



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

Southwick Town Hall- Land Use Hearing Room, 2nd Floor- IN PERSON ATTENDANCE ONLY

Thursday June 24, 2021 at 6:00 pm

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

Others Present: Randy Brown, DPW Director
Christie Myette, Office Manager
Keven Soper, Water Foreman

Guests: Sign-in Sheet Attached

The meeting was recorded.

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

Public Comments:

Maryssa Cook-Obregon: Asked questions about water usage in Town and how it relates to Carvana. A packet of questions was presented to the Board and is attached to these minutes.

John Vaillencourt: Asked if the items online can be updated to reflect the Carvana water usage of 9,000 gallons per day that was reported at one of the public meetings. Also he asked for the specific plans for the reclamation system that will be used be posted.

Andrea Bugbee: Asked if the Water Commissioners plan on answering the questions presented.

Sue Brzoska: Carvana says they will be using 9,000 gallons of what per day. What would happen if that is not the case once they are live? As a board is the Water Commissioners going to decide if they are for or against this project?

Sabrina Pooler: We are in a Mandatory Water Restriction as residents of the Town. Would Carvana be required to follow the same restrictions?

Review of the May 6, 2021 Water Commissioners Meeting Minutes.

*A **MOTION** was made by Dave Meczywor to accept the minutes from the May 6th meeting. This was seconded by John Cain. MOTION PASSED*

Two 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 17 Tobacco Road & 17 Buckingham Drive. This was seconded by John Cain. -MOTION PASSED*

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

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

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

1. Randy attended a meeting on 5/21 with officials in the MassDEP Water Management Act Program to discuss the process and schedule for renewing the Water Withdrawal Permit. MassDEP indicated that Southwick is high on the priority list for a permit review and update to start during the summer of 2021, along with other Water Systems in the Westfield River Basin (West Springfield & Russell). The first step is to develop a Water Needs Forecast which is administered by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).
2. Water Use Restrictions were implemented on 5/26 due to low streamflow levels in the Westfield River. The Restrictions continue to remain in place today.
3. The Planning Board opened a Public Hearing for a new development at 686 College Highway (Carvana car processing facility) on 5/27.
4. On 5/28, there was a water main break near 191 Berkshire Ave. About 10 customers were out of service for a few hours to allow for repairs to be made.
5. On 6/16, Governor Baker signed an *Act Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency* which allows the board to either 1) meet all in person, 2) meet all remote, or 3) meet in a hybrid approach.
6. On 6/24, Christie and Randy attended a meeting with Sensus regarding the RNI software upgrade to version 4.8.
7. On 6/24, Christie and Randy attended training on the new acoustic monitoring system that will monitor for leaks in the distribution system. This system ties into the same AMI meter reading system used to monitor meter usage.
8. The Planning Board received plans for a new 100 unit residential at 42 Depot Street that would be a large water user. The planning Board Special Permit hearing is scheduled for 6/29.
9. The Tax Collector is starting the process for shut-offs which will continue through this summer.
10. Emil Pustea of Sigma Water Systems continues to perform inspections at backflow devices.

Work Order Summary was provided to the Board.

APPOINTMENTS

6:15pm- 515 College Highway Abatement Request

The property owner was not present for this discussion. The owner of this property was notified of a water leak at the property and made the repairs after being notified of the leak. A timeline was provided to the Commissioners showing when the leak started when the property owner was notified and when the repair was made. They recognized that they had a leak and are looking for a reprieve. The Water Commissioners discussed the abatement and made the following motion.

A MOTION was made by Dave Meczywor to abate 10% off the bill for 515 College Highway. This was seconded by John Cain.

MOTION PASSED

6:20pm- 56 Summer Drive Abatement Request

The property owner was not present for this discussion. The homeowner had a leak at their property and the Water Department notified them via post card and the repairs were made shortly after. The Water Commissioners discussed the abatement and made the following motion.

A MOTION was made by Dave Meczywor to abate half of the bill or \$121.00. This was seconded by John Cain.

