

Water Commissioners' Meeting April 3rd, 2012

Members present were: Dana Blais, Gregg Edwards, Julie Farrell

Employees present were: John Driscoll, Ron Davan

Residents present were: Peter Farrell, Robert Mitchell, Steven Drury, Mr. & Mrs. Ed Blanchard

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

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

The March 13th minutes were approved on a motion by Julie, seconded by Dana, 3-0 in favor.

Old Business:

Ed Blanchard had returned to the Board to revisit the issue of his large water consumption bill from the first quarter in 2011. Ed Blanchard stated that he was confused about the way the situation had been left in April of 2011 and didn't know that Templeton Water had planned to lien the property, which they had. The Manager recalled that Ed Blanchard didn't wish to pay the total bill even if broken up over a years' time, and the Board had not voted to forgive or reduce the water bill amount. The Board did vote to in fact lien the property at 676 Baldwinville Road.

Ed Blanchard had since further developed his timeline of events leading up to and after the burst water pipe inside the residence. His original timeline of leaking water had been reduced from 61 days to 30 days. An evaluation was distributed by him to the Board and Manager explaining how this would alter his usage from 401,850 gallons to 198,720 gallons. Ed Blanchard added that this would be a flow of 9.3 GPM as opposed to 4.6 GPM, and asked of the Superintendent if that was possible at his residence. The Superintendent responded that the flow in that area was as high as 80-90 GPM, so 9.3 GPM was very feasible.

The Manager stated that he had concerns about reducing the gallons of water to be invoiced, since the water meter in question was relatively new and did pass accuracy testing as well. Dana Blais added that Templeton Water didn't want to set a precedent for cutting its customers' water bills in half whenever they had a leak inside their residences. Peter Farrell stated that Templeton Sewer had traditionally granted abatements in similar situations, to which Dana Blais responded that that was easy since a case could be made that the consumed water had never made it to Reservoir Street.

The Manager proposed tabling this decision until this new data could be evaluated by himself and the Board to reach (another) informed decision. He further added that he would need to revisit the administrative and operations staff with these new figures. Ed Blanchard stated that he could wait a month for Templeton Water to do that, and added that Templeton Water's staff had been very professional throughout this situation, and that he appreciated that. The Board would further review this issue for the May board meeting (Mr. & Mrs. Blanchard leave meeting).

A discussion began on the supposed citizens' petition to discontinue fluoridation of the public water supply in Templeton. The Manager stated that he still had not obtained a copy of the actual citizens' petition filing documentation or the list of petitioners. He stated that after a conversation w/ Templeton B.O.H. Director Phil Leger that this proposed warrant article may be a non-issue. After reading the language in this current citizens' petition, the Health Director, like the Manager, felt that the language too closely resembled that of last year's and he was to seek a legal opinion as to the stipulation of waiting for two years to resurrect a failed warrant article. The Manager was pleased with this decision as it would no doubt save both the B.O.H. and Templeton Water valuable resources and time. He would inform the Board as to the ruling of said legal opinion as soon as it was known.

The Manager informed the Board that there would be no water customer letter to be sent this time around, since the warrant article may not even remain on the agenda and also to save approximately \$990 in postage. The Manager further stated that he would not formally request the presence of Ms. Lynn Bethel or Dr. Myron Allukian at the May town meeting since they had been treated so rudely by both selectmen and citizens.

Peter Farrell stated that the Manager lives in Leominster and that they didn't fluoridate the public water supply, and that this should make him (the Manager) concerned. The Manager stated that this was in fact irrelevant to any vote the citizens in Templeton were to take. The Superintendent added that Leominster had not discontinued fluoridation, but rather hadn't ever started it. Steven Drury stated that obviously Templeton Water hadn't read the letter that he'd carefully prepared on Fluoride last year. The Manager responded that, no, in fact the letter was distributed to this very board and had had no bearing on his desire last year to keep fluoridating. The Manager further added that, like last year, regardless of the voting results of the citizens on continued fluoridation of Templeton's water that he simply would not discontinue it. He likened this to the citizens in Templeton voting to make their electric discount 20% instead of 10%, or eliminate demand charges for commercial customers, stating that any changes in operations, policies or rates are left to the sole discretion of the Board, and that the citizens cannot vote to do themselves harm.

