

2024 MAR 14 AM 11:10

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

**Meeting Minutes
January 9, 2024**

I. Call to Order

The January 9, 2024 meeting of the Norton Water/Sewer Commissioners was held at 166 John Scott Blvd and was called to order at 4:47pm, by Commissioner James Jardin, Acting Chair. Member(s) present: Commissioner Steven Bernstein. Commissioner Steve Bishop arrived at the meeting at 4:48pm. Also in attendance: Superintendent Frank Fournier, Assistant Superintendent John Harrop, Office Administrator Brooke Durden, Weston & Sampson's Tara McManus, Weston & Sampson's Steve Pedersen via zoom and Balfour Farm's Owner Al Endriunas.

Pledge of Allegiance

II. Executive Session

1. Commissioner James Jardin declared, under General Laws Chapter 30A, Sec. 21 (a)(6), that the purpose of the executive session will be to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real estate that the Chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body and with the Board to return to open session at the conclusion of executive session.

Motion was made by Commissioner James Jardin at 4:47pm to enter into executive session and with the Board to return to open session thereafter. Seconded by Commissioner Steven Bernstein. Vote: Commissioner Bernstein – Aye; Commissioner Jardin – Aye.

III. Open Session Reconvened at 5:37pm

IV. Minutes

1. Minutes from the November 14, 2023 meeting were approved.

Motion was made by Commissioner James Jardin to approve the Board of Water/Sewer Commissioners meeting minutes for November 14, 2023. Seconded by Commissioner Steven Bernstein. Vote: Commissioner Jardin – Aye; Commissioner

Bernstein – Aye. MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY. It is to be noted that Commissioner Steve Bishop abstained from the vote as he was not present at the November 14th meeting.

V. Balfour Farms Discussion

1. Superintendent Frank Fournier stated that we have received an updated set of plans from Balfour Farms for the Commissioners to review and approve. These set of plans have a few minor changes that need to be addressed as there are some things that were done differently in the field than noted on the plans, based on assessments and approval from the Department. Once the project is complete, we will receive a final set of as-built plans. Superintendent Fournier stated that we are still working with KP Law to come up with the MOA to show connection costs, as well as size and number of connections, as it was requested at the last meeting. Balfour Farms owner Al Endriunas is here tonight to discuss some options regarding payment of the connection fees. Mr. Endriunas started off by thanking the Board for allowing him to move forward with the project before the weather turned. Mr. Endriunas stated that they have about 300 feet left to install for the water main going from the end of Lloyd Circle to Briggs Street and about 800 feet left on the sewer side, but that has already been tied into the interceptor. As Superintendent Fournier mentioned earlier, sometimes minor changes are needed but both Departments have been great to work with. During the planning stage of this project, Balfour Farms initially proposed an interior loop from one road to the other in the sub-division; however, the Commissioners asked if the loop could be to Briggs Street, which Balfour Farms agreed to do. This change in plans added additional costs to the project so Mr. Endriunas was wondering if the Commissioners would agree to waive some of the costs. Commissioner Steve Bishop stated that the loop benefits the Town and asked Superintendent Fournier if waiving fees has been something that has been done in the past. Superintendent Fournier replied that the Board has approved either a discounted rate or waived a connection fee for an infrastructure improvement. Commissioner James Jardin stated that he does not have a problem waiving one of the 8-inch tap connection fees because of the infrastructure improvement. Commissioner Steven Bernstein asked Superintendent Fournier about his thoughts, to which Superintendent Fournier stated he also does not have a problem since it is a benefit to the Town as there will now be hydrants in the cross-country sections which will help with our flushing program. Mr. Endriunas also asked for assistance on the timeline on paying the fees. As previously mentioned by Superintendent Fournier, fees are typically paid upfront upon approval of the project; however, Mr. Endriunas would like the fees to be paid when the building permit is pulled as he is planning on selling the lots. Superintendent Fournier stated that if the Board approves this request, then we would want that in writing to make sure the person who purchased the lots are aware money is still owed. Assistant Superintendent Harrop mentioned that it may be in the best interest of whoever is purchasing the lots to pay now since fees could go up once the rate study is complete. After some further discussion, the Commissioners agreed to charge Balfour Farms for one 8-inch water connection and to allow the individual connection fees to be paid before obtaining a Building Permit.

