



# TOWN OF LINCOLN

WATER DEPARTMENT

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MIDDLESEX COUNTY  
MASSACHUSETTS

## Water Commissioners Meeting

March 10, 2020, 8:00 AM  
Town Hall, Donaldson Room, 16 Lincoln Road

### Attendees:

Ruth Ann Hendrickson, Chairman  
Jennifer Glass, Commissioner  
Michelle Barnes, Commissioner  
Michael Dolan, IT Director  
Jim Hutchinson, FinCom  
Tom Sander, FinCom  
MaryBeth Wisner, Water Superintendent  
Monica Kacprzyk, Administrative Assistant

Chairman Hendrickson called the meeting to order at 8:02 AM.

### 1. Approve the minutes of March 3, 2020 – vote expected

Commissioner Glass made a motion to approve the minutes for the March 3, 2020 meeting as amended. Commissioner Barnes seconded the motion. Voted: all in favor.

### 2. Approve the minutes of February 25, 2020 – vote expected

The Water Commissioners tabled the February 25, 2020 meeting minutes review and approval for the next meeting.

### 3. Appointment: Michael Dolan to discuss department phone system and radio communication upgrade projects

Mr. Dolan provided an update on recent changes with the department phone system. He explained that all department phone lines were on old copper Verizon lines that had ongoing disconnection issues due to water damage. He added that it was unclear which phone line the alarm system would call out on. Mr. Dolan said that he met with a Verizon technician, who explained that the best long term solution would be changing the phone lines to Fios. Mr. Dolan knew that they couldn't switch to Fios if the Lexington Alarm system rang in two different places, so he needed to separate the lines first. Eventually he switched the phone lines to Fios and the alarm system was temporarily down, which required operators to be onsite at the water treatment plant 24/7. He expressed his frustration with Verizon customer service.

Mr. Hutchinson asked why the main office number ending in 8997 could no longer be used. Mr. Dolan responded that he wanted to avoid changing the main office number, but he couldn't port the 8997 to the Windstream carrier at town hall. He explained that he call-forwarded the old 8997 line to the new 2669 line. Mr. Hutchinson recommended keeping the 8997 call-forwarding for one year until customers get accustomed to using the new number. Mr. Dolan added that the alarm system is now going out on the 1329 line but he needs to make sure the proper addresses are registered. Ms. Glass asked if there's a way to know how many times call-forwarding is used on 8997. Mr. Dolan responded that he will ask

Verizon for a report on that. Mr. Sander recommended adding a recorded message saying that the 8997 phone line is no longer active for anyone that calls the old number.

Next, Mr. Hutchinson asked if Mr. Dolan plans to replace radio links with fiber. Mr. Dolan said he's in discussions with R.E. Erickson about the alarm communications going out through radio and using internet as a back-up in the case of an outage. He added that the switch over is not automatic and someone would need to do a manual changeover if there was a radio outage. Mr. Dolan said he would need to speak to Lexington Alarm to see if the alarms could be set up to dial out on either the phone or internet panels depending on what's available. Ms. Wisner commented that she's not sure which alarms are sent to operators directly and which are sent to Lexington Alarm. She added that the supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system is antiquated and needs to be replaced. Mr. Hutchinson requested to meet with Matt from R.E. Erickson at the water treatment plant to get a better understanding of the SCADA situation. Ms. Wisner recommended meeting with Gary Tuck, the water treatment plant manager, and she offered to send an email to Mr. Hutchinson and the group regarding a time and date to meet.

Mr. Dolan noted that the SCADA system is not correctly set up on the radio/internet system, and he would need to call in a vendor to fix it. Ms. Wisner added that communications failed at the Tower Road well in May 2019 and they needed to turn the well off for a month. She added that she will look over the drinking water regulations in regards to policies around redundant systems. Mr. Dolan commented that it would cost about \$150/month to have an internet line back-up at the Tower Road well. Ms. Hendrickson emphasized that the need for consistent communication between the pressure reservoir and water treatment plant. Mr. Dolan concluded that he would follow-up about the voice recording on 8997 and talk to the Lexington Alarm about the alarm system calling out on a different communication line.

#### **4. Discuss Annual Consumer Confidence report - vote expected**

On the first page of the Annual Consumer Confidence report draft, Commissioner Barnes edited the last sentence of the second paragraph to read, "The distribution system consists of the Bedford Road..." In addition, Commissioner Glass recommended more formatting consistency on the first page and Superintendent Wisner agreed to take the bullets out. On the second page, both Ms. Barnes and Ms. Glass pointed out minor grammatical errors, and Ms. Glass added the following sentence to the third paragraph: "In addition to the tier rate increases, the base charge is now \$50/unit. A unit is defined as..." Mr. Sander and Mr. Hutchinson edited this sentence to read "\$50/quarter/meter or dwelling." Ms. Glass agreed to rework this sentence and send it to the Superintendent Wisner. Ms. Barnes and Mr. Hutchinson commented on the new quarterly rates table and recommended that the agricultural, irrigation, municipal, and condominium rate rows say "all usage levels" in the second column. Mr. Hutchinson recommended just writing \$50 for the base charge in the table.

On the fourth page, Ms. Barnes asked if there was no detection of Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). Ms. Wisner clarified that PFAS tested as none detected, not absolute zero. On the fifth page, Mr. Hutchinson asked about the unaccounted-for water (UAW) number and Ms. Wisner responded that the UAW is not yet confirmed. Ms. Barnes recommended adding a percent symbol once the number is updated in the document. In the section under water treatment, Ms. Hendrickson and Ms. Barnes pointed out some minor grammatical and formatting errors, and Ms. Barnes recommended adding an introductory sentence to the monitoring and reporting violations section. Ms. Barnes recommended moving "We routinely monitor our water system for the presence of drinking water contaminants" to the top of the section, and Mr. Sander recommended adding "our water system violated two drinking water standards and was found in non-compliance."

