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**Town of Norton  
Board of Water & Sewer Commissioners  
166 John Scott Blvd.  
Norton, MA 02766  
(508) 285-0280**

**Meeting Minutes  
April 11, 2023**

**I. Call to Order**

The April 11, 2023 meeting of the Norton Water/Sewer Commissioners was held at 166 John Scott Blvd and was called to order at 5:30pm, by Commissioner James Jardin, Acting Chair. Member(s) present: Commissioner Steven Bernstein. Member(s) absent: Commissioner Steve Bishop. Also in attendance: Superintendent Frank Fournier, Office Administrator Brooke Durden, Weston & Sampson's Steve Pedersen, Weston & Sampson's Tara McManus via telephone and Kameron Campbell from DeCelle-Burke-Sala & Associates Inc.

Pledge of Allegiance

**II. Minutes**

1. Minutes from the March 15, 2023 meeting were approved.

**Motion was made by Commissioner Steven Bernstein to accept the minutes of the March 15, 2023 Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners Meeting. Seconded by Commissioner James Jardin. Vote: Commissioner Jardin – Aye; Commissioner Bernstein – Aye. MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

**III. Superintendent Updates**

1. Water Updates: The newest replacement Well 5A was put online on March 20<sup>th</sup>. By adding this new source, we nearly doubled the output from the Water Treatment Facility. Due to the change in volume entering the distribution system, we did receive some calls from residents stating they had noticed a chlorine smell, as well as discolored water. Techs responded and low flow flushed the hydrants closest to the complaints which helped resolve the issues quickly. Commissioner James Jardin asked if the level of flow would change the amount of chlorine we put into the system. Superintendent Fournier responded that we have lowered our chlorine injection amounts at the Treatment Facility because of seasonal demand; however, there is a possibility that we would run slightly higher in the summer months and residents may call about the noticeable disinfectant smell. Commissioner Jardin

inquired what we tell residents who call regarding the disinfectant smell, as to which Superintendent Fournier responded that the level is well below the recommended maximum amounts that can be used for disinfection, but it is required by Mass DEP and EPA to provide safe clean drinking water which requires disinfection. Superintendent Fournier stated that since the new wells have been online, we are now noticing how bad Well 4 is actually performing so we are now out to bid for cleaning that Well.

2. Spring Flushing Program: Since we have an additional amount of water, we were able to begin the Spring Flushing Program. We have started the program at the Water Treatment Facility and have been working in small spirals out around that area. So far crews have flushed the following areas: Bay Road, King Philip Road, Plain Street, Burt Street, and Leonard Street and they will continue to work their way outwards into Town. Superintendent Fournier stated that he is very happy the way the program has been going and mentioned that this is typically a 10–12 week program; however, if we stay on the pace where we are now, we will probably see the amount of time cut in half which shows how much improvement there has been in the system. When we have available staff, we will do some daytime flushing on the side roads, and areas that we haven't been able to get to in the past; however, our goal is to do most of the flushing on the larger trunk lines at nighttime to have the least amount of impact as possible.
3. Distribution System Bleeders: During the week of April 17<sup>th</sup>, the day crew will be installing distribution system bleeders to control the water age in some of our dead-end mains in the area of Dean Street and Richardson Ave. The bleeders will run for about a week and will help turn the water over since it is not a high demand area.
4. Mass DOT Road Opening Permit: Any state roads, even if they are in town, need to go through the SHAPS program to ask for permission from Mass DOT to open up their road, as well as know which guidelines to follow for road repairs. We have not had to deal with this in a while; however, there is a water service that we are looking to replace on Mansfield Ave. It is an old iron pipe and the original service was installed in parallel to an existing service. In order to correct this, we need to dig in front of the house and provide them with a brand-new water service and curb stop so that they can replace their side of the water service which is failing. Superintendent Fournier mentioned that it has almost been a year since we have started the application to get this permit; however, we are now approved to do work as of April 15<sup>th</sup> (when the roads open). Superintendent Fournier stated that due to the cost for signs and requirements by Mass DOT, they are making it very difficult for the town to do work on state roads; therefore, all requests for doing work on a state road will be deferred to private companies going forward.
5. 21 Juniper Road: As discussed at the October 11<sup>th</sup> meeting, 21 Juniper Road had a massive water leak that went unnoticed for almost 5-6 months based on the location of the home, which created an excessive bill. There has been discussion with the property owner's attorney and Town Council. The attorney for the property owner is requesting an abatement of the sewer charges, since the majority of the water didn't go into the municipal sewer system. Superintendent Fournier mentioned that typically in the past the Commissioners would agree to abate the sewer portion if it was known to be obvious that water didn't enter the sewer system. There is an

additional request for an abatement of the capital fee which is a percentage of the water bill. Commissioner James Jardin stated that he would not have a problem abating the sewer, as they have done in the past; however, he would like to wait to make a decision regarding the capital fee until Commissioner Steve Bishop was present, as to which Commissioner Steven Bernstein agreed. After some discussion, Commissioner Jardin and Commissioner Bernstein decided to not make a motion and table the discussion so they can review it more and have some input from Commissioner Bishop.

