

BOARD OF SEWER COMMISSIONERS

5 MILLBURY STREET

AUBURN, MASSACHUSETTS 01501

MEETING MINUTES

August 19, 2021

The Auburn Board of Sewer Commissioners held a regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, August 19, 2021 in the Conference Room at the DPW Office, 5 Millbury Street, and remotely via <https://global.gotomeeting.com>

ITEM ONE-CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Healey called the meeting to order at 4:38 p.m.

Those in attendance were:

Board Members:

Mr. Thomas J. Healey, Chairperson
Mr. Wayne Belec, Vice Chairperson
Mr. Mark LaPlante, Secretary

Department Staff:

Ms. Joanna Paquin, Sewer Superintendent
Mrs. JoAnne Donahue, Principal Clerk

Guests:

Mr. Clay Williams, Eastland Partners, Inc.
Mr. Stephen O'Connell, Turning Point Engineering

ITEM TWO –APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. May 20, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes: The Board reviewed the minutes of the May 20, 2021 Regular meeting. After review, it was noticed that Mr. LaPlante's title was listed as Vice Chairperson instead of Secretary. The minutes will be amended to include Mr. LaPlante's title as Secretary instead of Vice Chairperson. Mr. Belec motioned to approve the minutes of the May 20, 2021 regular meeting as amended. Mr. LaPlante seconded, Mr. Healey voted in favor and it was so voted.

ITEM THREE– NEW BUSINESS

A. Board Reorganization: (This item was handled out of order after Item 3E). The Board agreed to keep the current organization. Mr. Belec motioned to have Mr. Healey remain as Chairperson, Mr. Belec as Vice Chairperson, and Mr. LaPlante as Secretary. Mr. LaPlante seconded, Mr. Healey voted in favor and it was so voted.

B. Sewer Superintendent Position – Ms. Paquin stated that since Mr. Coyle left the DPW, the Board of Selectmen voted to have her fill the DPW Director position. She stated that she is currently still acting Sewer Superintendent, but that the Sewer Superintendent position was advertised and they are currently interviewing candidates for that position. The Board expressed their concern about requiring the candidates to have an engineering degree. Ms. Paquin explained that the engineering degree was required due to the position including duties as the Assistant DPW Director.

C. Fiscal Year 2020 Sewer Use Abatement Applications:

1. 26 Laurel Street – postponed until the next meeting due to current meter reading not being received.

2. 13 Camden Drive – Abatement filed due to well meter being installed. Mr. Belec motioned to approve the fiscal year 2020 abatement application for 13 Camden Drive in the amount of \$685.18 for each installment. Mr. LaPlante seconded, Mr. Healey voted in favor and it was so voted.

3. 9 Whitetail Run – Abatement filed due to well meter being installed. Mr. Belec motioned to approve the fiscal year 2020 abatement application of 9 Whitetail Run in the amount of \$576.61 for each installment. Mr. LaPlante seconded, Mr. Healey voted in favor and it was so voted.

4. 3 Whitetail Run – Abatement filed due to well meter being installed; initial meter readings indicated high usage which would have resulted in a higher sewer bill when prorated. A toilet leak was found and repaired; current meter readings that were submitted were much lower. The Board agreed that they could not approve an abatement for the Fiscal Year 2020 bill due to the high water usage amounts from the toilet leak. Mr. Belec motioned to deny the fiscal year 2020 abatement application for 3 Whitetail Run. Mr. LaPlante seconded, Mr. Healey voted in favor and it was so voted.

5. 60 Pinehurst Avenue – The Board reviewed the abatement application and supporting documents for 60 Pinehurst Avenue, which had been filed based on the applicant’s letter stating that the water meter was not connected and that there had been no water usage since 2018. After review of the information provided by the applicant and by Auburn Water District, the Board agreed that a letter should be sent to the applicant explaining that they would reconsider the fiscal year 2020 abatement application at their next meeting, if the water meter is been removed and it is confirmed that there was no actual water usage for the property during the billing period.

D. Drainlayer License Applications: Salvidio Construction, Inc.

This item was postponed until the next meeting due to all of the supporting documents not being provided by the applicant.

E. 190 Washington Street – Vote of Support (this item was handled out of order after Item 2):

Mr. Stephen O’Connell from Turning Point Engineering, and Mr. Clay Williams from Eastland Partners, Inc. were present at the meeting to discuss a request for a sewer easement on land owned by the

Town of Auburn for an approved industrial park subdivision at 190 Washington Street. Mr. O’Connell explained that there was no sewer in the subdivision road and that easement would allow the sewer to be connected at an existing manhole on the Town owned property. After a brief discussion, Mr. Belec motioned to support the granting of the sewer easement. Mr. LaPlante seconded, Mr. Healey voted in favor and it was so voted. Mr. Williams and Mr. O’Connell thanked the Board and exited the meeting at 4:54 p.m.

