

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Water Commissioners  
Monday, February 10, 2014  
Bell Hill Water Treatment Facility  
14 Bell Road  
North Brookfield, MA 01535**

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

**Absent:** None

**Guests:** None

**Meeting opened:** 6:01 PM

**Mr. Nason noted to those present that this meeting was being audio recorded.**

- 1. Mr. Kularski made and Mr. Thomasian seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 13, 2014 as written. So voted.**
- 2. Doug Blood – Radio Repeater Request – AA Transportation** – Mr. Jones explained to the Board that Mr. Blood had come up to the office last week to ask about installing a repeater on the building for AA Transportation which is a company that has busses and has the contract to do the school. He said that the busses don't get complete communication now. Mr. Blood was supposed to be present with the Company owner to make this request.

Mr. Thomasian questioned if this would help the town. Mr. Jones noted that he was not sure, it would help the company and the company works for the town but how do you put an antenna up for a private company on a public building. Mr. Kularski noted that we didn't let Emergency Management put a horn up there and made them install a separate pole for it with a separate electric meter. Mr. Jones feels that you would have to have some sort of agreement that would have to be approved by Town Counsel.

**Whereas, neither Mr. Blood nor the company owner was present to speak on this issue, this item was passed over.**

- 3. Capacity Report** – Mr. Jones included the latest Capacity Report numbers in the Commissioners' packet as he does each year. 101,630,000 gallons of water were pumped from the Horse Pond Reservoir in 2013. This is 859,000 gallons more than last year. The daily average rose from 276,085 gallons per day to 278,438 gallons per day, a difference of 2,353 gallons per day. We have had 6 years of consistent flows ranging from 97 million gallons during a wet year and 105 million during dryer years. This is

down approximately 37% since 2001 when we started keeping these figures. Using the DEP capacity limit for the reservoir of 433,000 gallons per day, we were at 64.8% of capacity in 2013. The Unaccounted for Water (UAW) has not been calculated as of this date. We usually get the UAW figure upon completion of the Annual Statistical Report.

Mr. Thomasian stated that we need more users and Mr. Jones noted that a few years ago we didn't want anymore. If the house construction begins again it would not hurt to have some more users.

4. **Leak Detection Update** - We spent a lot of time in January looking for leaks in the system. We could tell by the amount of water that we were pumping that there were leaks. We found one leak on the ¾" copper main that feeds 41 Bates Street. We repaired this leak on January 14<sup>th</sup>. Due to the high pressure in the area this leak was losing between 6,000 - 10,000 gpd. This line also had a leak in it this past summer that had been found by the leak detection survey that we fixed and a leak a few years ago that was found by the leak detection survey at the time. As you can tell by the condition of the piece of pipe brought here tonight, this pipe is corroding due to external conditions. This line is not going to last too much longer and it will need to be replaced. Mr. Kularski asked how old this pipe was. Mr. Jones stated that the resident said it was installed around 1960.

Mr. Jones has tried to set up a day to fix the leak that we did know about, the leak in the 16" gate valve in front of the car wash on North Main Street. The weather hasn't been cooperating. This is a very important gate valve and he wants a decent day, at least in the 30s, to attempt to fix it. If it is too cold the tools start freezing up. It has slowed down some but it is still leaking. We still need to get to this repair fairly soon. We go up each day with sand and salt to keep the ice down in this area.

We also found a large leak in the 16" cast iron main on North Main Street just south of where the break occurred in December. We haven't set this up to be fixed yet, he would like to get the gate valve done first to get the barricades out of the road. He hopes to set up days to fix these leaks this month. This is going to be big we will have to shut down Main Street again from the car wash down to South Main Street. This is pretty big for this small water department.

5. **Community Development Block Grant** - Mr. Jones received an email from Andrew Loew, Senior Planner from Pioneer Valley Planning regarding the CDBG grant that the town has received along with the Town of Spencer. He has asked about items in the Request for Qualification that concern each of the departments. For the Water Department he wanted to make sure we would be on board to help with flow tests when the time comes. The flow tests will help the engineers estimate the pipe interior roughness coefficients and flow efficiency and evaluate flow rates pertinent to fire flow

requirements. They will also be doing a visual inspection of each hydrant within the project area and collect information on the hydrants including type, model number, and year installed. All valves in the area will be inspected.

They will be working with the Sewer Department and the Highway Department also. The main thrust of this project is to improve the town's drainage system. This area was chosen due to the poor condition of the town's drainage system in this area and because this area qualifies for CDBG grants. This isn't the most important area for the Water Department but if we can improve the distribution system using these grants it will still be worthwhile. The bottom line for this particular grant is to study the area and come up with a plan that can be followed if future grants are received.

