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

**Meeting Minutes  
July 11, 2023**

**I. Call to Order**

The July 11, 2023 meeting of the Norton Water/Sewer Commissioners was held at 166 John Scott Blvd and was called to order at 5:33pm, 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, and Norton Resident Louis Alcide.

Pledge of Allegiance

**II. Minutes**

1. No Meeting Minutes were reviewed or approved.

**III. Pump Station Updates: Knollwood & Holly Road – New Gas Line Install Discussion**

1. Majority of the site work has been completed at both locations and we are now just waiting for Eversource to put in the gas lines for the generators. Superintendent Frank Fournier mentioned that the Department is responsible to pay Eversource directly, and they will not start the work until they have received payment. The cost for both gas lines is around \$21,000. Commissioner Steve Bishop asked how long of a run the gas lines would be, as to which Superintendent Fournier responded that it is not a far distance. Luckily, where we have been going back and forth with Eversource, they were able to date the invoice in June so we could encumber and use some money that was remaining in our Fiscal Year 23 budget.

**IV. Continued Discussion on Customer Bills**

1. 313 West Main Street: Louis Alcide, resident of 313 West Main Street, has previously come before the Board asking for his bill to be waived due to a hose being left on which created an extremely high bill. At that time, the

Commissioners were going to work on a payment plan option with talks of waiving interest for those who entered into the payment plan. At the meeting on June 14<sup>th</sup>, Treasurer/Tax Collector Paula Linhares was present and stated her opinion and reasoning on why she recommends against the Water/Sewer Department starting payment plans. After listening to Ms. Linhares reasoning, the Commissioners decided against payment plans and a letter was sent to Mr. Alcide explaining the Board's determination. Mr. Alcide received the letter and reached out to the Department to see if the Board would reconsider. Commissioner James Jardin believes where there is no question regarding the accuracy of the meter, whatever goes through the meter needs to be paid for. Mr. Alcide joined the meeting later on and Commissioner Steve Bishop explained what was previously discussed. Mr. Alcide stated his disappointment in the Board for not helping him in anyway with the bill amount. He also didn't understand why his current bill was high as well. Assistant Superintendent John Harrop stated that it is an unfortunate event and if this property had sewer the Board would be inclined to abate that; however, their hands are pretty much tied. Assistant Superintendent Harrop also offered to send a tech out the next day to get a reading. If the reading is still trending high, then we will set up another leak detection for Mr. Alcide to make sure this will not be an ongoing issue.

**Motion was made by Commissioner Steven Bernstein to take no action. Seconded by Commissioner James Jardin. Vote: Commissioner Jardin – Aye; Commissioner Bernstein – Aye; Commissioner Bishop – Aye. MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. 210 Plain Street: At the last meeting, Ken Kalasinsky, resident of 210 Plain Street, came before the Board to discuss his high estimated bills. Mr. Kalasinsky's meter failed to transmit the correct amount of consumption to our system and over time his bills were estimated. Mr. Kalasinsky asked the Board for an abatement on the estimated bills; however, where the bills were estimated for so long, the Commissioners wanted to gather more information before making a decision. Office Administrator Brooke Durden gathered Mr. Kalasinsky's account history, as well as weekly readings from Mr. Kalasinsky's new meter and presented them to the Commissioners. Based off of the weekly readings, it is probable that Mr. Kalasinsky will be on track to use about 27 units this upcoming quarter, which was similar to his usage before the meter broke. Where the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter bills are passed the dispute date, the only option would be for the Commissioners to abate the 3rd quarter bill.

**Motion was made by Commissioner Steven Bernstein to abate the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter water bill for 210 Plain Street in the amount of \$255.30 as of July 11, 2023. Seconded by Commissioner James Jardin. Vote: Commissioner Jardin – Aye; Commissioner Bernstein – Aye; Commissioner Bishop – Aye. MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. 180 Reservoir Street: Douglas Smith, resident at 180 Reservoir Street, sent the Board an email asking why he received an estimated bill and would like a reduction in charges due to him and his wife being away for the past couple of months. Superintendent Fournier stated that by looking back in our system, Mr. Smith's meter stopped transmitting a reading in September of 2022, which has created an estimated bill since then. Commissioner James Jardin asked how far back we base estimated readings from, as to which Superintendent Fournier responded we look at the same quarter of the last two years. Mr. Smith did recently contact us, and his meter was actually replaced earlier today. Assistant Superintendent John Harrop stated that based off of the visual reading received today, it shows he was estimated higher than what was actually used. Commissioner James Jardin doesn't think there's much they can do where it's a small bill that was estimated following protocol and thinks that no action should be taken. Commissioner Steve Bishop thinks the Commissioners should consider abating the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter bill in total since the past three quarters have been over estimated and Mr. Smith has paid for them. Commissioner James Jardin and Commissioner Steven Bernstein are in agreement.

