



WATER & SEWER COMMISSION

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Minutes of the Water & Sewer Commission meeting 4.12.22

Meeting held at Town Hall, Assonet, MA

10:15AM Meeting called to order by Bob Parker
Members present: Bob Parker; Paul Sadeck
Staff present: Steven Chandler; David Thibodeau
Guests: Jonathan Velez, MasterMeter

Meeting being audio recorded by Paul Sadeck

Chris Stebbins of Ferguson Waterworks could not make the meeting.

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Reading Equipment and Infrastructure

MasterMeter

- Jonathan Velez is here to review the Allegro equipment and answer any questions the Board has in general.
 - Allegro is a 4G product and the newest version replacing the old 3G products. It operates on an FCC bandwidth. The FW&SC purchased a bandwidth.
 - There were issues arising when going out to read radio meters and this new product will eliminate that. There will be no interference from baby monitors, cell phones, and other electronic devices.
 - Going forward the new Allegro system will read the new 4G meters. The 3G meters will still need to be read by the old MMR equipment. Both will interface with the newest Harmony software.
 - Software in existing read unit will be updated with new firmware, and both the old and new units will interface with Vadar accounting program.
 - Initially there will be a 3-hour web training. Jonathan will call Esmerelda and have her call today to set up training. Also reach out to Vadar to coordinate a tech there to be available for the same day/time as training to assist in working out any kinks should they arise. This should eliminate any need for Chandler to enter reads manually and mitigate any hiccups. Currently, Chandler is entering all reads manually into Vadar due to variables in accounts.
 - Onsite training is a bit behind and will be available in June/July. Will start off with web training and once that is done Jonathan will take Chandler and others out to do testing to pick up reads and push them back through software cell.

- 3G Technician is a MasterMeter software that allows the operator to program meters, adjust meters, account factors, gear ratios. Will go through this process on old equipment and new equipment.
 - The case will be set up so that there is one power connector to plug in. Jonathan's team will set up the splitter to be attached to both units. There will be two antennas on the outside of the case. The case will also fit the laptop. Case will be purchased by Commissioners from Ferguson Waterworks. Laptop is to be purchased by Commissioners.
 - Jonathan will get laptop specs to FW&SC and MasterMeter will take care of installing all software needed onto the laptop. This included the 3G Tech, Allegro Tech, and Harmony.
 - All training is already paid for and will be in field and software.
 - Harmony software updates are done via the cloud. Allegro meter firmware updates can be done if needed in the future. A cellular unit and repeaters can be added in the future, and this would eliminate the need to drive by houses to pick up reads.
 - Any existing MasterMeter 3G meter heads can be replaced with Allegro heads and this would save the FW&SC money. Meter body has a 20-year warranty so if there are some that do not work, send them in and Jonathan will have them tested and replaced if not working properly. Replacing the head only would save about \$40 each.
 - Chandler states we have many dozen old meter bodies with many that are less than 20 years old. David says there are hundreds.
 - Jonathan said to box them up and send them to Ferguson letting them know they are not working and ask to have them tested. We can get new replacement bodies.
 - MasterMeter guarantees a 20-year accuracy and will do an RMA and will have a truck sent from Ferguson to pick them up. No charge for freight cost. May not be able to have all replaced but some should qualify for replacement.
 - Paul Sadeck says this is very informative.
 - Any meter bodies that FW&SC wants back will be sent back down to Freetown. Jonathan will check to see if there is a cost to ship back down. FW&SC will receive an email stating how many will be replaced and how many will not.
 - Jonathan states he can get us meter head replacement that can be retrofitted to Neptune meters. He would send plastic components that fit on Neptune and allow Allegro head to be attached. This would save money on these meter bodies too.
- Chandler let Jonathan know the next quarterly reads will be done in July.
- Jonathan states he can have the case all set up and back to Freetown in two weeks.
 - Once Commissioners have case Jonathan can pick up the reading units, antennas, and case and overnight them to MasterMeter to have it all set up.

- Paul Sadeck makes a motion to purchase a new laptop for the new reading equipment. Bob Parker 2nd. All in favor. Motion carried
- Paul Sadeck makes a motion to purchase a [carrying] case to house the new and old reading equipment. Ferguson [Waterworks] will put all components together in the case for us. Bob Parker 2nd. All in favor. Motion carried
- Paul Sadeck makes a motion to buy a new laptop for the new reading equipment. Bob Parker 2nd. All in favor. Motion carried

Water Meters

- Bob Parker asked Chandler to order three 1” meters and find out how quickly they can get them to us. These will be used for bleeding.

Approve Meeting Minutes

- Minutes from 8.17.22, 3.8.22, and 3.18.22 approved. Chandler will submit to Town Clerk.

Sign Bills

- Bills signed previously.

Other business that properly came before the Board that was not anticipated:

Permit

- Paul Sadeck states that Keven Desmarais recommends the FW&SC create a permit for contractors who are working on existing water infrastructure.
 - Chandler outlines the usefulness for having such a permit and requiring a contractor who is working on infrastructure for an existing customer to show proof of insurance. There would be a record of who did the work, and this will benefit the FW&SC in the future should the something go wrong with the work that had been done.
 - Bob Parker suggest a permit fee of \$25.00.
 - Paul Sadeck makes a motion to implement a requirement to have a permit obtained by a customer when they are altering their service line, and the fee is \$25.00. Bob Parker 2nd. All in favor. Motion carried.
 - Chandler will create a permit form and send to Commissioners to review and approve.

Emergency Calls

- Discussion of what to how to address pay for David Thibodeau when he gets calls during off hours. Example: if Freetown Police call David regarding a location that does not have water, does David get paid for answering the phone? If so, how much? Does a change in pay protocol need to be added to employee union contract? To be discussed further.

Accountant

- Kim Fales, Town Accountant, submitted a note to Commissioners stating there is not enough funds for longevity budgeted for FY2023. Commissioners will determine which line items require a Reserve Fund Transfer request and will let Chandler know after they meet with Deb Petty, Town Administrator.

- Kim gave Chandler an account number to use should he or David need to use Covid payroll funding.

Next meeting to be scheduled for April 19th at 9:00AM. Invite Mike Frederico of Hydro Utilities and Joe Coulter of TiSales to discuss meters.

Paul Sadeck motion to adjourn at 11:34PM. Bob Parker 2nd. All in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'S. Chandler', with a long, horizontal, wavy line extending to the right.

Steven Chandler, Senior Clerk
Freetown Water & Sewer Commission