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John M. Driscoll, *General Manager*

WATER DIVISION

Water Commissioners' Meeting January 16, 2019

Members present were: Chairman Dana Blais
Clerk/Secretary Chris Stewart
Member Gregg Edwards

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 Gregg, 3-0 in favor.

The minutes of November 7, 2018 were approved on a motion by Chris, seconded by Gregg, 3-0 in favor.

Old Business

The General Manager (GM) discussed the Maple St Water Main Engineering/Design Proposal and distributed a handout from Tighe & Bond. He explained that the cost of the job would most likely be **\$1,000,000**, not the **\$300,000-\$400,000** like we had anticipated. The GM needs to know if we should go ahead with this engineering and design now or later. Dana suggested paying off the **\$3,800,000** Bond first, but the GM said we would need the cash to do that (roughly **\$760,000** in principal and **\$148,000** in interest). Dana also suggested possibly rolling in this projected **\$1,000,000** cost with the **\$3,800,000** Bond, but the GM stated that the Town has no bond rating yet (to his knowledge at that time). He suggested possibly applying for a new USDA grant/loan with a likely **3%-3.5%** interest rate. The GM said the biggest challenge with another USDA grant/loan is the submittal process, however the Town's new bond rating would likely be over **5%** till they had a few solid financial years of reporting to provide to Moody's.

Tighe & Bond's opinion was that the biggest risk of doing the engineering and design NOW then the actual construction LATER were increased material and labor costs. This Maple St Project would cost about **\$409** per foot because most of Maple St was also MA Route 202, and the requirements for repaving state roads are much more burdensome than for town roads. It would be about 12-18 months before the project would start generating invoices that needed to be paid. The cost of the last water main break on Maple St was about **\$9,000**. Dana asked if the Water Plant would need to come up with the **\$60,000** immediately for the engineering and design? The GM said NO, that we would be billed monthly on a progress basis, and even if we signed with Tighe & Bond tomorrow they would not begin for a few months till the weather improved for their field work.

Since the USDA grants/loans are given to Towns and NOT Water Departments, the GM would need to appear in front of the Select Board and ask them to vote to accept the loan terms like he did before. Gregg asked if we had the \$60,000 right now, and was there another water project being considered? The GM said this Maple St project was 1 of 2 or 3 being looked at right now (one was Orchard Ln). Dana asked if the Maple St well would run forever if it was maintained at the same level that it is today? The WS said there was more than enough water in the ground there, and that we were currently only pumping 50% of what we were permitted to (450 KGPD actual/900 KGPD allowed).

[The WS showed the Board some pictures of the collapsed culvert pipe between Maple St Wells 1 and 2 that has rotted. The federal agency in charge of land management down there would be dictating to us how this broken pipe is to be replaced. The water level has been high recently given the amount of rain there has been in MA, so this crossing culvert continues to be a problem for our getting to Well 2. The WS said that something needs to be done for a permanent or temporary repair before the roadway simply washes away.]

The GM asked the Board if they felt comfortable moving ahead with the proposal offered by Tighe & Bond? Dana asked how many feet of water main construction was involved here? The GM said it was in the realm of 2,600' when including the portions both on and off of MA Route 202. He stated that the project cost could drop considerably with any decrease in ductile iron expenses; water main pipe represented \$238,000 or 22% of total project costs here. At this time a vote took place as follows:

"On a motion by Gregg, seconded by Chris, 3-0 in favor the Board voted to move forward with the full engineering and design proposal offered by Tighe & Bond for the reconstruction of the Maple St water Main not-to-exceed \$64,000."

Gregg – Aye

Chris – Aye

Dana – Aye

The GM also discussed with the Board the CDBG Opportunity for East Templeton road(s) reconstruction. He distributed a report on the history of our water main breaks in East Templeton since we had taken over in 2001. Patriots Rd and Sawyer St had always been first and second priorities for the Water Plant for the chance to rebuild entirely, but Patriots Rd was a state road ineligible for CDBG funding, and Sawyer St was considered a supply line for multiple neighborhood roads and thus ineligible. The next priority for reconstruction for us would have been South Main St, but that wasn't liked by Community Opportunities Group (COG), Inc because of the state bridge intersection in the middle. The GM said we are onto Orchard Ln now, and Weston & Sampson was preparing a preliminary project estimate. Once this was done, the GM and the WS would meet with COG, Inc to segregate project cost responsibilities by grant funds, town funds, sewer and water enterprise funds. Mike Pingpank had left COG, Inc after several years to pursue another career opportunity and had been replaced by Melissa Rodriguez. She would work with Peter Sanborn and us to get this project moving forward.

The GM felt that the Town would be asking for a financial contribution later and a financial commitment now for this project's development. The GM prepared the Board for this by mentioning the E&D work to be done for Maple St, whatever repairs need to be made for the Well 1,2 crossing culvert and the continuous and numerous water meter failures that we are experiencing. The GM will have to take a thorough look at our revenues and expenses mid-year and make some conservative projections for the next half of FY2019 before he can say with confidence that we can give any funds now or later to the Town for Orchard Ln.

New Business

The GM handed out Q1,Q2 FY2019 (rough) gallons/revenues summary to the Board. Our customer water usage increased by 7,000,000 Gal and our water revenues increased by \$103,000. Gallons sold are up by 11% and revenue collected is up by 12%. Clearly the Town has fewer empty homes than it did at this time a year ago, and this could be a sign of a local economic recovery.

The GM discussed the 2018 Annual Statistical Report status. In 2017 water sold represented 77.5% of all water pumped, and in 2018 that figure was now 84.1%. This had to be due to the improvements made with hundreds of new water meters being installed since FY2017. Further, a water leak analysis done by Prowler years ago uncovered some significant water leak areas that had since been addressed. The GM said that this translates into a lower percentage of Unaccounted For Water (UAFW); we would look better in the eyes of the Mass DEP as a small public water system running efficiently.

Other Business

The WS reported that we have been able to replace 5 or 6 water meters per day, continuing our system-wide metering upgrade that began in FY2017.

There being no other Open Session business to discuss, on a motion by Gregg seconded by Dana, 3-0 favor the Water Commissioners' Meeting adjourned at 6:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



John M. Driscoll
General Manager