

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Water Commissioners
Monday, October 7, 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 approve the minutes of the September 16, 2013 meeting as written. So voted.
2. **Whitney – 80 Elm Street** – Mr. Thomasian stated that he had gone down to 80 Elm Street and he does not feel that what we disrupted for the main repair warrants the paving of the entire driveway. He feels that we can only repair what we have disrupted.

Mr. Kularski stated that he too had gone to look at the driveway of 80 Elm Street and had also gone by when it was wet and he can definitely see where the rain does puddle up and pond there. Our construction area has brought a little silt onto the driveway but not too much. He feels that it is an old driveway that is cracked in a lot of places.

Mr. Jones talked to Highway Superintendent Gary Jean and he said that he had already talked to Mr. Whitney and Ed Thibault of E M Thibault Excavation. He said he told Mr. Thibault that when he was repairing the driveway to build a swale into the repair and carry it right down to the brook and that the town would pay for the swale from the driveway to the brook. This will replace the 4" PVC drain that the Highway had installed in the past.

Mr. Thibault is on vacation this week so Mr. Jones will call him next week to discuss this repair.

The Board asked that a letter be sent to the Whitneys notifying them of the Board's decision.

3. **Forestry Letter** – Mr. Jones presented the letter to the Selectmen regarding the Forestry Project on Oakham Road. The Board reviewed and signed the letter.

4. **Special Town Meeting** – November 1, 2013 – Mrs. LeBlanc reminded the Board that we submitted an article for the Special Town Meeting on November 1, 2013. The article is in regards to the Horse Pond Dam borrowing. The town had voted to borrow the full cost of the project but we received \$248,000.00 in grant monies so we need to reduce this figure from the total amount by \$248,000.00. Mr. Nason stated that he would go to the meeting because we have to have someone present when we have an article on the warrant to answer any questions that may come up.
5. **Leak Detection** - We received the report of our leak detection survey from Water & Waste Pipe Testing Inc. President Carl M. Sopper. As Mr. Jones had stated last month they found five service line leaks. Mr. Sopper estimates these leaks were wasting 43,000 gallons daily. This would come to approximately 15.7 million gallons per year worth \$45,000 at a national average rate. Mr. Jones feels that this is a very high estimate.

The leak on North Main has been repaired and we have repaired the leak on Bates Street. David Earle from 10 Ward Street has requested an extension as he is out of town. Mr. Jones has spoken to Paul Potvin who is going to repair this leak. Beaudoin at 14 East Brookfield Road has contacted E.M. Thibault to conduct her repair and this will be scheduled when Mr. Thibault returns from vacation.

The only one we have not heard from is Byszek of 136 Ward Street. Mr. Nason had spoken to someone regarding this issue but we have not had any updates. Mr. Nason noted that he had spoken to Jim Thompson and he will follow up with him this week. Mr. Jones noted that the longer we leave this with no action the harder it will be to shut off. Beginning in November we will not be able to shut this service off.

The leak report is in the office if anyone would like to look at it.

6. **Source Water Protection Plan Update** -We met with Bruce Young, the new Source Water Specialist for the Massachusetts Rural Water Association to plan for the update for our Source Water Protection Plan. The plan itself was developed in 2006 and the first update was completed in 2010. DEP regulations call for it to be updated every 3 years. Mr. Young will be working with us on the update and will put it altogether.

He also explained to us that MRWA has a very accurate GPS unit that can be used to pinpoint the location of our shutoffs. We could borrow this unit and get the locations of the shutoffs.

We would then send them to him and he would be able to take the locations and put them on an interactive map. He is also going to look into GIS software that may be available for towns for free. He is going to look into downloading this software and using the data from the GPS system to develop a GIS map for us. At the very least he will be able to teach us how to upload data into the two programs.

Using GPS and developing a GIS map isn't just the future anymore, it is being used in quite a few towns. We do not have the money to pay to have it done but if we can find the time to locate the shutoffs and if we can work with MRWA we can get a head start on the process.

Mr. Kularski feels that it is a good idea to do this when we have the time.

7. **Mendala Livestock Violation** - On April 16, during our weekly watershed inspection, Mr. Jones noticed cattle grazing and feeding in a field adjacent to the North Brook Canal on Barnes Road. The North Brook Canal is one of the two tributaries that feed the Horse Pond Reservoir. According to Mass General Laws 310 CMR 22.00 (4), "No stabling, hitching, standing, feeding, or grazing of livestock or other domestic animals shall be located, constructed, or maintained within 100 feet of the bank of a surface water source or tributary hereto. " We measured the distance from the North Brook Canal to the area of grazing and it came out to be approximately 50'. We sent a letter to James Mendala, the owner of the property, notifying him of this problem. By May 20th the animals were still there so he had decided to send a second notice. Before the letter went out the animals were removed so the second notice never went out. On July 29th the animals were back in the same location so we sent two second notices, one by regular mail and one by certified mail. The certified letter was never picked up and was returned to us recently. As of August 26th the animals have been removed from this field. Mr. Jones has also verbally discussed this problem with Mr. Mendala and suggested that he move his fence 50' further away from the North Brook Canal, which would solve the problem. We send copies of all correspondence to DEP and report these situations to them in our Annual Statistical report.

This is the third time we have dealt with Mr. Mendala regarding animals being kept too close to the drinking water reservoir or tributaries over the past few years. The first two times he moved the fencing away from the brooks or the reservoir itself. Mr. Mendala was a member of the Source Water Protection Committee that helped us put together the Source Water Protection Plan in 2006. Hopefully this will be the last time we will have to deal with this problem.

