



TOWN OF LINCOLN

WATER DEPARTMENT

MIDDLESEX COUNTY

MASSACHUSETTS

TOWN OF LINCOLN
WATER DEPARTMENT
16 Lincoln Road
Lincoln, MA 01773-6353
Phone: 781-259-8997

Water Commissioners Meeting

January 7, 2020

9:00 AM

Town Hall, Donaldson Room, 16 Lincoln Road

Attendees:

Ruth Ann Hendrickson, Chairman
Jennifer Glass, Commissioner
Michelle Barnes, Commissioner
Tim Higgins, Town Administrator
Colleen Wilkins, Finance Director
Tom Sander, FinCom
MaryBeth Wisser, Water Superintendent
Ryan Neyland, Vice President at Tata & Howard

Dr. Steven Kanner, 12 Bypass Road
Louise Bergeron and Ari Kurtz, Co-Chairs Agriculture Commission
Peter Lowry Manager Codman Farm

Absent

Monica Kacprzyk, Administrative Assistant
Jim Hutchinson, FinCom

Chairman Hendrickson called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM.

Appointment: 7 Forrester Ave Vincent Mula appealing abatement request decision – vote expected: Did not discuss. The Board tabled until the February 4, 2020 meeting. Mr. Mula was unable to attend.

Appointment: 12 Bypass Road, Dr. Steven Kanner to discuss high water bill: Superintendent Wisser explained to the Board that Dr. Kanner received a high water bill due to normal summer irrigation of his orchard and coincidentally a leak in his irrigation system; he applied for abatement. Due to an administrative error, the water was charged according to the normal tier pricing for residential water, but Dr. Kanner had been receiving an agricultural rate at tier 1, so the water use should have been charged at tier one since the agricultural rates were still in force. An abatement for the overpayment has already been applied to the account. Dr. Kanner explained that removing the lower water rates for agriculture would cripple his farming. He inquired if there is another solution.

Appointment: Ari Kurtz, co-chair of the Agriculture Commission and Louise Bergeron to discuss agricultural water rates: Mr. Kurtz wanted to discuss with the Board the water rate change voted at the June 12, 2019 Water Board meeting to eliminate the Agricultural water rates that were in effect since 2013. Mr. Kurtz further explained that Agricultural (AG) Commission met on January 2, 2020 to review the water usage rate change and the importance of affordable water for the livelihood of farmers. Mr. Kurtz expressed disappointment for the lack of outreach from the Department. Mr. Kurtz stated it was not cost effective to drill well as a well would cost as much as \$20,000 to install with no guarantee of sufficient water. The AG Commission would welcome the opportunity to work with the Board to find some alternatives. The AG Commission would like the following questions answered

- How does the AG rate affect water usage and water department finances?

- How much do farmers use over the course of an entire year compared to residential use?
- Who qualified for the AG rates that were temporarily established on March 8, 2017?
- What type of farm registration was required to be eligible for the AG rate and was this officially announced to local farmers
- What steps to take to qualify?

Commissioner Hendrickson explained that there had been no formal policy in the past, just informal arrangements by former Superintendent Greg Woods. The Commissioners are open to re-considering the policy, but asks that the Ag Community help provide information about current farms in Lincoln and how much water they use.

The Board agreed to continue discussions at the January 21, 2020 Rate Meeting and the February 4, 2020 monthly Water Board meeting. Mr. Kurtz requested that members of the agricultural community be notified whenever a change in agricultural rates will be discussed. Commissioner Barnes will work with Superintendent Wisner to collect information to present to the Board.

Discuss the FY21 Capital – vote expected: The Board discussed the quote on the security cameras and asked where the cameras were going to be installed. Superintendent Wisner informed the Board that cameras would be installed on the exterior of the Water plant, the pump station and the Tower Road Well and also in the interior of the water plant, the process room only, and the interior of the raw water pump room at the pump station.

The Board then inquired about the generator evaluation at the water plant and asked for further clarification as to what the cost included. Mr. Neyland informed the Board that the cost was to evaluate if a generator was sized correctly to include the systems that are tied in for backup power during a power outage and whether the current wiring supported controlling the acid wash function during a power outage. The report would make recommendations to the Board for consideration at a later date.

Tim Higgins asked for clarification on the funding source for the items on the FY21 capital budget. The generator wiring evaluation and the cameras would be funded from retained earnings while the neutralization system upgrade and the PLC upgrade would be bonded. Colleen would be able to roll the new bonding into the borrowing when the time comes to permanently borrow. Colleen Wilkins explained the Board has a retained earnings policy. The warrant article would contain one table that explained where the funding would be coming from retained earnings or bonding. A new vote would be needed at the spring 2020 Town meeting for the new Bond

Motion made by Commissioner Glass to approve the FY21 Capital request in the amount of \$250,000 as presented, seconded by Commissioner Barnes. Approved unanimously.

