between the main and the curb stop at Gary Daniels, Mrs. Anthony, John Ferrin and Country Road Estates, bleeder going through master meter. Bleeder puts water through meter as a constant flow, so no stagnant water. Jericho Road and Buttermilk Road so the line doesn't freeze. Going forward, requests for abatements will come to commissioners for vote of approval.

Talking about department after Larry retires: Water Treatment and superintendent position will be hard to find someone to do both positions; might be especially difficult to find a water treatment and/or superintendent candidate willing to take on the sewer piece. Superintendent might need a clerk to perform the billing aspect of the job.

Rich made a motion to obtain a pallet of water, Ray seconded, all in favor said Aye.

Rich made a motion to adjourn; Ray seconded the motion, all said Aye.

Respectfully submitted Lynne Baumgartner

WATER/SEWER COMMISSIONERS AGENDA / December 11, 2019 at 6:30pm

Community Room, Downstairs, Town Hall, 39 South St, Hinsdale, MA

posted 2pm 12/9/2019

Open Meeting

Approve minutes of last meeting, September 11

Discuss David Prickett's analysis

Water leak at Camp Emerson

Discussion of Water & Meter loans

Discuss future of Water & Sewer Department

Adjournment

WATER/SEWER COMMISSIONERS AGENDA / September 11, 2019 at 1pm

Select Board Meeting Room, Upstairs, Town Hall, 39 South St, Hinsdale, MA

posted noon 9/9/2019

Open Meeting

Superintendent's Report

Policies: Abatement and Other

Planning Ahead

Adjournment

WATER/SEWER COMMISSIONERS MINUTES / June 26, 2019 at 6pm

Community Room, Downstairs, Town Hall, 39 South St, Hinsdale, MA

posted 11am 7/22/2019

Set Water & Sewer Rates for FY2020 – The meeting opened with Larry passing out FY19 Water rates; and FY20 Sewer Rates. Larry Turner spoke about a proposal to eliminate the water meter fee of \$125. He said we would need a special town meeting to vote on this proposal. Right now there is enough surplus funds in the budget. All we need to keep in surplus is one-year water meter payments which is mandated by the DOR. If we eliminate the meter fee, and keep the rates the way they are right now, we will still have enough in surplus for the minimum requirement.

The water usage is \$5.80 per 100 cubic feet which is comparable to other towns. This base rate was set to pay Town's outstanding debt.

Mary Rice and Laura Galliher spoke about their 3-4 year commitment to the Water & Sewer Commissions committee. They want to see analysis by David Prickett's team before eliminating the meter fee. They feel it should be eliminated perhaps in the 4th year. They asked if we can find out what David Prickett's recommendation would be.

Rich made a motion to eliminate the water meter fee; Ray seconded and before Vivian could say Aye; there was discussion and the motion was rescinded. The Select board asked for more information before making a decision, perhaps even delaying the mailing of the water bills.

Rich then made an amendment to the motion, to give the committee, Select Board, and Larry 30 days to process David Prickett's analysis. The Water & Sewer Commissioners members, Larry Turner and the Select Board will meet again before the water bills go out at the end of July 2019 to go over year end numbers and loan figures to decide if we should eliminate the water meter fee; or lower the water rates and which loan to pay off if we have surplus in the account.

Discussion on Loan payoff – use the surplus funds to pay off the Sewer loan with the highest interest rate, without any penalties for paying early. Diane will be asked to provide details.

Rich made a motion to accept and approve the Sewer I Rates as NO CHANGE in FY20; Ray seconded, all said Aye. Since Dalton did not increase our rates on Sewer II, Rich made a motion to accept and approve the Sewer II Rates as NO CHANGE in FY20; Ray seconded, all said Aye. Larry proposed an increase of \$25 on Sewer III rates. Rich made a motion to accept and approve the Sewer III Rates as a \$25 increase in FY20; Ray seconded, all said Aye.

Vivian recommended that there should be follow-up to find out what Pittsfield and Dalton are currently charging for Water & Sewer rates.

Rich made a motion to adjourn at 6:50 p.m. Ray seconded the motion, all said Aye.

Respectfully submitted,

WATER/SEWER COMMISSIONERS MINUTES / July 22, 2019 at 9am

Community Room, Downstairs, Town Hall, 39 South St, Hinsdale, MA _

posted 3:40pm 8/15/2019

Present: Water & Sewer Commissioners Ray Bolduc, Rich Kardasen, Vivian Mason; TA Bob Graves, Ad. Asst. Lynne Baumgartner, Water & Sewer Administrator Larry Turner

Vivian opened the meeting and asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from June 26, 2019. Ray made a motion to accept the minutes as presented, Rich seconded, Viv agreed and all signed them.

