



OFFICE OF THE
WATER DEPARTMENT
TOWN HALL, 511 MAIN STREET
DUNSTABLE, MA 01827-1313
(978) 649-4514 FAX (978) 649-8893
waterdept@dunstable-ma.gov

Water Commission Minutes
Wednesday, July 20, 2022

Approved: 8/24/22

John O'Brien called the meeting to order at 6:08 pm
Other member(s) present: Mat Morton
Meeting held: At the Dunstable Town Hall, 511 Main Street, lower level
In attendance: Patrick Kerrigan, Acting Fire Chief; Sam Cavallaro, TI Sales

Reviewed & Signed:

- All Bills Outstanding Since Last Meeting
- All Payroll Outstanding Since Last Meeting

Department Operations Update

- *Fire Dept. Request for Equipment Placement*

Mr. Kerrigan began by providing some information relating to communications for EMS in town. The Fire Dept. would like to install a repeater on the top of the water tower. They're doing pretty good with existing equipment, but it doesn't provide as much coverage as placement of a repeater on a tower would. Groton also put a repeater on a cellphone tower near the Groton-Dunstable High School. This could be tied into the repeater on our water tower. Since we share our dispatch with Groton, it makes a lot of sense. Mr. O'Brien asked about the existing equipment. Mr. Kerrigan elaborated that it works, but the only repeater we have is in a person's house off of Forest Street that's at a relatively high elevation. This would be a huge improvement. Mr. O'Brien noted that the towers setup to be able to carry equipment on it as the Commission had hoped for cellphone antennas. Mr. Morton echoed that noting that it should be easy to setup, Fire Dept. would just need to get the equipment and the wiring for it. Mr. Kerrigan thanked the Commission for its willingness to permit the equipment's placement. They had explored a private cellphone tower in town, but it didn't have enough room high enough on the tower. It was agreed that certificates of insurance would be obtained for the company that will install it to ensure there is liability coverage for any accidents.

- *Proposal Regarding Water Meter Reading Equipment*

Mr. Cavallaro then introduced himself. He works for TI Sales. They sell several pieces of equipment, including some specialized meters. The beauty of the Neptune meters that TI Sales sells is their variable usage. He asked the Commission what its goals would be with any update of meters. Mr. Cavallaro responded by providing a sample that could be touched and looked at and he elaborated on what it can do. They can be cellular as well. Whether cellular, drive by, or integrated, they can do all of it. Mr. O'Brien noted that the current meters are read. Mr. Morton concurred describing his own meter and what it looks like. Mr. Cavallaro noted that the type described is compatible. Mr. O'Brien asked if there are significant price differences. Mr. Cavallaro responded it's about value. The barebones system is the cheapest and would involve more manpower. That's the type where you're manually reading. But you can also pay for cellular which sends data on the hour. This eliminates manpower and the need for reading meters. But it can work out pricewise as a wash with the lessening of manpower. As for the drive by option, you have a transceiver which you can drive

around by and the reads jump to it. So it makes the process from a manpower standpoint better, but less expensive than cellular. Mr. O'Brien felt cellular would likely be expensive. But drive by could be doable. Mr. Cavallaro noted that the other thing is that the town doesn't have to convert all of them. It could do some as cellular, some as drive by, and some as traditional read meters. Mr. Morton reminded our system is pretty small and compact. Drive by should be easy. It's basically Main Street, Pleasant Street, and Hillcrest Street. Mr. Cavallaro then provided some examples of how far the transponder works and noted it can read up to 8 simultaneously. Best practice is 1-2 reads at a time. But there is capacity there. Mr. Morton felt that it would likely, given the layout of houses on the routes, to be 2 at a time.

Mr. Cavallaro elaborated that the transponder can also pair with a smartphone. Most departments will tie them into one so that the employee doing the meter reads can easily see if a house isn't reading. Mr. O'Brien expressed the opinion that drive by is a step up from what the town is doing now. Mr. Cavallaro then elaborated on data noting how logging can be done and how the transponder can hold up to 96 days of data. This can help with concerns about misreads. Mr. O'Brien asked for TI Sales to provide a quote for the drive by option. He then asked if the existing meters can be upgraded with the technology or if the meters will all have to be replaced. Mr. Cavallaro responded that depending on the meter it should be doable to convert many. Further their software can link up with the towns billing software. So this can eliminate the need for administrative staff to enter manual reads. They also provide support staff for any issues with software connectivity. Mr. O'Brien noted we have identified a number of meter issues, most prominently the meter at Swallow-Union which has been under reading. Mr. Cavallaro responded that a lot of that happens due to age, so in many cases replacement is the best option. But they can help with testing it. He then noted there is one option for the nonresidential that is the ultrasonic meters. You don't need that for residential, but for some of the bigger users like a school it could be of benefit. It was agreed that TI Sales would reach out to the company that did the testing on that meter to better understand the existing meter and whether it should be considered for replacement as part of the quote. He then went over the way they study a system and determine the quote. It doesn't cost the town anything to quote that out. Mr. Cavallaro noted that the cellular is on First Net with AT&T under a 25 year deal. The Commission thanked him for attending and presenting information on these options.

Town of Pepperell Water Operator Services Review

Mr. O'Brien reported things are running smoothly. Still, as follow up to the last meeting. As long as things are good on that project and nothing has been dropped the Water Dept. is happy. Still Pepperell has opinions, and should they wish to express them the Commission had no issue with them doing so. It appears that is being done. Mr. Voelker reported that there was funds for the work on the Rt. 113 Infrastructure Project set aside, it was ARPA funds and about \$500,000. But now it appears that the true cost will be over \$600,000. Further, in order for the project to occur at all a decision will be needed to purchase the pipe. We're hoping for an earmark for the difference. Senator Kennedy has committed to seeking it in a bill that will be considered before the end of the summer. Mr. O'Brien also felt that Pepperell should be included in this discussion. Water Commission may need to send someone to the meeting to help with the decision making. In the meantime Mr. Morton agreed to reach out to Roads Commissioner Martin.

Next Meeting/Regular Meetings

The next meeting is expected to be scheduled for August 24, 2022.

Authorization of Accounts Payable & Payroll

The Commission considered and signed off on all of its outstanding bills. The Commission then reviewed and approved payment of the bills and also signed all outstanding department payroll. Mr.

O'Brien then briefly reported on all bills he'd reviewed and approved since the last meeting in his capacity as chair. He noted these are the usual ones, utilities, alarm, and the like.

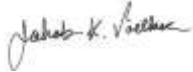
Minutes

The Commission considered the minutes from its meeting held on June 29, 2022. Seeing no reason to modify the minutes the Commission determined to accept the minute.

A motion was made by Mr. Morton to approve the minutes of June 29, 2022 as written. The motion was seconded by Mr. O'Brien and passed by majority vote.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Morton at 6:53 pm. The motion was seconded by Mr. O'Brien and passed by majority vote.

Respectfully submitted by

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jakob K. Voelker", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Jakob K. Voelker
Assistant Town Administrator