

**WATER & SEWER COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES – JULY 19, 2022**

5:30 PM – Conference Room B, 63 Main Street Northborough, MA 01532

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Meader
Bryant Firmin
David Pepe

ALSO PRESENT: Scott Charpentier, Public Works Director
Tim Davison, Water/Sewer Supervisor
Robert Luke, Administrative Assistant

Commissioner Meader opened the meeting at 5:33 PM.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES FROM THE MARCH 22, 2022 REGULAR MEETING

Motion to approve the meeting minutes of the March 22, 2022 regular meeting as written. Vote was taken by roll call, Commissioner Pepe “aye,” Commissioner Firmin “aye,” Commissioner Meader “aye;” the vote was unanimous with three votes in favor.

CONSIDERATION OF SEWER ABATEMENT FOR 135 NORTHGATE ROAD

Mr. Charpentier explained that the owner of 135 Northgate Road reached out to the Department of Public Works (DPW) to request a sewer abatement for refilling their swimming pool after experiencing catastrophic damage to their liner during the 2021-2022 winter season. Mr. Charpentier referred to the prepared memorandum that detailed the exceptional case. The homeowner’s written request was included in the memorandum as well as the pool liner receipt and tables from our Beacon water usage software. The refill amount, after factoring out average daily usage, equated to approximately 2,812 cubic feet to refill the pool after replacement. The net result is a sewer abatement request in the amount of \$338.55.

Motion made by Commissioner Firmin to approve the request for sewer abatement for 135 Northgate Road as an exceptional case; Commissioner Pepe seconded the motion. Vote

was taken by roll call, Commissioner Firmin “aye,” Commissioner Pepe “aye,” Commissioner Meader “aye;” the vote was unanimous with three votes in favor.

REVIEW FY’22 DRAFT WATER & SEWER RATE STUDY REPORT WITH RAFTELIS FINANCIAL CONSULTANTS, INC.

Mr. Charpentier began by informing the Commission that we are going through the annual rate study process now as we have done in past years and referred the members to the Draft Rate Study Report, that was prepared by Raftelis Financial Consultants, Inc. (Raftelis) out of Natick, Massachusetts, dated July 19, 2022.

The draft rate study presents actual water usage from FY2022 which was down 5.6% from the prior fiscal year. This was observed around mid-year and all subsequent non-essential water spending was halted. The result was a substantial budget underrun allowing less fund balance to be used for operational expenses. As a result of the Raftelis study, we are recommending an increase to the volumetric water rates of approximately 3% and raising the base charge from \$16 to \$18 as a means of better balancing the fixed charges with the variable charges. There is no suggested change to the sewer rates as we are still awaiting settlement with the City of Marlborough.

NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Meader inquired about updating the Town’s water/sewer betterment amounts, noting they had not been updated since the Pinehaven construction project, nearly thirty years ago. Mr. Charpentier agreed and added the request as a future agenda item.

Commissioner Meader also inquired about the Assabet Storage Tank performance since it’s rehabilitation. Mr. Davison noted the chlorine residual is much better than before the work, testing around 1.0 part per million (ppm) on a regular basis at the far extent of the system.

Commissioner Meader and Commissioner Firmin requested an update on the Northborough Reservoir Dam. Mr. Charpentier stated that the preliminary dam engineering report has been submitted to the Office of Dam Safety and we are waiting for comments. The next step will be the filing of environmental permit applications which, unfortunately, we believe an Environmental Impact Report will be required under the newly released Massachusetts Environmental Protection Agency regulations. This is due to the presence of an Environmental Justice community in the Town of Shrewsbury.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for August 16, 2022 at 5:30 PM. This will be a remote public hearing via Zoom to consider the water & sewer rates for 2022-2023.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Firmin moved the Board vote to adjourn at 6:34 PM; Commissioner Pepe seconded the motion. Vote was taken by roll call, Commissioner Firmin “aye,” Commissioner Pepe “aye,” Commissioner Meader “aye;” the vote was unanimous with three votes in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Luke
Administrative Assistant

Documents used during meeting:

1. July 19, 2022 meeting agenda
2. March 22, 2022 regular meeting minutes
3. Memorandum detailing 135 Northgate Road sewer abatement request
4. FY2023 Water & Sewer Rate Study Report