Motion was made by Commissioner James Jardin to approve the Balfour Farms plans with revisions after the peer review referencing the Balfour Farm plans dated 12/22/23 and also requiring the as-builts. 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 waive a single \$50,000 water connection fee for the Balfour Farms project. 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 allow the connection fees for the Balfour Farm individual parcels be paid individually before obtaining Building Permits and to bill for the one 8-inch water connection. Seconded by Commissioner Steven Bernstein. Vote: Commissioner Jardin – Aye; Commissioner Bernstein – Aye; Commissioner Bishop – Aye. MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

VI. Superintendent Updates

1. Generator Updates: As Superintendent Fournier has previously mentioned, we were having issues with a few of our back up power generators; however, they have now been taken care of. Superintendent Fournier stated that the best news is that the gas services for Knollwood and Holly Road were installed on January 2nd. The gas meter has been installed at Knollwood, but Holly Road is still waiting on theirs.
2. Update on Well 1: The Well Driller and Cleaner had some issues getting the Well apart to clean it, which has never happened at that Well before. As anticipated, the pump was worn and needed to be replaced, which is currently on order. The motor and drive still appear to be in good working order and will be reused. We took some early grab samples that indicated that the Iron and Manganese levels were lower after the cleaning and are hoping to have this Well back online by the end of the month.
3. Update on Well 3: As recommended, this Well is currently offline and we are assessing the permanent solutions for this location. We will also be discussing what would need to be done in order to put this Well back online. With Well 1 & 3 being offline, it has put a heavy burden on the water treatment facility and the other Wells feeding it.
4. TTHM: As mentioned at a previous meeting, we were noticing changes to the distribution system by having Wells 1 and 3 offline. Due to those changes, we have been adding higher amounts of chlorine to still have a detectable result at the outskirts of Town. Although that increase in chlorine is necessary, it can and will lead to other compliance issues such as an increase in TTHM levels. Superintendent Fournier stated that we did exceed for the quarter at the two dead-end locations; however, we did not exceed the locational running average.
5. Capital Budget: Superintendent Frank Fournier, as well as Assistant Superintendent John Harrop, have submitted the Capital Budget for FY25. As previously mentioned, we are looking to replace a few vehicles, and we have also been working on rebuilding some in-house. Superintendent Fournier stated that we have replaced one of the beds of a pick-up truck that was completely rotted and completed some other welding work to get the vehicle to pass inspection. That vehicle will now be used at the Treatment Facility, having the small

car that was there go to auction. Superintendent Fournier listed a couple other items that were going to be part of the Capital Budget, such as getting a new cab and chassis. We will then switch over parts, including the dump body and snow plow, from the existing truck over to the new one which will save us thousands of dollars. Another item on the list is to replace our large dump truck which was specked incorrectly from the beginning and is not able to hold the type of loads that we have to haul. Commissioner Steve Bishop asked if we could trade, to which Superintendent Fournier responded that we are not allowed to trade because everything has to go to municipal bid. Where this dump truck would be used by both departments, we are looking to split some of the cost with the Sewer Department. Commissioner James Jardin asked if we should consider what would happen when we become a DPW and if the Highway Department wanted to use this truck, should we ask them to pay some money towards it. Superintendent Fournier stated that we have not heard anything regarding the DPW so we are proceeding as normal and don't want to hold off as prices keep increasing. The last item on our list is to replace both of our electronic emergency road signs which were originally purchased in 2003.

6. Superintendent Fournier stated that the deadline for Town Meeting articles is soon approaching. We are looking to reallocate money to other projects from articles that have been approved at a previous Town Meeting but have not been used. For instance, there is some money left over from the Well 5&6 borrowing, as well as money that was appropriated for water main cleaning that has not been used due to the treatment facility doing its job. Therefore, we would like to present an article to reallocate those funds to something else.
7. Rate Study: Superintendent Fournier has been going back and forth with the company that will conduct the rate study and wanted the Commissioners opinion on whether we should move forward with it now or wait until we have a better idea on upcoming cost, such as the PFAS removal facility. He stated that although we may need to do another rate study down the road, we should move forward with a rate study now for the Water & Sewer Department to see the impact from Covid. Commissioner Steven Bernstein asked if this could be implemented by July 1st, to which Weston & Sampson's Tara McManus responded that it takes a couple of months and then we need to present it to the public. After some further discussion, the Commissioners agree to proceed with the rate study.
8. Abatement Request: There is a request from the Norton Glen LLC, to abate the interest amount due to Lockbox misapplying payment causing a delinquency in one of their accounts.

