

**Board of Water & Sewer Commission**  
**166 John Scott Blvd, Norton, MA 02766**  
**October 13, 2020**

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**Meeting called to order at 5:30pm**

**Attendance**

Superintendent Frank Fournier  
Commissioner Luke Grant  
Commissioner Steve Bishop  
Weston & Sampson: Tara McManus & Steve Pedersen

**Superintendent Updates**

At our last meeting, Superintendent Frank Fournier mentioned the problems associated with the utility crews working on East Main St. for the Mass DOT Improvement project. The areas they are working on fall into a grey area. Basically, crews are installing utilities on what was once private property, and beyond what is currently marked and owned by the utilities. now that the state has widened the road easement. Two weeks ago, the contractor for National Grid installed and set a new pole without incident. However, while installing the guy wire, they drilled through the private sewer line for North Cottage Street and ruptured the sewer line. We responded and supplied parts for the repair to the contractor, but did not complete the repair because it is private. The parts used will be returned to us.

**Route 123 Water Leak:**

A week or so back we had a tractor trailer unit try to perform a U-turn around in the middle of rt.123. His trailer struck the old fire hydrant at 129 East Main St. The hydrant was from the 1940's. It snapped at the base because it is not a break-away style hydrant. The damage resulted in a major leak that was equivalent to a pipe break. We lost over 100,000 gallons of water within minutes. Luckily, the technician who responded was able to get to and shut off the hydrant gate valve. This is a valve that was cleaned out last fall during our valve exercise program that was performed because we anticipated issues along this stretch of roadway with the pending construction. Superintendent Fournier responded with a crew and they installed a new hydrant at the same location even though this is part of the pipe that will be abandoned by the Mass DOT Improvement project. We will be getting the hydrants back to either reuse or strip for parts.

**Hydrant Flushing:**

We have been flushing the water mains during the daytime hours for three weeks now. We have only received a handful of calls from people who have experienced a minor

disturbance. these calls have been handled by light hydrant flushing in the area or by providing instructions to the owner and have them flush their water service if that area was recently flushed. There were no calls related to this hydrant break. It is important to note that in years past, we would have been out flushing for hours. This speaks volumes for the water treatment facility. Commissioner Bishop mentioned in the past that the water quality will improve significantly after a few system flush sequences

We would like to think that the treatment plant, in conjunction with our heavily coordinated aggressive flushing in the spring, really made a difference. This fall, we are limited with the amount of water we have available due to the drought, so we are flushing cautiously. Extra time has been spent to further isolate areas in an attempt to avoid any disturbances and save water. The extra time being taken with valve configurations does limit the time we have to actually flush. Superintendent Fournier has been working with the staff to come up with the new sequences that are working out quite well. The potential to isolate areas becomes more challenging as we approach some of the older sections of town where valves are limited. Daytime flushing and daytime flow testing will continue while we have the water and the weather on our side.

#### **Fire hydrant flow testing:**

We actually have a hydrant flow test that will be performed in the area of the police station. We will be working with Rustic Fire on East Main St. on October 14, 2020 at 10 in the morning to complete that test.

#### **Tank Cleanings:**

The Cottage Street tank is going to be cleaned out, but is not anticipated to be very dirty because it was drained and the stand pipe was flushed last June due to a valve break. This is sure to save some of the cleaning cost. The ground storage is anticipated to be fairly dirty because it is the first cleaning since the water treatment plant was brought online. Once those two tanks are complete, the crew will be switched over to Mansfield Avenue. And then the elevated tank in the center will be the last to be cleaned. We are hoping to get these all completed before the weather gets bad and it becomes difficult to get on top of the tanks. Commissioner Steve Bishop asks if the Cottage Street tank is going to be painted. Superintendent Fournier says that it has been discussed and explains that the exterior is currently in need of repair, but the inside is still in great shape. He then brings up that there is also a possibility of replacing that tank with a glass-lined concrete tank like the center elevated tank. There is also a possibility of using a smaller storage tank to assist in tank turnover. The pricing for encapsulating, sand-blasting, removing the hazardous material and painting will be very close to the price of replacing it all together. Commissioner Grant likes the idea of repairing the tank that is already in place over replacing it. He states that it is definitely a topic to discuss at a later date and time. Discussion continues between the board members about the possibilities and options available.