6. Demand Notice: We have been discussing the possibility of instituting a demand fee for delinquent water and sewer bills. There are quite a few accounts that go to lien every year, which is a lot of extra work for not only our department, but for the Tax Department as well. We are still waiting on more information on what will need to be done; however, the intent would be to add a demand fee between \$15 and \$30 and send a letter that will be a different color than the normal bill to try and grab the resident's attention to pay their delinquent bill before it goes to lien. Superintendent Fournier stated that one of his concerns is that if residents are already not paying their bills, an additional fee isn't going to change that. Therefore, this process could end up costing our department more money in the long run by additional work needed to be done, as well as more money spent in printing and postage. Superintendent Fournier then mentioned per the Rules and Regulations section 3.4, we do have the opportunity to shut residents' water off for non-payment because we do not conduct business with delinquents. However, it has been many years since we have done that and there are now new regulations from the Attorney General's office that limit when and who you can shut off. As previously stated, there are still questions that we are waiting to be answered, but Superintendent Fournier just wanted to make the Commissioners aware that this has been a topic of discussion. Commissioner Steven Bernstein mentioned that this is a common thing that other towns and cities do and believes we should as well.
7. Signing of Bills: The Department has been informed that the Board can choose to alter the way it currently reviews bills. Since the bills already get reviewed by Superintendent Fournier, or Assistant Superintendent John Harrop, the Board could choose to vote to sign just the Bill Schedule, and not have to initial each invoice like they have been doing. Copies of the bills will still be attached to each Bill Schedule in case there were any questions regarding a particular invoice. Commissioner Jardin, as well as Commissioner Bernstein are in favor of this new process.

**Motion was made by Commissioner Steven Bernstein to change the current status of initialing each bill and moving the approval with signatures to the Bill Schedule. Seconded by Commissioner James Jardin. Vote: Commissioner Jardin – Aye; Commissioner Bernstein – Aye. MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### **IV. Discussion on proposed plans for 0 Reservoir St**

1. Kameron Campbell from DeCelle-Burke-Sala & Associates Inc. came back before the Board to discuss the existing conditions plan for 0 Reservoir Street. Mr. Campbell stated that the original plan was to subdivide the R60 lot, as well as the Village Commercial lot for that location; however, his client is now planning on just subdividing the R60 lot into 15 single family homes with an option of two lots being a possible two-family home. There will be an 8-inch water line that will loop all the way around and tap twice with three gate valves with a proposal of 1-inch services to each home. They are also proposing extending the sewer line up Reservoir Street from just after Acre Road using an 8-inch sewer gravity line with a 1% slope to have a forced sewer line through the property. Each house will have its own E1 pump. Commissioner James Jardin mentioned the previous concern regarding using the Rumford pump station; however, Superintendent Fournier stated that with the decrease of homes the capacity goes way down so it should be fine. The existing homes along the route will have stubs left for them for future connections. Commissioner Jardin asked if this would fall under the 7 years to tie in to which Superintendent Fournier stated that it would. Superintendent Fournier also stated that the plans looked good and the developers have done everything that was asked of them but would like to have Weston and Sampson review the sewer plans to make sure the 1% slope would work.

**Motion was made by Commissioner Steven Bernstein to approve the subdivision plans as presented based on successful peer review for sewer. Seconded by Commissioner James Jardin. Vote: Commissioner Jardin – Aye; Commissioner Bernstein – Aye. MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

**V. Weston & Sampson – Water/Sewer Project Updates**

**Water – Tara McManus**

1. Wells 5 & 6: Weston & Sampson's Tara McManus stated that they were wrapping up Wells 5 & 6 and they received draft pay estimate #10 from Dankris in the amount of \$31,422.25. This payment is for the final solution of the work done, such as switching out the backup VFD.

**Motion was made by Commissioner Steven Bernstein to approve payment #10 for Wells 5 & 6 Replacement Project for \$31,422.25. Seconded by Commissioner James Jardin. Vote: Commissioner Jardin – Aye; Commissioner Bernstein – Aye. MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. General Engineering Contact: Under this contract, Weston & Sampson assisted with preparation of the Annual Statistical Report which was submitted on March 31<sup>st</sup>.
3. Auchlincloss Funding: A couple weeks ago we submitted the FY24 Funding Application for the tank replacement, as well as mixers in all of the tanks, and some additional water main work from the Treatment Plant on Plain Street. Unfortunately, we heard earlier today that we were not selected as one of the top projects to move forward. They do have a meeting on Tuesday with a representative from EPA to review the FY22 funding that was received.

4. South Worcester & East Hodges Street Area Water Main Project: Since the survey was completed and the Water Main Draft plans were put together, we were able to take some ties to additional valves that were found and are now making some revisions based on that new information. This project will be funded under the Town's ARPA funding through the County. Weston & Sampson's Tara McManus stated that they are working on finalizing the design and getting the permit applications in. They are starting to provide a draft of Notice of Intent for Conservation and are planning to get on an agenda for the end of May.

