

PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Pursuant to the notice filed with the Town Clerk, a virtual public meeting of the Public Works Commission in accordance with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Order of March 12, 2020 suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law was held virtually at 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 10, 2020. This meeting has been properly noticed with the Town Clerk and publicized in the Concord Journal.

PRESENT:

Commissioners:

Andrew Boardman
James Terry
Peter W. Wallis
K.C. Winslow

Staff:

Alan H. Cathcart, Director
Aaron I. Miklosko, MSFM, Highway and Grounds Superintendent
Steve Dookran, Town Engineer
Bob Hill, Management Analyst
Anna R. Trout, Administrative & Special Projects Coordinator
Melissa Simoncini, Environmental Services Program Administrator
Paul Reinhardt, Management Analyst

Other:

Terri Ackerman (Select Board Observer)
Robert Hilsinger (League of Women Voters Observer)
Karlen Reed

A: ACTION ITEMS

A-1 through A-3 - The meeting was convened at 4 p.m. by Commissioner Terry. Attendance roll call of commissioners was made as follows: James Terry, KC Winslow, Andrew Boardman and Peter Wallis.

The meeting minutes from March 11, 2020 were approved by roll call: James Terry, Aye, KC Winslow, Aye, Andrew Boardman, Aye and Peter Wallis, Aye. The next three PWC meetings were scheduled for Wednesday, July 8, August 19 and September 9, 2020.

D: DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

D-1: Water/Sewer Rate Public Hearing

Commissioner Boardman **MOVED** to open the Public Hearing for the FY21 Water/Sewer rates, Commissioner Wallis **SECONDED**, and it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED** by roll call vote as follows: James Terry, Aye, KC Winslow, Aye, Andrew Boardman, Aye and Peter Wallis, Aye.

Director Cathcart explained that the Public Works Commission is the official rate setting authority for water and sewer service for the Town of Concord. User fees and special service fees are necessary to ensure the Town can comply with regulatory and statutory requirements including drinking water regulations, the Water Management Act and NPDES discharge permits relating to wastewater. CPW works hard to achieve a high level of customer satisfaction and provide sufficient supply for the current and future needs of Concord.

The water system infrastructure assets are valued at 24 million dollars, which includes the following: Surface water source (Nagog Pond), six ground water supplies, seven pumping stations, two advanced water treatment facilities, two reservoirs (7.5 MG storage), 134 miles of distribution mains and 1,328 fire hydrants.

The water and sewer systems have been established as municipal enterprise funds, meaning they are self-supporting through user fees and special service fees. Technically these funds were created as a revolving fund. A significant amount of the operating budget goes to depreciation. Revenues are also allocated for support services offered by other Town Departments. Rates are not just based on next year's budget plans but long range Capital Improvement Plans that are projected out for at least 10 years. The expenditures that we anticipate for FY21 is approximately \$6,867,570 which includes costs associated with a number of major initiatives such as Nagog Treatment, Nagog Intake, Emerging Contaminants, Main Replacement, Reservoir Rehabilitation and Phase 1 of our Meter Reading Upgrade.

Sixty percent of our customer base is residential. We also serve commercial customers, as well as regional hospitals and correctional facilities in addition to municipal buildings and public schools. Quality of service is very important. The Town conducts a survey every two years asking for feedback on its services. The 2019 Town Services Survey showed 95% rated the system overall as excellent or good. The majority of residents also indicated that the water service price is reasonably priced or a good bargain. Concord compares favorably with regard to its user fees in comparison with adjoining towns.

We put a lot of energy and investment towards continuing to improve our customer service including monthly billing, combined billings for convenience, electronic access, customer service support and dwelling unit allowance.

A five percent increase has been proposed for the base-line residential rate for the upcoming fiscal year. The impact of this increase on the average residential

customer is approximately \$25.20 per year. To reduce any undue burden on customers that meet certain criteria, we also have a discount rate, which provides a savings on water user fees of up to \$265 per year. There is also a five percent increase proposed for the general service rates. Approximately 95% of Concord is served by the municipal water supply.

With regard to the Municipal Wastewater System only 34% of our community received direct service. The infrastructure for this system is valued at \$15.3 million dollars and consists of the following: Advanced Wastewater Treatment Facility, two large scale pumping stations, six neighborhood lift stations, 34 miles of collection main and 903 manholes.

Most of the expense is in depreciation, as a result of the value of the assets and the other major portion of the expense is attributed to contract management for the operation of the treatment facility. The bulk of the upcoming capital expenses will be for the upgrade of the Assabet Ave. and Lowell Road pump stations (\$2,208,000).

