

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Water Commissioners**  
**Monday, August 9, 2010**  
**North Brookfield Water Treatment Facility**  
**14 Bell Road**  
**North Brookfield, MA 01535**

**Present:** James Kularski, John Thomasian, Tim Nason and Steve Jones, Water Superintendent

**Absent:** None

**Guests:** Garrett Baker – 79 School Street

**Meeting opened:** 6:02PM

1. **Abatement Request** - The Board moved forward on the agenda to Garrett Baker of 79 School Street for a water abatement request. Mr. Jones reviewed with the Board the notes from Shiela LeBlanc and also the job notes made by him. Upon inspection by Mr. Jones it was found that the ERT and meter were in agreement, there were no water leak indications and the water usage was back down.

Mr. Baker explained that they had checked the toilet for leaks and there was none. He did note that he did have a leak in his outside faucet. He had forgotten to shut it off and it cracked and was spitting water out. He had shut this off when he noticed it on this winter. He believes that may be the cause of the high use.

Mr. Jones explained that Mrs. LeBlanc wrote up the abatement request in the amount of \$117.67. This amount being based on the fact that it is policy of the Board to entertain an abatement for residential customers down to a minimum bill of \$450.00.

**Mr. Nason made and Mr. Kularski seconded a motion to approve the abatement in the amount of \$117.67 for Garrett Baker of 79 School Street. So voted.**

Mr. Baker asked how this would be handled through the Sewer Department. Mr. Jones informed him to contact Mrs. LeBlanc when she returned from vacation and she can help him with that information. He also asked if he should remit the entire amount or the \$450.00. Mr. Jones again referred him to Mrs. LeBlanc. He did state that he thinks that she may tell him to pay the entire invoice and then the abatement amount would be refunded to him but to double check with her. He stated that he was not positive in this situation.

2. **Approval of Minutes – Mr. Kularski made and Mr. Nason seconded a motion to accept the minutes of July 12, 2010 as written. So voted.**

**Mr. Nason made and Mr. Kularski seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the July 16, 2010 meeting as written. So voted.**

**Mr. Kularski made and Mr. Nason seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the July 26, 2010 meeting as written. So voted.**

**Mr. Nason made and Mr. Kularski seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the August 2, 2010 meeting as written. So voted.**

3. **Horse Pond Dam Update** –Mr. Jones explained that due to the fact that he is spending all his time running the treatment plant, Administrative Assistant Shiela LeBlanc has handled all of the issues regarding the Horse Pond Dam repair project. She briefed him on it last week for the Selectmen’s meeting, so he will pass it on to the commissioners.

As Mrs. LeBlanc reported last month, there is still a problem with the Construction Engineering Contract. The Change Order to remove Articles 7, Construction Administration & Monitoring, and Article 8, Construction Closeout, from the original engineering contract because it is in the Construction Engineering Contract was approved. The rest of the contract was sent down to the Board of Selectmen with the changes that Town Council wanted noted in red. Mr. Kularski and Mr. Jones met with the Board of Selectmen last week and explained what they knew. In the meantime Mrs. LeBlanc had emailed USDA about whether this contract could be changed. The Selectmen decided to wait to hear the answer from USDA before making a decision. USDA’s answer was “Yes USDA Rural Development (RD) Water and Waste Water Loan/Grant Program must use the EJCDC E-500 (2008) document in entirety and incorporate the USDA RD Bulletin 1780-26 (2009) required contract language.” Shiela has emailed this to the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Jones assumes they will now sign the contract as written up by Lenard using the USDA form.

Basically we need to use the USDA form for engineering. This is what the Selectmen were waiting for. We can’t move forward until this is signed. The Selectmen don’t meet for two weeks, they could possibly do an emergency meeting before but otherwise it will be two weeks.

We are waiting for this to be signed before we can move forward.