Motion was made by Commissioner James Jardin to abate the interest amount for account 3172 in the amount of \$43.84. Seconded by Commissioner Steven Bernstein. Vote: Commissioner Jardin – Aye; Commissioner Bernstein – Aye; Commissioner Bishop – Aye. MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

9. Assistant Superintendent Updates: Assistant Superintendent John Harrop stated that the Lead and Copper results were sent off today and we only have 55 samples, rather than the 60 that are required. Therefore, we will be putting something in our CCR about that. Assistant Superintendent Harrop also stated that they will be conducting some interviews this week for some openings in the Department due to retirement.

VII. Weston & Sampson – Water/Sewer Project Updates

Sewer – Steve Pedersen

1. Knollwood & Holly Road: As Superintendent Fournier mentioned earlier, the gas services have been put in at both locations. The meter was installed in Knollwood; however, we are still waiting for the meter to be installed at Holly Road to which Weston & Sampson's Steve Pedersen stated he would follow up with the company. Mr. Pedersen also mentioned that he has been in touch with the Contractor who wants to move forward and complete the work at Knollwood.
2. Cobb Street Phase I: The breaker was installed and was done without shutting the station down. The generator is now up and running and the only thing left is to install the thermostat. Once the thermostat is installed, they will get the temporary generator out of there.
3. Cobb Street Phase II: A Notice to Proceed has been issued with an official start date of December 29th. The pre-construction meeting was held today and the plan is to get started in February.
4. Peer Reviews: Things have been moving along with Balfour Farms. Weston & Sampson is still waiting on the signed agreement to start the peer review on 0 Reservoir Street, but has received payment and a contract to start the review for 0 Mansfield Ave. As requested by the Commission, 0 Mansfield Ave is proposing a gravity sewer to run down Mansfield Ave and connect where the West Main Street project has left off.
5. Elm Street Sewer Design: We are continuing to make progress with the Elm Street Sewer Design and Weston & Sampson is currently working on the design report, as well as the preliminary design. An onsite meeting will need to be planned with Superintendent Fouriner and maybe someone from another Town Department to decide where they would put the pump station. Weston & Sampson's Steve Pedersen stated that we have the Mass Works Construction Grant for \$3.5 million, which should be more than half of the construction estimate cost; however, we will need to put an article in at Town Meeting for the remaining cost. Mr. Pedersen also mentioned that we will need to hold meetings and do a public outreach to the residents before Town Meeting so they will support this article.
6. Norton Public Schools: Weston & Sampson is trying to wrap up on the work being done for the schools. The schools are looking for costs on modifying the sewer connection down at the Yelle and High School, as well as connecting the Middle School. At the last meeting, the Commissioners approved to have Weston & Sampson do a review on sewer for Valentine Tool to see if they could possibly connect to the Middle School. Weston & Sampson has received plans from Valentine Tool and will work to see how it could connect.

Water – Tara McManus

7. Weston & Sampson's Tara McManus stated that she will continue to work with the Department on a sampling plan for TTHM and PFAS.
8. Contracts have been received for Cottage Street aeration design, elevated tank design and the system wide storage study, as well as the construction services for South Worcester Street. Weston & Sampson's Tara McManus stated that they are currently discussing funding opportunities using the ARPA money and do intend to go out to Bid sooner than later.

9. Ms. McManus stated that she will set up a meeting with the Department on meters and the transition of the billing system before the next meeting.

VIII. Topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance

1. Commissioner Steven Bernstein asked where we stood on meters. Superintendent Fournier stated that we haven't had a chance to really look into that, but we do have some issues with some of the meters that are in place now resulting in a few leaks. Neptune, the meter company that we use, are aware of the leaks and has made some modified parts that can be installed on their meters to prevent the freeze plate from leaking. Superintendent Fournier added that we are still looking to move forward with a newer style radio read system.
2. Commissioner James Jardin asked if there were any updates on Island Brook as he saw there was going to be a public hearing with the Planning Board regarding a 40B they are proposing. No one at the Department has heard anything.
3. Commissioner Jardin also stated that he wrote a letter to request an appointment as his term is coming to an end and the Commission will now become appointed, rather than elected.

IX. Bills & Correspondence

1. All bills were reviewed, approved and signed.

X. Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 6th

XI. Adjournment

Motion was made by Commissioner James Jardin to adjourn the meeting of the Board of Water & Sewer Commissioners at 6:50pm. 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: January 9, 2024

Respectfully submitted,

Brooke Durden
Brooke Durden, Office Administrator

[Signature]
Steve Bishop, Chairman

3-15-24
Date Approved

[Signature]
James Jardin, Clerk

3-13-24
Date Approved

Steven L Bernstein
Steven Bernstein, Commissioner

3-13-24
Date Approved