Set Water Rates for FY2020 – The meeting opened with Larry passing out Hinsdale Water Department Water Policy. Larry Turner spoke about a proposal to eliminate the water meter fee of \$125. Right now there are enough surplus funds in the budget. All we need to keep in surplus is one-year water meter payments which is mandated by the DOR. If we eliminate the meter fee, and keep the rates the way they are right now, we will still have enough in surplus for the minimum requirement.

The water rate is \$5.80 per 100 cubic feet which averages 750 gallons usage. This base rate was set to pay the town's outstanding debt. David Prickett wanted to review 2 years' worth of data and Larry provided the 2 years' worth of data to him. Larry's goal is to offer the residents the best water at the cheapest price, overcharging the residents by adding to that surplus is not the goal.

If we have an extra \$88,000 why wouldn't you pay down your debt? We can use that extra money now or wait one more year to do so as the consultant advised. The town has a young system, so we are not expecting any water main breaks. Why wait another year? This could save the town over \$40,000 in interest fees, to use the surplus funds to pay off the sewer loan with the highest interest rate, without having any penalties for paying early.

Viv stated the Town hired a consultant for his advice. We should wait until next year to take off the water meter fee. Residents were told and are expecting to pay this meter fee for five years, which would leave two more years. Rich suggested that we maintain and keep the meter fee the way it is for now. Following consultant's advice has paid off so far. Any opportunity that we have to pay down debt is a great idea.

Rich makes a motion to maintain the water rates consistent to last year's rates, Ray seconded, all in favor, said Aye.

Review and Approve Water Policy Changes - #2 should read Water base rate fees will be paid in advance. Water usage fees are billed and paid after usage amount is determined. You pay in advance for base rate, and you are paying in arrears for usage. The rest of the policy remains the same.

Rich made a motion to approve the Policy as amended; Ray seconded, and those in favor, all said Aye.

Future of Water and Sewer Committee – Rich stated as Chair as of the previous meeting, they agreed to meet only once a quarter to check the progress of the finances; follow along to see what kind of changes are happening and to make suggestions. This committee will not micro-manage the Water/Sewer department. Fiscal year ends 2020, when term stops after David Prickett's analysis is complete – committee will be dissolved.

Larry provides hands-on knowledge of what is going on his departments. If he has any issues or problems he reports to Select Board and to Bob. Committee was formed to take care of a certain problem -- 2014 Sanitary Survey that we received by DEP, or take a \$25,000/day fine. At that point, Larry admitted he did need help. Committee worked hard to get that chore done. Everyone pitched in. Laurel suggested we find a consultant for outside input (professional advice which was David Prickett Consultants). Now the committee has served its purpose. There is no other Water & Sewer superintendent that has a committee to oversee their position.

Ray made a motion to dissolve the Water & Sewer Committee with our thanks, Rich seconded the motion, all said Aye.

Short discussion followed about retirement within the Water Department within the next year.

Rich made a motion to adjourn at 10:05 a.m. Ray seconded the motion, all said Aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynne Baumgartner

Lynne Baumgartner

WATER/SEWER COMMISSIONERS AGENDA / July 22, 2019 at 9am

Community Room, Downstairs, Town Hall, 39 South St, Hinsdale, MA _

posted 2:20pm 7/17/2019

Set Water & Sewer Rates for FY2020

Review and Approve Policy Statement changes (2)

Future of the Water and Sewer Committee

WATER/SEWER COMMITTEE AGENDA / July 16, 2019 at 2pm

Select Board Meeting Room, Upstairs, Hinsdale Town Hall, 39 South St, Hinsdale MA

posted 4:22pm 7/11/2019

Open Meeting

Discuss Water Rates for FY2020

Discuss future of the Water & Sewer Committee

Discuss David Prickett's analysis

Adjournment

WATER/SEWER COMMISSIONERS AGENDA / June 26, 2019 at 6pm

Community Room, Downstairs, Town Hall, 39 South St, Hinsdale, MA

posted 11:15am 6/24/2019

Set Water & Sewer Rates for FY2020

Discussion on Loan payoff

Discussion on updating Water & Sewer Policies