

2023 AUG -9 PM 2:51

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

**Meeting Minutes
June 14, 2023**

I. Call to Order

The June 14, 2023 meeting of the Norton Water/Sewer Commissioners was held at 166 John Scott Blvd and was called to order at 5:31pm, by Commissioner Steve Bishop, Chair. Member(s) present: Commissioner James Jardin and Commissioner Steven Bernstein. Also in attendance: Superintendent Frank Fournier, Assistant Superintendent John Harrop, Office Administrator Brooke Durden, Weston & Sampson's Steve Pedersen, Weston & Sampson's Tara McManus, Treasurer/Tax Collector Paula Linhares, and Norton Resident Ken Kalasinsky.

Pledge of Allegiance

II. Minutes

1. Minutes from the April 11, 2023 and May 9, 2023 meetings were approved.

Motion was made by Commissioner James Jardin to approve the meeting minutes of the April 11, 2023 and the May 9, 2023 meetings of the Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners. Seconded by Commissioner Steven Bernstein. Vote: Commissioner Jardin – Aye; Commissioner Bernstein – Aye; Commissioner Bishop – Aye. MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

III. Water & Sewer Payment Plan Discussion

1. Treasurer/Tax Collector Paula Linhares was present to discuss Water/Sewer payment plans. Ms. Linhares stated that she recommends against the Water/Sewer Department starting payment plans since there is already a process in place on the Tax side and it may become confusing for the resident. Ms. Linhares believes the Water/Sewer Department should continue with the lien process for those who are delinquent in order to make sure the Town is protected and will receive payment. The Commissioners were in agreeance with Ms. Linhares and decided to revoke their original motion regarding residents entering into a payment plan. The motion that was made at the May 9, 2023 meeting regarding demand notices and fees will stand.

Motion was made by Commissioner James Jardin to revoke the motion for the May 9, 2023 meeting to offer 411 Old Colony Road for their meter to be tested and have the accuracy checked and see if they would be willing to enter into a payment plan for this bill. Seconded by Commissioner Steven Bernstein. Vote: Commissioner Jardin – Aye; Commissioner Bernstein – Aye; Commissioner Bishop – Aye. MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

IV. 210 Plain Street – Bill Discussion

1. Town Resident Ken Kalasinsky came before the Board to discuss his Water bill. Mr. Kalasinsky stated his frustrations as he has two liens on his property due to unpaid water bills that he was not aware of until this past March. He stated that he has not received any water bills for the last four years. After being contacted by the Tax Collector regarding his liens, he contacted the Water Department and noticed his water bills have increased tremendously. Superintendent Fournier stated that at some point, Mr. Kalasinsky's meter stopped working and failed to transmit the correct amount of consumption to our system. Once the previous Office Administrator noticed this, she sent him a notice alerting him that we were unable to obtain his water meter reading and to please contact the department to avoid an excessive estimated bill. As time passed without hearing from Mr. Kalasinsky, his bill continued to grow and be estimated. Mr. Kalasinsky recently had his meter changed; therefore, going forward he will receive accurate bills. However, he would like to rectify the excessive past due amounts and would like to see the numbers to see if the estimated amounts were justified. Since the system can only go back a couple of years, Office Administrator Brooke Durden will work with the database to try and pull the full account history. Mr. Kalasinsky asked the Commission if they would abate any portion of the bill at this time. Superintendent Fournier suggested tracking Mr. Kalasinsky's usage for the next month to see what he is on pace to use for the next quarter and that may help the Commission decide if an adjustment to the bill is warranted. The Commission stated they would like to move forward with Superintendent Fournier's suggestion and wait until they gather more information before they make a decision.

V. 21 Juniper Road – Water Leak/High Bill Discussion

1. As discussed at previous meetings, 21 Juniper Road had pipes that froze which resulted in a massive leak and an extreme bill. The meter tested accurately and the Commission has already waived the sewer portion of the previous bill leaving a remaining balance of \$36,799.05. After further discussion with 21 Juniper Road's Attorney, they stated they are willing to settle with paying \$30,000. Town Council advised us to take this offer since the Appeal Board is extremely sympathetic to homeowners and if we decide to fight for the whole bill amount, we could end up losing more money. Commissioner James Jardin stated he is inclined to take this offer; however, does not want to set a precedence of waiving fees. Commissioner

Steve Bishop agreed and thinks this is the best option so it doesn't cost the town more by possibly going to litigation.