F. FY2021 Sewer Use Billing Rates – The Board reviewed a worksheet that Ms. Paquin had prepared in regard to the charging of I&I fees, which also included sewer rate comparisons for

surrounding towns. Mr. Healey mentioned that in the past they typically looked at potential expenses that would drive up the operating budget when determining whether to have a rate increase. Ms. Paquin mentioned that she had spoken with Mr. Kazanovicz, Chief Financial Officer, and that as of June 30th the Retained Earnings balance was at \$1.7 million, increasing by about \$219,000.00 from last year. After a brief discussion, the Board agreed that the rates should remain the same for the Fiscal Year 2021 sewer use bills: \$180.00 minimum charge for up to 5,000 c.f. of water per unit, and \$8.32 for usage over 5,000 cubic feet of water per unit. Mr. Belec motioned to maintain the current sewer billing rate structure for fiscal year 2021. Mr. LaPlante seconded, Mr. Healey voted in favor and it was so voted.

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

A. Ms. Paquin informed the Board that she is still working with Environmental Partners to get a contract underway but that it had been delayed due to procurement questions. Mr. Healey asked Ms. Paquin if she should have an update for the next meeting as far as what milestones need to be met to satisfy DEP consent order requirements.

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

A. Ms. Paquin stated that she was now the Town's representative to the Upper Blackstone and had been attending the meetings since Mr. Coyle's departure. She stated that there was little to report from the meetings other than discussions about the flooding and high flows that have been happening with the recent heavy rainfall.

ITEM SIX - REVIEW OF BILL SCHEDULES

A. The Board reviewed the Sewer Division Bill Schedules for Fiscal Year 2021 and Fiscal Year 2022 which had been processed since the last meeting.

ITEM SEVEN - NEW SEWER CONNECTIONS

A. The Board reviewed the updated sewer connection list for Fiscal Year 2021 through June 30, 2021 and for Fiscal Year 2022 through August 19, 2021.

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

A. Ms. Paquin stated that she has not been able to update the work log recently due to all of the recent changes in personnel. She advised the Board that two Sewer Division employees had resigned and that the Highway Division employees had been filling in as needed.

ITEM NINE - BUDGET REVIEW

A. The Board reviewed copies of the updated monthly operating budget report for Fiscal Year 2021 through June 30, 2021. Since the Chief Financial Officer had not yet closed out the fiscal year, the first Fiscal Year 2022 budget report will not be available until the next meeting.

ITEM TEN – CAPITAL PLANNING

A. Update on Current Projects: Ms. Paquin stated that in regard to both the Pinrock Pump Station Bypass Force Main and the Bancroft Street Bridge Sewer Line Replacement project, the delay in delivery of materials has caused the start of construction on both projects to continue to be delayed as well.

ITEM ELEVEN – OLD BUSINESS

A. I&I Fees: The Board reviewed the Sewer Fee comparison worksheet that Ms. Paquin had prepared showing the sewer fees charged in surrounding Towns, and also gave the Board a copy of page 5 and 6 of Section II of the Sewer Regulations addressing I&I fees. Mr. Healey stated that they would like to have a chance to review the information that Ms. Paquin had provided, and then discuss it in detail at the next meeting.

ITEM TWELVE – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

A. The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for Thursday September 23, 2021, with an alternate date of Thursday, October 21, 2021 if the September date does not work out.

ITEM THIRTEEN – ADJOURNMENT

A. The meeting was adjourned at 6:22 p.m.

DOCUMENTS:

The following documents were part of the Board of Sewer Commissioner's Meeting on August 19, 2021, and are maintained in the Sewer Division office:

- Agenda
- Minutes of the May 20, 2021 Regular Meeting
- FY2020 Sewer Use Abatement Application and documents for 26 Laurel Street, 13 Camden Drive, 9 Whitetail Run, 3 Whitetail Run and 60 Pinehurst Avenue
- Copies of Bill Schedules dated May 21, June 3, June 22, June 28, and June 30, 2021 for Fiscal Year 2021, and copies of Bill Schedules dated June 14, July 19, August 2, and August 16, 2021 for Fiscal Year 2022
- Monthly Departmental Budget Report for Fiscal Year 2021 as of June 30, 2021
- Page 5 & 6 of Section II of the Town of Auburn Sewer Regulations
- Sewer Fee Comparison