### **Town Meeting Articles:**

We have two articles in this Saturday's Fall Town Meeting. We are asking for the authorization to use the monies remaining that were either borrowed or from retained earnings to avoid having to borrow money to pay for our portion of the Mass DOT improvement project. We have money left over from two water improvement projects that came in under time and cost. The first article is to transfer remaining funds from the Holmes and East Main St. project in the amount of \$191,250.00. The second article is to grant authorization to transfer remaining funds from Pine St. in the amount of \$820,400.00. These monies should cover our cost of the Mass DOT project. The state engineers originally came in with their estimate of around \$580,000.00 that would be our cost. We chose to raise the amount to \$700,000.00 in an attempt to cover any unforeseen items that are expected to come up after reviewing their estimate. Our portion was \$809,000.00 once the project was awarded to the low bidder. Having the money from these two articles in an account should cover the \$809,000.00 and any unforeseen fees that may be added to that number. There was an article in a previous town meeting authorizing us to borrow the \$700,000.00 for this project. Based on the engineer's estimate, if these two articles are approved, we will post to rescind the original article in the spring town meeting.

### **Blue Drop Water Machine**

Commissioner Luke Grant heads this discussion. There is a concern that the water that remains in the idle water machine could, and most likely will freeze during the winter months. As per the agreement with Blue Drop, our municipality would be responsible for any damage to the machine. Commissioner Luke Grant recommends that Blue Drop be contacted and told to please remove the machine. He states that they can cut and cap any utilities that are attached inside the town hall building. He also suggests a lock-out/tag-out on the outlet so that no one can get juice from it because electricity is getting more expensive as the winter gets started. He says that he wants Blue Drop notified to come and remove their machine because it is no longer needed due to the much-improved town water quality. Commissioner Steve Bishop agrees that removing the machine would be the best choice.

Three town residents say that they think it is a mistake to remove the machine while some residents are stating there is still brown water. He asks how the water commission plans to provide clean water while there is still "tingy" brown water once they remove the machine, and also asks if there is a way to take the risk away from the water commission of having to be responsible for the machine without removing it.

Commissioner Grant replies to the resident by explaining where the discoloration of the water comes from. He explains that the discoloration could be in the line from the main to the houses and that the main lines are scoured and flushed but that does not clean out individual resident pipes. He recommends that residents call and coordinate with the water department. The water department can come out and explain how to full flush



their water service through their spigots from the main. He explains how the process is performed in further detail. One resident asks if there is a possibility of installing a simple spigot within the town that has a motion sensor that residents can use to fill up their water jugs and have clean drinking water. Commissioner Grant tells the residents that he appreciates the suggestions but that there are too many safety issues involved since winter is approaching.

### **Weston & Sampson's Tara McManus: Water**

#### **Water Treatment Plant Update**

There was a conference call conducted last week with the contractors to discuss the remaining punch list items. The list and the change orders were reviewed. The outstanding utility bills that have been paid by the town was also discussed. They are in disagreement with paying for the portion of time when the plant was running but not at substantial completion. We are still in discussion on that matter. However, Tara has added the utility bill as a credit to change order #3. All of the items on the list are items that had been spoken about over eight months ago. We are awaiting a response as to whether or not it will be signed by the contractor. They would prefer to omit the utility bill information from the change order. That will need to be negotiated. The recycle tank was also discussed. The dual color system paint that was ordered has a three-week delay, but should be arriving next week. We are waiting for the contractor to provide us with a plan for completion of the work. They did submit additional information and we are checking off our list completed as well. There are still a few larger items to be completed. Tara discusses some of the items and then explains the color system and how it will help with wear and tear indication. Tara expects that the coating should last at least eight to ten years. She does expect a little pushback, but the commission's stand point is that it has been long enough to complete the work. She makes it clear that the contractor will only get paid once all of the remaining work is completed.

Commissioner Luke Grant states that the contractors will have to provide some form of an insurance bond for the work that they are doing because the tank has leaked since day one. This still has to be discussed. He makes it clear that he is weary of the quality and longevity of the contractor's work and needs bonding and assurances for at least 20 years.

