



TOWN OF WINCHESTER – CITY OF WINSTED

Town Hall – 338 Main Street

WINSTED, CONNECTICUT 06098

Minutes of Regular Meeting Water & Sewer Commission Probate Conference Room, Town Hall, 338 Main Street, Winsted February 11, 2020

Chairman John Massicotte called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The following members were present: George Closson, Bill Hester, Joe Lemelin, John Massicotte and Tim Moran. Also present was Finance Director Bruce Stratford, Director of Public Works Jim Rollins, Superintendent of Water Works Marty Cormier and Selectman Candace Bouchard.

Public Input - none

Approval of Regular Minutes from January 14, 2020: Motion by G. Closson to *approve the minutes of January 14, 2020*. Second by J. Lemelin. **Vote:** All in favor - *motion carried unanimous*.

Report from Finance Director:

Mr. Stratford distributed year-to-date budgets along with checking and savings account statements through January 31st.

Water: Mr. Stratford said we are 58% through the fiscal year as of January 31st. Revenues: a bit behind compared to last year - \$29,000 below; mostly from current water rents but it may be related to the business on Route 20 - attorneys are now involved. Expenditures: Water Works is at 50% of their budget - highlighted meter expenses; expecting more orders - may need to transfer funds but see if the department can absorb the expenditures. Mr. Rollins confirmed still ordering meters. Water Plant is at 42%; Administration is at 60%, as expected; Water Commission is at 24%; contingency is at 37% but may still need to complete the transfer for auto-flushers. Brief discussion regarding associated hardware for auto-flushers. Mr. Stratford said the vacuum truck is ordered - received documents from the finance company - no interest is due before the truck is delivered and accepted; the year-to-date is \$777,000 compared to \$706,659 last year due to a higher pension contribution. Brief discussion followed regarding the auto-flushers. Mr. Stratford reminded attendees this month is water collection month which should get us caught up due to better reads; noted the checking account had \$665,000 at the end of January. Chairman Massicotte questioned emergency repair expenses. Discussion followed regarding the funds came from emergency repairs.

Sewer: Revenues: Mr. Stratford said we are down \$50,000 from last year; reiterated the business on Route 20 has significant outstanding balances; Russ' Septic made no payment – still owes \$10,200. Expenditures: Water Plant is at 47%; Pumping Station is at 41% at 58% through the fiscal year; WPCA has an unencumbered balance of \$31,000 for Pump Station 8 site work and \$22,000 for Cardinal Engineering out of Contingency for the sanitary plant bridge. Mr. Rollins noted he is meeting with Cardinal Engineering Friday to review the final design – expect the cost to come down. Mr. Stratford said WPCA is at 45%; Debt Administration is at 25% but expect it to jump next month due to a payment; checking account had \$319,000 at the end of January and the savings account has \$571,000 for each the water and sewer divisions. Selectman Bouchard

The Town of Winchester is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.

verified the vacuum truck is split 50-50 between the sewer and water departments. Chairman Massicotte questioned the overtime line in Pumping Stations. Mr. Cormier explained there have been significant issues with calls at Highland Lake. Discussion followed regarding calls due to air bleeders, there are 20+ of them at \$1,000 each, 2 have failed already, they have reached the end of their useful life, they are daisy-chained together, age of the bleeders, etc. Mr. Rollins explained have changed the maintenance pattern.

Bill Adjustments - none

Director's Report: Mr. Rollins reported on the following:

