

Town of Hingham



Hingham Sewer Commission Meeting Minutes

September 6, 2016

Call to order:

The meeting was called to order at 7:05pm in the Central South Meeting Room, Hingham Town Hall.

Commissioners:

Robert Higgins, Chairman; and Kirk Shilts

Department Personnel & Staff:

Randy Sylvester, DPW Superintendent; Stephen Dempsey, Sewer Supervisor; and Liz Welch, DPW Office Administrator

Agenda:

The agenda for the meeting was established as amended.

Approval of Minutes:

Dr. Shilts made a Motion to approve the July 12, 2016 meeting minutes as drafted; the Motion was seconded by Mr. Higgins and passed by unanimous vote.

Scheduling:

The next meeting of the Commission will be Tuesday, October 4, 2016 at 7:00pm.

Proposed Sewer Connection Discussion:

29 Canterbury Street

Jeff Tocchio, John Woodin and Gary James spoke on behalf of the owners of 29 Canterbury Street, Mr. and Mrs. Jordan.

The proposal (plans dated 8/22/16 'revised') is to construct four (4) new single-family homes upon lots with frontage on Canterbury Street, which includes replacing an existing (5)-bedroom dwelling on the 17 acre property. Two of the homes will have 4-bedrooms and the other two 5-bedrooms. The existing dwelling currently has a standard 3-bedroom sewer allotment and the owner will seek an additional 2-bedroom increase in flow. In total, fifteen (15) bedroom allotments are sought. The Weir River Sewer District currently has extra capacity for thirty-nine (39) additional bedroom allotments. Mr. Higgins explained that a utility plan will be required. Mr. Higgins confirmed that the subdivision component to the proposal will

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be a private sewer system and the cul-de-sac considered a private way until accepted by the Town. Mr. Higgins said that a letter of conditions will explain the costs, betterments, and any requirements identified by the Commission's engineer. He added that proper plans need to be submitted and approved, and payment received before any bedroom allotment will be assigned to this particular project.

Proposed Sewer Connection Discussion:

166 Hull Street

Property owners William and Robin Nickerson asked about the availability of sewer connections for a proposed development on approximately 4.36 acres, located at 166 Hull Street.

The proposal (plans dated 8/4/05) is for three (3) new sewer connections to support three new 4-bedroom single-family homes. An existing two-family dwelling on the property, comprised of a 3-bedroom unit and a 1-bedroom unit, may or may not be rebuilt. In total, twelve (12) bedroom allotments are sought. The Weir River Sewer District currently has extra capacity for thirty-nine (39) additional bedroom allotments. Mr. Higgins explained that proper plans need to be submitted and reviewed by the Commission's engineer before a decision is made - and any bedroom allotment assigned to this project.

Financial Update:

Sewer Department Operating Budget and I&I Reserve Accounts:

Dr. Shilts stated he reviewed the FY2016 and FY2017 Sewer Dept. budgets and the department's two Infiltration and Inflow (I&I) accounts (MWRA I&I and Sewer I&I). After speaking with Mr. Sylvester and Ms. Welch he learned that 6% of all budgeted expenses are allotted to the Weir River Sewer District. He learned that a clerical position is equally apportioned and funded by the Sewer Dept. and the DPW.

Mr. Sylvester explained how the MWRA I&I account requires the Town to fund 25% toward a particular I&I-related project and the MWRA grants the remaining 75%. All MWRA I&I funds can only be used within the MWRA system. The MWRA I&I account currently stands at about \$226,000. Mr. Sylvester said Sewer I&I funds come from various user fees and this money is used for projects outside of the MWRA district including main breaks and emergency repairs. The Sewer I&I account currently stands at about \$40,000.

Dr. Shilts stated that he looks forward to reviewing details of the Sewer Dept's capital plan and proposed budget allocations at a future meeting.

South Hingham Sewer District Activities Update:

Dr. Shilts stated that the Commission is obligated to provide the town with Comprehensive Wastewater Master Plan (CWMP). The draft CWMP presently focuses on developing a decentralized sewer facility for the area in South Hingham located south of route 3. He said he and Town Engineer, Roger Fernandes, recently met with the MWRA in Boston to re-visit the CWMP alternative of connecting the So. Hingham Sewer District to the

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MWRA system; and if Hingham became a MWRA water-supply client, how could this affect this alternative. He said the MWRA dismissed the idea of expanding the MWRA's sewer footprint into So. Hingham - where they are already concerned over the projected additional flows from Weymouth's Southfield development.