In regards to the funding, we had been given preliminary approval of a 45% grant. However, before it could be sent to Washington for approval, all USDA money was called back to Washington. The reason given to Mr. Jones was that a lot of this money was stimulus money and that it wasn’t being distributed evenly. The example given to him was that Massachusetts had been awarded a large amount of these funds because towns had applied for them whereas Montana hadn’t applied for any and therefore hadn’t received any money. Somebody complained so all money was brought back to

Washington so that it could be distributed evenly. Not good news for us. We are supposed to receive an answer to our application in August.

Mr. Kularski clarified that we don't need the signature on the engineering contract to get the preliminary funding approval. Mr. Jones feels that it is up in the air. It has been advised that it be signed before we get the answer from USDA.

Mr. Kularski asked if we could send the Selectmen a brief email and ask how quick we can get this contract signed if they don't have any further problems with the contract. The quicker the better. Mr. Jones noted that Mary Walter is aware of the urgency; she came and asked for the copy of the contract for the construction engineering. We received the response from the USDA the day after Mr. Jones and Mr. Kularski met with them and Mrs. LeBlanc forwarded the email to everyone.

Mr. Thomasian asked if the actual construction on this project was going to happen in the winter? You will be dealing with pouring concrete and typically that is not a good time to do it. Mr. Nason stated that they could start on the tree removal. Mr. Thomasian stated that they could add stuff to make it cure faster but typically you get more cracking. They can do it and it accelerates it but it is not the best process in the world. Most contractors won't do it because of the risk to it. Mr. Thomasian questioned what would be the difference to them for our schedule if they started in the spring verses the middle of the winter. Mr. Jones noted that that would require two extensions going that way but we are due in January so we will be looking at one now anyways.

Mr. Jones asked if Mr. Thomasian would like him to set up a meeting with the engineers to discuss this. Mr. Thomasian stated that he thinks this is something that we need to look into. Mr. Kularski feels that we need to cross that bridge when we come to it, once the bid documents are back in with the sub-contractors and contractors and then figure out what the schedule is going to be then. Mr. Thomasian noted that a lot of contractors shut down for the winter, most road contractors and paving outfits do too. It is too costly for them to remain open unless there is a large volume of work.

Lenard did the six- month inspection in July as required. The next one will be in January 2011. This was included in the funding of the dam repair.

4. **New Operator Update** - We ended up with 4 applicants for the open operator's position. Two applicants did not have the licenses that are required so Shiela wrote them a letter of thanks and explained why we could not consider them. We interviewed the first applicant, who showed an interest in the position but ultimately pulled his name for consideration 11 days after the interview. We then interviewed Andrew Lalashius. Andrew had the licenses that are required, is a graduate of the University of Massachusetts with a

Batchelor's Degree in Biology, spent four years in the army, 1 in Iraq as a Sergeant, Chemical Operations Specialist, is currently a lab analyst at Test America in Westfield, and also is the Assistant Superintendent at the West Warren Water District.

On August 2, 2010 the Board of Water Commissioners met and voted to recommend to the Board of Selectmen the hiring of Andrew Lalashius as operator for the Water Department. On Tuesday, August 3, we met with the Selectmen to follow-up on this recommendation. The Board of Selectmen voted to approve the hiring of Mr. Lalashius as operator. He will be upgraded to Assistant Superintendent when he receives his T2 and D2 licenses.

Mr. Jones spoke to Mr. Lalashius that evening and he said he would be available to begin on August 17, 2010. Mrs. LeBlanc set up the physical and drug test with a Nurse Practitioner in town and he actually went and did that today. He picked up his paperwork for employment today and confirmed the start date of August 17, 2010.

Mr. Nason asked if the Selectmen have to okay if we hire someone. Mr. Jones explained that is the way the personnel book reads. They are the only people that can hire and fire. It has never been that way before the Board of Water Commissioners hired him and the previous operator. We are following the employee handbook, which says we have to go through the Selectmen.

