

Town of Hingham



Hingham Sewer Commission Meeting Minutes

February 24, 2022

Call to Order

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

Members Present

Stephen Harold, Chair; Kirk Shilts and Clark Frazier

Staff Present

Randy Sylvester, DPW Superintendent; Liz Welch, DPW Office Manager; Stephen Dempsey, Sewer Supervisor; Matthew Cahill, DPW Assistant Superintendent; Susan Sarni, Health Officer; and JR Frey, Town Engineer.

Meeting Minutes – September 23, 2021 & December 16, 2021

The Commission discussed the revised minutes and which version to vote on. It was decided amongst the Commission to table voting on either of the minutes until the next meeting.

Vote: Dr. Shilts made a motion to table the minutes of September 23, 2021 and December 16, 2021 until the next meeting, seconded by Mr. Frazier and VOTED (roll call);

members in favor: Harold, Frazier and Shilts

members opposed: none

Action Items:

- **Code of Conduct for the Sewer Commission**

The Sewer Commission would like to adopt a Code of Conduct for the Sewer Commission. A copy of both the Board of Selectmen's and Board of Health's Code of Conduct was distributed as examples. After discussion it was decided that Dr. Shilts would make revisions to the Board of Selectmen's Code of Conduct and present at next meeting as he already made revisions to the Board of Health Code of Conduct. The Commission will discuss at the next meeting.

- **109 Weir Street Hardship Sewer Connection**

Mr. Robert Cohen explained that due to health issues he and his wife Gloria are going to have to stay in Florida and sell their house in Hingham. The property only has a cesspool and they are fearful that it will not pass Title V. He does have a recorded easement from his back yard abutter, Patterson Pond Estates, giving him the right to hook into their sewer system which is connected to the Weir River Sewer District. Mr. Cohen is aware that there is no capacity available in the Weir River Sewer District unless you can show a hardship. He is also concerned as the property is full of ledge which would involve a lot of blasting in order to install a septic system. Mr. Cohen is also concerned about the land and polluting the pond. He thanked the Commission for their consideration of his hardship request. Right now on the property there is a one bedroom cottage and a barn with 2 lofts. Mr. Cohen would like to have a hookup for 3 bedrooms.

The Commission explained that in order to move forward with this request the Commission will need an application with a proposed plan as well as a copy of the easement. This does not appear to be a hardship request at this point. It has also been noted that his property not been assessed a betterment nor ever paid a betterment as there is no sewer line on Weir Street.

Septic or sewer is based on what is best for the environment in that area. Also if you connect into a private trunk line we would want to know the operations and maintenance contract would be. This would be a private system. Plan, Title V and maintenance plan would be essential.

Ms. Sarni, explained that the Board of Health would need soil tests done. She also stated that Conservation has approved systems 50 to 100 feet from wetlands.

The Commission advised Mr. Cohen on the next steps of this process. No vote is required at this time.

- **Sewer Bill Abatements**

Ms. Welch reviewed with the Commission the sewer bill abatement requests from 22 Park View Drive for \$246.62; 9 Bel Air Road for \$683.81; 13 Cushing Avenue for \$542.44; 16 Merrill Street for \$250.98; 12 Lewis Court for \$175.00; 19 Bel Air Road for \$437.19 and 96 Hull Street for \$175.00. She additionally explained why these abatements should be considered.

Vote: Mr. Frazier moved to approve the submitted abatements from 22 Park View Drive for \$246.62; 9 Bel Air Road for \$683.81; 13 Cushing Avenue for \$542.44; 16 Merrill Street for \$250.98; 12 Lewis Court for \$175.00; 19 Bel Air Road for \$437.19 and 96 Hull Street for \$175.00, seconded by Dr. Shilts and VOTED (roll call):
members in favor: Shilts, Frazier and Harold
members opposed: none

Discussion Items:

Summer Street Utility Corridor Request

Mr. Frey explained that the challenge for this project would be to provide a corridor for an as yet undersigned piece of infrastructure. We don't even know that there will be a sewer or where it will eventually discharge to. With all the unknowns this would not be an efficient use of the Town's resources. It would be a very complicated sewer design. There are such a large number of lines that are underground. Going forward the town would be happy to work with the Commission once there is an actual sewer system designed to serve the Martin's Lane neighborhoods.