8. **Electric Contract** -Two weeks ago Timothy Butler, an Independent Associate working for Veridian offered the town and the Water Department a 1 year electric contract at 6.4 cents per kwh based on a G1 rate. This is considerably less than Hampshire Power is charging us at this

time. Mr. Butler also saw that we were paying the G2 rate for small business. He checked with National Grid and found out that we should be in the G1 rate structure at the Water Treatment plant because we now use less than 10,000 kwh per month. He recommended that we look into whether there would be any rebate for past payments using the G2 rate. Mrs. LeBlanc worked on this but found that the G1 rate was not any cheaper than the G2 rate in the recent past. Mary Walter signed the contract and Mr. Butler will be working on switching us over from Hampshire Power to Veridian over the next month or two.

9. **Superintendent Retirement** – Mrs. LeBlanc informed the Board that she had spoken to Johanna Swain Administrative Assistant to the Selectmen in West Brookfield and she stated that it is legal to post the Superintendent Position internally before going outside to fill position openings. She said we should make sure that the posting along with a job description be given to all town departments.

Mrs. Swain also stated that the Board of Water Commissioners should submit a letter to the Personnel Board (Selectmen) and ask them for the approval to do an internal posting and include all the positive aspects of finding a candidate internally. Explain that you would then post outside if we cannot fill from internal posting.

Mr. Jones asked what date this letter should go out. He understands that it is still 20 months away. Mrs. LeBlanc cautioned that if position is filled internally we still would need to post the other position both internally and externally and go through the process. Licenses T2 and D2 are the required for the Superintendent position.

Mr. Jones questioned how long for training. Mr. Kularski feels that three months minimum. The rest of the Board was in agreement.

Mrs. LeBlanc and Mr. Jones met with Town Accountant Nancy Nykiel regarding using money from the Water Department's retained earnings account to fund the superintendent's sick pay and the training salary for the new hire. We all agreed this would be the better way to fund these line items instead of raising water rates. Mrs. Nykiel suggested transferring the money at the next annual town meeting. She suggested transferring the money for the health insurance into a separate account but since it will be around \$3,000.00, we will probably be able to fit this in the budget. Since at this point we aren't sure whether we will be hiring an operator or superintendent, she suggested transferring the money needed to cover the superintendent's pay and then if we hire an operator instead we will have money left over that can be allowed to go back into retained earnings. If we decide to do this we will need to put together a couple of motions in February to submit for the annual town meeting.

We will need to have the articles ready for the Board for the January meeting along with the budget. The Board was in agreement to transfer the almost \$50,000.00 from retained earnings. Mrs. LeBlanc noted that these fees would be separate line items in the budget and whatever is not used will go back to the retained earnings of the Water Department at the end of the year.

Mrs. LeBlanc suggested that we raise and appropriate the base budget and then add a line and to further transfer a sum of money from retained earnings. Mr. Jones asked if they should be separate articles. She did state that if they were separate articles it would not hold up our budget if there are questions.

Mr. Jones feels that we need to know what we are going to pay. Mrs. LeBlanc noted that the \$24,000.00 is the high side of the money figure. She noted that figure is based on Mr. Jones' current salary so if we have extra it will go back into retained earnings.

The Board had some discussion regarding the rates and feel that we cannot start anyone lower than the rate of the current Superintendent. This is the average pay for Water Superintendents. Should we have to replace the Operator we need to give incentive for someone coming in with T1 and D1 and you are looking at paying between \$22-25 per hour to get them in the door. We need to know this by January.

Mr. Jones also brought up the clothing allowance. He suggested that they not become eligible until July of that year verses right away. The Board agreed. We will purchase coats, sweatshirts and t-shirts.

Mr. Jones informed the Board that Andy Lalashius is interested in the superintendent position.

10. **Superintendent Report – Flushing** - Water main flushing began on Tuesday, September 24th and will continue through October 18th. Mrs. LeBlanc lists the daily schedule on Facebook for anyone that wants to know where we will be flushing.

Water Shutoffs -Shutoffs for nonpayment are scheduled to start on Monday, October 22st. Shutoff notices were sent out last week and multifamily buildings were posted today so that tenants would know what was going on.

F-350 - Hucks replaced the muffler on the F350 at the beginning of the month and now we have a hole in the exhaust manifold on the passenger side. Since this could be a two day job he will wait until flushing is over to get it replaced. This truck runs fine but it is now 13 years old. The spare tire holder rotted through and we now keep the spare in

the back of the truck. It only has 88,000 miles on it but it will need to be replaced in the next few years.

New Service - A service line was installed for a new house on High Street. This is the only new tap this year so far.

11. **New Business** – The Board of Selectmen have requested that the Board of Water Commissioners meet with them at their next meeting of October 22, 2013 to discuss our letter requesting the water department to be exempt from the purchase order system.

Mr. Kularski and Mr. Nason will be available that day. Mr. Thomasian will check his schedule.

Mr. Kularski asked if they want to bring up the transferring of funds from retained earnings for the superintendent sick time and replacement. Mrs. LeBlanc suggested that they wait on that and meet with the Selectmen and Finance Committee to review that at a later date. Mr. Jones also noted that they will need to meet with them regarding his contract renewal so they could combine the contract and new hire for that meeting.

Meeting adjourned: 6:48 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Shiela LeBlanc,
Recording Secretary