

WATER / SEWER COMMISSIONERS AGENDA / October 21, 2020 at 10am

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

posted 8:50am 10/16/2020

Public may attend meeting in person or by phone: **Teleconference** 413-449-5095; code 706954

Open Meeting

Review / Approve Previous Meeting Minutes August 27 meeting

Discuss Sewer Policy for new connections

Discuss Camp Romaca request for abatement

Sewer hookup – Bill Salvini

Any other business to come before the board

Adjournment

WATER / SEWER COMMISSIONERS AGENDA / August 27, 2020 at 10am

Firehouse Pavilion, Maple Street, Hinsdale, MA **NOTE:** Meeting place has been changed to Downstairs, Community Room, Town Hall posted 8:40am 8/23/2020 amended 8/25/2020

Public may attend meeting in person or by phone: **Teleconference** 413-449-5095; code 706954

Open Meeting

Review / Approve Previous Meeting Minutes June 10 meeting

Discuss Continuous Leak Letter distribution and response over past months

Discuss demand letter/tax lien protocol for non-payment of water bills.

Discuss Water Meter Loan: Pay off loan? Eliminate January billing for meters?

Discuss Camp Taconic request for abatement

Discuss best way forward for Water Sewer Department

Setting up SOPs, Completing mandated state filings; Enough time allotted for administrative duties?
What does Superintendent need for best results? What does department look like 3 years out? 5 years?

Any other business to come before the board

Adjournment

WATER / SEWER COMMISSIONERS MINUTES / August 27, 2020 at 10am

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

posted 1:30pm 10/21/2020

Public attended meeting by phone: 413-449-5095; code 706954

Vivian opened meeting at 10:00 a.m. asked if everyone could turn off their phones.

Ray made a motion to approve the June 10 meeting minutes as presented, Vivian seconded, both said Aye.
Dick abstained.

Viv said we are going to discuss the continuous leak distribution and response over the past few months. Boris has been vigilant about getting the letters out. They had several repeat leakers, two out of the three have past due accounts. We haven't given out any fines since Covid-19. We cannot turn any Utilities off due to non-payment since the Governor issued the state of Emergency. After June, we can add fines but have yet to do so. If it continues after 90 days, you will be fined \$50 a month plus they pay the additional water usage fees because of the continuous leak. Then it because part of the tax lien. When they do come in to pay property taxes, the monies go directly to pay off the overdue water bill/fines first, and leave the remaining balance open on their taxes, subject to interest. Dick said it doesn't make sense to have a policy that is not effective or enforced. This issue is on hold.

Mr. Kleinman from Camp Taconic sent in a request asking if his sewer bill can be reduced or abated due to lack of people there. The people staying at the camp went from 750 to less than 100. Bud noticed that the meter was off since last October 2020; and read zero since then. Discussion followed, Dick make a motion to award a one-time abatement of 50%; Ray seconded, all said Aye. Credit will be on his next bill.

Discuss the \$175,000 Water Meter Loan Pay off the remaining balance. Cost of each meter was \$625; so for 10 payments over five years equals \$62.50 for 280 water meter users. Three hundred twenty-three people are paying for water meters, the funds have come in and we have obtained more money than needed to pay off the

water meter loan. Dave Prickett had a letter with options for paying off the loan. The January 2021 billing for \$62.50 would not necessarily have to be collected. However these meters have a 20yr life expectancy, with a 15yr warranty. Should the meters break, if we have no money in this reserve fund, where does the money come from? Discussion followed and it was decided to collect the final payment in January and keep as a reserve fund.

An email was sent asking when the Betterments end... 2039 is the answer.

Going forward we don't want to undermine Bud. He is the department head. All the discussions should start with Bud, and if he needs to find past answers or the best way forward for Water Sewer Department – he should be asked the initial questions.

The Finance Chair send in a list of questions, that we do not have time for today. So Viv is requesting more time to review and think about solutions at the next meeting, such as setting up SOPs, completing mandated state filings; is there enough time allotted for administrative duties? What does Superintendent need for best results? What does department look like 3-5 years out?

Ray made a motion to adjourn at 11:18 a.m., Dick seconded, all said Aye.

Respectfully submitted, Lynne Baumgartner

WATER / SEWER COMMISSIONERS AGENDA / June 10, 2020 at 6:30pm

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

posted 4:40pm 6/8/2020

Public may attend meeting in person or by phone: **Teleconference** 413-449-5095; code 706954

Open Meeting

Approve minutes from January 24, 2020

Discuss Continuous Leak Letter distribution and response over past months

Appoint Scott Forgey to Water/Sewer Operator position

Discuss Camp Emerson request for abatement

Discuss Sewer pump replacement plan

Discuss letter/tax lien protocol for non-payment of water bills

Any other business to come before the board

Adjournment

WATER / SEWER COMMISSIONERS MINUTES / June 10, 2020 at 6:30pm

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

posted 11:30am 8/31/2020

Present: Select Board, Town Administrator, Administrative Assistant

Rich opened meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Ray made a motion to approve the January 24 meeting minutes as presented, Vivian seconded, all said Aye.

