

Town of Hingham



Hingham Sewer Commission Meeting Minutes

January 28, 2021

Call to Order

Mr. Higgins called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Mr. Higgins read the following statement: "This meeting is being held remotely as an alternate means of public access pursuant to an Order issued by the Governor of Massachusetts dated March 12, 2020 suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law. You are hereby advised that this meeting and all communications during this meeting may be recorded by the Town of Hingham in accordance with the Open Meeting Law"

Members Present

Robert Higgins, chair; Kirk Shilts; and Stephen Harold

Staff Present

Randy Sylvester, DPW Superintendent; Liz Welch, DPW/Sewer Office Administrator; and Pat Cotton and Steve Roy, Weston & Sampson Inc.

Agenda

Mr. Higgins reviewed the posted agenda with the Commission.

Vote: Dr. Shilts moved to approve the agenda as posted, seconded by Mr. Harold and VOTED (roll call);
members in favor: Higgins, Harold and Shilts
members opposed: none

Meeting Minutes of December 17, 2020

The Commission reviewed the draft meeting minutes of 12/17/20.

Vote: Dr. Shilts moved to approve the minutes of December 17, 2020 as drafted, seconded by Mr. Higgins and VOTED (roll call);
members in favor: Higgins and Shilts
members opposed: none
Mr. Harold abstained from voting

Action Items:

Abatements

Ms. Welch reviewed with the Commission the sewer bill abatements from 27 Hersey Street for \$1,137.12; 3 Bel Air Drive for \$210.12; 39 Bel Air Road for \$175.00; 1 Foley Court for \$319.40; 1 John Hazlitt Lane for \$1,161.84; 26 Summer Street for \$1,839.68; 246 North Street for \$383.16 and 54A Canterbury Street for \$3,298.16.

Vote: Mr. Harold moved to approve the submitted abatements from 27 Hersey Street for \$1,137.12; 3 Bel Air Drive for \$210.12; 39 Bel Air Road for \$175.00; 1 Foley Court for \$319.40; 1 John Hazlitt Lane for \$1,161.84; 26 Summer Street for \$1,839.68; 246 North Street for \$383.16 and 54A Canterbury Street for \$3,298.16; seconded by Mr. Higgins and VOTED (roll call);
members in favor: Higgins, Shilts and Harold
members opposed: none

New Business:

Rt. 3A Force Main Funding Discussion

Mr. Higgins said there is State revolving fund (SRF) dollars and Federal EPA funding available for cities and towns to upgrade their sewer infrastructure. Mr. Cotton and Mr. Roy discussed the options and provided recommendations.

Mr. Cotton gave a brief history of how Broad Cove is the Town's largest and most important pump station at Rt. 3A and Downer Avenue. From there, there is a 4,200 hundred feet reinforced concrete force main which discharges at Shipyard Drive and then transitions to a gravity main over to Stoddard's Neck. He said there have been at least five breaks that had to be repaired and were paid as an emergency expenditure.

Mr. Cotton said there are two grants they are looking at, the Coastal Zone Management grant (CZM) and the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness grant program (MVP). He said he will put together numbers for a cost of design for upgrading this important force main. In the design he said there are basically three options for upgrading a sewer main including installing a cure in place liner, insertion of a ridged inner sleeve, or a complete dig & replacement. He said the grant application is to see what is most cost effective. He suggested the Town go for the CZM grant as opposed to the MVP grant which is more for assessment type projects. He said where Hingham has a hard infrastructure project the CZM grant is more applicable.

Mr. Roy explained that the applications have to be carefully crafted to get access to these funds. There must be an element of climate resilience to tap into these funds rather than just an infrastructure upgrade project. He said there is flooding and sea level rise that is applicable to Hingham which shows this is a climate resilience type project.

Mr. Cotton said in FY2020, there was \$4.1 million dollars available and 30 grants were awarded. The State typically funds between 15 and 30 design projects a year. He said awarded grants can be as high as \$750,000. The Town would need to commit to a 25% match at the time of the application. The grant is on a reimbursement basis. He said the funding round comes out in the spring, usually May, and the submittal would be due in June.

Mr. Cotton said the grants are only funding the design of the project not the actual construction project itself. This would include paying for all field investigations, preliminary design work and the permits necessary to complete the project. He said the Town could then go for additional funding for the actual work which would be millions of dollars. Mr. Roy said they are telling all their clients to get their designs completed. He said when hard dollars are available for shovel ready projects, Hingham won't be ready to access those funds without having a set of design plans.

Dr. Shilts asked for a brief one-page summary of what the grant application would broadly cover for the Commission to review in February. He said more information is needed before the Commission can vote on whether to submit an application or not. Mr. Cotton said the cost would be \$5,000 for them to complete an application and around \$150,000 to \$175,000 to proceed with the actual design plans.

Vote: Dr. Shilts moved to authorize our consultant engineer to move forward with a summary for a design application to upgrade the resiliency of the Rt. 3A force main and participate in this year's funding program, seconded by Mr. Higgins and VOTED (roll call);
members in favor: Higgins, Shilts and Harold
members opposed: none

Hingham Sewer Rules and Regulation Update

Mr. Higgins said the Commission left off on page 19 at the October 29, 2020 meeting. He asked to go back to page 17, section 8 to make sure the Sewer Department was okay with the proposed wording. Mr. Sylvester said he believed that the wording was fine.

Mr. Sylvester asked Dr. Shilts about the new definition of a bedroom and why it had been changed. Dr. Shilts said the definition matches what is in the Town's Supplemental Septic regulations, which took into account the State's Housing Code regulations. He said we need to be consistent across all Town departments.

Mr. Sylvester explained that the Sewer Commission has always used the DEP definition of a bedroom. This is how we charge for our Infiltration and Inflow Reduction Program which the MWRA requires. It is prudent to continue using the DEP definition of a bedroom as we need a funding source to keep our I & I funded.

Dr. Shilts said it's important that any bedroom to be completely legal as well as safe. He said he will provide the Commission with a copy of the State's Housing Code regulations for review at the next meeting.

Mr. Sylvester mentioned that in Section 13 (A) (1), it's important that the MWRA is included in the process to verify that a property within the 200-foot buffer is actually in the Hingham Sewer District. Dr. Shilts agreed and will add it to the next draft.

The Commission reviewed the Sewer Rules and Regulations updates through page 24. Mr. Higgins asked Dr. Shilts to make the language changes discussed and provide staff with an updated version for next meeting.

Scheduling

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for February 25, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.

Adjournment

Vote: Mr. Harold moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:33 a.m., seconded by Dr. Shilts and VOTED (roll call);
members in favor: Higgins, Harold and Shilts
members opposed: none

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Welch
DPW Office Administrator

Documents reviewed during public meeting:

- *Meeting agenda for 1/28/21*
- *Draft meeting minutes of 12/17/20*
- *Sewer Abatement Summary*
- *Draft Sewer Rules and Regulations update, 10/8/20*