



TOWN OF LINCOLN

WATER DEPARTMENT

MIDDLESEX COUNTY

MASSACHUSETTS

TOWN OF LINCOLN
WATER DEPARTMENT
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Water Commissioners Meeting

January 16, 2019

4:00 p.m.

Town Hall Donaldson Room, 16 Lincoln Road

Attendees: Packy Lawler, Chairman
Ruth Ann Hendrickson, Water Commissioner (arrived at 4:57pm)
Bob Antia, Water Commissioner

MaryBeth Wiser, Superintendent
Karen Finelli, Administrative Assistant
Colleen Wilkins, Finance Director
Thomas Sander, Finance Committee
Heather Ring, Resident

Chairman Lawler called the meeting to order at 4:16 pm.

Approve Minutes of the January 10, 2019 Meeting:

Motion made by Commissioner Hendrickson, Second by Chairman Lawler to approve the January 10, 2019 minutes as modified. Motion passed (2-0-1) in favor: (2) Lawler and Hendrickson, (1) Antia, abstained due to absence.

Discuss the FY20 Operating Budget:

Chairman Lawler stated the Board came to a consensus at the January 10, 2019 meeting to approve \$1,373,203.91 as the preferred FY20 operating budget. He recapped the various comparisons and analysis the Board made with respect to implementing proposed percentages for each of the water level tiers and noted the comparisons as to how these proposed changes impacted the operating budget. Chairman Lawler added the goal is to consider dedicating a maximum of \$100,000 of retained earnings each year. To help offset operating costs for 4 years and maintain a minimum balance of \$500,000 in retained earnings. He added that the term of the bonds for the Water Treatment Plant will expire in 4 years thereby, reducing expenses and assisting the Board with future budgeting requirements.

Motion made by Commissioner Antia, Second by Commissioner Hendrickson to approve the FY20 operating budget of \$1,373,203.91. The motion passed, all in favor.

Discuss the FY20 Capital Budget:

The Board discussed various line items in the capital budget; sanitary survey recommendations, future road repairs, engineering services as well as estimated costs for each of these items. The DEP is recommending that the LWD exercise the town's gate valves annually. The Board had an extensive discussion regarding the costs associated with hiring an outside contractor versus having the current water department employees conduct the work. Ms. Wiser stated that her department doesn't have the available resources to dedicate to exercising the town's gate valves annually, especially since one of her employees recently retired which will leave the current water department short staffed. She added, this task usually requires two people as well as possibly requiring a

police detail and that once you exercise the gate valves, deficiencies may be detected which will require repairs. The Commissioners deleted this item from the budget and requested more information on the actual requirement by the state.

The Board also discussed and considered the current state of the aging pipe infrastructure which will require future repairs as well as the number of water leaks and breaks over the past year. Also, the resources required to repair items and the associated costs.

Motion made by Commissioner Hendrickson, Second by Commissioner Antia to approve as of January 16, 2019, the capital budget. Motion passed, all in favor.

Motion made by Chairman Lawler, Second by Commissioner Antia to amend the motion to include \$1,010,000 for the capital budget which will be bonded and allocate \$155,000 from retained earnings. Also, approval of expenditures for exercising of gate valves will be determined at a later date. The motion passed, all in favor.

Discuss Water Rates:

The Board considered implementing a 33% increase for all water level tiers; however, it was a consensus of the Board to adopt a 25% rate increase for all water level tiers. Also, noted was that water rates haven't been increased since 2014.

Mr. Sander stated town meeting will be sensitive to rate changes since real estate taxes are expected to increase and recommended that the Board implement the same percentage increase for each of the tier water level users.

A motion made by Commissioner Antia, Second by Commissioner Hendrickson to accept a rate increase of 25% per water level tier as well as to increase the base charge per water meter from \$30.00 to \$35.00 per quarter. The motion passed, all in favor.

New Quarterly Rates effective January 1, 2019

Tier One	0-20,000 gallons	\$5.08 Per 1000 gal.
Tier Two	20,001-40,000 gallons	\$10.71 Per 1000 gal.
Tier Three	40,001 gallons and over	\$25.03 Per 1000 gal.
Base Charge	per water meter	\$35.00

Discuss Warrant Articles:

The Board discussed warrant article #1, Mass DEP 2018 Sanitary Survey regulatory compliance and acknowledged that Mr. Thomas Mahin from the DEP is awaiting a response to his letter dated December 7, 2018. An extension until January 22, 2019 was granted by the DEP to provide a response to Mr. Mahin's letter. The Board had an extensive discussion pertaining to the Sanitary Survey, section C Mass DEP's recommendation to conduct annual valve exercising and associated costs. Ms. Wisner stated once you exercise the gate valves, deficiencies may be detected which will require repairs. She added her current staff is too small to check and exercise all gate valves annually in town and a contractor would need to be hired if it were to be

done annually. This discussion having revealed that annual exercising of all gate valves is not a regulatory requirement, Ms. Wisner was directed to develop a program with minimal cost to the department.

Motion made by Commissioner Hendrickson, Second by Commissioner Antia to table any further discussion of the proposed warrant articles for a future meeting. The motion passed, all in favor.

Review and Approve Revised Water Plant Manager Job Description:

The Board reviewed the proposed revised Water Plant Manager job description submitted by Ms. Wisner. Commissioner Hendrickson requested further explanation of “receive and field telephone calls” listed in the duties section of the job description. Ms. Wisner responded general water department phone calls will be directed to the administrative assistant; however, some calls may pertain to specific water issues in which the Water Plant Manager will be required to respond. Ms. Wisner added the phone lines will need to be addressed to ensure they are directed to the appropriate office.

Motion made by Commissioner Hendrickson, Second by Commissioner Antia to accept the job description of Water Plant Manager as written, all in favor.

Chairman Lawler asked how the Water Plant will be managed once Ms. Clary, the current Water Plant Manager retires. Ms. Wisner responded that each of the current water operators will split coverage each week and the employee on call will work in the water treatment plant. She added the DEP would not allow her to be the primary contact in the water plant since she is the current superintendent. Also, she will need to notify the DEP that the department will be short staffed and inquire as to the requirements to continue operation of the water treatment plant.

Discuss the draft insert for the Annual Town Report:

The Board had a brief discussion pertaining to proposed amendments as well as additional wording for further clarification and understanding of the town report.

Motion made by Commissioner Hendrickson, Second by Commissioner Antia to authorize Chairman Lawler to finalize the Water Department’s Annual Town Report. The motion passed, all in favor.

Discuss the Quarterly Bill Insert:

Motion made by Commissioner Hendrickson, Second by Commissioner Antia to authorize Chairman Lawler to finalize items included in the quarterly bill insert. The motion passed, all in favor.

Discuss the 2018 Mass DEP Sanitary Survey Report:

The Board discussed Ms. Wisner’s draft response to the DEP, due on January 22, 2019. Mr. Sander recommended that the Board update the approved budget totals. The Board requested that Ms. Wisner send the draft response to each member of the Board and they will provide edits independently back to her by noon time on Friday, January 18, 2019.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 6:09pm. Motion made by Commissioner Antia, Second by Commissioner Hendrickson, all in favor.

The next meeting of the Water Commissioners is scheduled for February 13, 2019 at 4:00pm at Town Offices in the Donaldson Room, 16 Lincoln Road.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Finelli
Administrative Assistant