

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Water Commissioners
Monday, January 14, 2013
North Brookfield Water Treatment Facility
14 Bell Road
North Brookfield, MA 01535

Present: James Kularski, Tim Nason, John Thomasian, Stephen Jones and
Shiela LeBlanc – Recording Secretary
Absent: None
Guests: Charles and Marianne Abysalh – 30 Ward Street

Meeting opened: 6:01PM

1. **Abysalh – 30 Ward Street** –Mrs. LeBlanc explained to the Board that she contacted the Abysalhs after the meter reading was done because their water usage was flagged by the computer as high use. Their usage was up by about 11,000 gallons. An appointment was made. Both the ERT and the meter reading matched and there were no leaks showing at the time of the appointment.

Mr. Abysalh explained that he has a plumber come in and check everything every year. He checked the toilets with the dye tabs and there were no leaks. What he doesn't understand is that they are gone ten days out of each of the months of September through November.

Mr. Thomasian explained the abatement policy regarding water leaks and our inability to grant any abatement on this leak. He explained how when we verify that the meter and the ERT match we are basically verifying our device integrity. He explained that he had a toilet that would run and then not run. The usage is down now and we will re-read the meter later this week to make sure that it is still down where it usually is.

Mrs. Abysalh thanked us for the phone call but she has no idea where the water could have gone. They just don't want it to happen again.

Mr. Jones suggested that they read their meter periodically to keep track of their use. Mrs. LeBlanc suggested that they at least read it before they leave for the ten days and when they come back. She also mentioned that they can test the toilets with food coloring and do not need to come get dye tabs all the time. Mr. Kularski also mentioned that he had a problem with a front loading washing machine where it just kept rinsing and rinsing.

Mrs. Abysalh thanked us again for the call and they left the meeting.

2. **Minutes – Mr. Thomasian made and Mr. Nason seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the December 10, 2012 meeting as written. So voted.**

3. **Horse Pond Dam** - We have received the Phase I Inspection Report from Lenard Engineering. The dam gets a “Good” rating in the report. The next Phase I will have to be done in 2017. Today we received a letter from the Office of Dam Safety that they have received the Phase I Inspection report. They will review it and hopefully send a certificate of compliance that we will have to record it at the registry of deeds.

Karen Fung of Lenard Engineering met with the Conservation Commission twice about issuing the Certificate of Compliance. At their last meeting on January 8th they voted to issue the certificate. It will be issued to the town and we will need to record that with the Registry of Deeds as well.

The final payment forms for the project were signed by Mary Walter last week and have been sent to USDA. Once they sign them we can by the equipment.

These are the last things that need to be dealt with in order to close out this project.

4. **FY 2014 Budget** - As we were asked to do by the Board of Selectmen, our operating budget is once again level funded. The total budget is actually down by \$5,126.00 but this is due to the ever changing MWPAT pass through amounts that we pay annually.

The water rates will rise by .4% to pay for DWSRF loan that went up by \$2,493.00.

The error that Mr. Kularski pointed out last month has been corrected.

Indirect costs are not finalized yet as we haven’t received an estimate from the Treasurer regarding health insurance costs.

The Testing and Research line item is an estimate; we won’t be able to get the final amounts until we receive the new schedule from DEP, which usually is sent out in January.

As we talked about last month, we added a 3% raise for water department employees and commissioners and also for our share of the collector, collector’s clerk, treasurer, and accountant salaries through Indirect Costs.

We have scheduled a leak detection survey and a computer replacement for the administrative assistant.

In the network that we host for the sewer department and the town collector, there has been a constant problem, mainly with the collector’s connection, where the

connection freezes up. They then call us and we break the connection so they can start again. One of the recommendations made by our IT consultant David Smith was to change the network to be able to use a static IP address. This would be an added cost so we have budgeted it for next year. Mrs. LeBlanc talked to sewer about splitting the cost and they agreed. Sewer's share will be deducted from the amount we pay them annually. This is reflected in the budget.

We actually made the change to static IP address two weeks ago when we were having problems with our router. We will be paying for the rest of this year. We will need to make a transfer into the telephone budget to pay for the rest of this year.