The Commission thanked Mr. Frey for explaining the Town's position on the project. The Commission needs to start planning for long term.

Sewer Regulations Public Hearing

The Commission would like to move forward with the Public Hearing Process. We need to set a date and post in a local newspaper for three weeks. These proposed changes highlight:

- Private Sewer Systems
- 200 ft. setback in the Hingham Sewer District
- Fee Schedule

Dr. Shilts has created a PowerPoint presentation for the Public Hearing. The Commission is still hoping to get comments from Town Counsel.

The Public Hearing will tentatively be scheduled for Wednesday, April 27 at 7:00pm or Thursday, April 28th at 6:00pm depending on room availability.

Weston & Sampson Meeting

Mr. Harold suggests that the Commission put in writing what we want to discuss with Weston & Sampson so they can prepare for the meeting.

The Commission discussed items that they would like answers to or information on. Dr. Shilts explained that this is an important discussion and feels the three Commissioners should submit questions and topics to Ms. Welch for staff to look over before we form a list for Weston & Sampson.

Mr. Sylvester explained that Weston & Sampson has evaluated our system and there is an Inflow/Infiltration (I&I) plan in place. In the past there has been an MWRA loan/grant program that we have taken advantage of. That program has not been in place for the last couple of years. In the interim Mr. Sylvester has put both \$100,000 and \$200,000 in the budget for I&I. Mr. Sylvester suggested that we ask for estimates from Weston & Sampson so we know how much money we will need to put into future budgets.

Superintendent and Supervisor Reports

Dr. Shilts wanted to know Mr. Sylvester has asked Town Counsel the answers to the following questions he had emailed to Mr. Sylvester.

1. We seem to have 1-property from Phase I and 26-properties from Phase II that don't have betterment information based on our 20-year old spreadsheets. When we determine which of these properties (if any) should pay a betterment, how do we go about collecting an unpaid betterment from this long ago?
2. Are any of the proposed changes to our proposed Sewer Regulations update that are in conflict with a state statute, and if yes, which update to which statute?
3. The Sewer/ Selectmen consolidation agreement stipulates a Dispute Resolution process (sec. 5.0) involving the Town Administrator. Since it's essentially a contract negotiation, would this process occur under closed rather than open session?

Mr. Sylvester has not yet given these questions to Town Counsel. He will do so and get the answers for the Commission.

Mr. Frazier would like to find out if the Sewer Commission needs to give the Planning Board any comments about the Accessory Dwelling Unit By-Law that he believes may be going to Town Meeting. Mr. Harold asked that the Commission to send any question to him and he will forward on to the Planning Board.

Scheduling

The next meeting was not scheduled.

Adjournment

Vote: Mr. Harold moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:55 a.m., seconded by Dr. Shilts and VOTED (roll call);
members in favor: Harold, Frazier & Shilts

members opposed: none

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Welch
DPW/Sewer Office Manager

Documents reviewed during public meeting:

- *Meeting agenda for 2/24/22*
- *Draft meeting minutes of 9/23/21 & 12/16/21*
- *Sewer Abatement List*
- *109 Weir Street Hookup Request 2/7/22*
- *109 Weir Street GIS Maps*
- *Draft HSC Sewer Regulations Update & Appendix K 11/12/21*
- *New Sewer Rules & Regulations Public Hearing PowerPoint 2/3/22*
- *BOH Code of Conduct 2/13/22*
- *BOS Code of Conduct 2015*
- *Rt.3A, Summer Street & Rockland Street Project – Virtual Design Public Hearing*
- *Consolidation Agreement FINAL 9/1/15*