

Board of Water Commissioners

March 22, 2022

Present:

- Board of Water Commissioners: Mr. Joseph Fisher (Chair) and Ms. Liz Klein, and Mr. Bill Ramsey
- Mr. Tom Mayo, Town Administrator
- Ms. Michelle Monsegur, Assistant Town Administrator for Finance
- Mr. Art Robert, Assistant Town Administrator for Operations

7:00 PM: Call to order

Mr. Fisher called the meeting to order and 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. If any participant wishes to record this meeting, please notify the chair at the start of the meeting in accordance with M.G.L. c. 30A, § 20(f) so that the chair may inform all other participants of said recording. “

No one indicated they were recording. Board of Water Commissioners participating in the meeting were himself, Mr. Bill Ramsey and Ms. Liz Klein.

Approval of Minutes

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to approve the minutes dated February 3, 2022. Ms. Klein seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Fisher: yes

Agreement with Environmental Partners Group, Inc.

Mr. Russ Tierney, WRWS Superintendent presented. Ms. Kathy Reilly, Procurement and Contracts Manager, was also present. Mr. Tierney said that this contract covers design work for the water main improvements in Manomet Avenue, Planters Field Lane, and Thaxter Street. Pending approval by the Board, the design work would commence immediately and would be complete by June 30, 2022. The cost of the design work is part of the WRWS Capital Budget. Part of the design work is to abandon one of two mains at the end of Thaxter Street. Ms. Reilly noted that the engineering is exempt from bidding under MGL Chapter 30B and the WRWS was not required to solicit bids for the contract. They chose to partner with Environmental Partners because they are familiar with the Weir River Water System. The contract covers just the design work, bidding and permitting fees, not fees for the construction itself.

Vote: Ms. Klein made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the agreement with Environmental Partners Group, Inc., for engineering services associated with the Manomet Avenue,

Planters Field Lane, and Thaxter Street Water Main Improvements projects for the Weir River Water System in an amount not to exceed \$125,000.00. Mr. Ramsey seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Fisher: yes

Agreement with SUEZ Water Environmental Services, Inc.

Mr. Tierney said that one of several things that came up during the first year of operations was the need for another O. & M. Tech. At the moment, they are subbing out this work to a contractor. Mr. Tierney noted that there could be a cost savings with doing this work in-house. He noted that the cost was \$151,907.45. Approval of the WRWS budget by the Select Board would set the hiring process in motion. The new full-time employee would begin no earlier than July 1, 2022. Responsibilities would include painting of the plant building, landscaping, painting of hydrants, maintenance work at the plant, and additional duties as needed. The revised Fifth Amendment includes a staffing plan that includes the hiring of this staff member.

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion that the Board acting as the Board of Water Commissioners pursuant to Article 11 of the 2019 Town of Hingham Annual Town Meeting and Chapter 139 of the Acts of 1879 (as amended) and all other applicable laws do hereby vote to authorize its Chair to execute and deliver the Fifth Amendment to the Agreement between the Town of Hingham and Suez Environmental Services, Inc. in substantially the form attached hereto. Ms. Klein seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Fisher: yes

Water Superintendent Report

Mr. Tierney said that the transition from Suez to Viola is currently underway. No changes to staff or management are planned. There is currently a message on the telephone system alerting residents that there will be a name change. As of now, the website and billing procedures have not changed.

Mr. Tierney reported that work on filter #1 is complete and that the repairs were within budget. He also said that they have drained filter #2 and found stone and carbon in the drain water, which indicates a possible breach in the tiles. After a thorough investigation, they found that, during installation in 1996, one air-line was not installed as it should have been. They will start the repair right away. Mr. Tierney also plans for some long-term capital projects, as well as ongoing maintenance that should be implemented in 2024-2025.

Mr. Tierney reported that the WRWS recently won an award from the DEP for 12 months of perfect fluoride levels.

He announced that the water main work in Downing Street went very well and that residents were very pleased with the result. He thanked Chrissy Roberts for facilitating communication with the residents.

The contractor for the Wompatuck project has been shut down until April 18, 2022. As stated in the contract, there was to be no work done until after the winter. They will start back up on April 18.

To date, the WRWS has collected \$10,000,026 in revenue. They are working very diligently with collections. He plans to start shut-offs for non-payment in the spring because it is now allowed by the State. He is happy to work with customers, in the event that they need help with a payment plan.

Mr. Tierney noted that the Master Plan is still on track to be completed by the end of April.

Mr. Fisher asked what metric Hingham is using to measure how effective we are at collections, as compared to benchmark communities. Mr. Tierney said that he receives a weekly report from Suez that includes all receivables. He said that he would email further information to the Board in the upcoming days.

Public Comment

There were no comments.

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Klein seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Fisher: yes

The meeting adjourned at 6:32 PM.