Motion was made by Commissioner James Jardin to waive \$6,799.05 from the total bill of \$36,799.05 for 21 Juniper Road, leaving the total owed at \$30,000 and be payable before the close of the Fiscal Year. Seconded by Commissioner Steven Bernstein. Vote: Commissioner Jardin – Aye; Commissioner Bernstein – Aye; Commissioner Bishop – Aye. MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

VI. Superintendent Updates

1. Land Purchase for Sewer Department: While Treasurer/Tax Collector, Paula Linhares, was still present at the meeting, Superintendent Fournier wanted to discuss the possibility of purchasing a piece of land for the Sewer Department. Superintendent Fournier stated that he received a list of Town owned properties that will be listed for sale and noticed a parcel of land next to the Cobb Street Sewer Station. The Sewer Department has always maintained this parcel of land thinking it was theirs; however, it is actually owned by the Town. If we would like to secure that piece of land for use, Superintendent Fournier would like to know if the Commissioners would be willing to start the process to see what is entailed in purchasing it. Commissioner Steve Bishop asked what this piece of land would be used for, to which Superintendent Fournier mentioned that it is used to help access and bring machinery into the Cobb Street Sewer Station. Commissioner James Jardin stated that he is interested to see what the cost would be and if this piece of land would be big enough to expand the sewer station if need be in the future. Superintendent Fournier responded that is one of the reasons he is presenting this to the Board and thinks this parcel of land would be very beneficial to the Sewer Department. Commissioner Steven Bernstein stated that they should follow the standard procedures and have that piece of land appraised. All of the Commissioners are on board and agree to have Superintendent Fournier work with Ms. Linhares to see what the next step would be.
2. Sewer Connection Discussion: Superintendent Fournier stated that he heard back from Legal Council regarding the language of the Sewer Connection Article. Legal Council agrees that the way this article is written can leave much room for interpretation and believes there should be some work in the future to correct the language to clarify both connections. The way the language is now indicates that the requirements would follow the initial funding of the project. However, the concern is the article doesn't clearly state what the requirements would be if the Town took over a project that started with private funds. As mentioned at the previous meeting, the Planning Board is also concerned about the way this article is written and would like a letter from the Water/Sewer Commission stating their interpretation of the article's language. Superintendent Fournier mentioned that they can provide them a letter; however, thinks it would be beneficial to have a joint meeting to be able to answer any further questions the Planning Board may have, to which the Commissioners agree.

3. Distribution System Flushing: For the first time in about five years, we were able to finish the Spring Flushing Program without running out of water or going into a drought. The nighttime portion was finished on May 25th, while we continued daytime flushing up until around June 9th. We also worked with Wheaton College to coordinate flushing hydrants on campus that haven't been flushed in years. Commissioner Steve Bishop asked if that was something that we do annually. Superintendent Fournier stated that we try to flush all of the hydrants twice a year but haven't been able to do the ones inside the campus because of timing and concerns on where the water would go as there are no drains nearby.
4. TTHM Samples: Superintendent Fournier stated that the samples that were taken in May were all below the limit once again. Since we've had multiple sample rounds below the limit, we are no longer required to send out any public notification. The next round of samples will be done in August and Superintendent Fournier does not anticipate any exceedances moving forward. Unfortunately, a public notification for an exceedance of manganese will be going out in July due to Well 1.
5. Rules & Regulations: The Department has been going over the Rules and Regulations to make sure everything is up to date. Superintendent Fournier mentioned that he came across the Private Fire Protection section under fee schedule that states that a fee of \$100 per hydrant will be billed in advance for all private hydrant maintenance contracted with the Department. This fee has never been implemented in Superintendent Fournier's 23 years of employment; however, he believes it should be. Superintendent Fournier asked the Commissioners what type of leeway they would like to give these associations with private fire hydrants before they begin to implement this regulation. Commissioner Steven Bernstein suggested generating a list to figure out how many private hydrants there are in town, and then send a letter letting the development know we will start to implement this regulation in FY 2025. The other Commissioners are in agreeance; therefore, Superintendent Fournier will start to work on gathering information for these associations.
6. Water Treatment Facility: On Monday, May 22nd, we lost the use of our Well 3 location due to the bottom of the pump motor rotting out and breaking. Luckily, our Well Company had the pump in stock and was able to get the Well back up and running on May 30th. We then lost Well 4 on June 8th, which was not a huge loss because it was already scheduled for cleaning due to barely producing any water. The Well remains down and we have Frank Sullivan scheduled to come out the last week of the month to take it apart for cleaning. We have still not heard anything regarding the Auchincloss funding, but did receive approval at Town Meeting for full amount of the replacement project at Well 4.
7. On Wednesday, June 7th, we lost all communications at the Department due to our fiber optic cable, which connects us to the Town server, being clipped and severed by a dump truck on John Scott Blvd. We were able to go back online around 11am that Friday. Unfortunately, where there is no report stating who took the wire down, we will more than likely be responsible for the repair costs which are around \$15,000; however, Superintendent Fournier mentioned that an insurance claim has been put through to see if they will cover that cost. Commissioner Steve Bishop asked if this was just our Department's line, to which Superintendent Fournier responded that the line is our link between Town Hall.