Viv said that we started sending continuous leak notices out in January. The numbers since dropped from 40 down to 5 which is good news. Discussion followed.

Kevin McDonough from Camp Emerson is requesting a \$4,000 abatement. He supplied history on his water usage over the past years. He paid his recent \$14,809 bill in full. After much discussion, Viv made a motion to authorize the abatement for \$4,000, Ray seconded, all said Aye. He thanked the Board very much since he cannot open this year because of COVID pandemic.

Superintendent Bud Hall announced that Scott Forgey took over the slot where Dalton Noel left off. He is Bud's lead person for Water/Sewer issues within the department.

Bud said that he is trying to replace the sewer pumps for each of the five pump stations. Lenore station has a lot of issues. The cost estimate to fix is \$6,000. Bob suggests expediting a new one, as it is critical.

Boris informed us that there are 77 people who haven't paid their water bills; 22 out of those were \$5 or less. He sent out a final notice letter with a pay date of June 29 as a reminder saying that the unpaid water bill becomes a tax lien on the property.

We received a letter from Patrick Mehr, on Rose Drive, with an issue of clear stagnant water on his property. It has been explained that this is not the Town's responsibility, it is part of the Rose Drive private water project which is from Camp Emerson. A letter will be sent from the commissioners explaining we cannot help.

Question was raised on Water & Sewer clerical staffing. Viv response was, the Select Board hasn't forgotten about the issue, but because of COVID we are a little behind.

Comment from Rich: he thanked folks for helping with the Water & Sewer Committee, (Mary Rice, Laura Galliher and Bonnie Conner who were present at tonight's meeting. Not present were Russ Parks and Dick Eastland).

Viv made a motion to adjourn at 6:59 p.m. and Ray seconded, all said Aye.

Respectfully submitted, Lynne Baumgartner

WATER / SEWER COMMISSIONERS MINUTES / January 24, 2020 at 9:30am

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

posted 10:30am 6/12/2020

Present: Select Board, Admin. Asst., Water/Sewer Superintendent Bud Hall

9:32 a.m. Rich opened the meeting

Viv made a motion to accept the January 8th minutes as written, Rich seconded. Viv and Rich voted aye; Ray abstained since he was absent on January 8, 2020.

Rich read aloud the proposed abatement policy to be adopted by Hinsdale Water/Sewer Commissioners within 45 days of the request. An abatement would be allowed on a case by case basis on the usage only. Vivian made a motion to approve the policy, Ray seconded, Rich stated it would be going forward, all said Aye.

Rich read aloud the proposed Continuous Leak letter and discussed standard operating procedures going forward. Water running through the meter every 15 seconds over several days triggers a report. The letter would be mailed out first class. The board will monitor usage for the next 30 days, and a 2nd notice will be sent, If it continues after 2nd notice, user will be fined \$50 a month until the problem is corrected. Residents can use as much water as they need, but a continuous leak is water going through that meter every 15 seconds, night and day, 24/7. It could be just a drip which causes them to be on the continuous leak report. Ray made a motion to approve the continuous leak letter, Viv seconded, all said Aye.

We received a letter from Treasurer to consider paying off USDA water loan. To pay the principal amount, which is due on June 9, it would save \$45M in interest. We would still have enough funds in surplus for catastrophic emergencies. This item may go on the Annual Town Warrant for vote if we think it has merit. We will table the discussion until we hear back from our advisor, David Prickett.

Viv made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:17 a.m. Rich seconded, all said Aye.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynne Baumgartner

WATER/SEWER COMMISSIONERS AGENDA / January 8, 2020 at 6:45pm

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

posted 3pm 1/2/2020

Open Meeting

Review / Approve the minutes from December 11 meeting

Formulate policy regarding abatements vs. unpaid personal property taxes

Discuss abatement request time limit

(Select Board Meeting follows immediately after)

WATER / SEWER COMMISSIONERS MINUTES / January 8, 2020 at 6:45pm

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

posted 2pm 1/24/2020

Present: Vivian Mason, Rich Kardasen – Ray Bolduc was out sick

Rich announced Vivian would chair this meeting since we would go right into the Select Board meeting immediately following this one. Vivian opened Meeting at 6:45.

Rich made a motion to approve December 11 meeting minutes, Viv seconded, both said Aye.

Viv said we are trying to come up with a consistent Policy regarding abatements. Considerations: A time line in which to file. Do you have to pay the bill in full before you have to apply for an abatement? For real estate or personal taxes, you pay within the 30-day time limit to avoid penalty charges such as interest and late fees. The assessors have up to 90-days to decide to take action. If an abatement is given, it can go back to the Treasurer's office, and that money can be applied to whatever else that person owes in outstanding debt.

Discuss abatement request time limit – Bob suggested making it a 60-day period beyond the invoice date. That way residents would get the invoice once, and in 30 days receive second notice with late fee added on. So the town would prove due diligence.

Rich made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 p.m. to go directly into the Select Board meeting, Viv seconded.

Respectfully submitted, Lynne Baumgartner