



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

# Town of Southwick

454 COLLEGE HIGHWAY SOUTHWICK, MA 01077

## Department of Public Works- Water Division

Telephone (413) 569-6772 Fax (413) 569-5001

### Water Commissioners Meeting Minutes Thursday, July 9, 2020

Members in Attendance: Edward Johnson, Chairman - Remote  
Dave Meczywor, Commissioner - Remote

Others Present: Randy Brown, DPW Director - Remote  
Christie Myette, Office Manager – Town Hall Remote  
Doug Moglin, Select Board Chairman - Remote

Guests: Amanda Madiera & David Nadolski- 8 Second Street - Remote  
Daniel Albano- 44 Tannery Road - Remote

Absent: Luther Hosmer

The meeting was recorded.

The meeting of the Water Commissioners was called to order at 6:00pm.

Pursuant to the Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. Chapter. 30A, Section 18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Town of Southwick, Board of Water Commissioners is being conducted at both Town Hall and via remote participation by some or all of its members to the greatest extent possible. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for the Order. Despite our best efforts, if we are not able to provide for real-time access via the Zoom Conference Call Platform we will post a record of the meeting on the Town's website as soon as we are able

Review of the February 20, 2020 Meeting Minutes  
*The minutes will be tabled until the next meeting.*

The commitment for February thru June were approved by the Commissioners and will be signed at a later date.

The Elderly Rate Applications submitted were approved and will be signed at a later date.

#### **DPW DIRECTORS REPORT:**

1. Ludlow Construction has finished construction of the water main and pump station project. MassDEP issued the final approval to operate the facility. There were a few issues during construction that have to be addresses. One being the original chlorine analyzers were not

compatible and were replaced and the Town received credit for the original analyzers. The second issue was the new pump station is not operating at max capacity. This is likely due to corrosion or closed valves in the transmission main that is restricting flow. Lastly there is additional SCADA programming required to calibrate and monitor the chemical pump feed.

2. Prowler Water Systems preformed a Town-wide leak detection testing in June. DPW is awaiting the final report.

3. Water tank inspections are scheduled for this summer/fall.

4. Lead and Copper Sampling is scheduled for August. DPW sent out notices to 20 residents requesting assistance to draw water samples. In addition, testing is required at the schools if they are open this fall.

5. Water use restrictions were put into effect in June 9<sup>th</sup> due to low flows in the Westfield River. All of Western Massachusetts remains in a drought and the water use restriction will be lifted when we are out of drought conditions and water demands return to normal.

6. The Annual Statistical Report and Consumer Confidence Reports were completed and submitted to MassDEP. For the Statistical Report, we used 73 residential gallons per capita day with a 9.9% unaccounted for water. These numbers are consistent with prior years.

7. Emil Pustea of Sigma Water Safety continues to perform backflow inspections.

8. Water Bills were issued and due June 9<sup>th</sup>. Demands were sent out and due June 29<sup>th</sup>. However due to the Governor's COVID 19 State of Emergency Declaration the Town cannot shut-off water customers for lack of payment. This process will resume when permitted.

9. DPW received a call from Edgewood Golf Course requesting information on a permanent hook-up. They estimate requiring 25,000 to 30,000 gallons/day to irrigate their greens and fair. Unfortunately, the Town's infrastructure cannot support that demand at this time. There are also concerns about exceeding the allowable limits in the MassDEP Water Withdrawal Permit.

10. There is a large mixed use development planned in the open field south of American Inn. DPW is coordinating with the developer regarding their planned use and estimated water needs.

**A work order summary was presented to Commissioners.**

## **APPOINTMENTS**

6:15pm- 6:30pm-8 SECOND STREET- MADIERA & NADOLSKI

Ms. Madiera & Mr. Nadolski requested an appointment with Water Commissioners about connecting to town water. They are currently on a shared private well and are concerned about the quality of water they currently have. Originally the option that was given was Ms. Madiera and Mr. Nadolski could run a private water service from Miller Road to make the connection. This would be at their cost. Commissioner Dave Meczywor asked what the cost would be for extending the 6 inch water main all the way down the road to service all those homes on First

and Second Street with town water. The rough estimate would be around \$100,000.00. The Commissioners would like to look into this and possibly include this in the future upgrades of the system.

