

BOARD OF SEWER COMMISSIONERS

5 MILLBURY STREET

AUBURN, MASSACHUSETTS 01501

MEETING MINUTES

March 4, 2021

The Auburn Board of Sewer Commissioners held a regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, March 4, 2021 remotely via <https://global.gotomeeting.com>

ITEM ONE-CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Healey called the meeting to order at 4:33 p.m.

Those in attendance remotely were:

Board Members:

Mr. Thomas J. Healey, Chairperson

Mr. Wayne Belec, Vice Chairperson

Department Staff:

Ms. Joanna Paquin, Sewer Superintendent

Mr. William Coyle, D.P.W. Director/Town Engineer

Mrs. JoAnne Donahue, Principal Clerk

Absent:

Mr. Mark E. LaPlante, Secretary

ITEM TWO –APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. January 28, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes: This item was tabled until the next meeting due to Mr. LaPlante’s absence from the present meeting, and Mr. Belec’s absence from the January 28, 2021 meeting.

ITEM THREE– NEW BUSINESS

A. Drainlayer License Applications: Vegas Builders

At the time of the meeting, the drainlayer license application for Vegas Builders was incomplete, and therefore review of the application was postponed until all of the necessary documentation is received.

B. Fiscal Year 2020 Sewer Use Abatement Applications: The Board reviewed and discussed the Fiscal Year 2020 abatement applications that had been received since the last meeting, which were

included in the meeting, document “FY2020 Sewer Use Abatement Applications 3-4-2021.”

1. 12 Sibley Street: The Board reviewed the abatement application for 12 Sibley Street, which was filed due to a well meter being installed on November 6, 2020. A reading was obtained after the well meter had been installed for three months, and the bill amount would be adjusted to \$216.80 per installment. Mr. Belec motioned to approve the sewer use bill abatement for 12 Sibley Street to \$216.80 per installment. Mr. Healey seconded and it was so voted.
2. 567 Southbridge Street: The Board then reviewed the abatement application for the Yoga Studio at 567 Southbridge Street, which was filed due water being used in humidifiers. After a brief discussion, the Board agreed that water used in humidifiers would not enter into the sewer system, however, there was no way to properly quantify this amount. It was agreed that the business owner would need to investigate whether it would be feasible for a plumber to connect the humidifiers to a dedicated water line that was metered in order to measure the actual amount being used on the humidifiers. The fiscal year 2020 abatement application could be revisited after some actual data was received which would substantiate the percentage of water being used in the humidifiers. A letter will be sent to the applicant explaining the Board’s decision.

C. Sewer Use Abatement Application Process: Ms. Paquin explained to the Board that due to open meeting laws it is necessary to list all of the abatement applications that will be discussed at the meetings on the Meeting Notices and Agendas. Abatements that are filed for the 20% discount are based on the resident’s qualification for a real estate tax exemption, which could in most cases be considered confidential or sensitive information. Ms. Paquin asked the Board if they would allow the 20% discount abatement applications to be processed without being discussed at the Sewer Commissioners meetings since the abatements are approved only after it has been verified that the resident qualifies for a real estate tax exemption. Mr. Belec motioned to waive the requirement for the Board of Sewer Commissioners to approve the abatements for residents that qualify for the 20% discount based on their eligibility for a real estate tax exemption. Mr. Healey seconded and it was so voted.

ITEM FOUR – I & I (INFLOW & INFILTRATION) SEWER REHABILITATION

A. The Board briefly reviewed the updated I&I Analysis reports prepared by Environmental Partners Group. Ms. Paquin stated that the final report had been submitted to DEP. She stated that the report showed the Town divided into twenty-three equal sections of sewer pipe, with each section prioritized by the amount of potential I&I. They are currently awaiting a proposal by Environmental Partners for further investigation of the first (highest priority) section. The Board also briefly discussed the recent sewer break that occurred in the area of 101 Southbridge Street, and that a sewer break occurred in the same area in 2016. Mr. Coyle stated that they plan on looking into replacing or lining this section of the pipe in the future.

ITEM FIVE - U.B.W.P.A.D./UPPER BLACKSTONE CLEAN WATER

A. Due to Mr. Belec’s absence from the last meeting, Mr. Coyle again advised the Board that given the current situation with COVID and the economic situation, the Upper Blackstone Board tried to minimize any increases to the member towns/cities, with Auburn’s increase being .9%. He stated that the overall budget was almost level-funded.

ITEM SIX - REVIEW OF BILL SCHEDULES

A. The Board reviewed the Sewer Division Bill Schedules dated February 1, February 4, February 11, February 18, March 1 and March 2, 2021, which had been processed since the last meeting.

ITEM SEVEN - NEW SEWER CONNECTIONS

A. The Board reviewed the updated sewer connection list as of March 4, 2021.

ITEM EIGHT – SEWER DIVISION/D.P.W. WORK LOG

A. The Board reviewed the updated Sewer Division/D.P.W. Work Log, which Ms. Paquin had prepared for their review.

ITEM NINE - BUDGET REVIEW

A. The Board reviewed copies of the updated monthly operating budget report for Fiscal Year 2021 through February 28, 2021, which was prepared for their review.

ITEM TEN – CAPITAL PLANNING

A. Update on Current Projects: Ms. Paquin informed the Board that the bid opening for both the Bancroft Street bridge sewer line replacement and the Pinrock Road bypass project was held on February 25, 2021. She stated that there were ten bidders for the Pinrock Road bypass project with the lowest bid being \$1.49 million. There were nine bidders for the Bancroft Street bridge replacement with the lowest bid being \$272,000. Ms. Paquin advised that they had just received the Recommendation to Award from the consultant, and that they will be moving forward with awarding the projects. In regard to the Pinrock Road project, Mr. Coyle advised that the Order of Takings for the easements would be voted on at one of the next two Board of Directors meetings at Upper Blackstone so that the project can move forward.

ITEM ELEVEN – OLD BUSINESS

A. I&I Fees: This item was tabled until the next meeting for discussion when all the Board members are present.

ITEM TWELVE – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

A. The next regular meeting was tentatively scheduled for Thursday, April 29, 2021 at 4:30 p.m.

ITEM THIRTEEN – ADJOURNMENT

A. The meeting was adjourned at 5:34 p.m.

DOCUMENTS:

The following documents were part of the Board of Sewer Commissioner's Meeting on March 4, 2021, and are maintained in the Sewer Division office:

- Agenda
- Minutes of the January 28, 2021 Regular Meeting
- FY2020 Sewer Use Abatement Applications received since January 28, 2021
- Environmental Partners Inflow & Infiltration Analysis Reports updated as of February 2021
- Copies of Bill Schedules dated February 1, February 4, February 11, February 18, March 1 and March 2, 2021
- Sewer Connection List as of March 4, 2021
- Sewer Division/DPW Work Log as of March 4, 2021
- Monthly Departmental Budget Report as of February 28, 2021
- Bid Canvass Documents for Bancroft Street Gravity Sewer & Pinrock Road Force Main dated 2/25/2021