



# WATER & SEWER COMMISSION

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2016 JUL 28 AM 9:48

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## Minutes of the Water & Sewer Commission meeting 06/3/2016

10:00AM	Meeting called to order by Bob Parker
Members present:	Bob Parker; Brad Paiva; Paul Sadeck
Staff present:	Keven Desmarais; Steven Chandler
Guests:	Ryan Trahan and Bob Rafferty, Environmental Partners Group

Bob called the meeting to order at 10:00AM

EPG here to discuss sewer extension study.

Bob Rafferty: We look at funds or find funds for future projects. First we need to establish a public health need for sewer and we do that by looking at all board of health records for property along the corridor of proposed project as well as soil from soil maps to correlate a need. Also want to look at any planning projects the town has on board or long term plans the town has along the proposed corridor as far as any commercial and/or residential plans. Look at water use records to help establish a need. There is a MassWorks infrastructure grant which requires a mixed use component and with your plans it sound like it may be a fit for Freetown. After we do a needs analysis we lay out a plan schematically on a GIS type map. We look at the towns plan for drainage and so forth. Look at permitting and regulatory issues. A new cost estimate and schedule including looking at the grants. If the town would like to get on the grant schedule, we can lay that out for you. Pretty much a standard process with focus on making you eligible for as many funding programs as possible.

An SRF looks for some kind of planning mechanism that the town has done to say there is a reason for borrowing funds. They can get the town 20-30 year loans with low interest with some principle forgiveness. Requires a comprehensive management plan which is very expensive because it is a town wide plan. Or, you can do a project evaluation report. Doing the PER you don't get as many points on funding applications but this might satisfy the project evaluation report that is very specific to one area so they get you points on the application while establishing needs along the way.

Study is an investment on showing grant agencies that the town is serious and taking steps to do the project. MassWorks may cover some construction costs but they generally are looking for a match. A match would show them that we are actively doing the project. Or, a private company may contribute as a match. Communities may contribute...say Fall River would need to do upgrades based on our project, we could create a community partnership.

For sewer installation, the general rule for cost is over one million dollars per mile.

Ryan Trahan: EPG study/proposal is a good first step in this process to establish a need to then research various grants and apply for funding programs. They are going to want to know how much the project costs, what are the benefits to doing the project, etc.

Keven Desmarais: We've identified along the South Main Street corridor, through an overlay district, future commercial development. We have an economic and environmental need to put in a sewer line.

Paul Sadeck: The Freetown Water & Sewer Commission is not in the position to pay for installing sewer lines. We are an enterprise fund and have over 600 water customers and 2 sewer customers. What we have to do as a town is reverse the enterprise fund situation or get the town to take on the debt. Debt cannot be funded by 600+ customers so until we reverse EF we are not going anywhere.

Bob Rafferty: There are several ways to fund a sewer district extension. It will cost about \$2,000,000 to do a pump station and forced main. There are several ways of funding that so first we look at grants, second is a town wide share, and the third is betterments for properties along the route. If someone is putting in a lot of development, the town could say to them, here is your impact, can you contribute to the sewer project.

If you look at all grant programs and have exhausted all avenues with no success for funding, then you could go to the town and ask for support of the project.

Paul Sadeck: The water commissioners need to sit down with the selectmen and go over this. Tell them the issues with the water, issues with the enterprise fund, issues with the sewer. It's being driven by BOS to put in sewerage for the economic benefit for the town. So we have to come to an agreement to say hey, listen, we are on the wrong track with the enterprise system; we are never gonna get anywhere with this. That the bottom line. It should be a town department.

To pay for study, ask Kim regarding sewer budget and if we cannot use those funds and have to create a warrant, then we will do that for the next town meeting in the Fall.

Brad Paiva: makes a motion to have the secretary (Chandler) set up a meeting with the BOS on a Monday night.  
Bob Parker 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. All in favor.

Brad Paiva: The Commission is in agreement that we want to move on this but will have to wait until October until we can get permission to start this project.

Ryan Trahan: It is too late for getting into the grant cycle for this year. If you are under an ACO and having trouble Bonding or financing, you can apply for SRF (State Revolving Fund) to loan you the money, that's a longer and lower interest rate. This ACO helps you score high and get that funding over those who just say they need it, you guys show you have a need. But, your right Paul, the Selectmen need to understand that if you are going to borrow from the Town, everybody needs to understand what the need is for borrowing.