The FY19 Customer Survey indicates over 85% feel the sewer service price is reasonable or a good bargain. Compared with comparable communities Concord's fees are competitive. We are looking at a 2% increase for the user fee, which equates to an average impact to our residential customer of \$14 per year. There is no proposed change to the sewer improvement fee.

Commissioner Boardman **MOVED** to close the Public Hearing for the FY21 Water/Sewer rates, Commissioner Wallis **SECONDED**, and it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED** by roll call vote as follows: James Terry, Aye, KC Winslow, Aye, Andrew Boardman, Aye and Peter Wallis, Aye.

Commissioner Boardman **MOVED** to approve the Water Rate Schedules, and also Sewer Rate Schedules as presented and as described in the Fiscal Year 2021 – Water and Sewer Rate Schedules memo dated May 26, 2020, prepared by the Water/Sewer Management Analyst and issued by the Public Works Director. Commissioner Wallis **SECONDED**, and it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED** by roll call vote as follows: James Terry, Aye, KC Winslow, Aye, Andrew Boardman, Aye and Peter Wallis, Aye.

D-2: Integrated Water Management Plan

Director Cathcart explained that the Commission is being asked to provide a letter of support for a Town Request for a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) grant from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA). These grants are issued to communities that are looking at either planning activities related to climate change or infrastructure improvements. Staff within CPW worked with the Town's Sustainability Coordinator to

develop a framework for plan of work that has been developed to meet local long-range water resource management needs which is in keeping with previous planning initiatives. Concord Public Works will play a leading role with this particular grant, working with other stakeholders in Concord and watershed groups and regulators. While this could serve to be a model for communities outside of Concord, more importantly, if successful, it will inform big picture investments over the next twenty to fifty years.

Commissioner Wallis **MOVED** to support the Director's initiative as described in his memorandum to the Commission dated June 4, 2020 related to the Integrated Water Resources Plan (IWRP) MVP Grant Application – Letter of Support and agree to a letter of support from the Commission. Commissioner Boardman **SECONDED**, and it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED** by roll call vote as follows: James Terry, Aye, KC Winslow, Aye, Andrew Boardman, Aye and Peter Wallis, Aye.

D-3: Director's Report

- **Personnel** – Melissa Simoncini has been promoted as the Environmental Services Program Administrator, dealing with trash, recycling and sustainability issues for Concord Public Works.
- **Public Park and Street Barrels** – Additional barrels and recycling containers are being placed and emptied with the increased volume of activity by residents and visitors.
- **Rte 2 Rotary – Water Trench Repair** – CPW worked with Mass Highway to restore road treatment with coordination of Highway and Water/Sewer.
- **Compost Site** – Site has been reopened so residents can bring leaves and brush on Saturdays 9-3 and Wednesdays 3-6. This service is greatly appreciated by residents.
- **Street Sweeping** – Street sweeping is being performed on every public roadway in Town. Weekly sweeping is also performed in the business districts.
- **Public Shade Tree Maintenance** – In addition to hazardous public shade tree removals and cleanup from severe thunderstorm damage on May 15, the Tree Warden and staff assisted Water/Sewer staff with tree removal at the Annursnac Reservoir.
- **Heywood Street Water Main Break** – Crew responded to this incident on May 22. The break was isolated quickly with no service interruption. Repair completed within four hours.
- **Lowell Road Pump Station** – Improvements underway including the installation of a new emergency generator.
- **Nagog Pond Watershed Trespassing/Fire** – A campfire created damage, which required staff to dismantle a fire pit and post additional protection signage.

D-4: Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Boardman mentioned a resident contacting him to compliment the park and tree staff for doing a great job with a hazardous tree removal.

The Commissioners expressed that the meeting time of 4 PM can be accommodated for the near future.

When asked about the progress of the Cambridge Turnpike Project, Town Engineer, Steve Dookran explained that the project should be done by late fall. A lot of progress has been made in spite of various delays.

D-5: Public Comments

None.

Commissioner Boardman **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 5:06 PM, Commissioner Wallis **SECONDED**, and it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED** by roll call vote as follows: James Terry, Aye, KC Winslow, Aye, Andrew Boardman, Aye and Peter Wallis, Aye.

ADJOURNED: 5:06 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved,

Anna R. Trout
Administrative & Special Projects Coordinator
Concord Public Works

James Terry
Public Works Commission