

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Water Commissioners

Monday, August 7, 2017

Bell Hill Water Treatment Facility

14 Bell Hill Road

North Brookfield, MA 01535

Present: Jim Kularski, Shiela LeBlanc, Rich Kennan and Administrative Assistant, Kelly Valeri

Absent: Tim Nason

The meeting opened @ 6:00 PM

Review and approve the minutes

Mrs. Leblanc made a motion and Mr. Kularski seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the July 10, 2017 Board of Water Commissioners meeting. The vote to accept these minutes was unanimous.

Abatement Request

- **10 West Brookfield Rd** – Mr. Kennan and the Board welcomed guests Jessica Hanam and Brett Jolly to the meeting. Ms. Hanam and Mr. Jolly came to the meeting to discuss their high usage water bill. Mr. Kennan started off with explaining to the Board as well as Ms. Hanam and Mr. Jolly that during our recent billing cycle their property was flagged as having high water usage. Mr. Kennan went to the residence to inspect the meter and perform a follow up read. At that time, it was determined that the usage was back in line with the previous usage billed to the homeowner. He then entered the residence to perform a visual read on the meter where he determined the readings were the same which told him that everything seemed to be working properly. A few weeks later Mr. Kennan went to the residence to replace the current meter with a flow meter so he could bring the homeowners meter up to the pump station and perform a bench test on the meter. After the test it was determined the water meter was working properly. At that time, Mr. Jolly explained they noticed minor water in the garage around February but thought nothing of it as snow had been melting. In April he went to wash off his car and noticed the spout coming out of the house had cracked and water was dripping down the side of the house. He called his cousin a few days later to come fix it. Since then there's been no water in the garage. He couldn't say for sure when the pipe cracked but could only speculate maybe some time in February as that is when they first noticed water in their garage. After discussion by the BOWC Mr. Kularski made a motion and Mrs. LeBlanc seconded to allow for a one time abatement on their bill.

Superintendent Report

- **Minimum Fee** - Mr. Kennan advised the Board that you cannot base the water usage rate on the final budget total. You have to look at the user fee increase for future billings as the loan obligation

decrease by the state does not offset our total budget costs. The rate increase in this billing period was due to the significant increase in indirect costs. Mr. Kennan is looking into the possibility of the Minimum fee increasing to \$60 in our next billing cycle to offset this increase.

- **Itron** – Kelly Valeri contacted Itron about the FC300. They sent us new antennas to try on the handheld unit and we will be reading on a larger scale to see if there is any improvement. Mr. Kennan has been in contact with Toomey about a new system and utilizing old meters with new Ert's sending signals directly to the Water Treatment Plant.
- **RWPS Pump Packing** – Mr. Kennan had Ruby Electric come inspect the pump packing at the RWPS. It was advised that over time the pump may fail due to packing issues. This is not something that needs to be addressed right away but sometime in the near future.
- **Carl Sopper** – Mr. Sopper will begin leak detection on Tuesday, August 8, 2017. Our unaccounted water has been higher than past years. There was one leak in Spring but it's very hard to tell how much water was lost as the daily water usage per day was not off by a lot.
- **Jamie Flamand** – Jamie is doing a fine job and seems to be enjoying his position at this point.

New Business

- **10 West Brookfield Rd** – Mr. Kennan used 10 West Brookfield Rd. as an example to show how a new system could have caught this leak/issue sooner. If we had the capability to run reports/readings weekly you can catch a problem much sooner than reading only every 6 months. New system details will be checked into and discussed at future meetings.
- **Town wide Meter Inspection** – There has been a major reduction in water user amounts which in turn factor into the higher water rate. Mr. Kennan feels that a town wide inspection of meters may catch any people bypassing, etc. which could help explain the reduction in water usage by residents. Or it could show that residents are in fact using less and conserving water.
- **96 Ward Street** - Mr. Kennan will be in touch with the homeowner in regards to his flushing of the hydrant on his property. This could have a lot to do with our unaccounted water. Mr. Kennan suggested including him in our current flushing cycle.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:57 pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Kelly Valeri, Administrative Assistant