



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 May 6, 2021

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

Others Present: Randy Brown, DPW Director - Remote
Christie Myette, Office Manager – Town Hall Remote
Keven Soper, Water Foreman- Remote

Guests: Michael Doherty, Southwick Planning Board
Peter Currier, Westfield News
William Strain, 18 Vining Hill Road

The meeting was recorded.

The meeting of the Board of 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.

Public Comments
NONE

Review of the April 1, 2021 Water Commissioners Meeting Minutes.

A MOTION was made by Dave Meczywor to accept the minutes from the April 1st meeting. This was seconded by John Cain.

Roll Call Vote:

Edward Johnson- Yes

Dave Meczywor- Yes

John Cain- Yes

MOTION PASSED

The monthly commitment for April 2021 was approved to be signed at a later date.

*A **MOTION** was made by Dave Meczywor to approve the April 2021 Commitment. This was seconded by John Cain.*

Roll Call Vote:

Edward Johnson- Yes

Dave Meczywor- Yes

John Cain- Yes

MOTION PASSED

Six Elderly Rate Applications were presented for the Water Commissioners. The applicant meets all the necessary requirements

*A **MOTION** was made by Dave Meczywor to approve the elderly rate applications for 27 Bungalow Street, 11 Cedar Street, 230 Feeding Hills Road, 4 Gargon Terrace, 27 Gargon Terrace and 11 Tobacco Road. This was seconded by John Cain.*

Roll Call Vote:

Edward Johnson- Yes

Dave Meczywor- Yes

John Cain- Yes

MOTION PASSED

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

1. Water bills were sent out and are due May 17th. A total of \$486,929.95 was billed out compared to \$428,350.00 in April 2020.
2. Christie and Randy met with Michelle Hill, Tax Collector, to review the schedule for shutoffs which will start this spring/summer.
3. The Planning Board received plans for a new development at 686 College Highway that would be a large water user. The Planning Board Special Permit hearing is scheduled for May 27th.
4. Sensus is planning to update the RNI software to version 4.8 shortly.
5. The Water Department will take additional Lead and Copper Samples at Woodland School and the Rec Center now that schools are reopened.
6. Confirmatory water samples were taken on April 5th and analyzed for PFAS as a follow up to the first round of testing. The results will be discussed in further detail during Old Business.
7. Emil Pustea of Sigma Water Systems continues to perform inspections of backflow devices.
8. Randy received a call from a realtor working on behalf of the George Hankin estate that abuts the wells and has access off Lexington Circle. The family is weighing options how to split or sell the property and may consider selling some land to the Town for drinking water supply protection.
9. In conjunction with a drainage project on Cedar Street, the water main will be extended closer to the end of the road and a new hydrant will be installed for flushing purposes.
10. Approximately 103 residents filled out the online Customer Portal Survey. These results will be reviewed at the next meeting.

Work Order Summary was provided to the Board.

OLD BUSINESS

WATER MORATORIUM DISCUSSION

The Water Moratorium was put into place in August 2020 and was slated to be revisited at the May meeting. A table was presented to the Water Commissioners with the monthly flow rates from 2016-2021 to date. The water usage spiked in May 2020 and returned to normal levels in September 2020. This year we are using water at the same rate as in 2020. The chart also shows the current capacity and the projected capacity with improvements. The current usage versus and the capacity of the system was discussed as well as the vote coming up at Town Meeting in two weeks for the upgrade of the Springfield Water Transmission main from the Jarry Drive pump station to the interconnection with Springfield in Westfield. The Commissioner discussed how they want to proceed with the Water Moratorium and the future needs of the Town. The Water Commissioners discussed allowing a yearly usage threshold on the moratorium any project that would break that threshold would have to come before the Board.

A MOTION was made by Dave Meczywor to extend the moratorium to the first meeting in July 2021 and lift the moratorium for any project using less than 150,000 gallons per year. Seconded by John Cain.

Roll Call Vote:

Edward Johnson- Yes

Dave Meczywor- Yes

John Cain- Yes

MOTION PASSED

APPOINTMENT

6:25pm- William Strain 18 Vining Hill Road Abatement

Mr. Strain has a water leak and was notified by the DPW in February starting at 10 gallons an hour. Another notice was sent in March that the leak had increased significantly. Mr. Strain contacted John from Crestview to come in and find the leak to make the repair. There were issues due to the ground being frozen. When Crestview was able to dig they took a few days to locate the leak which was difficult due to the high water table at the time. The leak was in the pipe that runs from the house to the barn. The repair was completed in April which included new pipe from the meter pit on location to the barn. They were able to isolate the leak and shut the water off to the barn in the evenings when the horses were watered for the night. The water has to be on during the day for the care of the horses. Mr. Strain requested an abatement of \$650.00 the normal bill runs about \$300.00-\$350.00.

A MOTION was made by Dave Meczywor to abate \$400.00 off the bill for 18 Vining Hill Road. This was seconded by John Cain.

Roll Call Vote:

Edward Johnson- Yes

Dave Meczywor- Yes

John Cain- Yes

MOTION PASSED

OLD BUSINESS (Continued)

PFAS TESTING

In April the Water Department conducted confirmatory testing for PFAS per MASSDEP. The results are very similar to the first round of testing. This was a small detect on Well#1 that is small enough that it's below the threshold for action. Well #2 also had a very small detect but it was below the reporting limit. No action needs to be taken at this point. This fall we will start quarterly sample for PFAS. After one year we will have to continue to test either once a year or twice a year if our detect levels stay below 10 parts per trillion. If detects go above 10 parts per trillion we will have to test monthly.

LOCATIONS REQUIRING METER UPGRADES

There are about 15 properties requiring meter upgrades. For the last few years they have been being assessed a manual meter reading fee. Some of these old meters are no longer reading. We will be reaching out to these property owners in the next few months to get these meters changed out.

NEW BUSINESS

TRANSMISSION MAIN BORROWING

The article at town meeting for the Transmission Main Improvements the total borrow request is for \$575,000.00. The Commissioners were given three debt schedules 10, 20 & 30 year payback. Randy Brown was looking at a 20 year payback but spoke with CAO Karl Stinehart and bond counsel suggested a 10 year payback due to small size of the project. Then down the line when the Town Hall roof project happens which is valued at one million or more this could be refinanced and rolled into that bond for 20 or 30 year note. When Randy Brown completed the rate study he had projected about \$40,000.00 per year payback with the 20 year payback but it will be about \$70,000.00 with this 10 year payback. We will likely have to deal with this for a year or two until the roof project is bonded. We will keep an eye on the budget and make sure we are bringing in enough revenue to cover this note.

TANK INSPECTIONS

Underwater Solutions completed our tank inspections. The report noted a small amount of sediment at the bottom of the tank and some small surface cracks on the outside of the tank. These are very low maintenance tanks. Keven Soper noted that he will be able to flush out that sediment.

WATER RESTRICTION

The Commissioners requested a proposal to strictly enforce the Water Use Restriction if one is required to be implements.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be tentatively set for May 20th. If the meeting is not needed it will be postponed to June.

*Dave Meczywor made a **MOTION TO ADJOURN** this was seconded by John Cain the meeting was adjourned at 6:45 pm.*

Roll Call Vote:

Edward Johnson- Yes

Dave Meczywor- Yes

John Cain- Yes

Respectfully Submitted By,

Christie Myette
DPW Office Manager

Ed Johnson, Chairman

David Meczywor

John Cain