



Approved: 10/24/23
(date)

**TOWN OF PAXTON
Water Commissioners
Minutes of Meeting**

Date: Wednesday, October 4, 2023

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Meeting Place: John Bauer Senior Center, 17 West Street, Paxton, MA

Present: John Malone (JM), Chair
David Trulson (DT), Vice Chair
Rodney Jenkins (RJ), Clerk
Travis Thibault (TT), Director of Public Works
Tiffany Sidhom, Administrative Assistant

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Motion (DT) seconded (JM) to accept the regular meeting minutes from the June 29, 2023 meeting.

Bill Dispute – Customer at 176 West Street

The Customer at 176 West Street had a “leak” (continuous flow through the meter) inside the residence from approximately August 14-17, 2023. On August 16, 2023, the Department left a voice mail for the Customer stating that a leak of 200 gallons per hour had appeared on the leak alerts. The Customer called weeks later, when they received their bill, disputing the balance. (TT) explained all information and told the Customer they were welcome to come before the Board at this meeting to dispute their bill. The Customer did not appear at tonight’s meeting. Motion (JM) seconded (DT) that the Customer will be responsible for the bill in full. Unanimous, all in favor.

FY23 Annual Report for the Water Department

The Board reviewed the draft of the FY23 Annual Report for the Water Department, as prepared by (TT). Motion (JM) seconded (DT) to accept the report as written. Unanimous, all in favor.

Upcoming Cleaning of the Asnebumskit Water Tank

Per the maintenance agreement with Veolia (fka SUEZ), the tank is scheduled to be cleaned and inspected internally during year 5, which is calendar year 2023. The cleaning is presently scheduled for October 25, 2023. To prepare for emptying the tank so that it can be cleaned, the

Department dug a trench for E.J. Prescott to install a tap and sleeve, and then the Department installed a hydrant at the location and ran 15' of 6" water main to said hydrant.

The tank will need to be drained to complete the cleaning, inspection and making any small, necessary internal repairs. After that point, the tank will need to be re-filled and samples taken and submitted to the DEP (and be deemed within allowable limits) before the tank can be placed online. The project could take up to two to three weeks in total. Veolia will also make any necessary external repairs that may be needed.

(TT) attended a Select Board meeting to inform residents of the process and notify them that a water ban will be put in place one week prior to draining the tank, and while the tank is offline.

FY23 Worcester Water Bill Issue

FY23 was a difficult financial year for the Department, filled with unexpected costs that were incurred due to breaks and leaks. The Department only had enough money left in the budget to pay a portion of the water bill that was due to the City of Worcester. The Town Administrator instructed (TT) to pay as much as was possible out of the FY23 budget, and to pay the remainder out of the FY24 budget make a request at Special Town Meeting for the \$21,246.64 (paid in FY24) to be withdrawn from Retained Earnings. Motion (RJ) seconded (DT) to place an Article on the Warrant for the Special Town Meeting requesting that the sum of \$21,246.64 be transferred from Retained Earnings to the FY24 Water Budget. Unanimous, all in favor.

FY24 Budget/Retained Earnings Review and Discussion

The Board reviewed the financials to date, including retained earnings. (TT) noted that the amount spent on overtime this FY so far is high because of multiple water breaks; two that were on Sundays. The Town Administrator and the Executive Assistant re-classified and re-graded the Administrative Assistant position. The new position is Administrative Services Manager. The position will be paid retroactively from July 1, 2023, and the Water Department's portion to cover the increase for FY24 is \$3,340.80. Motion (RJ) seconded (JM) to approve the new position and increase in compensation. Unanimous, all in favor.

Discussion of Water Rates

(TT) met with the Town Administrator this morning to start discussing water rates. The rates were last raised in 2017 (FY18). The Town Administrator is running her own calculations and would like to meet with the Board on October 19, 2023 to present her information. Thereafter, (TT) will present his recommendations and the Board can discuss further, including whether to place an Article on the Warrant for the Special Town Meeting on November 20, 2023.

Director Updates and Reports

On July 7, 2023, lightning struck a tree, which then fell onto the pump station on Route 122, damaging the roof and parts of the building. Department staff were able to make temporary repairs. The Town's insurance company came to inspect the damage, and will be awarding the Department \$16,651.38, minus a \$1,000.00 deductible, to make necessary repairs.

On July 28, 2023, there was a water main break on West Street.

On August 2, 2023, the Department repaired a service leak on Red Oak Street.

On August 18, 2023, 27 Lancelot contacted the Department regarding a service leak. The Department determined that the break was on the Customer's side, and the Customer contacted Dig In Deep to make the repair.

On August 29, 2023, the Department repaired a service leak at 8 Eagle Lane.

On August 30, 2023, there was a break on the 1.5" iron pipe service that feeds 3 Mower Street. This is the one service in town that is fed directly from the City of Worcester. Worcester sends the Department a bill, and the Department bills the Customer at 3 Mower Street based on meter readings. The line broke in Paxton, so Worcester would not make the repair. The repair was made over three days; 40-50' of the service was replaced, and there was pipe running under a brook as well as the fiber optic lines.

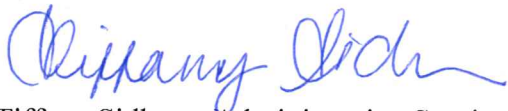
On September 17, 2023, there was a water main break on West Street. (TT) notified the Board that the Department is going to need to purchase a second trench box.

Next Meeting

Next meeting is scheduled for October 19, 2023.

Motion (JM) seconded (DT) to adjourn at 7:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Tiffany Sidhom, Administrative Services Manager