



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, August 27, 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: None

The meeting was recorded.

The meeting of the Water Commissioners was called to order at 6:05pm.

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

A moment of silence was observed in honor of Luther F. Hosmer. Luther was a Water Commissioner for 34 years and was an asset to the Board and the Water Department. He will be greatly missed by all that knew him.

Review of the February 20, 2020 Meeting Minutes- Edward Johnson was not present for this meeting but listened to the audio and reviewed the minutes.

A MOTION was made by Dave Meczywor to accept the minutes from the February 20th, 2020 meeting. This was seconded by Edward Johnson.

Roll Call Vote:

Edward Johnson – Yes

Dave Meczywor- Yes

MOTION PASSED

Review of the July 9, 2020 Meeting Minutes

A MOTION was made by Dave Meczywor to accept the minutes from the July 9th, 2020 meeting. This was seconded by Edward Johnson.

Roll Call Vote:

Edward Johnson – Yes

Dave Meczywor- Yes

MOTION PASSED

The commitment for July was approved by the Commissioners and will be signed at a later date.

The Elderly Rate Applications:

17 Sawgrass Lane- A MOTION was made by Dave Meczywor to approve the elderly rate for 17 Sawgrass Lane as the applicant meets all the requirements. This was seconded by Edward Johnson.

Roll Call Vote:

Edward Johnson – Yes

Dave Meczywor- Yes

MOTION PASSED

15 Juniper Road- A MOTION was made by Dave Meczywor to approve the elderly rate for 15 Juniper Road as the applicant meets the requirements. This was seconded by Edward Johnson.

Roll Call Vote:

Edward Johnson – Yes

Dave Meczywor- Yes

MOTION PASSED

16 Concord Road- A MOTION was made by Dave Meczywor to reject the elderly rate for 16 Concord Road as the applicant does not meet the requirements because there are more people living in the home other than just the spouse. This was seconded by Edward Johnson.

Roll Call Vote:

Edward Johnson – Yes

Dave Meczywor- Yes

MOTION PASSED

DPW DIRECTORS REPORT:

1. Ludlow Construction has finished construction of the water main and pump station project. There are a few punch list items that have been addressed. The Contractor will perform the final loam and seed in various location in the fall.

2. Prowler Water Systems preformed a Town-wide leak detection testing in June. One leak was found on Rising Corner Road. This is set to be repaired likely next week.

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. We received a response from 23 and are awaiting

the results. In addition, testing is required at Woodland School and the Rec Center when they are open this fall.

5. Water use restrictions were put into effect in June 9th 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. Water Bills and Demands were issued and due. We still have outstanding bills but due to the Governors COVID order we are unable to continue to the shutoff process. It was brought up by Christie that other Cities and Town on the larger side don't do actual shutoffs and they will just lien the past due amount on to the real estate bill. The Commissioners asked Randy to look into this process with the Tax Collector. We have 293 bills that are past due.

7. On August 4th, the Great Brook Well site lost power due to the heavy rains and wind. The generator kicked on and ran for about 24hrs, but then failed. The other pumps could not keep up with water demand, so an Emergency Order was implemented banning all non essential water use. Power was restored and the pumps returned to normal late morning on August 6th.

8. The Town was copied on a letter for the Town of Longmeadow to Springfield Water & Sewer Commission (SWSC) requesting to serve in an advisory role in SWSC's upcoming treatment plant upgrades. Longmeadow is a much bigger user than Southwick and their economic impact will be larger. A copy of this letter was provided to the Board.

9. The Greens East tied in the water main connection and made the loop connection. They plan to start paving phase 1 shortly.

A work order summary was presented to Commissioners.

APPOINTMENTS

NONE

OLD BUSINESS

FIRST STREET SERVICE LINE

At our last meeting we had the residents of 8 Second Street Ms. Mадiera and Mr. Nadolski looking to connect to the Town water system. An estimate was done at the last meeting but the Commissioners asked for some research to be done on the numbers then brought to the next meeting for review. The numbers that Randy Brown came up with based on other projects that have been done recently estimates this project would be about \$48,500.00. This is not something the Water Department crew could do on their own. We would have to hire a contractor. At this time we do not have the funds for this project but we can look to incorporating it in the future.