VII. Weston & Sampson – Water/Sewer Project Updates

Water- Tara McManus

1. Last meeting there was brief discussion regarding the operators at the Treatment Facility noticing a little bit of deficiency with some filters. Weston & Sampson brought in their subconsultant to do an assessment and was then provided with a proposal to do the work. Weston & Sampson's Tara McManus stated that there was about \$17,000 left over in the General Services Budget, and the work cost around \$23,000. Therefore, the Town Accountant suggested putting an amendment together to increase the General Services Budget from \$50,000 to \$55,000. Commissioner Steve Bishop asked what work had to be done. Ms. McManus stated that the installation of the stone bed was not thick enough so they pulled it out and reinstalled the proper bed size and depth. Ms. McManus also stated that the vessels itself looks good and there are no issues with the other drains. There will be a summary report with some photos that will be provided to the Commissioners once it is received. Weston & Sampson recommends having a filter specialist come out periodically to check and make sure everything looks good.

Motion was made by Commissioner James Jardin to approve an additional \$5,000 to the General Engineering Services Contract with Weston & Sampson for a total of \$55,000 for Amendment #1 and allow Frank and/or John to sign for it for Fiscal Year 23. Seconded by Commissioner Steven Bernstein. Vote: Commissioner Jardin – Aye; Commissioner Bernstein – Aye; Commissioner Bishop – Aye. MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

2. Weston & Sampson's Tara McManus and Steve Pedersen both stated they will present the Fiscal Year 24 General Engineering Services Contract at the next meeting.
3. White Street: Since the last meeting, the final paving has been completed. Weston & Sampson's Tara McManus presented a final pay estimate to close out the project with Gravity Construction. Commissioner Bernstein noted that Gravity Construction did a very good job.

Motion was made by Commissioner James Jardin to approve pay estimate #2 for White Street Area Water Main Improvement Projects to Gravity Construction for the amount of \$58,403.16. Seconded by Commissioner Steven Bernstein. Vote: Commissioner Jardin – Aye; Commissioner Bernstein – Aye; Commissioner Bishop – Aye. MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

Sewer- Steve Pedersen

4. Elm Street Sewer Design: As mentioned at the last meeting, we have been working with both grant agencies to clarify how the money will get distributed, which has since been worked out.
5. Cobb Street: The generator has been delivered and will be installed within the next couple of weeks. As of now, June 27th is the target date for the start up. In

conjunction with the generator, they are also doing some electrical work and are adding some lights in the Wet Well. Fall River Electric is stating that some wiring is not up to code and additional work will need to be done; therefore, they have submitted a change order. Weston & Sampson's Steve Pedersen is working with them on lowering the change order request because he believes there was a lack of investigation on their part and the wiring should have been mentioned in the beginning. Commissioner James Jardin asked if an electrical inspection has been done, to which Superintendent Fournier responded that it was inspected when it was first installed and it passed. The Commissioners agree to have Weston & Sampson's Steve Pedersen continue to negotiate, but also agree the work needs to get done.

6. Cobb Street Phase II: Weston & Sampson met earlier today with Superintendent Frank Fournier, Assistant Superintendent John Harrop, and Sewer Tech Howard to discuss Phase II, which consists of getting in and making repairs to the Wet Well. Weston and Sampson's Steve Pedersen stated that we are pretty much ready to go out to Bid and will send the Commissioners a copy of the spec and drawings. It was mentioned by Howard that a structural analysis needs to be done to see if any repairs need to be made. This will be added to the contract and the contractor will have to hire a company to do the structural analysis. Commissioner Bernstein asked if they thought there would be any structural issues. Superintendent Fournier mentioned that it is in rough shape and there is quite a bit of deterioration.

VIII. Topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance

1. N/A

IX. Bills & Correspondence

1. All bills were reviewed, approved and signed.

X. Next Meeting: Tuesday, July 11th.

XI. Adjournment

Motion was made by Commissioner James Jardin to adjourn the meeting of the Board of Water & Sewer Commissioners at 7:29pm. Seconded by Commissioner Steven Bernstein. Vote: Commissioner Jardin – Aye; Commissioner Bernstein – Aye; Commissioner Bishop – Aye. MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

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

BOARD MEETING HELD: June 14, 2023

Respectfully submitted,

Brooke Durden
Brooke Durden, Office Administrator

[Signature]
Steve Bishop, Chairman

8/8/23
Date Approved

[Signature]
James Jardin, Clerk

8-8-23
Date Approved

Steven L Bernstein
Steven Bernstein, Commissioner

8/8/23
Date Approved