

Town of Hingham



Hingham Sewer Commission Meeting Minutes

September 23, 2021

Call to Order

Mr. Harold called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

Members Present

Stephen Harold, Chair; Kirk Shilts and Clark Frazier

Staff Present

Randy Sylvester, DPW Superintendent; Liz Welch, DPW/Sewer Office Manager; Stephen Dempsey, Sewer Supervisor; Matt Cahill, DPW Assistant Superintendent and Kristin Dziergowski, Hingham Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes – July 15, 2021

The Commission reviewed the draft meeting minutes of 7/15/21.

Vote: Mr. Frazier moved to approve the minutes of 7/15/21 as drafted, seconded by Dr. Shilts and VOTED (roll call);
members in favor: Harold, Frazier and Shilts
members opposed: none

Action Items:

- **Delegation of Authority to DPW Superintendent**

Mr. Sylvester had been given the authority by the Sewer Commission to sign bills up to \$200,000. Mr. Sylvester is now asking for permission to sign operational bills over \$200,000, specifically the MWRA assessment and the Hull Sewer usage assessment since they are over \$200,000 and are in the operating budget.

Vote: Dr. Shilts moved to delegate the DPW Superintendent, Mr. Sylvester, the ability to sign off on the MWRA Assessment and the Hull Sewer Assessment for WRSD usage on an annual basis seconded by Mr. Frazier and VOTED (roll call);

members in favor: Frazier and Shilts

members opposed: none

members absent: Harold

At 10:21am Mr. Harold, Chair, had a computer issue and was knocked out of the meeting. Dr. Shilts stated that he was now the presiding Officer and has declared the meeting in recess.

- **Sewer Bill Abatements**

Ms. Welch reviewed with the Commission the sewer bill abatement request from 227 Otis Street for \$2,342.89. She additionally explained why this abatement should be considered.

Note: Dr. Shilts moved to approve the submitted abatement from 227 Otis Street for \$2,342.89, seconded by Mr. Frazier and VOTED (roll call):
members in favor: Frazier & Shilts
members absent: Harold

At 10:35am presiding Officer, Dr. Shilts, decided to continue with the meeting. Dr. Shilts explained that no one was able to get in touch the Mr. Harold and he has made the assumption that something else has happened so he is going to go on with the meeting without him.

- **Regulations Update, review comments & schedule Public Hearing**

Dr. Shilts reported that we had one comment from an unidentified resident. He went on to ask Mr. Sylvester if he can please ask Town Counsel when we will receive comments from them on the posted Sewer Rules and Regulations. The Commission would like a meeting in a couple of weeks with this one item on the agenda.

Mr. Frazier asked if we can change the Sewer Commission website as he would like the Sewer Rules and Regulations to stand out more and to notify the public about the posted changes to the Sewer Rules and Regulations for public comment.

Discussion Items:

- **Jordan Way / Canterbury Street Subdivision Status**

Mr. Frazier explained that there are both sewer and septic in this project. He believes this should be revisited. He believes they should all be on sewer as to keep Weir River clean and he doesn't think it will be if there is septic. He also believes the sewer rates will go up if not everyone is on sewer.

Dr. Shilts explained that the applicant came to BOH to renew the application for one of the sewer lots because it had expired. The two septic lots have to come to the BOH to have them renewed as well. The Sewer Commission has the ability to comment on this. Since 2017 the WRSD is closed to additional hookups due to the information we had. Currently in discussion of upgrading the documents. Maybe there is additional capacity and maybe not. Discussions should be where we are regarding additional hookups. Wetland or ACEC should be focus of ours and that they not be on septic as well as ledge. The septic applications that were approved on that hill they fit in the best they could. The project met the legal requirements. Dr. Shilts doesn't think we should make everyone hook up. We should recommend to the BOH that we not allow septic systems in those areas to protect the environment.

