



# WATER & SEWER COMMISSION

3 North Main Street . P.O. Box 438 . Assonet, MA 02702  
508.644.4000 . Fax: 508.644.2053

RECEIVED  
FREETOWN TOWN CLERK  
2017 MAY 19 PM 12:02

## Minutes of the Water & Sewer Commission meeting 5/1/2017

6:15PM Meeting called to order by Bob Parker  
Members present: Bob Parker; Brad Paiva; Paul Sadeck  
Staff present: Keven Desmarais; Steven Chandler  
Meeting with the Finance Committee at the C.O.A.  
Meeting being recorded by Paul Sadeck and Steven Chandler

### **Article for Water Filtration and Treatment Facility System Site Upgrades**

Discussion of funds requested for MassDEP mandated upgrades to the facility located at South Main Street, Assonet.

#### **Finance Committee:**

- Very little impact to water customers
- 3% bond for 20 years: increasing water charges to all water customers would cover the \$2,900,000 needed to execute the mandates.
- States that this issue is a water user issues.
- "Excess revenue coming down the pike will cover this cost."
- If it goes out for a debt exclusion it then becomes a Town issue and that will go on top of the budget.
- George suggests implementing a betterment.
- Other cities have their water department operating costs paid for by their water customers.
- 64% of the water is being used by commercial customers so the cost of the improvements should be paid by them.
  - Stop & Shop is a multi-billion dollar corporation and has gotten a free ride here [in Freetown] for 18 years and should pay their fair share.
- Asks about \$30.00 quarterly charge to water customers that has been removed.
  - (This was removed to honour customers who were initially forced to pay for pump station in East Freetown that turned out to be a Town responsibility.)
- Committee will vote tonight on whether or not to approve funds for upgrades.

**Water & Sewer Commission:**

- The site upgrades needed is the responsibility of the Town of Freetown and not the responsibility of (600+) water customers.
- Laying a nearly \$3 million cost onto (600+) customers is not acceptable and Paul will fight it and not allow the Finance Committee to put the burden on the backs of (600+) customers.
- Almost every water customers was forced into connecting to Town water because of environmental hazards and contaminated wells.
- The current Board of Commissioners inherited the problem and this problem needed to be addressed for 10 years, ever since Mass DEP made the Town installed filters for the water that was being purchased from Fall River and the high level or THM's back then, and MassDEP is no longer letting it go.
- Prior Commission hadn't acted on the mandates because they knew that the changes could not be made by making (600+) customers pay for the MassDEP mandates.
- Counting on excess future revenue is not feasible since it is not guaranteed.
- Paul Sadeck makes a motion to notify all water customers that the Finance Committee intends to have them pay for the improvements to the filter site and inform them of the Annual Town Meeting, should they want to have their voices heard. Brad 2<sup>nd</sup>. All in favor. Motion carried.
- The Town was forced to bring water onto Braley Road through an environmental lawsuit and a pumping station was built using a Bond issue. When the FW&SC enterprise fund was created the Town moved the burden of the pumping station to the water customers, they had nothing to do with the decision of need. Originally, the Town had put the burden of cost for the East Freetown pumping station to the water customers when it needed to be installed. The Town was made aware that it was a Town responsibility through a law suit and it was then put back into the Town budget where it belonged in the first place.
- If the mandates do not take place as outlined by MassDEP, a fine of \$1,000 per day can be imposed onto the Town of Freetown.

Respectfully submitted,



Freetown Water & Sewer Commission