

Approved: 4/28/2020

**WATER & SEWER COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES – JANUARY 21, 2020**

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5:30 PM – Conference Room B, 63 Main Street Northborough MA

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** John Meader  
Bryant Firmin  
David Pepe

**ALSO PRESENT:** Scott Charpentier, Public Works Director  
Tim Davison, Water & Sewer Supervisor  
Sarah Jean, Administrative Assistant  
Julianne Hirsh, Board of Selectmen Liaison

Commissioner Meader opened the meeting at 5:32 PM.

**1. Consideration of minutes from the August 20, 2019 regular meeting**

Commissioner Pepe moved to approve the meeting minutes of the August 20, 2019 regular meeting as amended, Commissioner Firmin seconded the motion; the vote was all in favor.

**2. Water / Sewer Capital Improvement Program Summary – Fiscal Year '21**

Mr. Charpentier presented the Capital Improvement Program Summary for the Water and Sewer Enterprise Funds. Mr. Charpentier reported that the Capital Improvement Program Summary has been reviewed by the Town Administrator & is awaiting review by the Capital Planning Committee.

Mr. Charpentier informed the Commission that Town Meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 27, 2020.

**DPW: Highway/Parks/Cemetery Division**

Mr. Charpentier noted that with FY'21 we will see some culvert drainage replacement and he's hoping to have two, maybe three sites replaced as Ridge Road, Lyman Street & Davis Ave all have failed culverts.

The Architectural Access Board (AAB) is requiring the Town to make improvements to satisfy the requirements of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Mr. Charpentier stated that the project should be completed within 18 months of funding and that funds are expected to come from the Community Preservation Committee (CPC), the General Fund & donations.

**DPW: Sewer Enterprise Fund**

Mr. Charpentier discussed the Water/Sewer Operations Building and informed the Commission that we currently have the drawings and are under contract with the engineer through land use permitting, including zoning and conservation.

The new building was described as an 80' X 32' or 2,560 square foot metal building which will be built on the lot in addition to the existing building already located on the site. Mr. Charpentier stated that the goal moving forward is to bid out the site work; which will include utilities, concrete slab, shell and all rough utilities. Mr. Charpentier explained that he's hoping to award in July and have the building done by November. Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School (AVRTHS) will then complete the interior finish work for the new building. This offers students a unique opportunity and everyone is very excited about the project.

Commissioner Meader thought it would be helpful to see a North Arrow added to the plan to convey information regarding the orientation of the plan. Also, he was wondering if a double door on entry into the garage should be considered?

**DPW: Water Enterprise Fund**

Mr. Charpentier discussed the Assabet Hill Water Storage Tank Rehabilitation Project. The work will recoat the exterior of the tank, install a non-mechanical mixing system, a new 10' X 10' control shed with SCADA ready controls, and modifications to access/driveway, etc. Mr. Charpentier indicated that the work will need to be timed appropriately as the tank will most likely be offline while the Tideflex Potable Water Mixing System (TMS) is being installed. Mr. Charpentier anticipates receiving approval at Town Meeting, will plan on having a bid package together for the month of May or June and installation taking place in November.

Mr. Charpentier stated that this water quality based project may be eligible for Local Water System Financial Assistance funding through the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) –a ten year 0% interest loan will allow us to save money on interest and is something that may be worth considering.

Mr. Charpentier reports that we are getting closer on the Supervisory Control And Data Acquisition (SCADA) Systems Project that is shared between both Water & Sewer Enterprise Funds. Mr. Charpentier stated that we will work to continue chipping away at it as ongoing improvements are being made at pump stations incorporating SCADA ready components.

Commissioner Pepe asked where we were on the Dam issue? Mr. Charpentier reported that it's been pushed out one year. There will be financial & technical assistance available for Removal/Repair of the infrastructure. Mr. Charpentier believes that the project would be grant eligible and that these would be considered as the project time approaches.

### 3. Review Flat Sewer Rate Memorandum from Raftelis

Mr. Charpentier reminded the Commissioners that there was concern from some residents over the flat sewer only accounts and due to this concern Raftelis Financial was hired to perform a flat sewer rate study. This study was to include historic water consumption analysis, peer survey of methods of billing sewer only customers, and recommendations for billing method amendments.

Mr. Charpentier presented the Memorandum from Raftelis Financial dated January 9, 2020 & went on to explain how the Town of Northborough charges residential sewer-only customers a rate equivalent to 3,000 cubic feet (or 30 Ccf) per quarter. That consumption was then multiplied by the Town's current volumetric sewer rates to create a quarterly flat charge. In Fiscal Year 2019, that charge was \$340.20.

Raftelis analyzed residential use data and found that the 2018 average consumption was lower than 30 ccf. Industry experience has shown that sewer-only customers typically use more than the average residential water customer. Thus, the 70th percentile consumption, equal to 19.23 ccf, was chosen here. That consumption amount multiplied by the Town's Fiscal Year 2020 rates is equal to \$218.07 per quarter.

<u>Tier</u> <u>Cutoff</u>	<u>Quarterly</u> <u>Consumption</u> <u>(1,000 cf)</u>	<u>FY 2020</u> <u>Rate</u> <u>(per 1,000 cf)</u>	<u>Quarterly</u> <u>Charge</u>
Tier 1 (0 - 2,000 cf)	1.923	\$ 113.40	\$ 218.07
Tier 2 (2,000 - 6,000 cf)	0.000	117.77	-
Tier 3 (over 6,000 cf)	0.000	123.03	-
<b>Total Charge per Quarter</b>			<b>\$ 218.07</b>

Raftelis is recommending \$220.00 per quarter as the new charge for sewer-only customers for the next rate adjustment (Fiscal Year 2021). This reduction will result in an approximate revenue reduction of \$88,000 annually, or approximately 3% of the Town's existing sewer revenue. It is believed that a typical non-flat rate residential customer could expect to see their bill increase by approximately \$5.00 per quarter in order to make up this shortfall.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

Mr. Charpentier reports that the Forbes Road Sewer Pump Generator Replacement will be out for bid later this week, sealed bids will be received up until 2:00PM on Thursday, February 13, 2020 at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud.

Mr. Charpentier reports that the City of Marlborough has obtained new legal counsel, along with having hired a new City Solicitor and stated that nothing of substance is happening with regards to the Intermunicipal Agreement at this time.

Commissioner Meader would like to take this time to acknowledge the death of Roger Leland, member of many advisory boards and extremely active within the Town of

Northborough for over 30 years. On behalf of the Commission, Mr. Meader would like to express our deepest sympathy and stated that we are forever grateful for his assistance over the years.

**Next Meeting:** The next regular meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, March 17, 2020 at 5:30PM.

**Adjourn:** Commissioner Firmin moved the Board vote to adjourn at 6:21 PM; Commissioner Pepe seconded the motion; the vote was all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Jean  
Administrative Assistant

Documents used during meeting:

1. January 21, 2020 Meeting Agenda
2. August 20, 2019 Regular Meeting/Public Hearing Minutes
3. Water / Sewer Capital Improvement Program Summary
4. Flat Sewer Rate Memorandum from Raftelis