MOTION PASSED

OLD BUSINESS

LOCATIONS REQUIRING METER UPGRADES

A list of the last 15 properties that require meter upgrades was provided to the Commissioners. This has been ongoing for the last 5 years. The Water Commissioners discussed what the next step should be. The Commissioners reviewed a draft of a certified letter that would require an appointment being made for the meter upgrade by July 12, 2021 or the water will be shut off.

A MOTION was made by John Cain to send the certified letter and if an appointment is not made by July 12, 2021 and shut the water off on July 13, 2021. This was seconded by Dave Meczywor.

MOTION PASSED

686 COLLEGE HIGHWAY WATER DISCUSSION-(PROPOSED CARVANA FACILITY)

Randy Brown had a handout for the Water Commissioners that provided an overview of the proposed water use for the Carvana Facility. Their estimated daily usage based on other facilities of this type in other parts of the country is about 9,000 gallons per day or less than 1% of the water used in town on an average summer day. At this time the Water Department has not received any formal requests for a water service but the Commissioners asked for information to back up that estimated usage of 9,000 gallons per day. The Water Commissioners discussed their concerns and the capability to provide water to this facility and

for other proposed development in town. Randy Brown read through the questions that were provided to the Board during public comment and provided verbal responses.

NEW BUSINESS

TRANSMISSION MAIN IMPROVEMENTS-ENGINEERING SERVICES

This is a contract for the design services for the Transmission Main that runs from the Jarry Drive Pump Station to the interconnection in Westfield with Springfield Water. We are looking to start the construction this fall or next spring.

A MOTION was made by Dave Meczywor to approve the design services for the Transmission Main Improvements. This was seconded by John Cain.

MOTION PASSED

ARPA FUNDS

The Federal Government approved funds to Municipalities through the COVID relief plan and these funds can be used for infrastructure improvements. After Randy Brown has spoken with C.A.O. Karl Stinehart it was mentioned that some of this money may come to the Water Department for the Transmission Main Improvement Project. Details are very limited at this point.

CUSTOMER PORTAL SURVEY RESULTS

We sent out a flyer with the most recent water bill to gauge the interest in a customer portal. The results were compiled and we had 107 responses or about 4% of our users. The Commissioners were provided the results as well as the feedback provided in the comment section at the end of the survey. The Water Commissioners asked for the figures and will discuss at a later meeting if they would move forward with implementation of a customer portal.

WATER RESTRICTION DISCUSSION

We are currently in a water restriction. We have sent out about 40 warnings for first offenses and 10 second offenses which included a \$50.00 fine. Randy has spoken with a few of the people who have received a fine. A copy of our Water Withdrawal permit was provided to the Water Commissioners if there were questions about why we were in a water restriction and what triggers the restrictions. Commissioner Cain has concerns that the restrictions need to be changed so that water users can water their lawns more frequently than 1 day a week. The language provided in the Water Withdrawal Permit comes from MassDEP and is standard to those who have had their permit renewed. Randy Brown explained the MassDEP puts these restrictions in place when we are experiencing drought conditions to protect and preserve water quality in our water bodies. Commissioner Cain asked if it was possible to use Springfield Water more frequently in order to avoid the water restrictions. Randy Brown explained the difference between registered water system like Springfield and permitted water systems like Southwick. It was also mentioned that MassDEP is working to place similar water use restrictions on registered systems as well as the permitted water systems. When the permit renewal process starts, Randy Brown will ask MassDEP whether they would allow modifications

and allow outdoor water use more frequently or on different schedules than one day a week before 9am or after 5pm.

REORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD

Dave Meczywor nominated Ed Johnson as Chairman to the Board of Water Commissioners. This was seconded by John Cain.

ALL WERE IN FAVOR- MOTION PASSED

*Dave Meczywor made a **MOTION TO ADJOURN** this was seconded by John Cain the meeting was adjourned at 7:31 pm.*

MOTION PASSED

Respectfully Submitted By,

Christie Myette
DPW Office Manager

Ed Johnson, Chairman

David Meczywor

John Cain