

BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS MEETING HELD: March 15, 2023
LOCATION: 84 Somers Road, East Longmeadow, MA 01028

ATTENDANCE: P. Abair, M. Lynch, B. Fenney, M. Berman, F. Vachon, D. Keane, R. Roy, T. Christensen and B. Taddia **ABSENT:** T. O'Brien

P. Abair called the meeting to order at 4:00pm and asked if anyone is recording the meeting other than Bob Taddia. **B. Fenney** commented that ELCAT is recording the meeting.

REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES from 02/07/2023 meeting: **P. Abair** entertained a motion to approve the meeting minutes dated February 7, 2023; **M. Lynch** made a motion to approve the minutes. **P. Abair** seconded the motion. The vote was taken and was unanimously affirmative.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT:

Project Updates: Sidewalk projects: 1. Pleasant St from Indian Springs to Mapleshade Ave; 2. Hamden Road, from the intersection of Parker St to Angela Ln; Smith Associates will be surveying both locations; then bids will be prepared soon after; construction to take place this summer. Porter Road Bridge Rehabilitation Project is under way. Bids were received on March 1st and the contract was awarded to Northern Construction Services LLC in the amount of \$470,364. Work will commence in June of 2023. **Utilities:** Locked in a three-year contract for natural gas at \$1.28 per therm. A 40% reduction from our \$2.10 contract that will expire November of 2023.

DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT REPORT:

Chapter 90, WRAP and other paving: Maple St. invoicing is complete, we are submitting a little over \$1.1 million to MassDOT for the Chapter 90 reimbursement. Preparing a bid to mill and overlay 3,100 ft of Shaker Rd; using WRAP funding totaling \$327,917.53; bids due 4/6/2023. Coordinating with Eversource gas on pavement restorations of their trenches from gas main replacements. Working with VHB on the North Main St. TIP Project with MassDOT for FY27, Harkness to Dearborn. **Stormwater:** Signed a contract with Tighe & Bond for the MS4 Permit Year 5 Compliance Services; working with the new Stormwater Foreman (Lukas Baudin) to bring him up to speed on the regulatory and maintenance requirements that need to be done on the stormwater system.

COMMENTS: **B. Fenney:** Lukas Baudin is our new Stormwater Foreman; previous Stormwater Foreman (Anthony McAuliffe) left and was rehired back as Skilled Worker. HR completes exit interviews. **P. Abair:** Will the roadway over by N. Main St near the Springfield be repaved? **F. Vachon:** When project is completed, they will mill from curb to curb before summer.

WATER & SEWER ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:

First quarter TTHM and HAA5 samples have passed and we are in compliance; Springfield did treatment at the facility; we lowered levels in the tank. Working on EPA and DEP and confidence reports due. Various capital projects are being held up for supply chain issues: sewage grinder, water meters.

COMMENTS: **P. Abair:** Re. water samples: with all the help from experts, it took 8-9 years for DEP to fix the problem. Would like to know the results from Longmeadow and other communities. **F. Vachon:** Springfield TTHM's are ok; HAA5's are not good because they are closer to source. Longmeadow has not completed samples; other community samples will be different depending on their location; each community posts their water sample results on their websites. **M. Lynch:** will we be sending out mailings to residents to be transparent? **F. Vachon:** We could but is costly. **B. Fenney:** We can post on the results on the website and the ELCAT bulletin board; no mailing.

P. Abair: Concerned about the amount of water lost compared to what we are billing; anything over 5% is significant currently at 9.6% **B. Fenney:** We track all water loss: new meters on fire hydrants, hydrant flushing, all water going into equipment is monitored and calculated, water breaks; the data is required in our yearly ASR report. Unaccounted water comes from faulty and older meters that have batteries, theft and leaks; we will continue with the meter swap program until every older meter is replaced. **F. Vachon:** The older meters are replaced first; we are setting up appointments with residents to replace meters, but getting push back; when we go into resident homes and businesses we look to see if there are any taps before the meter. **M. Lynch:** Re. supply chain issue, how long are we waiting for pieces of equipment? Are we going out to bid? Are we including in the deliverables and bid language? **B. Fenney:** Capital projects can be paid over multiple fiscal years as long as funding is still available; currently waiting for electrical switchgear; we have to plan especially when equipment is failing.

HIGHWAY & UTILITIES REPORT:

D. Keane: Started spring projects: Fields painted and marked; Step 1 & 2 fertilizer has been ordered and applications have been scheduled. Had two plow events including salt and sanding; was impressed with the quality of work and the time it took to complete the work. There were several mailbox damage complaints because of the heavy and wet snow; crew makes sure drains are clear during snow events. Shaker Road project between Chestnut and Desnlow: all catch basins were cleaned and maintained before project starts; as soon as asphalt plants open, we will schedule our crew to raise and replace all the water gate tops. Using the camera on the storm drain lines to see if there are any repairs needed or breaks in the line; had an issue on Kibbe Rd and Quarry Hill Rd, the culvert across the street was clogged which caused an issue with several residents back yard flooding; jetted the line 6-7 times over the month and corrected the issue. Re. New vacuum truck: we cleaned 22 catch basins in 2 days.