6:30pm- 6:45pm- 44 TANNERY ROAD- ALBANO

Mr. Albano requested an appointment with the Water Commissioners regarding his mother's large water bill that was due to a leak in the service line. He said that after he knew about it he took care of it right away and thought that the meter would have registered a large volume of water being used. He was asking the Water Commissioners if they could further reduce the bill for his mother. A timeline of events were presented to the Water Commissioners. There were some inconsistencies when it came to how long this leak was active between what the office was told and what the Water Department crew onsite was told. The meter was changed on February after the water leak was repaired. The usage on the meter from October 1<sup>st</sup> 2019 to February 20<sup>th</sup> 2020 was 4,926,726 gallons. When this large amount of water usage was found the bill was initially reduced by 50% as a courtesy. We were unable to be notified of this large consumption of the bill because the meter was not upgraded. Notices were sent multiple times in the last 3 years including in the water bills. Mr. Albano claims that he never received them. After a short discussion by the Commissioners the following motion was made.

*A **MOTION** was made by Dave Meczywor to reduce the bill to \$7,000.00 payable within 7 days. This was seconded by Edward Johnson. Motion Passed.*

*Roll Call Vote:*

*Edward Johnson – Yes*

*Dave Meczywor- Yes*

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **FY2021 BUDGET**

Everything that was requested in the Water Department budget was approved at Town Meeting. One issue was that some of the debt that went on the books this year mainly the water main and pump station project. This project was lumped into a large bond which included North Pond Purchase, new vehicles and other items. Our rate study that was done 2 years ago was to accommodate for this new debt and we are currently on year 2 of a 3 year rate increase. The way the bond was developed it will be much higher than anticipated due to the numbers that we reviewed in 2018 where for a bond with a longer term and lower interest rate. This in turn will be a larger impact on our current year budget. This was not communicated to Randy Brown until recently when he was given the debt service schedule. The Chief Administrative Officer told Randy that this is a discussion between the Chairman of the Water Commissioners and the Chairman of the Select Board. Doug Moglin was currently on the meeting and would look into it.

### **METER READING FEE- OLD METERS**

A discussion took place regarding how to get the last 17 properties to make appointments for their meter to be changed over. In the past we have added a Manual Reading Fee to the bill to get people to call and make appointments after which we would abate that fee. Before we added these fees on we also sent out many letters notifying them of this. The last billing we had only one call and the resident told me that he would just pay the extra \$150.00. The

Commissioners requested that another letter be sent out by certified mail to those 17 remaining properties. This letter will be reviewed by the board at the next meeting. \*\*See end of meeting for additional item to be included in this letter.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

##### **ABATEMENT REQUEST- 11 SEFTON DRIVE**

Mr. & Mrs. Gagnon submitted a request for an abatement. Back in December of 2019 they received a leak notification card. They called in a plumber and it was found that there was a leak in the upstairs toilet at about 70 gallons an hour. Mr. Gagnon had the leak fixed by a licensed plumber and is asking for an abatement of an amount that the Board thinks is fair. A short discussion took place.

*A **MOTION** was made by Dave Meczywor to abate 25% of the water portion of the bill (\$129.73). This was seconded by Edward Johnson. Motion Passed.*

*Roll Call Vote:*

*Edward Johnson – Yes*

*Dave Meczywor- Yes*

**\*\*Commissioners Dave Meczywor would like a line in the letter to the homeowners who need to upgrade their meters that states no abatements will be issued if you have not upgraded the water meter.**

*Dave Meczywor made a **MOTION TO ADJOURN** this was seconded by Edward Johnson the meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm.*

*Roll Call Vote:*

*Edward Johnson – Yes*

*Dave Meczywor- Yes*

Respectfully Submitted By,

Christie Myette  
DPW Office Manager

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Ed Johnson, Chairman

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David Meczywor