

Town of Hingham



Hingham Sewer Commission Meeting Minutes

April 13, 2023

Call to Order

Dr. Shilts called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m.

Members Present

Kirk Shilts, presiding member and Clark Frazier.
Stephen Harold was absent.

Staff Present

Randy Sylvester, DPW Superintendent; Liz Welch, DPW Office Manager; Matt Cahill, DPW Assistant Superintendent; Stephen Dempsey, Sewer Supervisor; and JR Frey, Town Engineer.

Meeting Minutes

The Commission reviewed the draft minutes of 3/16/23.

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

members in favor: Shilts and Frazier

members opposed: none

Action Items:

Infiltration & Inflow (I&I) Report

Mr. Frazier suggested that the Town come up with an I&I plan to deal with illegal connections into the sewer system. Dr. Shilts clarified that these illegal connections would be sump pumps, basement drains and roof drains which are illegally connected to the sewer system.

Mr. Dempsey explained that the current process is when we find illegal inflow, we notify the homeowner verbally at first and follow-up with letter and ask them to notify us in writing when they get the problem fixed. If we don't get a letter from them, we assess them an illegal inflow fee per billing cycle.

Mr. Sylvester explained that the DPW has dealt with at least five of these inflow situations in the last few years. He said we have required residents disconnect their illegal sump pump discharges and they figure out how to deal with their water on their property. There are Town Bylaws that states that any water discharge has to stay on the private property. Dr. Shilts asked to get the list of customers with ongoing illegal inflow.

Mr. Sylvester said \$350,000 is available in MWRA grants for I&I projects and Hingham spent \$117,000 last year.

Capital Budget Status Report

The Commission discussed the 2023 Capital Budget.

Mr. Sylvester explained we have an old system and we are updating it as fast as we can. He said he uses available resources and we have to use it when things happen. He said \$482,000 was spent on capital upgrades last year. He said the Walton Cove station has a new pump and generator; Greenbush station has a new generator; Broad Cove station had its pump's broken impeller fixed and will soon get its new pump; Town Hall had check valves replaced; and I&I work was performed along Planters Field Ln. Mr. Sylvester said that \$250,000 in upgrades were not done in FY-22 due to COVID-19 but moved to ensuing years.

25-year Strategic Plan

Mr. Frazier believes we need a 25-year strategic plan to deal with capital and maintenance in the system. He said the Commission should get consultants to do an overall assessment of what we need to replace and repair.

Mr. Sylvester explained that we do a 5-year plan which does need to be re-done, which would cost approximately \$200,000. He said a strategic plan would require an RFP competitive billing.

Discussion:

2023 TM Sewer Article

Dr. Shilts explained that the Commission needs to be prepared on how we will be spending our \$900,000 request. He said Mr. Sylvester believed it would cost approximately \$500,000 to study replacing just the 3A sewer mains. At Town Meeting, if the Sewer Commission is asked to explain what the \$900,000 relates to it would be the chairperson's responsibility to speak.

I&I Inspection Form

Dr. Shilts explained he has come up with a draft I&I Inspection form that Mr. Dempsey had helped him with. He said he will develop a second inspection form for more complex Private Sewer Systems which would have an operations & management (O&M) component.

Private Sewer Regulations Update

Mr. Frazier wants to know if the Sewer Dept. has its own O&M plan and if we use that plan for our private sewer regulations. Dr. Shilts said an O&M plan will be developed for private sewer systems with input from staff.

Federal Grant Status Report

Dr. Shilts said he sent an email to Assistant Town Administrator Monsegur about potential grant money to upgrade water and sewer infrastructure for up to \$20 billion dollars recently passed as part of the federal Infrastructure Act. He has not heard back yet but expects we will after Town Meeting.

DPW Superintendents / Sewer Supervisor Reports:

Dr. Shilts learned from Town Counsel Coughlin, that the only way ratepayers would be responsible for the \$300,000 new pump for Broad Cove station the Selectmen purchased in January is a Sewer Commission vote.

Mr. Dempsey reported that 64R South Street, which has had previous blockages, wants to add flow. This involves a private sewer system connection. Mr. Sylvester said in the past the Sewer Dept. has repaired problems there. Mr. Sylvester believes the Commission should write a letter to them stating that they are on a private lateral and it is their responsible to maintain it. Dr. Shilts suggested that Mr. Sylvester draft a letter for a vote at next meeting.

Scheduling:

The next meeting is scheduled for May 9, 2023 at 6:00pm

Adjournment

Vote: Mr. Frazier moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:32 p.m.; seconded by Dr. Shilts and VOTED (roll call):
members in favor: Shilts and Frazier
members opposed: none

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Welch
DPW/Sewer Office Manager

Documents reviewed during public meeting:

- *Meeting agenda 4/24/23*
- *Draft minutes of 3/16/23*
- *Draft I&I Inspection Form*