COMMENTS: B. Fenney: Part of our MS4 process Re. cleaning catch basins: Foreman completes an assessment: how much is it filled and what type of materials are inside. **D. Keane:** All catch basins have been inspected and work orders have been completed if they need repairs. The other issue is where will we put materials from the catch basins once the transfer station is full. **B. Fenney:** This will be beneficial when we start our Allen St pump station; will use determination form through the DEP; and or get permission to use the materials for the Allen St landfill; we currently have \$200k worth of disposable materials. **P. Abair:** This will put a good dent in our MS4 requirements.

BUILDING FACILITIES REPORT:

R. Roy: Completed 475 work orders since our last board meeting. **Birchland Park:** The generator is down with a portable set up in stand-by operation. Working with our vendor and Kolher to rectify the issue. We replaced heating coils after the pipe damage from a recent freeze. **High School:** Repaired the freshman wing roof. Sealed up air leaks over the nurse's office, as this was the cause of a pipe burst this winter. **Maple Shade:** Installed a cricket on the roof to prevent pooling and help eliminate water pooling on the roof causing leaks. **Meadowbrook:** Patched the roof (holes in membrane) over the modular this winter for roof leaks. **Mountainview:** Cleared roof drains. **Police Station:** Air quality testing of the ductwork and office spaces. **Fire Station:** Repaired several of the doors at the station. Repaired motors and replaced springs over the doors to ensure proper and safe operation of the facility. **Town Hall:** Cleaned out a section of the basement for the placement of documentation. **Capital Projects:** High School switchgear has arrived, we plan to install next year. Skylights are in the process of being ordered with vendors; Mapleshade door project should be completed by this summer. Mountainview project: just received drawings from architects (70-80% complete); will start the bidding process soon.

FY24 Proposed Rates & Fees: **B. Fenney** reviewed and discussed the proposed details with the board.

Water & Sewer Rate Comparison

Water Rates: recommend .60 cent increase from \$3.60 to \$4.20 per 100 CF

Sewer Rates: recommend .35 cent increase from \$3.75 to \$4.10 per 100 CF

Stormwater Rates: (see attached proposed stormwater enterprise funding table)

Water Services Fees: no change

Sanitary Sewer Services Fees: no change

Stormwater Services Fees: no change

Other Services Fees: no change

Life Cycle Maintenance Fees: no change

Transfer Station Rules & Regulations: no rate changes

COMMENTS: B. Fenney: In 2016 there was an anomaly in the water division totaling only \$519,791; could have been an expense, credit or the administration before. **M. Lynch:** What is our intention with the water enterprise fund? Is the lower usage impacting the ending balance? **B. Fenney:** Many contributing factors: our meters are getting old so were seeing that on our billable usage; also sprinkler meters, which is affecting our sewer rate. Bruce reviewed the billable usage sheet with the Board. **P. Abair:** Re. 2023 billable cubic feet water, verify how many months it is and how many more billings. Re. 758 as the yearly average for water consumption is too low; thinking it should be between 825-850; this affects sewer as well. **P. Abair:** Re. Stormwater, we have \$189k in reserve; not sure if we should hold back another year; not sure overall what our needs are going to be; we are building a reserve that we haven't defined. **B. Fenney:** We have long-term debt and interest numbers that are not part of the equation; we will not receive until next year. Rates & Fees need to be to the Town Manager by April 1. We also need more bodies in stormwater department. **M. Lynch:** Big picture, if I am a resident and I have gas, despite the increase in water I am seeing a savings gas savings of almost .70 cents per therm. **B. Fenney:** We will see a savings in electric rates as well; contributing factor is our mild winter. **M. Lynch:** One of the big things that stands out is the amount of water that we can't bill for and is unaccounted for; that is a huge factor in terms of setting the rates we have and the revenue that the Town collects; that goes back to meters, if we have expiring funds we should utilize that, capitalize on those things and plan ahead orders; and chip away at unaccounted amount for billing. **P. Abair:** These are stressful times; the percentages and increases to some degree are not totally out of line with the economy; from a financial standpoint, there is a recession going on and it will get tighter and tighter for homeowners.

The board has recommended that Bruce supply actual revenue figures for water and sewer for the past (2-3) to correlate that against the current billable cubic feet of water to help make a better judgement before setting the water, sewer and stormwater rates for the homeowner.

OTHER BUSINESS

B. Fenney presented an abatement for 26 Marshall St. totaling \$125.38 regarding a delinquent water sales and service bill that was not created in MUNIS. Property was then sold with a clean MLC/Deed.

REVIEW/APPROVE abatement for 26 Marshall St: **M. Lynch entertained a motion to approve the abatement for 26 Marshall St;** **P. Abair seconded the motion. The vote was taken and was unanimously affirmative.**

M. Lynch: Staffing: hoping to add positions and we talked about writing a narrative on how those positions would impact incase funding became available. Budget update? **B. Fenney:** those positions have been taken out of our budget; will send the updated budget to the board.

SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING: B. Fenney will send an email invite for the next meeting and will have it posted to the Town website.

P. Abair entertained and made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:41pm; M. Lynch seconded the motion; there being no further discussion the vote was taken and was unanimously affirmative.