

BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING OF OCTOBER 28, 2020

REGULAR MEETING: The regular meeting of the Board of Water Commissioners was held at the 438 Granby Road Office on Thursday, October 28, 2020. Chairman R. Scott Williams called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE:	Chairman	R. Scott Williams
	Clerk	Brian S. McClaflin
	Associate Member	William L. Schenker
	Superintendent	Jeffrey A. Cyr
	Office Manager	Jennifer L. Fernandes
	Office Billing Clerk	Kari L. Scytowski
	Foreman	Jeffrey L. Levreault
	Maintenance Worker	Samuel C. Bernash
	Treasurer	Terie Fleury
	Prudential Chairman	John Wojciechowski
	Resident	Mitchel Malinowski

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Brian S. McClaflin made a motion to approve the minutes of September 16, 2020. This motion was seconded by William L. Schenker. Motion Carried

BERWYN STREET
WATER MAIN: Jeff Cyr updated the Board that the Maintenance Crew is currently replacing the water main on Berwyn Street, from Newton to Viviani Street. It is approximately 900 feet and so far, the Maintenance Crew has completed 200 feet. Jeff reported that if weather permits, the Maintenance staff is hoping to finish by the time we read meter again, around December 1st. If the Maintenance staff is unable to finish, they will wait until spring and do the services then. Jeff noted that they rented an excavator for the project.

RADIO READ METER
DISCUSSION: Jeff Cyr mentioned we still have money left from the Newton Street Water Main project to use for water mains and meter upgrades. Jeff informed the Board that he purchased 225 radio read meters for approximately \$30,000 for the properties on the pipeline. These 225 properties include New Ludlow Rd, Granby, West Street and Fuller Streets in Granby. Jeff noted the range is about 200 feet off the road and will be read by just driving by with our current handheld interrogators. Jeff mentioned these will be considered a “test”. William L. Schenker asked how much it would be to do our entire system. Jeff responded that some years ago we did look into converting to all radio read meters with a system that would allow office staff to click a button to see what the reading is. The cost of the conversion was upwards of \$750,000 for Flexnet at that time.

EMPLOYEE MANUAL
REVISION DISCUSSION:

Jeff Cyr reminded the Board that the Revised Employee Manual they received to review is an updated version with only a few minor changes. Jeff noted some of the key changes are Mass. General Laws for Sexual Harassment, the Education requirements for the Maintenance Crew to get licenses and the new Work Boot allowance for the Maintenance Crew. Jeff asked the Board to review the Manual and get back to him if they have any questions and or comments. R. Scott Williams asked Jeff to highlight the changes in the electronic version to better review.

COMPENSATION
DISCUSSION:

Jeff Cyr opened up the discussion of compensation and put together a spreadsheet based off of William L. Schenker spreadsheet of different scenarios for giving different staff members an annual raise (See Note 1). William Schenker mentioned that when the Board gives a percentage raise the employees making more money, gets a bigger raise which widens the gap between Management and staff. William Schenker is looking to make it fair for all employees when giving raises. Brian S. McClafin stated that when he worked for Fire Dept., they would go off the lowest wage person for percentage. William Schenker asked the Board to think of the future people when reviewing different ways a raise could be given. Jeff noted that the Mass. Water Works Association did a salary survey in 2019 of different communities and their salaries. Jeff noted that for our size District and number of customers we have, we are within the median of what the average systems are paying. Brian McClafin noted that we want to keep the quality of people we have and not have them look elsewhere and as a Board member he realizes how much money the Maintenance staff saves the District doing their own water main projects. Jeff also noted to keep in mind that the increase in wages affects our retirement costs as well. Jeff asked John Wojciechowski, Chair of Prudential Committee if the committee wants to meet with the Water Board to discuss budgets for next fiscal year. John Wojciechowski noted that he is new to being Chair and would like to see how the Water does their budgets to better help him prepare and thinks that when Water is done with their budget they forward to Prudential. Jeff responded that the water has never forwarded their budget to the Prudential Committee. In the past before Fire had a Union contract both Boards would get together, but just to discuss what each was thinking for a raise for the employees. Jeff explained that neither budget process can begin without a water surplus figure for water and a certified free cash for fire. When the Water budget is complete and the Board votes on it the Treasurer gets a copy to then process the reports needed for the Annual Report Booklet before the Annual Meeting. Jeff Cyr mentioned that John Wojciechowski was always welcome to any of our budget meetings, usually starting in December. Jeff suggested to John Wojciechowski that both Boards meet to discuss when they would like to hold the next Annual Meeting and start planning its location. John Wojciechowski mentioned he was approached by District 2 Chair, Jim Menard about collaborating and streamlining some things between the two Districts. John Wojciechowski said Jim Menard mentioned a letter going out to both District 1 entities regarding this. Jeff Cyr advised the group that conversations regarding such should not be held until a formal letter is submitted.