Mr. Kularski questioned on page 6 Salary – Other, we have 3.4% shouldn't that be 3% and then on page Sheet 21 it shows 3%. Mrs. LeBlanc stated that she thinks it is a rounding issue with in the worksheet. Mr. Jones feels that it is the calculation and we will check into it.

Mr. Kularski also questioned the Treatment Chemicals on Sheet 9 – Page 10. Is the cost per gallon for Sodium Hypochlorite? Mr. Jones stated that it was and he will go back and re-label it. Then the PC H180 is by the gallon as well. Mr. Jones noted that these are his worksheets only. He includes any fuel charges into the gallon price.

The powdered activated carbon is in pounds but we have not been using it. This year he has not budgeted for it. He stopped using it because we treat the pond and the PAC never did the total job getting rid of taste and odor. It is a nasty chemical to use. We do have some left over from two years ago.

Mr. Nason made and Mr. Kularski seconded a motion to accept this budget for submittal to Finance Committee subject to the above mentioned corrections. So voted.

5. **Bates Observatory** - As we discussed last month, Linda Grace is looking into the Bates Observatory and the \$90,000 that was left to the town to repair the observatory. She has emailed town departments with questions regarding this. The questions are on page 5; slide # 10. Mrs. Grace is weighing opinions on the questions she asks.

The Board reviewed the questions and answered what they could:

1. Is \$90,000.00 enough money restore and maintain the observatory - No.
2. If it is considered to be open to the public would it necessitate handicap accessibility and accommodation? The Board does not feel they are qualified

to answer this part. That type of question should be referred to Building Inspector.

3. Is there a demand for such a facility? Not known by this Board
4. Would it be feasible to consider removing mature trees and adjusting landscape to serve its intended purpose? The Board feels that if it was repair that answer would be yes. Landscape and remove trees.
5. Who would be responsible for future maintenance and supervision? The Board agreed that we could continue the mowing of the area but cannot be counted on for maintenance of the building.
6. Any alternatives or measures that might serve to memorialize Mr. Doane's gift at Bell Hill or elsewhere? The Board feels that the money should be used to take the building down and level that area and use some of the granite and bricks to erect a monument with a picture of the tower and a dedication to Mr. Doane. If the money is taken for the townhouse, this issue still needs to be addressed. It is a liability.
7. Who will lead? If they determine to tear the building down Mr. Jones will assist on the project. If this is part of the former water works we should have enough money to tare this down.

Mr. Thomasian stated that is not feasible to renovate and it needs to be secured or taken down at the very least.

The Board asked that a letter be written to Linda Grace in response to her inquiry. It is cost prohibitive to renovate this building.

There was additional discussion of what would need to be done to level the hill for easier mowing and maintenance.

6. **Capacity Report** - We included the latest Capacity Report numbers in the Board's packets. 100,771,000 gallons of water were pumped from the Horse Pond Reservoir in 2012. This is 3,948,000 gallons more than last year. The daily average rose from 265,268 gallons per day to 276,085 gallons per day, a difference of 10,817 gallons per day or 4%. This past summer was fairly dry and Mr. Jones feels the increase in use was due to the weather. We have had 5 years of consistent flows ranging from 97 million gallons during wet years and 105 million during dryer years. This is down approximately 40% 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 64.2% of capacity in 2012.
7. **Electronic delivery of CCR** - EPA released its final "interpretive memorandum" to clarify the delivery requirements included in the Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) Rule. EPA's new interpretation will allow all community water systems to meet the mailing requirement of the rule by publishing a CCR on a publicly-available website and including the direct URL of that CCR on a water bill mailed or emailed to a customer.

Community water systems that publish their CCRs on a public website may elect to not mail paper copies of the reports to each customer. Instead, the water system would prominently print or include a direct URL to the website of the CCR on customers' water bills, water bill inserts, or community newsletters. Water systems would have to notify customers that a paper copy of the CCR will be mailed to them upon request.

For us that would mean we would have to include a notice with the bills that will go out at the end of this month. Mr. Jones has discussed how to do the web site with the town's webmaster and it is possible to do. We would have to mail out paper copies to anyone that requests it. This would save us the cost of over 5000 sheets of paper, stamps, the cost of the ink cartridges that we use to print them, and the hours we spend collating and folding them all by hand before they can be mailed out.

