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John M. Driscoll, *General Manager*

WATER DIVISION

Water Commissioners' Meeting March 9, 2021

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 6:01 p.m. by Dana.

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

Old Business:

The GM discussed with the Board the Maple Street Well #2 Culvert. The WS stated that he believes the reconstruction of the culvert is overkill based on what the Mass DEP is requiring to be done. The WS had some questions for the state when the water is going to be held back in that area by the Birch Hill Dam Authority. When they open up the dam, the backup of the water flow is fast and the WS is concerned with the new culvert materials being washed out again like they have been in the past. The WS did have a meeting with Ron Amidon who was going to look into our getting some grant funds for this type of project. Ron did get a grant for \$150,000 from the Fish & Wildlife Department for the Town towards a bridge project on Stone Bridge Rd in Templeton. The WS stated that the Water Plant will keep filling in this area until we can fix it, which could possibly be not until September or October.

The GM stated he was waiting on a new draft from T&B on their water rate study. He said they had added on the Maple St Well #2 Culvert but had removed Patriots Rd Water Main. The GM would like to wait for this third draft before asking the Board to consider a vote to increase water rates. Dana wanted to know the average water cost in MA. The GM said he has not looked at the T&B Water Rate Survey in several years but will check it out. [The second draft of this water rate study had their proposed water rate increases at 8%, 5% ,5% ,5% and 5% for FY22 thru FY26. The GM knew that the third draft would end up around 11%, 3%, 3%, 3% and 3% for the same fiscal years.]

New Business:

The GM handed out to the Board the summary page only of the 2020 ASR. He pointed out that the Unaccounted for Water (UAFW) came out to only 2.4%, which was amazing. Even with the Mass DEP no longer allowing us to use water service leaks as unaccounted for, we still came in at the lowest percentage the Water Plant has seen since 2001. The WS said that the new meters that were already installed prior to this COVID-19 hysteria were no doubt helping us with this low percentage.

The GM discussed with the Board the TMWP Risk & Resiliency Report. He reminded them that the TMWP did an Emergency Response Plan, or ERP, (a.k.a., Disaster Plan) ten (10) years ago, and even T&B noted the similarities there would be between these two reports. They also said that because a lot of the original leg work was done already that modifying the data into the form for a federal report rather than for a state one would take less time than creating a new report from scratch. The GM said that most of the data will have to be verified or modified rather than be created. T&B's cost to do this will be (NTE) \$14,000. The GM said that back in 2011 the ERP cost \$10,000 from Tata & Howard.

The GM talked to the Board about the water gallons & revenues for Q3 of FY2021. The GM explained that he only had preliminary data, but it was close enough to the actual figures to at least discuss it. He said that nearly three hundred (300) water meters had failed to be read for East Templeton/Templeton. He saw no reason why the meters for Baldwinville/Otter River would produce similar results. Dana asked if most people were allowing us into their homes to change water meters or not; the GM and WS both said that most people were more comfortable with our NOT entering their homes just yet at this stage of COVID-19 pandemic. Brigid would be estimating a lot of quarterly water usages until we could get into all of these homes but the water customers for the most part were OK with this process when weighed against our entering their homes.

The GM informed the Board that Kyle Banville had left the Water Plant after barely a year of employment here. He had procured a similar job at MA Development working in water/wastewater for \$4-\$5 more per hour. The WS will put out a new ad for a water utility specialist so that we can replace Kyle ASAP. The WS had suggested hiring 2 new employees this time around, one water utility specialist and one laborer with Greg Cheney retiring sometime within the next year. The GM agreed and said we'd be ahead of the curve, the alternative being having just Randy and Dick available for standby until the new specialist had been made familiar with our water system. But there was no board level discussion at this time about this additional new hire.

The GM discussed with the Board a new Truck #33. He said that the TMWP has paid around \$9,000 since July 2020 on Truck #33 repairs. This vehicle now has its body rotting away. The WS had two (2) handouts for the Board on estimates for a replacement truck, one Chevrolet unit and one Ford unit. The units were identically equipped and the Ford unit was \$2,000 more, but the WS said that the Ford unit was on the lot for purchase now with no waiting. The Chevrolet unit would take about eight (8) weeks. At this time a vote took place as follows:


"On a motion by Dana, seconded by Chris, 2-0 in favor the Board voted to purchase the Ford unit off of the lot if still available; if not purchase the Chevrolet unit instead for \$2,000 less."

Dana – Aye

Chris - Aye

There being no other Open Session business to discuss, on a motion by Chris, seconded by Dana, 2-0 in favor, the Water Commissioners' Meeting adjourned at 6:34 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,


John M. Driscoll
General Manager