



OBSERVER REPORT

WATER & SEWER COMMISSION – September 5, 2023, 7 pm –Remote access available on Zoom.
Meeting will not be interrupted due to problems with remote access. Meeting recorded, audio only

LWVM Observer – Maggie Smist

Commissioners present: **F. Carlton Siegel, Chair; Thomas Carroll, Thomas L. Murray, Barton Hyte,**
Members

Members of Staff present: **Amy McHugh, Superintendent; Dianne Rodgers, Office Manager; Bethany Spangler, Assistant Superintendent**

The meeting called to order at 7:00 PM.

1. Review and approval of Minutes from 8/1/23. Motion made, seconded and approved.
2. Superintendent Reports

Water: Amy discussed continuing problems with chlorine residual at the Burke's Tank. This issue will go on the water loss audit.

The water department is working with the fire department while doing training at the transfer station.

Sewer: The Fort Beach wet-well will need work. The crew is concerned about falling while working on this wet-well.

The department is looking into the cost of a back-truck – it is not needed immediately. Amy is waiting for two companies to provide a truck so the department can try out the new vehicle. The department currently has a truck which is having problems, and it has been difficult to get technical support. Amy wants to get references on various trucks since the town needs a truck which can do sewer cleaning. The capital improvement plan will include the expense for the truck.

The department hasn't heard back on expected Congressional Directed Spending funding from Rep. Moulton or Sen. Warren – it is a \$3,000,000 request.

Administration: End of month reports have been submitted and reviewed. There is a discrepancy with outstanding bills on the two systems – Amy is working with the finance director on this issue.

Amy will be attending procurement classes to become a procurement officer. There is a week of on-line training and then further classes – she will complete training in January, 2024. She will be the back-up procurement officer for the finance director.

Diane reported on collections: 270 days and over is 1 person, 180 days is 60 people. The group discussed how monthly billing is available and homeowners can monitor their bills better with this option being available.

Water demand has been lower this summer due to large amounts of rainfall.

GIS server crashed two weeks ago – much work is being done by hand. There was a faulty drive and the server is 12 years old. Bethany has become the main 'computer' for the department, and it has added to all the work in the office. New finance director is pushing things in the right direction. Amy hopes issue will be resolved by 9/12/23.

3. Reports

MWRA – report included in package – 3 employees went on field trip to Quabbin Reservoir. MWRA is offering confined space training – most employees will go for that over the next two months.

South Essex Sewage District – CDM will be doing an assessment of transformer truck delivery over Bessom Street – this is being coordinated with MMLD as the transformer passes over a water and sewer main as well as electrical lines.

They are putting together a field trip for board members in November.

4. Drain Layer License Application – The intent is to start putting all new and renewal applications in front of the commission. The department is also calling letters of recommendation for drain layers. A revised application review policy is being put together to add some additional checks. There were two applications put before the commission this evening – both approved.
5. Contract: Answering Service – A new account set up form reviewed. 2 quotes in total were received. The Commission approved hiring BPE, Inc. in Beverly to take over answering service.
6. Contract I88 ABC Material Processing 2023-Change Order – A DPW yard was requested at town meeting – there is a need to clear the area. Adjustments are needed to add clean-up of yard to the change order – it is \$43,000 for fence on the upper yard. Motion approved by commission for Water and Sewer to pay for about 10% of cost.
7. Contract 184 Pump Station Service Replacement – Change Order Department is still seeing extreme delays on traffic boxes. Amy is asking for extension of contract to 1/23. Motion approved.

8. Lead and Copper Grant Submission -- It is a fully funded grant to replace lead service lines. The grant will also find and make available a report to anyone who wants to know that their service line is made up of. The report will eventually be up on water and sewer website for everyone to review. Motion approved to have chairman sign to begin grant process.
9. Request for exemption – 5 Gilbert Heights
A drain layer excavated and installed plastic pipe -- this work is usually done by the water department so the water has not been turned on to date. Amy has requested additional information from the homeowner and drain layer, and the commission discussed being sure the town is indemnified. Commission approved this exemption contingent on getting the sales slip for the sales receipts and satisfactory additional documentation to Amy McHugh.
10. Letter: 89 Harbor Avenue – There was a letter written by Amy to the homeowner to clarify responsibility of town if there is an issue with the exempt service. The commission reviewed the letter.
11. Railroad Right of Way - Various departments have ownership in the right of way. The Select Board is taking on planning for rail trail. The crossings at various streets got grants and a design is now out to replace land and water bridge with road rated bridges. Designer is pushing for road rated bridges but MMLD and Water/Sewer don't think we need it. Further discussion ensued on construction of gates. Amy just wanted to make commission aware of this issue.
12. Finance Department Procedural Changes – the finance department is working to recommend new practices. Finance department has approved a credit card for the Water and Sewer department and there will be a policy for use in place.
They will be moving Enterprise funds from National Grand to Eastern Bank.
13. Public comments - none
14. The October meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 3rd at 7 pm.
Meeting went into executive session at 8:45 pm.