**Motion was made by Commissioner James Jardin to abate the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of Fiscal Year 23 bill for 180 Reservoir Street. Seconded by Commissioner Steven Bernstein. Vote: Commissioner Jardin – Aye; Commissioner Bernstein – Aye; Commissioner Bishop – Aye. MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

## **V. Superintendent Updates**

1. Fire Hydrant Flow Test: A Fire Hydrant Flow Test was performed on June 26<sup>th</sup> at 288 East Main Street. We did receive, and responded to, a couple of dirty water calls in Red Mill Village due to this test. Commissioner Steve Bishop asked if we received any dirty water calls from the apartments down the road, to which Superintendent Fournier responded that we did not.
2. Fire Pump Flow Test: A Fire Pump Flow Test was performed at Auto Parts International on June 27<sup>th</sup>. The required notifications were posted online, as well as in the Sun Chronicle. Unfortunately, this flow test did create some disturbances since water flowed close to 3 times of the flow rate that we normally move water in the distribution systems; however, it seemed to be isolated to the Mansfield Ave and Freeman Street area.
3. Well 4: At the last meeting, Superintendent Fournier stated that the pump at Well 4 had failed. At the time, we already had a cleaning scheduled so we decided to have both services done at the same time. When the new pump and existing motor was reinstalled, we could not generate the same flows. Unfortunately, the motor is worn and unable to operate; therefore, we will be replacing that as well and will hopefully be in within the next week. Since the pump failed before the end of the Fiscal Year, we were able to encumber that cost and pay it out of the Fiscal Year 23 budget; however, the motor will be paid out of Fiscal Year 24. The Well is still offline until we get the motor in and can replace it.

4. **Water & Sewer Rate Studies:** As mentioned at a previous meeting, we need to re-evaluate our Sewer Connection Fees to bring it up to the betterment cost. We are also due for a Water Rate Study as we just entered into our last year of the Water Rate increase. Superintendent Fournier stated that he does not remember a time when a Sewer Rate study has been done, but thinks it's a good idea to include that with the Water Rate study. Superintendent Fournier stated that they have used Mark Abrahams in the past, to which Commissioner Bishop stated he likes him. The Commissioners agree to have Superintendent Fournier reach out to begin a new rate study. Commissioner Bernstein asked about the Sewer Connections Fees, and if the Elm Street project would be assessed a betterment. Weston & Sampson's Steve Pedersen responded that it is still in the works; however, it is recommended that way.
5. **Mass DEP Annual Statistical Report Review:** We received notice from Mass DEP indicating that they have denied some of our unaccounted-for water amounts, stating lack of documentation. Superintendent Fournier stated that Mass DEP wants to know what the system pressures were prior to and during pipes failures, as well as an exact time that the failures ran for to determine exact accuracy of the water loss. This information is nearly impossible to provide and Weston & Sampson's Tara McManus stated she will work with Superintendent Fournier on a rebuttal.
6. **Townwide Leak Detection:** Throughout the year we complete town wide leak detections; however, Mass DEP wants a professional company to complete this. Superintendent Fournier will talk with Weston & Sampson to see if this is something that can be completed in the Fall.
7. **Cobb St. Sewer Station Generator Update:** The new backup power unit at Cobb Street has been installed; however, training was put on hold due to the gas meter regulator being too small. The Contractor is in contact with Eversource in order to resolve the problem.
8. **Fiber Optic Cable Repair:** As mentioned at the previous meeting, our Fiber Optic Cable was clipped and severed by a dump truck. The Town's Director of Technology reached out to the company and repairs were made. The bill for the repair was originally paid out of the Town's Technology account; however, since the Fiber Optic Line services our department, we will need to reimburse the technology account for the cost of the repairs. Superintendent Fournier presented a letter to the Commissioners asking for their signatures and approval to transfer the funds from one account to the other. As Superintendent Fournier mentioned at the last meeting, an insurance claim has been put in; however, we have not heard anything back from them at this point. Superintendent Fournier stated that the Town is now looking into getting a maintenance contract with the company who made the repair.

**Motion was made by Commissioner James Jardin to debit the Water Department Account #061-450-570-5315 and credit to Account #001-155-570-5315 the amount of \$13,128.80. Seconded by Commissioner Steven Bernstein. Vote: Commissioner Jardin – Aye; Commissioner Bernstein – Aye; Commissioner Bishop – Aye. MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

9. Assistant Superintendent John Harrop stated that the air release valve, as well as the transducer failed at the Great Woods Pump Station over the weekend. The transducer was replaced; however, the replacement also had a malfunction. The Sewer Department is trying to see if they can get a new replacement or if there is a better alternative that is compatible to the system.

## **VI. Weston & Sampson – Water/Sewer Project Updates**

### **Water- Tara McManus**

1. White Street: A Balance and Change Order was presented to the Commissioners for approval to balance and close out the project.