Several back-and-forth dialogs amongst the Manager, the Superintendent, the Chairman and those in the audience then ensued and quickly reached a point where the exchange of ideas was transformed into a shouting match. The Manager abruptly reminded those in the audience that this was not a town meeting, and that it was a real meeting, and people would talk and then listen otherwise nothing gets accomplished.

Robert Mitchell asked of the Manager (to clarify) if he was hearing the Manager right, in that he would essentially ignore the results of any fluoridation vote and keep on with water treatment as it is done now. The Manager said yes, that in addition to the authority granted to him under

MGL Chapter 164 Section 56, there were additional public oral health concerns that Templeton Water had to address. He further added that Templeton Water, although ruled by its board of commissioners and not directly by Templeton's citizens, is also regulated by the MA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and also MA Department of Public Health (DPH) which contains within it the Office of Oral Health. The Manager stated like last year that simply voting the fluoride out of the water is just one of many steps for the citizens' petition group to achieve their goal.

Robert Mitchell expressed his chagrin with this position taken by the Manager, and said that the Manager would be thwarting the will of the people by ignoring said voting results. To that, the Manager responded that in fact not one of the three audience members present were certified or qualified to make decisions for the other 2,179 water customers as far as the chemical treatment of the public drinking water supply went.

Julie Farrell stated that the Board had taken a vote to support continued fluoridation at the March board meeting and it had gone 2-1 in favor, with herself as the dissenting vote. Gregg Edwards suggested at this point that perhaps there had been enough discussion on this issue at this board meeting, and since the town vote wouldn't take place until May (if at all) that we should move to the next agenda item. Dana Blais agreed and wished to proceed to new business on the agenda, at which point Peter Farrell and Steven Drury thanked the Board for their consideration (Mr. Farrell and Mr. Drury leave meeting).

New Business:

The Manager and Superintendent gave the Board some information on the water service leak repair at 569 Baldwinville Road. There had been an unfortunate rupture of the existing asbestos-cement (A-C) water main while making the water service repair. This turned the project from a 3-hour service repair to a 10-hour endeavor requiring a closed road, a police detail and concrete at a later date. The Manager and Superintendent added that in the meantime, being out of normal asphalt production season, that a mixture of calcium and stone dust had been utilized as a temporary covering for the road. The Superintendent had felt confident that it would be paved completely in two weeks' time.

Robert Mitchell inquired as to whether or not some of the commercial and residential customers on Baldwinville Road had been notified of the upcoming reconstruction project, to which the Superintendent stated that all abutters had received letters via mail describing the project's scope and affects to the area. Robert Mitchell further suggested that Templeton Water should do this survey to ascertain the need for a larger water main and/or service connections prior to Baldwinville Road being permanently paved (???). Dana Blais stated that because the state was funding this construction project that they would be allowed to determine what reasonable costs would be covered. The Superintendent added that to his knowledge the affects to Templeton Water's system seemed to be limited to the re-location of a single hydrant.

The Manager had distributed to the Board copies of a letter that he had written to the Templeton B.O.S. regarding transfer of dirt from behind Pineview Housing to the Zone II area at the Sawyer Street Water Treatment Facility. The Manager stated that he had witnessed for five

months' time trips by dump trucks bringing dirt from Bridge Street out of the site for the new proposed senior center. The Superintendent had been in receipt of information that this dirt was being dumped at the Zone II area in East Templeton. The letter from the Manager asked of the Templeton B.O.S. that the dirt now in Zone II from Bridge Street be appropriately tested for chemical content, as it should have been prior to its transport to a Zone II area.

Town Coordinator Jeff Ritter had relayed back to the Manager thanking him for the letter and adding that they will take care of this request in a timely fashion. Jeff Ritter added that he had received from the Superintendent contact information for a suitable soil testing entity capable of acquiring the desired results. The Manager will keep the Board informed as to the status of this situation.

Other Business:

Julie Farrell had asked of the Manager if it would be possible to have an FY13 water budget available for the annual town meeting in May. The Manager stated that in fact the FY13 water budget for town meeting was complete and that he was just finalizing each version to get the bottom line financial figure to agree with the FY13 water budget to be presented to the Board in May. He added that the groupings of expenses were different than what he'd been used to from doing the budget line items on his own. The Manager stated that he would e-mail said water budget to the Templeton B.O.S. and there would be a water budget discussion at the May board meeting.

There being no other business to discuss at this time, on a motion by Dana, seconded by Gregg, 3-0 in favor the water board meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

John M. Driscoll
General Manager