Mr. Frazier has questions on what kind of records we have for WRSD and the betterments that were paid. Dr. Shilts explained he emailed a spreadsheet with the information they would like to see regarding the WRSD. Dr. Shilts explained there are some open space lots that have capacity being held and there are some properties that have frontage that haven't paid a betterment. A long discussion ensued about what the Commissioners want in a revised WRSD spreadsheet. Mr. Frazier stated that he could help with the spreadsheet. Dr. Shilts asked Mr. Frazier to look over spreadsheet he created and to make comments.

Dr. Shilts explained that he was embarrassed by the WRSD documents that he received at the last meeting and disappointed that he hasn't seen an updated version of the WRSD spreadsheets as he had requested. He went on to reprimand Ms. Welch about not getting him what he wanted.

Mr. Harold rejoined the meeting at 11:45am and Dr. Shilts reviewed what he missed.

Mr. Sylvester explained that the reprimand in a public meeting is not appreciated. These spreadsheets are historical as they are not ones we have created. Town Counsel suggested we not re-create these betterment documents.

Dr. Shilts concerned that staff going to Town Counsel unless directed. We only asked them to review Regulations. He believes if staff has issues they should come to the Commission. He believes Town Counsel is only for the benefit of the Commission. Mr. Harold explained that they have the right to ask Town counsel for any issues they have.

- **Long-range Planning**

Mr. Frazier would like to know what we are doing about I&I issues. Mr. Sylvester explained that Weston & Sampson has gone in and done camera work and we have fixed a lot of I&I in the past six years. The Commission has funded \$100,000 in I & I and we have been making repairs. The MWRA has not funded the Grant/Loan program in the last two years. We are hoping that it will start up again soon otherwise we can increase the I&I budget in the future.

The Sewer Commission would like to have flow studies sent to them. Mr. Sylvester will certainly forward any that he receives.

Mr. Frazier is concerned about age of the sewer system and wants to know what we anticipate to be the big issues within the next 5-10 years. Mr. Sylvester explained that Weston and Sampson has done a report on all the pump stations and what will need to be done on them.

- **DPW Superintendent / Sewer Supervisor Reports**

Mr. Sylvester explained that we did get the CZM Resiliency Grant in the amount of \$220,000 for the design of force main at Broad Cove. There will be a 25% match on our end. It is reimbursement as we pay and get reimbursed. The contract is in the Procurement Officers hand right now. This will have to be signed by the Sewer Commission once we receive it back.

Mr. Sylvester went on to report on some other items.

- Broad Cove Station parking lot has been paved.
- We are working on safety issues within the pump stations.
- Mr. Cahill has gone through our contracts and has found some errors in one of our contracts and we will be reimbursed approximately \$40,000 from one of our vendors.
- 6 New Towne Drive is ready to get their driveway done before the winter. Town Counsel is looking over the agreement.

Mr. Dempsey looked into getting an updated flow study but has found we still have enough outstanding I&I work that needs to be done. Weston & Sampson is confident that we should get through that outstanding work before another flow study is necessary. This may take 2-3 of years depending how aggressive we want to be. Mr. Dempsey explained he has many flow study reports that are available for the Commissioners to look at in his office.

Mr. Dempsey explained that there is a lot of upgrades being done at the pump stations. If the Commission wants to review his weekly reports that might be helpful for the Commission.

Mr. Sylvester explained that the delay in getting the easement from the Division of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) for the Stoddard's Neck project is that the State changed lawyers during COVID and it is now on the forefront. They are working on it actively.

Dr. Shilts wants to know what the procedure is to apply a betterment to a property that was not assessed a betterment in the past. Mr. Sylvester explained that we are working with Town Counsel on that.

Scheduling

The next meeting was not scheduled

Adjournment

Vote: Mr. Frazier moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:55 a.m., seconded by Dr. Shilts and VOTED (roll call);
members in favor: Harold, Frazier & Shilts
members opposed: none

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Welch
DPW/Sewer Office Manager

Documents reviewed during public meeting:

- *Meeting agenda for 9/23/21*
- *Draft meeting minutes of 7/15/21*