

Town of Hingham



Hingham Sewer Commission Meeting Minutes

March 16, 2023

Call to Order

Mr. Harold called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Members Present

Stephen Harold, chair; Kirk Shilts and Clark Frazier

Staff Present

Randy Sylvester, DPW Superintendent; Liz Welch, DPW Office Manager; Matt Cahill, DPW Assistant Superintendent; and Stephen Dempsey, Sewer Supervisor

Meeting Minutes – February 16, 2023, February 27, 2023 and March 2, 2023

Vote: Dr. Shilts moved to approve the minutes of February 16, 2023 as drafted; seconded by Mr. Frazier and VOTED (roll call):

members in favor: Harold, Shilts and Frazier

members opposed: none

Vote: Dr. Shilts moved to approve the minutes of February 27, 2023 as drafted; seconded by Mr. Frazier and VOTED (roll call):

members in favor: Harold, Shilts and Frazier

members opposed: none

Vote: Dr. Shilts moved to approve the minutes of March 2, 2023 as drafted; seconded by Mr. Frazier and VOTED (roll call):

members in favor: Harold, Shilts and Frazier

members opposed: none

Action Items:

Delegation of Authority to the DPW Superintendent to Sign-off on Sewer Contracts on Behalf of the Commission

Dr. Shilts explained that Mr. Sylvester has authority to sign off on any expenditures of \$50,000 or less and has also been able to sign off on the MWRA assessment and the Hull assessment which are both now above \$200,000. He said this is something voted on each year.

Vote: Dr. Shilts moved to delegate authority to the DPW Superintendent to sign off on behalf of Commission on any contract of \$50,000 or less and to sign off on the Hull assessment and the MWRA assessment; seconded by Mr. Frazier and VOTED (roll call):

members in favor: Harold and Shilts

members opposed: none

Mr. Frazier abstained from voting

Policy on Funding Emergency Sewer Repairs

Dr. Shilts would like to discuss the policy about when there is an emergency, where is the money coming from to make these unexpected repairs? He mentioned how the Select Board recently helped the Sewer Department with the purchase of a pump for an emergency repair. He said we should create an emergency fund that Mr. Sylvester would have immediate access to. Mr. Sylvester explained that he has an emergency fund in the capital budget but it is not funded in this year's budget.

Mr. Sylvester explained that the Inflow & Infiltration (I&I) account has historically been used for I & I as well as emergencies. He tries not to use it for emergencies but sometimes it's the only account with available money. The balance has been as high as \$1 million and is now around \$500,000. The account is from bedroom fees and also the 25/75% MWRA grant loan, which we pay them the lump sum first before any matching fund. He said the grant will hopefully be around \$400,000 this year.

Mr. Sylvester explained that he can send a budget spreadsheet monthly. He said as far as 5-year capital budget, he may have to move things around to show what capital asset was fixed. He said we can't do everything at once as we have to be fiscally responsible to the ratepayers. We have done a lot in the last 10-years, trying to make things more efficient.

Dr. Shilts stated that he does not like the fact that money being spent from the I&I account is going to anything but I&I. He said we have an emergency account and should move money from the mixed I&I account to the emergency account, for instance \$50,000.

Dr. Frazier would like to see a reporting process based on goals and objectives.

The Commission decided to address this for the new budget year.

Discussion:

I&I Discussion

Mr. Frazier would like to see a plan and set an objective of how the I&I can be reduced.

Mr. Dempsey explained that we have an I&I program with our contract engineer, Weston & Sampson, that works very well. But it is always a work in progress.

The Commission would like a quarterly report on what I&I work was planned and done.

Summary of Results for the 2023 Annual Town Meeting Article: Route 3A Sewer

The Hingham Advisory Committee and Select Board both voted unanimously for the Commissions' \$900,000 Town Meeting Article.

Mr. Frazier reported that the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act of 2021) will give money to certain projects that qualify, which sewer does. We could receive as much as \$3 million. We could use that money as a means of paying for some of the resiliency down the road.

Private Sewer Systems Policy & Re-draft of Section 14 of our Sewer Regulations

Dr. Shilts provided an updated version of a draft. He said there are provisions that describe sewer areas that

have I&I problems and property inspections. There is also a mechanism where private homeowners do an inspection that mirrors what we use in the non-sewered parts of Hingham. He said Title-5 inspections at the time of title transfer is already going on in all of Massachusetts who have septic systems.

Dr. Shilts stated that on the Mass-DEP website, Sewer Systems Policies & Guidance link, I&I Guidelines on pages 54 and 55, there is an example of the form that an inspector would use to go into a private house and investigate I&I. Dr. Shilts would like to redo the form and talk about it at a future meeting.

Mr. Dempsey explained that I&I from private sewer systems is a problem that's been identified in a number of different ways. He agrees that when there is a transfer of tile that there should be an inspection. It would be up to the Commission on how to police it.

Mr. Frazier believes that if there is an illegal connection and a resident is putting stormwater into the sewer system (inflow) they should have to do a town-directed stormwater study on their property. Dr. Shilts believes the Commission should decide what the homeowner may need to do on a case by case basis.

The Commission decided to take this up again at a further meeting.

DPW Superintendents / Sewer Supervisor Reports

Mr. Dempsey explained we had a significant rainfall event last week; and two pumping stations were compromised. He said the I&I repercussions still evident in the last few days.

Mr. Dempsey said there was a Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO) near Board Cove station on 3/8/23 due to valve replacement work in the pump room. The replacement took longer than anticipated. He said it affected a manhole in front of Foster School where about 90-100 gallons went into the storm drain. We cleaned that catch basin out, and the DEP, EPA, BOH were all notified. He said there is a new reporting process through the DEP that came into effect in February. He said he has been working with Weston & Sampson to put a program in place.

Scheduling:

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 13, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

Adjournment

Vote: Mr. Frazier moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:28 a.m.; seconded by Dr. Shilts and VOTED (roll call):

members in favor: Harold, Shilts and Frazier

members opposed: none

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Welch
DPW/Sewer Office Manager

Documents reviewed during public meeting:

- *Meeting agenda 3/19/23*
- *Draft minutes of 2/16/23, 2/27/23 and 3/2/23*
- *Draft Private Sewer System Policies 11/18/23*
- *Draft Sewer Regulations Section 14 – Inspections 3/9/23*
- *Draft List of Topics for Discussion – Clark Frazier*