Mr. Kularski noted that we reappoint Mr. Jones each year not the Selectmen. Mr. Nason feels that the selectmen have their hands in too much. Why have the Board of Water Commissioners then.

5. **Tank Cleaning** – Mr. Jones hired Underwater Solutions to clean & inspect the storage tank and clearwell again this year. This is the same company that did the work last time. This is a job that we have done every five years. They didn't find much in the way of accumulated solids in either place, approximately 1/8". The inspection did not show any major problems but it did mention fine cracks in the finish on the outside of the tank and they have recommended that we recoat the outside of the tank. Mr. Jones will look into this and get back to the Board. The inspection reports on both locations are here for the Board's perusal.

Mr. Kularski noted that we might have to look into replacing the ladders at some point too. Mr. Jones agreed.

6. **Superintendent Report – Pumping** – Mr. Jones informed the Board that we pumped a lot of water in July due to the hot and dry weather. We pumped 1.7mg more than last year and the most since 2007. Our high pumping day was 438,000 on July 5<sup>th</sup>. The reservoir as of today is approximately 14" low,

which is fairly normal for this time of year. At no time over the last month have we approached any type of water ban.

**Calibration** – A&D Instruments came and calibrated our flow meters in July. This is an annual calibration required by D.E.P. We do an actual flow test on the flow meter at the Raw Water Pump Station and then A&D does the electrical calibration on the four here at the treatment plant. The cost for this calibration is \$875.00.

**Lead & Copper** – Last week we received the results of the lead and copper samples that we collected in June. We passed with flying colors. We had to collect double the number of samples that we have done in the past due to the number of people being served by the system. All samples for both metals passed. The corrosion control program that we revamped a few years ago continues to work well. This will allow us to continue to test on a reduced monitoring system. The next test will be in three years.

**Cutting** – Mr. Jones has once again hired Bobby Barnes, Highway Dept employee; to mow the brush and grass at the treatment plant, pump station, and reservoir. Mr. Barnes does an excellent job as he mows the back roads and pipelines.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Operator** – This is the 34<sup>th</sup> day in a row that Mr. Jones has worked at the treatment plant. If anyone asks why we need a third operator this is one of the reasons. The Town is taking a large risk with its municipal drinking water operations by having only one person working continuously. You are one burnt out operator away from having no one trained to operate this treatment plant.

**Vacation Pay** – We received an answer from the Selectmen regarding the vacation pay for the former operator. We are responsible for paying all three weeks of the vacation he had due for this fiscal year. We cut a check for \$2,188.80 of vacation time and \$2, 188.80 for fifteen sick days due him for a total of \$4,377.60. This amount has been paid out of the Operator Salary Account.

**Algae Bloom** – An algae bloom occurred last week in the reservoir. This is not something that is visible and the only way we can tell is to do taste and odor tests daily. Mrs. LeBlanc picked up a slight smell in the raw water last Wednesday and a stronger one on Thursday. The turbidity went up a little bit on Wednesday and considerably on Thursday. Mr. Jones called Lycott on Thursday afternoon and they treated the pond on Friday morning. We were a day from this water getting into the system.

**Air Compressor** – The valves at the treatment plant run on compressed air and one of our compressors had to be rebuilt last month. The final cost for this was approximately \$4,400.00.

**Mowing** – Between Mr. Jones and Mr. Flamand they have managed to keep up with the mowing. Mr. Flamand continues to paint hydrants and they have marked out gate boxes and curb boxes on the roads that the Highway Department will be working on this summer including Madbrook Road, Ryan Road, King Street, lower Bigelow Street and the section of Bell Street that leads to the catholic cemetery.

**Meters/ERTs-** Mr. Jones has been working on replacing faulty meters and transmitters and visiting the residences that have higher than normal water use through the last billing period to make sure there are no continuing leaks.

**7. New Business – None**

Meeting adjourned: 6:32PM

Respectfully submitted

Shiela LeBlanc,  
Recording Secretary