



# WATER & SEWER COMMISSION

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## Minutes of the Water & Sewer Commission meeting 3/1/2017

7:00PM Meeting called to order by Bob Parker  
Members present: Bob Parker; Brad Paiva; Paul Sadeck  
Staff present: Steven Chandler  
Guest: East Freetown resident Lucia Cunningham

Meeting being recorded by Steven Chandler and Paul Sadeck

### Resident inquiry

- Resident and water customer, Lucia Cunningham of 7 Quanapoag Road, East Freetown, MA, makes a request to the Commissioners for a reduction in charges for water supplied to her mother's residence located at 3 Quanapoag Road, East Freetown, MA.
- Customer received a bill for 196 units at \$1,179.69. The regular bill is for 4-7 units at \$25-\$50. The amount of water [196 units] was "used" due to a leak in a pipe located after the meter. A neighbor had noticed the leak and reported it to the homeowner, Lucia Cunningham, who in turn called to have the water shut off. When Keven Desmarais of the FW&SC shut off the water at the curb stop the neighbor told him that he noticed a couple weeks before but thought it was water from melting snow. Lucia's Mom is in a nursing home facility and has been since November and that is why it went unnoticed.
- Commissioners all agreed to reduce the amount of the bill and charge net cost from New Bedford. The amount of the final bill is \$725.00 plus the \$3.69 service charge for a total of \$728.69.
- Customer appreciates the generosity of, and thanks, the Commissioners and will send in payment.

### Improvements to Filter Site

- No updates. Bob Parker, Commission Chair, would like to see what it would cost to move the filter site closer to the Fall River line onto a parcel of land that may be given to the Town by Ashland/ISP who owns the land. This would allow the FW&SC to include the six customers. DEP would most likely require the FW&SC to do the upgrades to the current site as directed a few years ago anyway.
- Paul Sadeck speaks to the fact that it would be too costly to move the site and that there is more to the process than just moving the site. There is existing piping that will have to be cut off and capped and then the system would have to be reinstalled at any new site which may or may not be a gift of land from Ashland/ISP. The FW&SC is running out of time. After speaking to Kim Fales, Town Accountant, Paul states that she has a concern with going for two debt exclusions for projects [water filter site and police station] and although both are necessary, Kim feels that if the Town goes for a debt exclusion for the DEP mandated water filtration site updates the police station project will not pass by vote. Instead, Kim suggests that the cost of the filtration site project can be paid for through taxation over a twenty

year period. The filtration site project is a Town issue and not a water customer [643 locations] issue. This would have to be passed by a vote by residents in the Annual Town Meeting. DEP has given a deadline for regulatory upgrades to be made. If the deadlines are not met, a daily fine will be billed to the Town of Freetown.

- Bob will contact Ashland/ISP to see if they are still interested in giving a parcel of land to the Town.

### **DEP Sanitary Survey**

- Touched on in previous topic.

### **GPS Reading Equipment and Field Cards**

- Information on field cards had been input into Vadar system and are not used for any reason. Chandler feels we should file cards in corresponding files for each address. Paul suggests bringing in a senior to do the filing. Commissioners agree and Chandler will contact Barbara Place, Director of Council On Aging, to get someone in for this project.
- Bob Parker would like Keven Desmarais to begin using the new GPS system equipment to mark out curb stop locations. He will speak to Keven about this.

### **City of New Bedford Water & Sewer Agreement**

- Bob Parker has not yet called them. He and Paul Sadeck will address this when Bob gets back from his vacation.

### **Stop & Shop/Fall River Meter**

- Bob Parker has not yet called them but will.

### **Budget for FY2018**

- On hold because the Board of Selectmen may want to go over the budget with the Commissioners.

### **FW&SC Forms**

- Bob has forms in his files that he wants to confirm usage with Chandler who will update any forms that have not been previously updated by him.

### **FW&SC Emergency Procedures**

- Regarding digging in the ground at a curb stop to shut off water, Paul Sadeck feels that Keven should not have to do this. The last time Keven had to do this he had to call Chandler to go help Keven out of the hole. When asked about digging the hole Keven said it would cost \$500.00 to have someone go out and do the digging with a backhoe. What if it caved in or the water line broke and the hole filled with water? It is too dangerous and to have one person doing this type of work and we have a highway department that can go dig the hole when needed.
- Bob Parker had told Keven in the past that if he needs to dig a hole to locate a curb stop and shut off water, or to go down into the Fall River pit, to call him so that he has someone with him.
- Keven is so conscientious and he's been doing it so long that he just does what he has to do to get the job done.
- Bob will speak with Keven.

### **Proposed Water & Sewer Commission Fees**

- Paul Sadeck feels that certain fees should not be billed to the customer. Specifically, to shut off water at the request of the customer the town should not be charging for basic services such as turn on/turn off water. People pay taxes for service and the water customers pay a service fee which should cover such fees unless a company has to be hired to dig.
- Charging of some fees and fee amounts need to be readdressed.
- Chandler suggests tabling this until Keven Desmarais is present.

### **Operational opportunities**

- Annual payment to UniBank for the pump station at Chipaway Road.
  - Responsibility of payment for this debt by the Freetown Water & Sewer Commission was reversed in 2015 by a vote by the residents of Freetown at an annual town meeting. It was decided that the Town of Freetown is responsible for this debt which was brought on by a law suit brought on by Reverend Dias and his community on Braley Road environmental discrimination naming the Town as responsible to increase water pressure supplied to customers by building a pump station.
  - Chandler will check with Kim Fales, Town Accountant.
- Regarding the bill to water customer Dwayne Lopes of 14 Nick Drive, East Freetown, MA.
  - Customer told Bob Parker that he will not pay the bill and his attorney has said that he is not responsible. Bob Parker forwarded information regarding this situation to Town Counsel who in turn recommends that the FW&SC send Mr. Lopes his bill and if he doesn't pay it the FW&SC put it to tax lien.
  - Paul Sadeck makes a motion to send outstanding bill of \$3,122.49 plus interest to lien if customer does not pay. Brad Paiva 2<sup>nd</sup>. All in favor. Motion carried.

### **Approve Minutes**

- Brad Paiva makes a motion to approve minutes from February 17, 2017. Paul Sadeck 2<sup>nd</sup> motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

### **Review and Sign Invoices.**

### **Meeting Adjourned**

- Brad Paiva makes motion to adjourn. Paul Sadeck 2<sup>nd</sup>. All in favor. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

### **Next Meeting**

- TBA

Respectfully submitted,



Steven Chandler

Senior Clerk, Freetown Water & Sewer Commission