METER READING FEE- OLD METERS

A letter was drafted to be sent out to the remaining 17 homeowners who have not had their meter upgraded. The Commissioners reviewed the letter and approved it to be sent out by certified mail.

NEW BUSINESS

BOARD VACANCY

Due to Luther's passing we have a vacancy on the board. The Town has nothing in the bylaws on how to fill this position so we have to go by the Mass General Law Chapter 41 Section 11. The Board of Water Commissioners has to send in writing a notice of the vacancy within one month. Then this position will be advertised. Once advertised the applicants will meet with the Board of Water Commissioners and Select Board at a joint meeting. Then the vacancy will be filled by a roll call vote. The applicant will be appointed until the next town meeting then would run for a 2 year term to complete the appointment.

A MOTION was made to by Dave Meczywor to notify the Select Board of the vacant position on the Board of Water Commissioners. Thos was seconded by Edward Johnson.

Roll Call Vote:

Edward Johnson – Yes

Dave Meczywor- Yes

MOTION PASSED.

WATER RATES

This year we had significant debt and interest on the books for the water main and pump station project. Due to the issues we had spoken about at the last meeting with the way the bond was formulated. We need to bring in about \$250,000.00 to cover costs in this first year of the bond payments. We are year 2 of a 3 year rate increase. We will have to modify the rate for year 3. The rate would have to be raised about 22% to make up this deficit. A rate comparison was given to the Board which outlines how our rates compare to other cities and towns in Massachusetts. At this point with our rates as they are now we are in the lower than about 75% of Massachusetts. If we were to raise rates by 22% we would still be lower than alittle over 50% of Massachusetts. A discussion was had on ways to lessen the impact to the users. The Board asked for some numbers to be run and options to be discussed at a special meeting scheduled for Wednesday, September 2nd at 6pm.

WATER SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENT CHANGE ORDER

This is change order 3 which is basically to zero out the project. This is a net credit of about \$151,000.00 on paper. Once this is signed off by the Board this will go to the Select Board for their signatures.

A MOTION was made by Dave Meczywor to sign off on Change Order #3. This was seconded by Edward Johnson.

Roll Call Vote:

Edward Johnson – Yes

Dave Meczywor- Yes

MOTION PASSED.

WATER WITHDRAWAL PERMIT/ NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS

Randy Brown presented the projected water use for 2020 to the Board. It is expected to increase from last year by about 20%. This is likely due to the drought conditions we have been in since June coupled with the COVID-19 virus with more people at home and using more water

than they have in the past. Regardless this is a tremendous spike in usage. The Board discussed a moratorium on new water service connections. Our Water Withdrawal Permit was due for renewal in 2016 and MassDEP is running behind and there is no definitive timeline when we may start the process. When we finally get the permit renewed DEP and DCR may not permit us to pump more water than we already do. They determine this by doing a "Water Needs Forecast". Overall we do not have enough water to sell more to the customers we currently serve. We are fortunate that we have water to provide what we do there are a lot of basins out east that are dry all year round as well as out on the west coast as well.

Randy Brown suggested educating the users on water conservation and also reaching out to the top users and discuss ways that they can cut down on their usage.

A MOTION was made by Dave Meczywor to put a moratorium on all new water service connections for new subdivisions and large users also a moratorium on irrigation for new residential services (domestic use only). This was seconded by Edward Johnson.

Roll Call Vote:

Edward Johnson – Yes

Dave Meczywor- Yes

MOTION PASSED

*Dave Meczywor made a **MOTION TO ADJOURN** this was seconded by Edward Johnson the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 pm.*

Roll Call Vote:

Edward Johnson – Yes

Dave Meczywor- Yes

Respectfully Submitted By,

Christie Myette
DPW Office Manager

Ed Johnson, Chairman

David Meczywor