- No-Reads/Zero-Reads: 92 of 250 meters have been repaired; 56 still need investigation - 22 are curious; of the remaining, 42 properties are vacant; 10 appointments have been scheduled for spring; some meters have been shut off due to renovations; still have 400 that need MIU's; over 100 repairs done on an issue that wasn't discovered until the last quarter.
- Town-Owned Properties: Caitlyn reviewed these properties to determine how much revenue we're giving up by forgiving the bills; 11 properties accumulate to \$19,000 – almost enough to replace the air breathers. Discussion followed regarding those property owners stopped paying the bills long before the Town took possession of the properties, blight process does force the property owners to catch up, withholding \$19,000 from the payment to the Town, etc.
- Water/Sewer cost: Review examples of bills; based on Town Hall usage, sewer is \$.00834/gallon and water is \$.024/gallon which equals \$.032; this is a good value but why is sewer one-third the cost compared to water when sewer is so much harder to treat. Brief discussion followed regarding New Hartford rates.
- Water Fluoridation Award: Kudos to Jeff Rines; noted it's very difficult to keep that standard especially due to recent regulation changes. Brief discussion followed regarding other water systems and making that award public.
- Barkhamsted Interlocal Agreement: Regional #7 denied the original request; have submitted an invoice for engineering to Barkhamsted for reimbursement but haven't received payment yet. Brief discussion followed regarding Lombard Ford, has been no re-vote by Regional #7, maintaining the lines, etc.
- State Revolving Loan Fund: RFQ was sent out and people are picking them up; RFQ is for the water tank at Crystal Lake, the water tank at Wallens Hill and water main replacement; 70 applications have received funding; Marty found point scoring; Winsted was second, third and fourteenth of the highest; kudos to Marty for putting the applications together; know the Town will get at least 25% reimbursement; next step is to interview the applicants which submitted business resumés, select 3 – 5 for presentation of qualifications; last time, we had a few stand-outs who really want the job, then pick the best qualified and negotiate a deal. Brief discussion followed regarding going out to bid. Mr. Stratford asked if it has to be awarded as one. Mr. Rollins explained the RFQ was written to allow to split out the projects. Chairman Massicotte asked when the project would start and how it will be funded. Mr. Rollins said he would like pipe in the ground next spring; State funding should stay in place – they want us to get it done. Discussion followed regarding including in the budget, bonding the projects, this is a revolving loan, anticipate 25% forgiveness, paying 75% of each invoice, amounts currently not budgeted, including the amounts in the 2020-2021 water budget, etc.
- Jim McCarthy Fishing Tournament: Tournament was held last weekend; made \$10,000 this year so now have \$17,000 for interns and scholarships; currently have 3 applicants. Discussion followed regarding where to circulate applications.

Old Business:

- PO to Cardinal Engineering for Bridge Repair at Sewer Plant: discussed earlier
- Wallens Hill Water Tank: discussed earlier

The Town of Winchester is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.

- Crystal Lake Dam Historical Review Submitted: Mr. Rollins noted there is a possibility it will be discussed at the SHPO meeting in March; if not, it will be in June (they only meet quarterly).
- Update on Pump Station #8 completion/landscaping in the Spring, 2020: scheduled for spring.
- Overlook Installation of Laterals; Main line in and operational: Mr. Rollins said water is done; the sewer will be done when the hill is dry enough.
- Update on Water Regulations to Accept Use of High-Density Polyethylene: nothing new
- Tree Harvesting/Housatonic Valley Watershed Association offer: nothing new

New Business:

G. Closson said the Plan of Conservation and Development includes water and sewer; input is welcome. Mr. Rollins asked if there are targeted areas or expanding maps. Discussion followed regarding projected use areas, economic development in potential areas, etc. Mr. Rollins explained the Public Works facility is a mess – storm water, septic system, etc.; need to have sewer run down old Route 8. Discussion followed regarding the length of New Street, area is favorable for development, area would require pump stations, nature of that area, size of lots, potential buildings worth considering, etc.

Mr. Cormier asked about new hook-ups to existing grinder pumps. Discussion followed regarding all property owners should have been assessed evenly even if a lot only, charges to surrounding properties off the side roads and streets, etc. Mr. Stratford noted the sewer assessment fund has a deficit due to accounts being paid early. T. Moran said he was told the assessments went into the general fund. Mr. Stratford assured attendees they went into the assessment fund. Discussion followed regarding tying neighboring properties into existing sewer systems if inside 300’, cannot tie into grinder pumps, assessments, sun-setting charges, grinder pumps are owned by the Town but being abused, shifting culpability to the property owners, educating property owners on grinder pumps, etc.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned 7:57 p.m.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted,

/s/
Laurie Bessette
Minutes Secretary

Next Regular Meeting:

Probate Room
Tuesday, March 10, 2020
7:00 p.m.