**Motion was made by Commissioner James Jardin to approve the Balance and Change Order for the White Street Area Water Main Payment Contract #1 to increase the amount of \$3,368.44 and approve Superintendent Frank to sign. Seconded by Commissioner Steven Bernstein. Vote: Commissioner Jardin – Aye; Commissioner Bernstein – Aye; Commissioner Bishop – Aye. MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. The Standard Annual Contracts for Drinking Water, as well as Wastewater, were presented to the Board for approval for fiscal year 2024.

**Motion was made by Commissioner James Jardin to approve the General Engineering and Consulting Services that are related to the municipal drinking water issues and assignments for fiscal year 2024 agreement between Town of Norton and Weston & Sampson Engineers in the amount of \$50,000. Seconded by Commissioner Steven Bernstein. Vote: Commissioner Jardin – Aye; Commissioner Bernstein – Aye; Commissioner Bishop – Aye. MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Motion was made by Commissioner James Jardin to approve the General Engineering and Consulting Services that are related to wastewater issues and assignments for fiscal year 2024 agreement between Town of Norton and Weston & Sampson Engineers in the amount of \$50,000. Seconded by Commissioner Steven Bernstein. Vote: Commissioner Jardin – Aye; Commissioner Bernstein – Aye; Commissioner Bishop – Aye. MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

### **Sewer- Steve Pedersen**

3. Cobb Street: We were getting ready to do the startup and testing; however, they couldn't get it up to the full pressure that they needed so they are still working on it. The Contractor submitted pay estimate #2 for the work that has already been done. As mentioned at the last meeting, a Change Order was submitted from Fall River Electric. After some negotiations, Weston & Sampson's Steve Pedersen was able to cut the Change Order amount in half from \$6,300.00 down to \$3,195.04.

**Motion was made by Commissioner James Jardin to approve payment estimate #2 for the Cobb Street Pump Station Improvement Project in the amount of \$114,627.95 and approve Superintendent Frank to sign for it. Seconded by Commissioner Steven Bernstein. Vote: Commissioner Jardin – Aye; Commissioner Bernstein – Aye; Commissioner Bishop – Aye. MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Motion was made by Commissioner James Jardin to approve Change Order #1 for the Cobb Street Pump Station Improvements in the amount of \$3,195.04 and allow Superintendent Frank to sign for it. Seconded by Commissioner Steven Bernstein. Vote: Commissioner Jardin – Aye; Commissioner Bernstein – Aye; Commissioner Bishop – Aye. MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

4. Cobb Street Phase II: The Improvement in the Wet Well has been advertised and will run in the Sun Chronicle on Friday. The Pre-Bid Conference will take place on Thursday, July 27<sup>th</sup> at the station and the Bid Opening Date will be Thursday, August 10<sup>th</sup>.
5. Elm Street Sewer Design: 64 Elm Street reached out to see when Sewer will become available on Elm Street, as they need to replace their Septic System. Weston & Sampson's Steve Pedersen stated that unfortunately they don't have a time line and should reach out to Board of Health to see if they are able to wait or if they are mandated to replace their septic system now.

## **VII. Topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance**

1. Assistant Superintendent John Harrop stated that the last three Lead and Copper samples were submitted at the beginning of June and we have still not received the results from the lab.
2. Assistant Superintendent also stated that he sent an email to the Commissioners to see if any of them would be available to attend the next Planning Board Meeting. The Planning Board would like some clarification on the way the article is written for Sewer Connection. They ended up denying the Reservoir Street Project because they didn't want the abutters to be forced to tie into Sewer. Superintendent Fournier stated that it is possible that an agreement could be made between our Board, and the Planning Board, for the project on Reservoir Street so there is no impact to residents. Commissioner James Jardin asked if we would want Legal to be at this meeting to help explain the article. Superintendent Fournier stated that he doesn't think it would be necessary to spend the money to bring them in.
3. Commissioner James Jardin asked if hybrid meetings were still a requirement and if not, then he would like to stop them and just have in person meetings. Assistant Superintendent Harrop stated that he doesn't believe it is a requirement, but he can double check. Superintendent Fournier stated that he believes hybrid meetings are beneficial.

### **VIII. Bills & Correspondence**

1. All bills were reviewed, approved and signed.

### **IX. Next Meeting: Tuesday, August 8<sup>th</sup>.**

### **X. Adjournment**

**Motion was made by Commissioner James Jardin to adjourn the meeting of the Board of Water & Sewer Commissioners at 7:39pm. 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: July 11, 2023

Respectfully submitted,

Brooke Durden  
Brooke Durden, Office Administrator

Steve Bishop  
Steve Bishop, Chairman

5/8/23  
Date Approved

James Jardin  
James Jardin, Clerk

A-F-23  
Date Approved

Steven Bernstein  
Steven Bernstein, Commissioner

8/8/23  
Date Approved