On the sixth to eighth page, Ms. Barnes and Ms. Glass pointed a few formatting and grammatical errors. On the eighth page, Ms. Barnes recommended highlighting the total trihalomethanes (TTHM) row so it stands out as a violation. Ms. Barnes also asked why the PFAS info was not included in the table and Ms. Wisner responded that the table only shows data for items that were detected. Chairman Hendrickson recommended editing the introductory text to include "results below detectable limits are not reported in this table."

The Water Commissioners tabled the approval of the Annual Consumer Confidence report for the next meeting.

#### **5. Discuss LWD Rules and Regulations – vote expected**

The Water Commissioners tabled the approval of the Lincoln Water Department (LWD) Rules and Regulations for the April 7, 2020 meeting.

**6. Q3 FY20 Water Bill insert – vote expected**

The Water Commissioners noted a few formatting and grammatical errors in the Q3 FY20 water bill insert draft. Commissioner Glass made a motion to approve the Q3 FY20 water bill insert as amended. Commissioner Barnes seconded the motion. Voted: all in favor.

**7. Drought Update- discuss annual water use restrictions - vote expected**

Commissioner Barnes and Chairman Hendrickson noted a few errors in the Q3 FY20 water bill insert draft, including updating the Water Department phone number and correcting the fine amount to match the rules and regulations. Commissioner Glass made a motion to approve the mandatory outdoor water restriction notice as amended. Commissioner Barnes seconded the motion. Voted: all in favor.

**8. Approve the 2020 hydrant flushing notice – vote expected**

Commissioner Barnes and Mr. Sander noted a few formatting and grammatical errors in the 2020 hydrant flushing notice draft. Commissioner Glass made a motion to approve the 2020 hydrant flushing notice as amended. Commissioner Barnes seconded the motion. Voted: all in favor.

**9. Discuss Unaccounted for Water (UAW)**

Superintendent Wisner distributed the UAW data to the group. The Water Commissioners tabled the discussion of UAW for the March 25, 2020 meeting.

**10. Update on programming the SCADA system**

Superintendent Wisner presented the \$400,000 estimate from Tata & Howard to reprogram the SCADA system at the water treatment plant. Mr. Hutchinson recommended going out to bid for estimates from other vendors. Ms. Wisner strongly recommended standardizing with one integrator to ensure consistency and continuity of the work already done. Mr. Hutchinson commented that he'd like to know what portion of the \$400,000 is for Tata & Howard's services. Commissioner Barnes stated that a risk-management price tag for upgrading the SCADA system of \$150,000 was materially different from \$400,000 and that going deeper along the path of fixing the existing WTP is more likely to rule out alternative long-run options such as MWRA water, at least for the next WTP life-cycle of seven years or so. Commissioner Glass said that the commissioners need a better sense of the itemized costs before presenting this budget request at town meeting. Mr. Hutchinson agreed and added that the Commissioners need to be confident and well-informed in their budget requests to increase their credibility. Chairman Hendrickson recommended scheduling another meeting before town meeting on Wednesday, March 25th from 9-11am to discuss the proposal. Superintendent Wisner said that she would invite Ryan Neyland from Tata & Howard to participate in the meeting.

**11. Approve the March 2020 ATM warrant articles – vote expected**

The Water Commissioners tabled the approval of the March 2020 Annual Town Meeting warrant articles for the next meeting.

**Discuss the presentations for the Fin Comm and the Annual Town Meeting**

To begin, Chairman Hendrickson presented her draft presentation for the Annual Town Meeting. The Water Commissioners recommended including bullets to highlight why the \$1.84 million operating budget is so high and

mention the increased wages to attract qualified staff. Mr. Sander and Ms. Barnes recommended including a budget growth comparison of FY20 and FY21.

Ms. Hendrickson proceeded to present her draft presentation for the Finance Committee (FinComm) meeting. Mr. Sander recommended changing the title of the fifth slide originally titled "Status November 2019" to "Major Budget Drivers." Mr. Hutchinson recommended creating back-up slides for the fifth slide. Ms. Barnes recommended emphasizing the requirements to increase the budget vs. discretionary items. Next, Mr. Sander recommended doing a budget growth comparison of all fiscal years from 2017-2021 instead of just 2017, 2018, and 2021. Ms. Barnes recommended annualizing percent change so it's spread out over the five years. She also emphasized the need for analyzing the more recent changes and/or the year-over-year changes. Mr. Hutchinson added a recommendation to feature annualized growth vs. total growth and he offered to help Ms. Hendrickson generate this data. He also recommended showing the 30% increase of the operating budget for FY21.

Next, Mr. Sander asked Ms. Hendrickson at what point in the fiscal year was the retained earnings balance calculated. Ms. Hendrickson responded that she would ask Ms. Wilkins for this information. Ms. Glass recommended using her alternative slide for retained earnings. Then, the Water Commissioners recommended changing the wording on a few of the projects listed on the ninth slide dedicated to funded projects. The group agreed that the warrant request slide was to be finalized at a future meeting after discussing the SCADA proposal from Tata & Howard. Lastly, Mr. Sander recommended adding retention of personnel to the last slide on department challenges.

The Water Commissioners tabled the approval of the FinComm and the Annual Town Meeting presentation approval for the March 25, 2020 meeting.

## **12. Other Business**

None.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:50 AM. Motion made by Commissioner Glass, seconded by Commissioner Barnes. Approved unanimously.

The next meeting of the Water Commissioners is scheduled for March 25, 2020 at 9:00 AM in the Donaldson Room at Town Hall, 16 Lincoln Road.

Respectfully submitted,

Monica Kacprzyk, Administrative Assistant