6. **DEP Watershed Protection Log Credit** - As was mentioned at a prior meeting, Source Water Specialist Kathy Romero from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection inspected the Horse Pond Watershed and reviewed our Watershed Protection Control Program. A letter from Ms. Romero was received and was included in the packet. She seemed happy with our efforts to protect North Brookfield's drinking water and did not add any requirements or make any recommendations. Due to this we received a ½ log removal/inactivation credit toward the disinfection requirements of the Federal Surface Water Treatment Rule.
7. **Water Billing** – Mr. Jones informed the Board that the water bills were mailed on January 28, 2014 and payment is due on March 3, 2014. 1,194 bills were mailed and the billable consumption totaled 33,642,441 gallons overall and the water rate stayed the same as the past billing cycle which was \$45.00 minimum fee for 0-5,000 gallons and gallons 5,001 and up is billed at .010801 per gallon or \$10.801 per 1,000 gallons. Approximately ten people were contacted for high usage and we go to the houses and work with them on this. We had four ERTs that did not read. These residents were contacted and all but one ERT was replaced. The one remaining is in a seasonal home on Shore Road.

Mr. Nason questioned if Chooch's usage was down. Mr. Jones noted that Chooch's was not even on Mrs. LeBlanc's list so he is not sure.

8. **Superintendent Report – Tank Cleaning SOP** - Mr. Kularski had asked about an SOP for tank cleaning. We do not have one yet but Mr. Jones has put it on the list to get done. He does have notes from past jobs to work from.

**No Trespassing Signs** – Mr. Jones informed the Board that he has not had time to purchase the No Trespassing signs, this is on the list also.

**Low Lead Brass** - Due to the new federal law we have now switched over to using the low lead brass as required. All the regular brass meters and fittings that we still had in stock will be scrapped.

**12" Butterfly valve** - A 12" butterfly valve on the backwash line here at the plant jammed closed last week and we were not able to free it. Mr. Jones has ordered a new valve which will cost \$461 plus shipping. We have replaced these ourselves in the past but they were always at ground level. This one is 6 1/2' high and we don't have the equipment to do the job so it will be hired out.

**Frozen Meters** - As cold as it has been, there has only been one frozen meter so far. That occurred on Friday night, January 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM. The meter had frozen and the bottom had split. Mr. Jones replaced the meter and a plumber unthawed the rest of the line. He repaired the meter the next week and went back and reinstalled it. The homeowners cost of repairing a meter with a broken bottom due to freezing is \$90.00. There have been quite a few frozen lines, mostly in the houses which we don't get involved in.

**STM** - We have looked into the next town meeting and have been told it will be the special town meeting held before the Annual Town Meeting in May, as we have discussed, we will have to transfer money from the Retained Earnings Account to other accounts to pay for the North Main Street water break.

**Meter Testing** - In 2005 we started a meter testing program for all meters 2" and larger as recommended by the American Water Works Association.

2" meters are tested every 4 years,  
3" meters are tested every 3 years,  
4" meters are tested every 2 years.

Letters have gone out to the five (5) owners of 3" meters and two (2) owners of 4" meters that need to be tested this year. The 2" meters don't have to be tested again until 2017. This is to make sure the meters are accurate which cuts down on our unaccounted for water.

9. **New Business – Dam Question** – Mr. Thomasian noted that he had spoken to Mr. Jones regarding a question posed to him regarding the Horse Pond Dam. Town Resident, Bill King asked Mr. Thomasian if the dam could be leaking because he had noticed quite a bit of flow at the base of the dam. Mr. Thomasian asked Mr. Jones about it and he explained that there is a drain so you will see more water concentrated at the base. Mr. King seemed to indicate that he thought it was leaking more than before the repair. Mr. Thomasian does not feel that it is an issue. He thinks that it just appears this way to Mr.

King. Mr. King also question what he feels is sumac growing at the base of the dam. Mr. Thomasian informed Mr. King that we try to maintain the area as best we can and some of the areas are hard to get at. Mr. King questioned if we could mow it. Mr. Thomasian stated that he has not looked at it so he is not sure what Mr. King is referring to. Mr. Thomasian feels that in the retention area these things start to grow and maybe we can throw some Round-up. Mr. King apparently had gone to Selectwoman, Mary Walter about the brush growing out of the back of the dam. Mr. Thomasian feels that we could respond to him and highlight his questions. Mr. Jones explained that we do cut the area and we do cut the sumac but it has been a screwy winter and we have not gotten back up there but we will get it. The back of the dam has been done but we usually get more help from the guy mowing for the highway department but we didn't this year because they had a changeover in personnel. Mr. Jones is not worried about this, we do it every year. He does not see it as a problem.