This ruling just came out. Mr. Jones expects DEP will review and possibly make changes. There is a webinar that he will be attending on January 17th that will help explain how the rules work.

He would like to add this web site and the notification to this next billing. This will be our only chance to send out the notice this year. Mrs. LeBlanc pointed out that we will still be required to make this report available to the larger housing units and have copies at various locations throughout town.

Mr. Kularski made and Mr. Thomasian seconded a motion to send the electronic CCR delivery notice out with the water bill at the end of the month. So voted.

8. **Superintendent Report** – Low Level gate valve – Mr. Jones and Mr. Lalashius went to the dam and exercised the low level gate valve last month. This will be an annual maintenance SOP to keep the valve from rusting solid as the previous one did. We open the valve, let it run for a few minutes and then close it back up.

Meter Reading - We read meters at the beginning of the month for our semiannual billing. Bills will be going out at the end of the month. Mrs. LeBlanc has been checking the readings and trying to contact building owners regarding any irregular readings. Usually this means high readings and we do this as a courtesy just in case there is an ongoing leak. For the owners she cannot contact, Mr. Lalashius has posted a notice at the building regarding the problem. We have also had a few ERTs that have stopped working. Mr. Lalashius has replaced them with the remaining stock that we have. We have a few 60 watt erts left and when they are gone we will be switching over to the newer 100 watt erts that are more powerful and contain leak detection software in them.

FEMA reimbursement - Mary Walter called Mrs. LeBlanc to notify the water department that the Town Accountant was able to find most of the FEMA money that we had filed for. This is reimbursement for the equipment used during the Halloween snowstorm of 2011. We will be reimbursed for the generator use and the use of the truck and plow. They were not able to find any money to reimburse Mr. Jones's hourly pay for that time, although this had been done for the ice storm reimbursements. This money will not be able to go back into the budget since we are in a different fiscal year. It will end up in the retained earnings account next summer.

Beavers - Beavers had taken up residence in an old hut located in Doane Pond. Since Doane Pond is an emergency water source, we received permission from the Board of Health to trap them out and were told today that two were taken.

CDAC -The community development action committee met earlier this afternoon and voted to recommend joining the Town of Spencer in the grant process. Apparently it is better to partner up with a town to apply for the grant. The focus of the grant will be housing rehabilitation money and a plan to fix the drainage and infrastructure in the Little Canada area. Water pipes should be included.

TCHs – Mr. Lalashius attended a class entitled Filter Surveillance Workshop, put on by the New England Water Works Association. This class was held at the Worcester Water Treatment plant and covers much of the surface water direct filtration process in filters like ours. He received .6 CEUs for attending the class.

Horse Pond Dam Power Point Presentation - With help from Mr. Lalashius and Mrs. LeBlanc, Mr. Jones put together a PowerPoint presentation to give to the Board of Selectmen on the Horse Pond Dam project. We have set January 29th as the date to do it. Mr. Nason will try to be there.

Light bulbs - We began replacing our current T8 fluorescent light bulbs with the free replacement bulbs from the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources. We have replaced 105 bulbs so far and have another 45 to go. According to the rules we need to finish the replacement project by the end of the month.

Forestry -Mr. Jones received an email today from the Board of Selectmen's administrative assistant about a public hearing on the forestry plan for the town forest and the Doane Pond watershed area. The hearing will be January 22nd at 6:30 at the senior center. Mr. Jones hasn't talked to anybody about this since the first time so he really can't tell the Board anything about it at this point. He will try to get some information from Joe Holloway before the meeting and let the Board know. He plans on going to the meeting.

9. **New Business – Ethics Exam 2012** – As we discussed last March, we all had to retake the Ethics test in 2012. Mr. Lalashius, Mrs. LeBlanc and Mr. Jones have retaken the test and passed the certificates in to the Town Clerk. We haven't received the Board member's copies of the test to pass in. Please get them to Mrs. LeBlanc and we will pass them on to Shiela Buzzell, Town Clerk.

Annual Report – A copy of the annual report was emailed to the Board this morning for proofing. If there are any questions or comments please notify Mr. Jones.

Mr. Kularski noted that maybe we should note the electronic delivery of the CCR.

Meeting adjourned: 7:09 am

Respectfully submitted,

**Shiela LeBlanc,
Recording Secretary**