Bob Rafferty leaves the meeting.

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Bob Parker: Since Ryan is here we should go over the meeting with DEP on May 26, 2016.

Ryan Trahan: There are still questions, something still has to get done. Probably put the FWSC under an administrative consent order. This is good since this order will have dates of completion and won't hit us with fines as long as we are meeting the deadlines of task completion. If we continue to ignore the deadlines they will give a penalty which means the town has to pay the penalty and meet all the deadlines. If deadlines are missed again there are more fines every day.

Paul Sadeck: The Board of Selectmen knows nothing of this [Proposal for Engineering Services Assonet Sewer Extension Study]. The Board of Selectmen, and I've been on for six years now, never heard anything about the 2006 review. I haven't heard anything about this [proposal]. In 2006 they gave us some [mandates], if I remember in a meeting, and subsequent to that we had another review, a three year review, with a bunch of requirements. I've been on [the BOS] for six years and have never heard about

this three year review until being on the Water Commission. So, I think the first thing we need to do, and I'll make a motion, that as part of the meeting we are going to have for the sewer, and I would like to invite Environmental Partners [Group] to come in and explain to the BOS that this is what we are dealing with. And again, this is not 400 customers in Assonet, this is a Town issue because this came into play before the Enterprise Fund [was established]. Just like the pump station in East Freetown came into play before the Enterprise Fund. This is a town wide issue and the Board has no idea this is going on. We need to get everyone on the page of what DEP is going to do. It's the responsibility of the Town to take care of this.

It is the opinion of the DEP that an Enterprise Fund for 600 customers doesn't work unless the number of residents equals the number of customers.

The only way for this to work is to get the Board of Selectmen on board. We have to do this project right.

Keven Desmarais: Until four years ago the Selectmen were "sewer commissioners" until at a Town meeting it was decided to have Water Commissioners take that over.

Bob Parker: I think the reason that the Selectmen didn't know about this was because we were trying to operate as an Enterprise Fund.

Brad Paiva: We need to increase what we have [for filter site] and put larger filters in preparation for future needs. Perhaps we could have an electronic valve that the Fire Chief could go and operate.

Keven Desmarais: To help fund projects there are some funds in the Sewer budget that have not been allocated but it's going to take a town meeting to bring a vote to use those funds.

Paul Sadeck: the water commissioners need to sit down with the Board of Selectmen and go over the issues with the water, the Enterprise Fund, and the sewer because it is being driven by the Selectmen to put in sewer lines for the economic benefit of the town and its residence. We are never going to get anywhere with the Enterprise Fund and the Water & Sewer Commission should be a town department. This would make difference in how future projects get funded.

Commissioners of the Freetown Water & Sewer Commission to meet with Board of Selectmen on Thursday, June 30, 2016 at 6PM at the Council On Aging, Chace Road. Ryan Trahan from White Water, Inc. is invited to attend. The only topic on the agenda is Water & Sewer Commission.

Chandler to post meeting with Water Commissioners and Selectmen. Send Ryan contact information for Ali Golz.

Discussion about adding sewer line which will help bring in more commercial businesses as well as help current businesses. Will also allow businesses in Assonet Village to be present again and residential growth.

Ryan will send report to Ali who will send it to the Selectmen in preparation for the meeting with FWSC Commissioners.

Ryan Trahan leaves meeting.

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Paul Sadeck makes motion to accept and approve minutes from May 13, 2016 meeting. Brad 2<sup>nd</sup>. All in favor.

Steven Chandler presents history of billing from New Bedford through spreadsheets created from billing information he received from New Bedford. Chandler has contacted Fall River for information regarding their billing as well and waiting to receive that info.