Dr. Shilts stated that no one seems to know where the records are regarding the soil percolation tests that were supposedly done on property purchased a few years ago by the Selectmen for the purpose of advancing a decentralized sewer system in So. Hingham. He suggested the Commission write the Selectmen to help determine where, if anywhere, the Town could locate a wastewater discharge facility in So. Hingham. Dr. Shilts said he would prepare a draft letter for discussion during the next meeting.

Bayberry Pump Station Update:

Mr. Sylvester reported that he is allocating money in the capital plan to refurbish the Bayberry Pump Station as the mechanism within the station is obsolete. This project was in the capital plan last year but came in over-bid. He said it will likely cost \$12,000 for engineering, and between \$100,000 and \$150,000 to refurbish. The documentation is ready to go out to bid and posting in Central Register on September 14, 2016. He said this is a high priority project.

Grinder Pump Service Program Discussion:

Mr. Higgins stated that after looking at the letters since 2004 he feels the Sewer Dept. did an adequate job of notifying residents with grinder pumps in the Weir River Sewer District of their ownership responsibility and information they need to maintain their pumps. He said this policy needs to be updated in the Town's Sewer Rules and Regulations.

Mr. Dempsey reported that an average charge by a private service provider to service a resident's grinder pump is about \$200, and the cost to send two Sewer Dept. employees for the same service call would be close to \$400. Dr. Shilts suggested the Sewer Dept. post a list of service providers on the Town website with a fee structure, including any Sewer Dept. service option if so implemented. He also wished to post the same self-help FAQ's previously mailed to customers in October 2011. Mr. Sylvester suggested we speak to Town Counsel regarding this issue to ascertain the Town's potential liability from disseminating this information.

A long discussion ensued about posting service providers on the Town's website capable of servicing grinder pumps. Mr. Dempsey suggested a telephone prompt that residents consult the Town's drainlayers list on the website. Dr. Shilts would like to send an inquiry to all permitted Hingham drainlayers asking if they would like to be put on such a posted list and if they are willing to service residents' grinder pumps after-hours and on weekends. Mr. Higgins said the Commission would be organizing a customer service management program which is not the responsibility of the Sewer Dept., where it's a private property issue. He reiterated that letters have all been sent and residents were properly notified of their ownership responsibility over these pumps.

Dr. Shilts offered to draft a letter to the Town's drainlayers for additional discussion about this topic.

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Supervisor's Report:

Mr. Dempsey reported that the Downer Avenue easement was cleared this past month, and the frames and covers to manholes 337, 338 and 339 were reinstalled properly onto the structures. Mr. Dempsey explain that they had become compromised due to tree roots. Wood chips are now being spread throughout the easement as authorized by the Conservation Commission. John Hersey, resident of 65 Hersey Street, showed pictures he had taken and questioned if the woodchips were being picked up or dropped off. Mr. Dempsey explained that trees were cut and chipped, and the chips hauled out to grind the stumps and then the chips replaced with some additional chips from the Transfer Station.

Mr. Dempsey said that although the FOG Regulation is being implemented and enforced, there has been a recent surge of grease in certain pumping stations. Mill Street Station in particular has been noticeably affected. Additionally the Bel Air Station, which only handles residential flow, has a substantial grease mat. Mr. Dempsey believes this is caused by garbage disposals or illegal dumping. Mr. Dempsey will continue to monitor this situation.

Mr. Sylvester said that the dig repair, non-dig repair, and camera cleaning contracts will be bid out in September. He will report back on the results at the next meeting.

Public Comments:

Mr. Hersey, 65 Hersey Street, asked why the Commission doesn't have a dedicated public comment period on its agenda like the Selectmen have. Mr. Higgins explained that if any resident wants to be on the agenda he or she would simply need to contact the Commission's office, submit their documentation, and ask to be put on the agenda. Mr. Higgins stated that the public can speak to most any item on the agenda.

Sewer Bill Abatement Request:

Commissioners Higgins and Shilts reviewed the bill abatement request for 60 Baker Hill Drive.

Dr. Shilts made a Motion to approve the submitted bill abatement for 60 Baker Hill Drive; the Motion was seconded by Mr. Higgins and passed by unanimous vote.

Meeting adjourned at 8:54pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Welch
Office Administrator