Mr. Thomasian just brought it up as maybe an easier way. Mr. Jones stated that he is all for easier but never Round-up near a reservoir, even if it is flowing downhill. It was burned years ago but the fires do not go out by the end of the day and you would be getting calls all night. Mr. Jones stated that we have cut way back on the brush cutting. Mr. Thomasian noted that he is not criticizing he would just like to give the gentleman an answer.

Mr. Kularski asked Mr. Jones if he has seen the leaking he is referring to. Mr. Jones noted that all earthen dams leak. We never had toe drains before and we had one put it during this project. The toe drains brings all the water to this one spot and this makes it very visible and this is where that cloudy water is. He noted that it always leaked but you never saw it because it was in the high grass before. Mr. Jones saw it because it was found during the first inspection. He does not know what the cloudiness in the water is and noted that the cloudiness was there before the dam project was done. It might have something to do with iron bacteria, cloudiness would be like movement stirring up the dirt but not this much. Mr. Kularski noted that was pretty much how it was explained in their report. Mr. Jones does not recall them ever coming up with an answer but with the toe drains there shouldn't be the sediment and getting cloudy water. He does believe that the leaking he is seeing is the toe drains.

Mr. Thomasian will give Mr. King the answers that were covered here. Mr. Jones volunteered to speak with him if he has any further questions.

**Next Meeting** – Mr. Kularski informed those present that he will not be able to attend the next meeting.

**Leak Repair** – Mr. Nason noted that where the leak that needs to be repaired on North Main is going to be a big repair and we do not know how long it will take he questioned if we could run fire hoses from above the gate valve to above the leak and run some water for those down town. Mr. Jones explained that we could hire a company to come in or you could put in your own temporary mains like you see done on some city streets, the problem is we have no gate valves to stop it from coming back to our leak. Once you pressurize that pipe there is no way to stop it from going back up to the leak. Mr. Nason was just looking for an alternative because of fire protection and businesses and the housing. Mr. Jones agreed and is trying to come up with the best plan whether it is done at night or on weekends etc.

Mr. Jones explained that we will make up a list of businesses and try to come to a best possible solution. He will take any advice from the Board. Mr. Nason question having tank trucks to be filled off hydrants.

Mr. Thomasian noted that no matter how we approach this there are no other departments in town with any experience in which to help with this type of project. There is no one we can pull to give us a hand to help do this. Mr. Nason is thinking about the supplying of water. Mr. Jones stated that we need to come up with a plan. Do we have something up here where people can come up with buckets? Or jugs? Mr. Nason stated he was thinking about business and the houses can fill their bathtubs. Mr. Jones stated that fire you can't help they are going to have to lay hoses to hydrants that are live. There is nothing we can do about that. Businesses – we can give out jugs of water if the Board wants to get into that is all we can do. We can't pressurize the system.

Mr. Jones has been thinking about this and we know not all the gate valves hold so can we fill the hydrant only so much that the water comes part way up the hill and not to the break? We would need to keep the flow from going over the top. He is not sure if this would work.

Mr. Kularski question how far the interconnection from East Brookfield would go. Mr. Jones stated that it would go only to Bullard Road. We would have water all around this area but we can't pressurize this main. There will be water on Grove, on Summer and School but we cannot feet that main.

It is a complicated issue. We have two feet of frost, ledge all around it, gas main right next to it and the towns drain too. We may as well plan on replacing the drain because once we get down to it we own it. We try to keep the repair part down to 3-4 hours. We have the pipe and repair couplings in stock.

Quabaug Corp does not run on Friday but the pizza shop is closed on Sunday but then you have church on Sunday. Someone is not going to be happy.

We will send out a notice that suggests they fill bath tubs for flushing prior to any repair. Mr. Kularski suggested that our best option may be a Sunday whereas the pizza house and most businesses will be closed. Cumberland's would be opened any day either way. The Church could park in the Grove Street parking lot. Mr. Jones noted that the noise would be the thing for the church, it will be very loud jackhammering first thing in the morning. We need to do the repair and the least impact to all. The problem would be that working on a Sunday we may need something and the places will be closed like sand and gravel. Mr. Kularski suggested stockpiling it beforehand. Mr. Jones noted that we need so much of it that Bond has trucked it in for us. We need truckload after truckload.

Mr. Kularski suggested we stockpile it in Highway and ask the Highway guys if they would come in and truck it. Mr. Thomasian suggested talking to Bercume in East Brookfield as well. But they do not have the cold patch.

There is a lot to think about and the Board encouraged Mr. Jones to ask for any help if he needs it.

**Meeting adjourned: 6:41 PM**

Respectfully submitted,

Shiela LeBlanc,  
Recording Secretary