#### Discussion of New Bedford and Fall River water routes and billing.

- Penalties and interest has accumulated and Steven Chandler is researching when (what year) that interest and penalties began. Paul Sadeck requests to see some of the bills to see what they look like and what our payment history looks like.
- Keven Desmarais explains the processing paying bills in the past which includes statements and actions of paying only current usage charges and not paying interest, late fees, penalties, and base rate fees. He explains that Mike Pillerilla would call up Fall River and have the interest and other fees removed. New bills coming in would not have interest and fees included but this practice would not last and eventually we would receive bills which did include interest and other fees. In the past, clerks that worked for the FWSC would receive a bill, cross off interest, penalty, fees, and create a schedule of bills payable listing only current usage charge and send it up to accounting for payment. Past accountants would also state that the town does not pay anything but current charges for water used.
- For Innovation Way we are charged a \$300.00 base fee per quarter from Fall River. We do not use this line so it appears that we are being charged for the meter, like a rental.
- Chandler explains that from the day he started working here, he was told not to worry about demand notices, we do not pay anything but current charges for water usage.
- Brad Paiva seems to think that based on conversations with Mike, the Town of Freetown is a municipality and does not qualify for paying interest.
- Bob Parker states that this has been an ongoing issue since he came on board.
- Keven Desmarais states that this has been an issue since he started working part time for the FWSC over nine years ago when Helen Medeiros was the clerk for the FWSC.

Paul would like the Commissioners, and Steven Chandler, to sit down with New Bedford and Fall River to discuss all accounts and balances.

- Chandler try to set up an appointment for the 8<sup>th</sup> of June.
- Bring current bills and demand notices to meeting.
- Take care of New Bedford first and then meet with John Friar from Fall River. John Friar has requested that Freetown pay \$50,000 by the end of June for past due amounts. Paul Sadeck states that we cannot expend that amount of money without approval from the residents of Freetown. Bob Parker directs Chandler to send an email to John Friar letting him know that the Commissioners have discussed the balances for accounts and will set up a meeting with him shortly. Paul says we can't do anything until we find out what all of the billing is all about.
- Chandler determine which notices are water and which are sewer.

#### Discussion of agreement with Warren Verga regarding the installation of water line extension up Narrows Road Extension.

- Jack Healey states that the Town of Freetown require \$5,000,000 insurance coverage which is based on what Council for the Town, Attorney Mark Rich, recommends.
- Paul Sadeck says that the people hired to do the work, Dean Pettay, already have a \$2,000,000 and this should be sufficient.
- Commissioners all agree that they do not see why a \$5,000,000 premium is needed.
- The contractor will have the road open for one day and has coverage to cover.
- Make changes to the contract to require that only \$2,000,000 be required as coverage.
- Paul Sadeck makes a motion to accept this change. Brad 2<sup>nd</sup>. All in favor.
- Commissioners initial changes.

- Paul recommends and makes a motion that in the future, agreements like this go through the Council for the Town, as usual, and follow the recommendations of the Council. Brad 2<sup>nd</sup>. All in favor.

Chandler would like to have signatures of the Commissioners so that he may create an electronic image of each and keep on file for future use in letters coming from Commissioners. Signatures are only to be used as directed by the FWSC Commissioners.

Keven Desmarais requests decision from Commissioners to purchase the GPS system for the FWSC as long as it's less than \$3,000. Brad Paiva makes motion to purchase GPS system. Bob 2<sup>nd</sup>. All in favor.

Keven Desmarais requests decision for back up chemical pump at the filter site. DEP is going to be looking for it in the sanitary survey. It's about \$400.00. Brad makes a motion to purchase. Bob 2<sup>nd</sup>. All in favor.

Keven talks about a customer calling him over the weekend complaining of blue water. He contacted New Bedford and they are not having issues. Talked with neighbors on that line and they are not having issues. It's only this one house. White Water did testing and we are waiting for test results but, it does seem to be an internal problem.

Discussion of water agreement/contract with City of Fall River.

- Sent the Commissioners an email from Terry Sullivan regarding rates per CCU for water and sewer.
- Freetown's rates will be figured out when the contract is negotiated.
- Jack Healey has contacted Joe Massey of The City of Fall River regarding the contract each week but has not gotten a response.
- Keven Desmarais states that Joe Massey only works about 18 hours a week.
- Paul Sadeck states that Council for the Town suggests perhaps firing "a shot across the bow" and think about taking them (City of Fall River) to court.
- Bob Parker thinks we should do what the attorney suggests and attorney contact Terry Sullivan.
- Paul suggest Bob give Jonathan (attorney) a call to find out what should be done and bring that back to a meeting to take a vote.

Sign bills.

Bob Parker: Makes motion to adjourn meeting. All in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Next meeting will be Friday, June 17, 2016 at 10:00AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Chandler  
Senior Clerk, Freetown Water & Sewer Commission