

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Water Commissioners
Monday, March 11, 2013
North Brookfield Water Treatment Facility
14 Bell Road
North Brookfield, MA 01535

Present: James Kularski, John Thomasian, Tim Nason, Stephen Jones – Water Superintendent and Shiela LeBlanc – Recording Secretary

Absent: None

Guests: None

Meeting Opened: 6:02PM

1. Mr. Kularski made and Mr. Thomasian seconded a motion to accept the minutes of the February 11, 2013 meeting as written. So voted.
2. **Horse Pond Dam Update** - We received the Certificate of Compliance from the Conservation Commission. The signatures hadn't been notarized so Mrs. LeBlanc had to send it back for notarization. We haven't heard from the Office of Dam Safety regarding their Certificate of Compliance.

With the snow melt and rainfall the water level at the reservoir finally increased enough to go over the spillway. Mr. Jones reported that the spillway works. We will be closing the weir board soon.

3. **Top Ten Water Users** - Each year we print this list out. Nine out of ten on this year's list are the same as last year's list, with East Point Properties moving into the top ten and bumping out Hannaford's. Mr. Jones went back to the 2008 list and the one huge difference is that Quabaug Corp. has gone from water usage of 5,335,000 gallons then to 2,642,000 gallons last year, a drop of 50 %. They have taken water conservation very seriously.
4. **Unaccounted For Water** – Mr. Jones pointed out that we have been fairly consistent in the 11% - 15% area since 2008. The one obvious change is that the amount lost to known leakage has gone up considerably in the past three years. He doesn't know if this is just an anomaly or if it is a sign of the age and condition of the distribution system. DEP has not allowed us to subtract known leakage for the past 2 years whereas we had been able to subtract this number in the prior years.
5. **Algae Management** - Each year there is a water taste and odor potential in Horse Pond due to the excess of algae that occurs in the spring from the nutrients that are washed into the reservoir from the spring rains. We have learned that a May treatment of copper sulfate destroys the excess of algae and brings the ecosystem back into balance. We have found that this is also true in the mid to late summer. We have received this year's contract from Lycott Environmental and Mr. Jones recommended to the Board to accept Option B of this contract from Lycott to treat the reservoir during 2013 and to further write a letter to the Board of Selectmen

recommending Lycott for approval and subsequent contract signing. Lycott's contract is for \$1,650.00 per treatment, an increase of \$150.00 per treatment over last year's cost.

Mr. Kularski made and Mr. Nason seconded a motion to recommend to the Board of Selectmen the acceptance of Option B of the Lycott proposal and to further request that they sign the contract at \$1650.00 per treatment. So voted.

6. **Net Metering Credits** - We met with Hampshire County Power and Nexamp, the company that is running their solar program. Their offer is similar to the Solterra offer that was mentioned at last month's meeting. One difference is that Nexamp is offering a 30.5% discount as opposed to the 25% discount offered by Solterra. The time period is the same, 20 years. They are contracting with a solar installation in Palmer. The electricity produced by the panels goes to National Grid and they give Nexamp credits for the power that is produced. We sign up for a certain amount of credits. They sell us these credits at .695 on the dollar. We save 30.5%, they get the rest.

They recommend allocating 85% of our load to net metering. We have spent approximately \$34,000 over the past two years on electricity, 85% of that would be \$28,900. 30.5% of that would be \$8,800 that we would save if all goes well. We don't want to buy too many credits because if our use went down, we would still have to pay for the credits. The one other problem would be if the solar panels did not function at 100%, say we had a lot of cloudy days; we wouldn't get all the credits we signed up for. They asked us to send in 12 months of bills so they could figure out the best plan. We are waiting to hear from them.

After some discussion the Board was in agreement that even if we only save a few thousand dollars then we should do it. The scariest part is the 20 year signing.

Mr. Nason asked if we had thought about putting solar panels on our roof. There is funding out there. Mr. Jones explained that the funding and tax credit is for private businesses. A third party would come in and put in the solar panels and we would go through them to buy the power.

Mr. Jones did note that there were questions raised at this meeting regarding what the department heads will do with the additional funds seen from the savings and how to budget for these additional funds.

7. **Superintendent Report - Leaks** - We spent most of the past month looking for and repairing leaks in the distribution system. We have kept records of the daily average water use over the past few years. During the months of November through March, these numbers stay fairly constant. During December of 2012 we noticed an uptick of water use of approximately 17,000 gallons per day. Mr. Jones hoped that this would show up when we read the meters in town at the

beginning of January or that the water would come to the surface. Although other leaks did show up through the meter reading, the 17,000 gallons per day leak did not. On January 30 we noticed an additional increase of 23,000 gallons per day. This brought the total of additional water use to 40,000 gallons per day. We started a leak detection survey shortly thereafter. Both Mr. Lalashius and Mr. Jones went out with the Subsurface Leak Detector and listened on most of the 230 fire hydrants in the system. Mr. Lalashius heard a leak on the hydrant on Gilbert Street by Hannaford's parking lot and we were able to narrow the location down to 119 South Main Street, Bill Remington's house, by listening on all the curb stops in the area. Mr. Lalashius was able to pinpoint the exact location by finding a service line in the front yard that we didn't know about. The water from this leak never surfaced. We hired Ed Thibault and we found that the service line was broken on both sides of the curb stop; the threads on the pipe had rotted away. Mr. Remington said he had been hearing the hissing noise for approximately 3 to 4 months. Once we made the repair we found that this was the 17,000 gallon per day leak we had been looking for. Using a conservative start date of mid-December, this leak ran at least 53 days at 12 gallons per minute for a total of 901,000 gallons. It probably ran longer.

At that point we still had the 23,000 gallon per day leak. Since this leak showed up after we read the meters, Mr. Jones decided to reread the whole town to see if this leak would show up. We did this during the final week of February. Last Monday Mrs. LeBlanc started going over the results of the readings and fairly quickly found that a multi-family house on Nursery Ave had used approximately 700,000 gallons of water since the meter had been read at the beginning of January. Mr. Jones found the house empty and he could hear water running in the cellar although he could not get in. He located the curb stop and shut the line down. This turned out to be the 23,000 gallons per day leak we had been looking for. Using the start date of January 30th when we had noticed the increase, this leak ran for 32.5 days at approximately 16.5 gallons per minute for a total of 770,543 gallons of water.

The total amount of water lost from these two leaks came to at least 1,671,543 gallons. This is 1.7% of the total amount of water we pumped in 2012 and illustrates why it will be hard to get down to the 10% unaccounted for water that DEP is requiring by 2017.

Mr. Jones noted that this bill is estimated at \$7,000.00 and it is a three-family dwelling. Any abatement consideration under our policy would wipe out the entire abatement budget line item. Mrs. LeBlanc noted that we are making an assumption that this was a broken pipe we never actually saw it.

Heater Vent Pipe - One of our Heater vent pipes has a large hole in it and will have to be replaced. Technicians from Meacham came out last week to take a look at it and to prepare a quote for the repair. The quote was for \$711.00 and they will be out to repair it.

CCR – Mr. Lalashius attended a webinar put on by EPA on the changes regarding the delivery method for the annual water quality report. It was the same one Mr. Jones had participated in previously.

PT Help - Mr. Jones informed the Board that Joseph Flamand will be back to work on April 1, 2013.

8. New Business – None

Meeting Closed: 6:38PM

Respectfully submitted,

Shiela LeBlanc
Recording Secretary