



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

# Town of Southwick

454 COLLEGE HIGHWAY SOUTHWICK, MA 01077

## Board of Water Commissioners

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

### Water Commissioners Meeting Minutes Southwick DPW Facility – Hybrid Meeting Thursday June 15, 2023 at 6:00 pm

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

Others Present: Randy Brown, DPW Director

Guests: Larry Veprauskas, 10 Veteran Street

The meeting was recorded.

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

#### Public Comments

None

#### Meeting Minutes Review

Review of the May 18, 2023 Water Commissioners Meeting Minutes was tabled to a future meeting.

#### Elderly Rate Applications

One Elderly Rate Application was presented to the Water Commissioners. The applicant met all of the necessary requirements.

*A **MOTION** was made by John Cain to accept the Elderly Rate Application. This was seconded by Ed Johnson.*

*Roll Call Vote:*

*Edward Johnson: YES*

*John Cain: YES*

***MOTION PASSED***

#### DPW Director's Report

1. Christie is out on maternity leave which started last week.
2. Water Use Restrictions were implemented on June 1<sup>st</sup> due to the low flow levels of the Westfield River per conditions in the Water Withdrawal Permit with MassDEP. Notices and signs were posted around Town and a Code Red call was issued.
3. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter samples for tri-halomethanes (TTHM) and haloacetic acids (HAA5) were taken on 5/9 at Jarry Drive Pump Station. Results were HAA5 better but still tripped a water quality violation. Notices were mailed to all water customers about a week ago.

4. DPW received a request from 10 Second Street for a new water service connection. A similar request came from 8 Second Street a couple of years ago. Second Street does not have a water main. A connection would have to be made from Miller Road. This is something that the Water Department can look into for future years.
5. Jeff Vedovelli continued performing inspections at backflow devices in May and will continue until the spring test are completed. A couple of failed devices will be addressed soon.
6. DPW talked to a member of the Hankin family. Their property behind Lexington Circle is on the market. They are not looking to sell the property to the Town at this time.

#### Work Order Summary

None

#### Appointment – 10 Veteran Street Abatement Request

Larry Veprauskas of 10 Veteran Street attended to request an abatement on his last water bill. Mr. Veprauskas's latest bill was higher due to an intermittent leak. Mr. Veprauskas replaced parts of his shower and toilet which seemed to fix the leak. Mr. Veprauskas requested \$200 off his latest bill. His bill usually runs around \$300 to \$350, but this bill was \$564.

The usage is consistently around 50,000 gallons per billing period for both summer and winter bills. This bill was for about 67,000 gallons. The Commissioners discussed abating 17,000 gallons of usage to bring the bill back to normal usage, which equates to an abatement of \$130.57.

*A **MOTION** was made by John Cain to abate 17,000 gallons of usage at the billed rate, lowering the bill by \$130.57. This was seconded by Ed Johnson.*

*Roll Call Vote:*

*Edward Johnson: YES*

*John Cain: YES*

***MOTION PASSED***

Mr. Veprauskas requested to have the credit applied to his next bill.

#### Old Business – Whalley Park Spray Park

Park and Rec has not provided a response to questions that were posed to Park and Rec members at the February Water Commissioners Meeting. Funds were approved at the May Annual Town Meeting. This will be kept as an Old Business item at future meetings.

#### New Business – Water Use Restrictions

Water restrictions were implemented on June 1<sup>st</sup> due to the low flow levels of the Westfield River per conditions in the Water Withdrawal Permit with MassDEP. John Cain spoke with Representative Nick Boldyga regarding the process in which the current permit is being renewed. Rep. Boldyga indicated he would try to help speed up the process at the State level.

Further, John Cain and Rep. Boldyga spoke about the water restrictions and the process of issuing fines for those residents that violate the water restrictions. John Cain asked about the Water Commissioners role in the fine process. Randy Brown responded that Town Bylaw dictates how the fines are enforced. The Water Withdrawal Permit states the Water Department must implement water restrictions, but the process to administer enforcement is not specified. Last year, violators first received a written warning. If the violation continued

for 2-3 weeks, the resident received a \$50 fine. For those that continued the violation for 2-3 more weeks, the resident received a \$100 fine. For those that continued the violation for another 2-3 weeks, the resident received a \$100/day fine. Most residents stopped after this first fine, but a few continued after the first three notices. Last year, some of the residents noted they knew the fines were racking up but chose to continue to violate the restrictions in order to keep their lawn green. John Cain suggested continuing the same process as last year in which the large \$100/day fines would be issued only after several notices.

The next meeting was set for July 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM.

*A **MOTION TO ADJOURN** was made by John Cain. This was seconded by Ed Johnson.*

*Roll Call Vote:*

*Edward Johnson: YES*

*John Cain: YES*

*MEETING ADJOURNED AT 6:17 PM.*

Respectfully Submitted by:

Christie Myette, Office Manager

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Ed Johnson, Chairman

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Dave Meczywor

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John Cain