



WATER DIVISION

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John M. Driscoll, *General Manager*

**Water Commissioners' Meeting  
August 18, 2015**

Members present were: Dana Blais, Gregg Edwards, Chris Stewart

Employees present were: John Driscoll, Ron Davan

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

The agenda was approved on a motion by Gregg, seconded by Chris, 3-0 in favor.

The July 21, 2015 minutes were approved on a motion by Gregg, seconded by Chris, 3-0 in favor.

**Old Business:**

Jeff Faulkner and Peter Valinski from Tighe & Bond were in attendance for the first agenda item to discuss the USDA Loan Application status and also for a pros and cons session on a new concrete water storage tank versus a steel/glass one. The Manager had informed the board that Tighe & Bond did not wish to take an official position as to whether concrete or steel/glass was the better water storage tank choice for Templeton Water. Tighe & Bond has to deal with several different independent consultants, contractors and engineers who are involved in either tank design and they did not wish to alienate themselves with one particular faction of tank designers/installers.

A discussion was had by all in attendance after a handout was distributed to the Board, Manager and Superintendent with some bullet point pros and cons on either tank style. Peter did confirm that although the side of the wall of a steel/glass water tank would not rupture and leak with a smaller caliber rifle there would be visible damage that would require repair. This is due to the Manager's expressing concerns about vandalism at the local level and shared a report about electrical insulators being shot at on the electrical transmission line behind the light and water office. He had concerns that the Johnson Avenue location was somewhat "off the beaten path" and may be subject to similar vandalism.

In general, particularly after the Board's discussion with Tighe & Bond, the favor seems to be with a concrete tank rather than a steel/glass-lined one; although the upfront costs would be higher the Board/Manager/Superintendent felt that this 65+ year capital asset would outlast its steel/glass counterpart. However, there was no vote taken to officially accept one tank design over the other. The Manager stated that this vote would need to be taken in the next 6-8 weeks to solidify the USDA Loan application.

The newer SCADA system for the Water Plant had been installed and was functioning at minimum levels at this time. The reason for this was the newer and larger amount of analog

points of data required from the various water sites in town. The Manager had had a conversation with Rich Laviolette who was handling the SCADA Upgrade prior to tonight's meeting about his explanation for the complete date being extended. He had told the Manager that the newer licenses for the water software used in the water meter laboratory required upgrades to be purchased at higher levels of data acquisition, hence, the additional analog data points to be installed. This boiled down to extra memory cards at the SCADA master computer here and at the various water sites in town.

The Manager had assured the Board that there was no need for concern here and that this was normal in the SCADA field. He gave examples to compare it to the Light Plant SCADA system where current was an analog point, voltage was another, power another, frequency another and so on. This could be compared to water flow, water pressure, water volume, tank levels and so on.

The Manager and Superintendent updated the Board on the status of the hydrant flushing for the spring of 2015 and the Water Plant had only completed about 20% (about 88) of the hydrant flushing that is normally already done by mid-June each year. They attributed this to the fact that one of the four water employees in operations had been out of work since March 2015 on disability combined with planned vacation days and/or unplanned sick days taken by the remaining three. The Manager thought it likely that some water overtime may be required in order to flush all the necessary hydrants once before the fall 2015 flushing season was here. The Board raised no objections to said overtime if necessary.

### **New Business:**

The Superintendent gave the Board a review of two recent water main breaks that had occurred, one on Elm Street on July 26 and another on Patriots Road on July 25. The matter on Elm Street was minor and required minimal time to both find the water main leak and to repair it. The matter on Patriots Road was much different and took longer to locate the source and longer to perform the repair. The clean-up efforts of this water main break were extensive since nearly the entire private commercial parking lot at #203 Patriots Road (Wilson Bus Lines) was covered with a few inches of dirt that had been pushed there by the roughly 10,000 GPM flow of water from the main. The Superintendent said that he would have to utilize Templeton Highway to sweep this private parking lot properly (Templeton Water had no such equipment anyway) in addition to making the usual road restoration repairs to Patriots Road.

On August 9 a vehicle had struck the Dudley Road PRV (Pressure Relief Valve) Hut and caused considerable damage to it. At this time, according to the Manager and the Superintendent, the hut was out of service till further notice. This would be an insurance claim matter and Commerce Insurance was the driver's carrier, but in the meantime some make-ready repairs had been made to make the building safe and secure. The pressure relief valve connection to the Dudley Road water main had been damaged and as a result the hut could not be used to reduce the water pressure to the one water customer connected to it. The Superintendent informed the Board and the Manager that this would not be an issue and he would monitor the pressure till final repairs had been made. The Superintendent had already been in touch with Stonkus Hydraulic and DW White to inquire on the possibility of repairing the hut as soon as possible.

The Manager had distributed to the Board copies of the Water Plant's 2014 ASR (Annual Statistical Report) and commented on the Mass DEP's response to it. The variance between accounted for an unaccounted for water (UAFW) for 2014 was 9.8%, which was still 5.2% less than the Mass DEP's threshold for concern. However, they had disqualified water service leaks'



reported gallons of water lost; this had raised the UAFW to 10.1% and now, in the Manager's opinion, unfairly represented Templeton Water as having lost roughly 500,000 gallons without an explanation. There were no fines or notices of non-compliance associated with the Water Plant's UAFW increase to 10.1% but this adjustment made by the Mass DEP without cause left the water consumer to assume that Templeton Water was somehow losing pumped water somewhere between the well and the end user.

The Manager gave the Board copies of a job description for a [Water Utility Laborer](#), a classification that had been vacant at the Water Plant for several years since the other three employees in operations had received all of their necessary water licenses and training for distribution and treatment (now Water Utility Specialists). The Manager stated that this water department had been operating since March 2015 with, on average, only two employees at any given time due to one extended absence due to disability and other shorter absences due to personal, sick and vacation time. The Superintendent had inquired of the City of Gardner's DPW Water Division on the possibility of getting part-time assistance with licensed water employees who could help us finish the spring 2015 hydrant flushing. This proved to be more difficult than it was worth since the city had essentially contracted its water operations needs to United Water, a private entity, and legal hoops would have to be jumped through in order to "borrow" one of these water employees temporarily.

The Manager and Superintendent both felt that it was time to hire a new full-time water employee as a laborer so that there could, in a few years' time, be enough properly trained water personnel to cover normal working hours and after-hours responsibilities of the Water Plant. This would allow easier scheduling of jobs for the Superintendent with an absence, planned or unplanned, and it would also eliminate the need for the temporary use of Light Plant employees to assist in water main break repairs. The Manager stated that this had been a costly alternative for Templeton Water in the past year or so; utilizing linemen in lieu of other water laborers.

The Manager informed the Board that he would be placing an ad in the Gardner News in the next week or two to get this process started. He anticipated receiving over 100 applicants for such a position here, and would require the assistance of the Superintendent's water industry knowledge to make a sound decision on the hiring of a new permanent water employee.

There being no other Open Session business to discuss, on a motion by Chris, seconded by Gregg, 3-0 in favor the Water Commissioners' Meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

John M. Driscoll



General Manager