A few of the punch list items are touched on like the paving, the wheelchair ramp, electrical and certification of the pumps. Most of the items on the punch list have been there for six months or more.

#### **Pine Street Project:**

The contractor will be out next Monday 10/19/2020 starting to mill the water main trenches in preparation for the anticipated day or two of paving that will begin on Tuesday. This milling will go from the well access road to Plain Street. The road will be closed to non-residents. Detour signage and police details will be set up. The intention

is to have that work completed by the end of the day on Wednesday. The highway dept. will be out there at some point next summer to pave the curb to curb overlay.

### **Wells 5 & 6 Replacement Project**

Tara will be having a pre-construction meeting with the conservation commission tomorrow to review the project. The first stage of that is to get our driller out there to develop the wells and complete the 48-hour pumping test afterwards. Well 5 will be constructed first. This will take a couple of months. We will be getting the erosion control measures in place and then start the well construction in the next few weeks. The second stage will be when we actually publicly bid the connections of the wells to the raw water system and put that toward the treatment plant. Excavation and trench work will need to have more erosion control. We sent in the information for the well 6 permit approval and work on well 6 can begin once that is approved.

### **Steve Pedersen: Sewer**

All of the main line gravity sewer has been completed since the last meeting. The cross trenches are almost complete. There are only three or four left to complete. The contractor is saying that they will be finished by the end of October, but Steve thinks it will more than likely be in the end of November. By the end of the year, the town will start allowing connections to be made to the new line. Paving and road restoration work will be in the spring. Once all of the gravity main connections have been made, the system will then need to be tested. There are some connections that need to be extended. The board discusses the connections and where the caps will be placed and how the system will flow.

Commissioner Luke Grant states that he wants a specific letter or communication to go out to the schools that clearly informs them of where the lines will be terminated and how things will work from that point on. He then asks how the school bus traffic is being affected. Steve Pedersen explains that it has been difficult, but that they are doing their best to keep traffic moving while not hindering the contractors or schools. He goes further into detail on how the school traffic is affected.

Commissioner Steve Bishop asks if there are plans to soften the bumpiness of the road for the time being or if the contractors plan on waiting until the whole project is completed. Steve Pedersen explains that the temporary pavement will be ripped up and replaced with a permanent trench patch once all of the connections are in place and the testing has been done. This will happen before the winter begins. He then goes further into detail on how the whole process will be completed and the regulations that have to be followed.

Steve Pedersen explains the funding from SRF and the housing authority is what is paying the bills right now.



### **Cobb Street Engineering Project:**

An agreement was presented by Weston & Sampson that would help the Water & Sewer Department put out a package to make some improvements at Cobb Street. Steve Pedersen asks if the board has had time to look it over and wishes to discuss it. It was a tabled topic last time it was brought up at the meeting. He explains that it is their services to put a design package together, put it out to bid and perform spot inspections during construction. He details what some of the items are in the package. He asks if they would like to make a motion to get the agreement signed for the Cobb Street Engineering Project today or think on it until the next meeting.

### **Motions:**

1. Commissioner Luke Grant asks Commissioner Bishop for a motion to send the Blue Drop machine back to the company.

Commissioner Steve Bishop makes the motion to send the Blue Drop machine back to the company.

Commissioner Grant seconds the motion

All in favor: Commissioner Grant - Aye.

Commissioner Bishop - Aye.

Motion is approved.

2. Commissioner Steve Bishop makes a motion to sign the Cobb Street Engineering Project contract.

Commissioner Luke Grant seconds the motion.

All in favor: Commissioner Grant - Aye.

Commissioner Bishop - Aye.

Motion is approved.

3. Commissioner Steve Bishop makes a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Grant seconds the motion.

All in favor: Commissioner Grant - Aye.

Commissioner Bishop - Aye.

Motion approved.



# TOWN OF NORTON

Water &amp; Sewer Department

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BOARD OF WATER/SEWER COMMISSIONERS

ACCEPTED AND APPROVED MINUTES FOR THE MEETING HELD: 10/13/2020

Respectfully submitted,

Victoria Nye Brown

  
Luke Grant, Chairman

  
Steve Bishop, Clerk