Discuss Water Rates: The previous rate study was based on 2018 usage. In 2019 Superintendent Wisner discovered approximately 100 account discrepancies. Although the account issues have been resolved, the data was skewed in 2019. Colleen Wilkins stated she would be able to supply FY20 data which would give us a better understanding of where we are today. The Commission would like to get the raw data about each customer’s usage and charge exported into an Excel spreadsheet on a quarterly basis. Mr. Neyland thought it should be possible to get that directly from Neptune; Ms. Wisner agreed to investigate.

Discuss LWD Rules and Regulations: No discussion. Superintendent Wisner was instructed to place a copy of the proposed new LWD Rules and Regulations in the drop box for ease of access for everyone; if possible the version that shows the changes from the current regulations published on the WD web site. The goal is to vote on all the updates at the February 4, 2020 meeting

Public Hearing set a date – vote expected: The Board set the rate change public hearing date for February 4, 2020 in the Donaldson Room Town Hall 16 Lincoln Rd. Superintendent Wisner will email the draft notice to Chairman Hendrickson

before posting post the notice in the newspaper and Water Department webpage. Chairman Hendrickson will post the notice on Lincoln Talks.

Motion made by Commissioner Glass to set the public hearing date of February 4, 2020 for the proposed new water rates, seconded by Commissioner Barnes. Approved unanimously.

Discuss the warrants for the March TM: Discussed above during the FY21 Capital Plan.

Update on the staffing plan: Tim Higgins informed the Board that Plant Manager, Gary Tuck started on December 16, 2019. The Town is grateful for all the temporary part time help Superintendent Wisser brought in. We have Contract Operations two days per week with Weston and Sampson. We still have three full time vacancies and are advertising on all the normal webpages. Superintendent Wisser informed the Board that she and Mr. Tuck interviewed a candidate for one of the vacancies on January 3rd. Mr. Higgins stated he is keeping the DEP up to date on the progress.

Mr. Higgins also informed the Board that he had discussions with a representative from the Minuteman School. They offer course work in the sciences and water and this could lead to a pipeline for staff in the tight labor market for water operators.

Superintendent Wisser asked the Board if they would be willing to temporarily compensate her for being on call as well as the call out rate for responding to emergencies. Mr. Higgins informed the Board he would research the matter and get back to the Board at the February 4, 2020 meeting.

Approve the minutes of November 12, 2019 - vote expected: The Board reviewed and approved the minutes as amended for the November 12, 2019 meeting. Motion made by Commissioner Glass, seconded by Commissioner Barnes. Approved unanimously.

Approve the minutes of December 9, 2019 – vote expected: The Board reviewed and approved the minutes as written for the December 9, 2019 meeting. Motion made by Commissioner Barnes, seconded by Commissioner Glass. Approved unanimously.

Approve the minutes of December 10, 2019 – vote expected: The Board reviewed and approved the minutes as amended for the December 10, 2019 meeting. Motion made by Commissioner Glass, seconded by Commissioner Barnes. Approved unanimously.

Approve the minutes of October 29, 2019 – vote expected: The Board reviewed and approved the minutes as amended for the October 29, 2019 meeting. Motion made by Commissioner Glass, seconded by Commissioner Barnes. Approved unanimously.

Discuss the insert for the Annual Town *Meeting Report– vote expected:** Motion made by Commissioner Glass to approve the 2019 Water Department insert for the Annual Town report as amended at the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Barnes. Approved unanimously.

Discuss draft Annual Consumer confidence report: Superintendent Wisser presented the 2019 Annual Consumer Confidence Report to the Board to review and comment on in preparation of the February 4, 2020 meeting. Superintendent Wisser would like to have a Board vote by the March 2020 meeting.

Discuss the Bill insert – vote expected: Superintendent Wisser informed the Board that the department is in violation with the disinfection by products rule and will need to do a public notification. This is a Tier 2 violation and requires public notice. The insert will be two sided. One side will contain the Public Notice the other side will contain information on the abatement policy, PFAS and important links to various water department information.

Motion made by Commissioner Glass to approve and include the bill insert as written in the Q3 water bills, seconded by Commissioner Barnes. Approved unanimously.

Other Business:

Discuss Security Cameras: Discussed above during the FY21 discussion.

Discuss and Sign the Contract with Tata and Howard for Engineering Services for the Water Treatment Plant Pilot Testing Contract No. 2642: This contract includes the pilot testing (April and May) and the full-scale demonstration of pilot coagulation testing (June, July). If the testing is positive, most of the equipment used for testing will become part of the permanent installation. Motion made by Commissioner Glass to sign the Contract with Tata and Howard for Engineering Services for the Water Treatment Plant Pilot Testing Contract No. 2642, seconded by Commissioner Barnes. Approved unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:38 AM. The next meeting of the Water Commissioners is scheduled for Tuesday January 21, 2020 dedicated to discussing rate changes, followed by the regular monthly meeting Tuesday, February 4, 2020 both scheduled for 9AM at Town Hall in the Donaldson Room, 16 Lincoln Road.

Respectfully submitted,

MaryBeth Wisner
Water Superintendent