**Sewer – Steve Pedersen**

5. Holly Road/Knollwood: A kickoff meeting was held on-site last Monday. Weston & Sampson's Steve Pedersen stated work has started at Knollwood this week and they are getting ready to put in the pads for the generators at each site. At this point, the generators are expected to be installed in November.
6. Cobb Street: The generator is expected to be installed in the coming weeks. Mr. Pedersen mentioned that they are looking to have the 90% design for Phase 2 (Wet Well Improvement) for review during April.
7. Elm Street Sewer Design: Meeting was held with the Mass Work and Economic Development Bill Grant agencies to discuss how the two different Grant monies are being applied to the design and everything should be good.
8. Norton Public Schools: Weston & Sampson still owe the School Department a budget cost on what they need to do to connect the High School directly into sewer and modify the pumping chambers at each location so that they pump liquids and solids, as well as conceptual layouts on tying the Middle School and JCS in.
9. Sewer Regulations: Weston & Sampson is still working on some updates regarding language on the sewer connection fees and will try to send something over before next meeting to review.
10. NPDES General Permit: Weston & Sampson met with Superintendent Fournier about the new NPDES permit. Most of the requirements for this permit is through the MFN; however, each of the communities have some requirements with regard to the collection system. Weston & Sampson's Steve Pedersen mentioned the Town of Norton is in good shape; however, they will provide a scope for a few things that need to be done so that we are compliant. Commissioner Bernstein asked Superintendent Fournier if he had anything to do with the MFN, as to which Superintendent Fournier stated that he did not. Commissioner Bernstein then stated his confusion as to why a Water/Sewer Commissioner is not on the MFN Commission. Superintendent Fournier explained that the MFN Commission members are the Town Manager, as well as a former Water/Sewer Commissioner who was voted to stay on as our liaison.

**VI. Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance**

1. Commissioner Steven Bernstein mentioned some topics he would like to discuss.
  - a. Commissioner Bernstein asked if there were any new information regarding the Water/Sewer Article for the upcoming Town Meeting and if the Department has met with the Finance Committee yet. Superintendent

Fournier responded that there were no updates on the articles and that they still had to meet with the Finance Committee.

- b. He also mentioned that the Town Election is on April 29<sup>th</sup> and he is surprised that no information has been provided regarding the DPW ballot question. Commissioner Bernstein also mentioned that he volunteered to sit down and help formulate this but his offer was declined.
  - c. Although Commissioner Bernstein thinks the new TTHM notice that was required to be sent out has improved, he still thinks it was awful. The language is hard to follow and he has had some residents ask him what the notice means. Commissioner Bernstein understands that we are not allowed to change or add anything to this notice; however, he would like to make the residents aware of how complex our system is and that we do meet the standards.
  - d. Commissioner Bernstein attended the visit with MA DEP at Well 5 and stated how impressed he was with our staff, as well as how clean and orderly everything was.
  - e. Commissioner Bernstein asked if we had a good handle on where curb stops are and if there were tie-cards for each location. Superintendent Fournier stated that we do have a good number of tie-cards for some of the newer sections that have been replaced. However, there are some older sections in Town that it is almost impossible to find the curb locations. We typically go out in the Fall to try and locate a few of the areas that are known to be problematic in finding the curb stop. Commissioner Bernstein asked about tie-cards for Red Mill Village, as to which Superintendent Fournier responded that we do have tie-cards for Red Mill Village; however, where it was reconstructed from the original plans, there are sometimes problems getting access to the shut-offs. Commissioner Bernstein stated that the Red Mill Village Trustees are trying to locate all of the curb stops so in the event of the problem, the town will have no issues shutting off the water.
2. Commissioner James Jardin asked for an update on 313 West Main Street. Superintendent Fournier stated this property had a hose running under the porch that resulted in a high bill and the homeowner requested the bill be waived. As discussed at the last meeting, the Board denied this request due to the fact the water did go through the meter. Since the homeowner received another high bill, we believe that by the time they found out about the running hose, it was already in the next billing cycle. However, we offered to do a leak detection to make sure nothing else was going on. The leak detection was performed earlier today and there was no leak found. The Department has let the homeowner know about the results of the leak detection, as well as remind them of the outstanding bill.

## **VII. Bills & Correspondence**

1. All bills were reviewed, approved and signed.

## **VIII. Next Meetings: May 9<sup>th</sup> & June 14<sup>th</sup>**

**IX. Adjournment**

**Motion was made by Commissioner Steven Bernstein to adjourn the meeting of the Board of Water & Sewer Commissioners at 7:09pm. Seconded by Commissioner James Jardin. Vote: Commissioner Jardin – Aye; Commissioner Bernstein – Aye. MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

BOARD OF WATER/SEWER COMMISSIONERS  
ACCEPTED AND APPROVED MINUTES FOR THE

BOARD MEETING HELD: April 11, 2023

Respectfully submitted,

Brooke Durden  
Brooke Durden, Office Administrator

Steve Bishop  
Steve Bishop, Chairman

6-14-23  
Date Approved

James Jardin  
James Jardin, Clerk

6-14-23  
Date Approved

Steven L Bernstein  
Steven Bernstein, Commissioner

6/14/23  
Date Approved