



WATER DIVISION

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John M. Driscoll, *General Manager*

Water Commissioners' Meeting March 5, 2019

Members present were: Chairman Dana Blais
Clerk/Secretary 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 7:09 p.m. by Dana.

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

The minutes of January 16, 2019 were approved on a motion by Chris, seconded by Dana, 2-0 in favor.

Old Business

The GM spoke on the CDBG opportunity for East Templeton to the Board. He handed out a preliminary estimate of the Orchard Lane Reconstruction Project. Pete Sanborn and Melissa Rodriguez from COG, Inc had estimated the total project cost at \$932,000, including a 10% contingency. The grant would provide the Town of Templeton with \$650,000 toward this project; the GM noted that this was low compared to previous years due to the state's getting more aggressive on communities tightening up their own operating budgets before getting large grant amounts. When the Water Plant was working with the Town on the various phases of the Back Bay reconstructions in Baldwinville, grant funding was more accessible. The Town Administrator (TA), Carter Terenzini, had promised \$175,000 in municipal funds and \$90,000 in Chapter 90 funds toward Orchard Lane. The \$108,000 seemed like a large amount for the Water Plant to commit to without raising our rates, according to the GM. But he still thought it possible, citing the additional revenue being realized and/or that will be realized with the 300+ water meters being replaced before June 30, 2019.

Then, earlier this afternoon, the grant administrators had bumped the project cost up to \$1,145,000, much to the chagrin of the TA and the GM. Holding the \$650,000 constant, the Water Plant's estimated project donation of \$108,000 was now very close to \$175,000. The GM told the TA that this was nearly 15% of our fiscal gross revenue, and it was not possible. He told the TA that he would be asking the Board to vote tonight on the \$108,000 if there was a vote at all, and there certainly would not be a vote on \$175,000. The TA understood this, since the Town was getting state and federal money to make their contribution, and the Water Plant's contribution had to come only from water customers. The GM advised the Board that if they wanted to participate in the Orchard Lane Reconstruction Project, that he

would make sure the \$108,000 was available in about a year, when it would be needed to begin funding actual project costs.

At this time a vote took place as follows:

"On a motion by Chris, seconded by Dana, 2-0 in favor the Board voted to contribute a maximum amount of \$108,000 toward the upcoming Orchard Lane Reconstruction Project."

Dana - Aye

Chris - Aye

New Business

The GM talked with the Board about the recent vehicle maintenance for Truck #34 (backhoe). The unit is a 2007 JCB purchased for \$68,000 and its current replacement value for same is around \$130,000. In FY2019 the Light and Water Plants have spent \$5,000 (each) or more on maintenance costs. When the time comes for unit replacement the GM thought that there would need to be a conversation on how much of the backhoe operating hours are for the Light Plant as opposed to the Water Plant. Maybe the next one's cost could be split amongst the two departments.

The GM told the Board that the Water Plant was purchasing from Ti Sales a new mobile data collector & GPS receiver. What the device does is read hundreds of water meters simultaneously and collect massive amounts of water usage data by interval. This data can be then manipulated into charts for display to us or to water customers to resolve billing disputes. The Water Plant will need to purchase a mobile laptop computer for around \$1,000 in order to use this new collector device. All of the water meters that we have installed since FY2015 have this newer technology built into it them already, so once we have replaced all of them, a lot more customer usage data will be available for our review.

The GM spoke to the progress on our Q3 FY2019 water meter reading. For East Templeton/Templeton meters (about 1,200) we have had 67+ read failures, and for Baldwinville/Otter River meters (about 1,000) we have had 100+ read failures. What is happening is that all of the water meters that we installed in 2001/2002 after taking over the water department are reaching the end of their 15-year battery life in the register. We can estimate water bills pretty easily without too much objection raised by the water customers, and we will have to do this for some accounts. The GM said that we have already purchased 175 water meters in FY2019, 50 more than he had budgeted for, so funding for even more water meters is not available in this fiscal year. Most of the older water meters are testing at -10% or so, so it is fair to claim that we'll be seeing more revenue coming to us in FY2020, along with improved ASR figures on water loss.

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 7:09 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



John M. Driscoll
General Manager