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE:	<p>Jeff Cyr opened up the discussion that in the past the Board has given the Water Department employees the day after Thanksgiving off and the entire day of Christmas Eve off instead of working a half day. After a brief discussion, R. Scott Williams made a motion to grant the staff the day after Thanksgiving off and the entire day of Christmas Eve off. The staff will work the normal half day on New Years' Eve. This motion was seconded by William L. Schenker.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Motion Carried</p>
ACH ON-LINE PAYMENTS:	<p>Jeff Cyr updated the Board that the office staff has the ACH on our website up and running. We will now offer our customers the option to pay with their credit card and checking account one time for a fee and now an option to pay with their checking account (ACH) for a set amount recurring monthly for free. Jeff noted that it was quite a cumbersome process to get it up and running and thanked the office staff for their diligence in making it happens.</p>
MWRA RATE FOR NEXT FISCAL BUDGET:	<p>Jeff Cyr mentioned that with the increase in water usage for this calendar year, our flow share portion of the Chicopee Valley Aqueduct (CVA is Chicopee, Wilbraham, South Hadley Water) the MWRA has stated our water rate for the next fiscal year could see an increase by as much as \$40,000.</p>
INGRAM STREET WATER MAIN BREAK:	<p>Jeff Cyr presented the Board with pictures of a 4-foot piece of Ductile Iron pipe that was cut out of Ingram Street. Jeff explained after the Maintenance Crew flushed fire hydrants Oct. 13th – 16th, Ingram Street had a leak. Initially the Crew thought they could wrap the pipe but it was so corroded from the clay in the ground they had to cut it out and replaced with PVC pipe. Ingram Street pipe was installed in 1987. Jeff explained that back then they were poly wrapping all the ductile iron they used during water main projects. Many communities were not wrapping the pipe back then. William Schenker asked how much ductile iron was still in our District. Jeff thought that maybe 40 – 45% of the roads still had ductile iron.</p>
PROWLER WATER LEAK DETECTION:	<p>Jeff Cyr informed the Board that Prowler Water will begin leak detection on half of our system in November.</p>
TERIE FLEURY COMPENSATION:	<p>District Treasurer, Terie Fleury opened up the discussion about compensation for the Assistant Treasurer, Kari Scytowski. Terie noted she has researched annual pay increases for the Assistant Treasurer and said when water has given a raise historically the Assistant was given a raise. Terie said she didn't feel comfortable giving the Assistant a raise being a new Treasurer and thought she needed to check with Prudential Board. Terie went on to say that during her research she discovered that the portion of her salary that the Water Department pays had also gotten a raise and she feels as though she should get a 2% raise retroactive to July 1st. Terie stated she spoke with Tom Scanlon, the Districts Auditor, and he stated</p>

that there is money in the Water Departments budget. Jeff Cyr said he will call Tom Scanlon tomorrow to ask him where this money will come from considering the Treasurer's salary portion of the water budget is voted on specifically at an annual meeting. Jeff Cyr then responded to Terie informing her that her salary was given to him by the interim treasurer during the budget preparation. Jeff went on to say that the treasurer line was increased from the FY20 budget amount of 16,271.00 to the FY21 amount of \$16,546.00. The Water Department's budget was then voted by the Board of Water Commissioners and then the voters of the District at the Annual Meeting. Jeff then remarked that once a budget has been voted on by the people a Special Meeting would then be required to pull funds from surplus to add funds to that line item if approved. Kari Scytowski mentioned to the Board that this whole conversation came up because Kari approached Terie and asked why she didn't get a 2% (.53 cents/hr.) raise and she felt as though she was worth the increase. Kari said that Terie responded to her that the District Treasurer didn't get an increase so she didn't feel as though Kari should get one. Kari then stated that she thought the Treasurers salary was voted a few years ago to be portioned out so Prudential would pay 75% and Water would pay 25%. Jeff Cyr said that yes that is in fact true, the Treasurer had asked for a 3.5% increase and Prudential would pay 75% and Water 25% of the Treasurers salary (See Minutes from 3/1/2018).

LEAPING WELLS LAND:

Jeff Cyr suggested to the Board they may want to try again to market and sell a portion of land that that on the Leaping Wells property. Jeff noted the land is about 9 acres total and about 3 acres are buildable. Jeff mentioned that the land was not under Article 97 (preserved space). A few years back the Department tried to sell the land but was unsuccessful. William Schenker would like to iron out exactly how the money would be split between Prudential and Water if sold before moving forward. Jeff Suggested that both Board chairs should discuss this issue and bring it back to the respective Board members.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

R. Scott Williams a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Brian S. McClaflin. Motion carried

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS

Brian S. McClaflin, Clerk