



86 Bridge Street, P.O. Box 20, Baldwinville, MA 01436-0020

TEL: 978-939-5323

FAX: 978-939-4309

John M. Driscoll, *General Manager*

## WATER DIVISION

### Water Commissioners' Meeting

September 13, 2017

Members present were: Chairman Dana Blais  
Clerk Chris Stewart

Employees present were: General Manager [GM] John Driscoll  
Water Superintendent [WS] Ron Davan  
Business Manager [BM] Jennifer Belliveau

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Dana.

The agenda was approved on a motion by Chris seconded by Dana, 2-0 in favor.

The minutes of June, 2017 were approved on a motion by Chris, seconded by Dana, 2-0 in favor.

#### **Old Business:**

The GM notified the Board that the Johnson Ave WST project is complete; there is no news to report. Dana asked about the left over monies to the project, the GM stated that we had paved and hopefully will be reimbursed partially for the Town Building Permit with the remainder.

The GM discussed New Water Meters for FY2018. The GM produced a change-out list going by the high water users from the Billtrust system, but the Water Superintendent (WS) stated that this was not necessarily tied to the age of the meter; factors to change the meters initially dealt with age and not consumption. If the meter does have high usage but is only 5-6 years old we did not have to change it. The GM and WS agreed on our wanting to change out meters that were 13+ years old. The WS also said that they are giving meter serial numbers to Ti Sales in exchange for date-of-manufacture, making it easier to pick out the ones that should be replaced. The WS and the Water Clerk/Secretary Brigid have been working on a final list for the GM.

The GM explained to the Board the comments made by the Mass DEP regarding the 2016 ASR report. The original report submitted included estimated leak detection water loss from service breaks and malfunctioning meters totaling 6.4%, yielding an UAFW of 1.59% loss for 2016. The Mass DEP did not accept that number and told us that we could not use these service break or malfunctioning meter estimated data amounts. The GM did explain to the Mass DEP that we hired an outside leak detection agency to find the leaks, but that did not matter. Now our UAFW loss was 9.92% without those two other figures being considered. When the GM asked them what the threshold was, the Mass DEP said 15% would be deemed unacceptable, but 10% would put the TMWP into a different reporting category (likely more often).

The WS stated that our water service breaks normally are around 6 per year, but this year there were 16 due to those found by the leak detection agency. The GM suggested to Mass DEP that we may not keep track of these losses any longer, but they said we have to. He was visually frustrated at their refusal to accept our loss estimates on these large water quantities; they offered no alternative method of

calculating these quantities. In an email to Mass DEP the GM asked them why bother changing meters if meter mistakes were not to be actually included in overall losses.

### **New Business:**

The GM provided a copy of his proposed FY2018 Water Budget to the Board. [He specified that there was a new line item for \$60K listed in this budget for Account #320-00, Water Treatment Plant-Filtration Media. This was to replace the "green sand" in the filters at the Sawyer Street WTP that is necessary to mitigate the high Fe and Mn content in the groundwater. Other water industry experts suggested that this is usually done at 11-year intervals. The WTP is now 13 years old and had not yet had its filtration media replaced.] The total operating budget \$\$\$ for FY2018 were the same as that of FY2017. The GM provided an additional report on projected gallons sold and revenues to fund the TMWP in FY2018. After some discussion a vote took place as follows:

*"On a motion by Chris, seconded by Dana, 2-0 in favor the Board voted to approve the GM's proposed FY2018 Water Operating Budget of \$1,570,016."*

*Dana – Aye*

*Chris – Aye*

The GM and WS discussed the Sawyer Street WTP Filtration Media. The GM proposed doing an RFP OR Bid next month for the replacement of this "green sand". An RFP could deliver a better product than a conventional bid would, but the GM was discouraged by the amount of time put into the RFP process rather than the Bid process. The GM stated that to simply go out to bid on the filtration media would necessitate our accepting the lowest priced bid, but we were just essentially buying multiple bags of the same materials here. The WS stated that our WTP was constructed in such a way as to allow palletized materials to be driven inside the facility, and with our own personnel actually installing the new filtration media we would be looking at less than the \$60K projected by the GM.

The GM handed out a 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Water Sales Summaries and Revenues report for FY2018. The water usage was down by 5,000 KGAL and the revenues were down \$43K as compared to the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter from the previous fiscal year. There were also 17 less water bills in FY2018 than in FY2017. The WS stated that there had been a few more homes that recently had town water back on; this in addition to newer meters being replaced would allow water revenues to sustain the operating budget.

The GM told the Board that Underwater Labs had been out to inspect the South Rd WST for interior damage and sludge buildup. The WS stated that there was really no difference from the last inspection, and that the sludge buildup was less than 1". Underwater Labs will be sending us a summary report.

The GM informed the Board about a high amount of backhoe maintenance as of late on Truck #34, the 2007 JCB unit. This backhoe is 11 years old and NITCO had been out for maintenance on several different occasions in FY2017 AND in FY2018. Thus far in this fiscal year, the total NITCO costs were at \$2.3K. Dana asked approximately how many hours were on the unit; the WS said it was about 4,000. He stated that driving it in town on these roads has caused a lot of excess wear and tear on Truck #34. The GM stated that the 2007 cost for this backhoe was \$68K and he believed its replacement cost to be \$100K in today's dollars. There would be no backhoe at any time in the short term for budgetary reasons but the WS included that with proper maintenance another 10 years of useful life for Truck #34 was likely.

The GM and BM updated the Board on the FY2017 Water Audit status. The audit that began 3 weeks ago had stopped, due solely to the fact that Adam Schremser from Goulet, Salvidio & Associates, PC

(GSA) could not get a response or documents from the USDA Office in Hadley, MA. We had provided them with the papers we had regarding the USDA, but they are looking for more information. We had sent GSA all the information that we believed the Town had received on the \$950K loan. On September 16, 2017 the GM and BM had received an email from GSA stating that they would not be coming out for the on-site audit field work as previously scheduled. [The GM was wondering if this had something to do with the last commissioners' meeting when Jim Goulet arrived with TMLP documents for discussion and was asked by the Board to leave as they were already in executive session.] Unfortunately, USDA representative did not seem to be responding to GSA's office and at this time neither the GM nor the BM knew with any certainty when this water audit would resume. This would become more problematic when the Town started requesting this water audit information for their annual book. The GM continued to be disappointed with GSA's behavior and performance, as they had come highly recommended by other small/medium light departments.

**Other Business:**

The WS stated that the TMWP had four (4) new connections to home this past month. He cited a concern of his with #252 Baldwinville Road, which now belonged to the company that owned Space Age Electronics. Although no Dig-Safe was called in for this property there had been a lot of excavation (Moschetti) anyway. He also informed the Board that the new building owners would want the water service turned back ON soon and we would not be able to oblige; the WS knew of several sprinkler heads inside the building which had unrepaired leaks. The TMWP would be in communication with the Town's building and plumbing inspectors for their approval in advance of restoring water service there.

There being no other Open Session business to discuss, on a motion by Chris, seconded by Dana, 2-0 favor the Water Commissioners' Meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

John M. Driscoll



General Manager