



Approved: 2/28/2024  
(date)

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

**Date: Wednesday, January 24, 2024**

**Time: 7:00 p.m.**

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

Present: David Trulson (DT), Vice Chair  
Rodney Jenkins (RJ), Clerk  
Travis Thibault (TT), Director of Public Works

Absent: John Malone (JM), Chair

Additional: Michael Scot of Land Design Collaborative  
Matt Simpson of Anna Maria College

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Meeting Minutes**

*Passed over as minutes from the November 16, 2023 meeting are not currently available.*

**Anna Maria College Master Plan**

Michael Scot of Land Design Collaborative and Matt Simpson of AMC discuss new master plan for the school, and what they'd like to do in Phase 1. (TT) recommends running the new 8" main under the proposed road and connecting it back into the existing main on the back side of the campus center in front of Trinity, replacing the hydrant closest to the President's house and installing a master meter on Sunset Lane. AMC wants to keep meters in each building regardless of master meter. (TT) needs to speak to AMC about flushing.

**West Street Water Main Project**

7,700 Linear feet of 12" and 8" main and appurtenances to replace on West Street from Route 122 to just past South Street to end of existing main, and Holbrook Lane in its entirety. Cost estimate in September of 2022 was for the entire project (all water, and storm drain, and mill and pave after) was \$2.34M. Cost estimate when submitted for the One Stop Grant in June of 2023 was \$6.036M. Tata & Howard sent over info on a USDA Loan in the end of the Fall and the rate was at 3.75%. Loans could go as long as 40 years with USDA. We can look into the USDA loan further, or we can attempt to apply for the grant again this year. The due date for the One Stop grant is June 5, 2024. (TT) is waiting for further recommendations from Tata & Howard. The

issue with the One Stop grant is this project does not show the types of growth in the community they are looking for, and the median household income is on the high side for Paxton. On January 10, 2024 Neilsberg Research put out an online article stating that the median household income for Paxton MA is \$133,988.00. The Board asked for (TT) to get a cost of Phase One of the project from Tata & Howard.

### **Discussion of Water Rates**

(TT): On October 24, 2023 the Board voted to raise the flat meter fee from \$21.45 to \$27.00 effective as of January 1, 2024 to make up for the short fall we were going to have in FY24. With an average of 1350 customers per month this increase of \$5.55 per customer per month increases our revenue by \$7,492.50 per month, or \$89,910.00 annually. We know we still need to raise the rates further for FY25 to make certain we have adequate funding moving forward. As discussed at our last meeting we can always raise this flat rate further to \$31.00 to give us the additional funding necessary. That would be an additional \$4.00 increase as of July 1, 2024 to each customer increasing the expected revenue by \$5,400.00 monthly, or \$64,800.00 annually. Or we can discuss % increases. Somehow the Municipal rate is higher than both the Commercial rate, and the Institutional rate. So if we are looking at a % rate increase I would recommend that we leave the Municipal rate where it currently sits, and at a minimum raise both the commercial and institutional rates to where the municipal rates are currently at, and go from there. There are several issues that I would like to see corrected with the rates, but in my opinion the Municipal rate should be the lowest rate since it is paid by Town Departments which, in turn, is paid by town revenue. Other adjustments that should be made are the rates being set to only two decimal places. I would also like to note that the Town Administrator mentioned at our last meeting that she would like to see the rates simplified rather than having the tiered system. I have no issues with that if the Board would like to do that, but that is a big undertaking, and honestly I don't think Tiffany and I have the time to do that right now. So at this time I'm looking to see how the board would like to proceed. My recommendation would be to increase both the Commercial and Institutional rates to at least be equal to the Municipal rate (this alone produces an increase in revenue of roughly \$24,800.00), get all rates to only two decimal places (we have not made these adjustments as of yet to the projections), and increase the flat rate (each dollar we raise the flat rate we are looking at an annual increase in revenue of \$16,200.00). Increasing the Commercial and Institutional rates to the Municipal rate and raising the flat meter rate to \$31.00, we'd be projecting to increase the revenue by \$179,510.00.

### **FY25 Budget Review and Discussion**

(TT): As shown on the Budget attachment we're currently looking at an increase of \$179,433.00 to cover all necessary expenses. To note, I decreased the hydrant line item by \$1,000.00 and increased the training line item by \$3,000.00 since the last time we looked at the financial needs of the department. The reason for doing this is we're having an issue with getting licensed CDL drivers on the Highway Department, and since they do all the trucking for emergency excavations for us I would like to be able to have funding to send two employees a year to school to get licensed, and I'm hoping that the Water Board would agree to pay for one of these annually (cost to us would be roughly \$2,900.00 per student).

### **Director Updates and Reports**

(TT): Since we met last we've had two water main breaks. One on Marshall Street and one on Suomi Street.

We have 5 old meters we still need to get in to replace, and 24 new meters we're having issues reading, and we're trying to get in to rectify.

This year we have 8 customers that were liened for a total of \$5,555.74.

### **Water Billings Rendered**

The Board reviewed and signed the recent Billings Rendered.

*Motion (DT) seconded (RJ) to adjourn at 8:17 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Travis Thibault". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Travis Thibault, Director of Public Works