

Holden Water & Sewer Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes

February 1, 2024 – 18 Industrial Drive Holden, MA, Holden Public Works Facility and Remote via Zoom

Call to Order

Mark Johnson called to order a meeting of the Water & Sewer Advisory Board at 6:00 PM on February 1, 2024 at the Holden Public Works Facility, 18 Industrial Drive, Holden, MA.

Roll Call

Board Members Present:

Mark Johnson, Larry Kowalczyk, Dawn Michanowicz, Michael Andrus, Robert Dempski and Tito Sanchez.

Board Member(s) Absent:

None.

Other Attendees:

John Woodsmall and Joseph Kenney of the Holden DPW.

1. Public Comment

None.

2. Water and Sewer Superintendent Update

Mr. Kenney spoke about the Meter Program. We have received approximately two thirds of the meters. There are two meters that have been installed for testing. Once we approve the transmitters, ERT's, the remainder of ERT's will be shipped to us and we can then start installation.

Mr. Kenney mentioned the forced sewer main break discussed in the previous meeting. That has been repaired. There has been one service leak so far, which was on the homeowner's side of the service. They hired a contractor and that repair has been made. Mr. Andrus questioned the forced sewer main break, whether there is a problem or someone hit it with a pipe. Mr. Woodsmall mentioned that this was the second leak, but they haven't had an issue previously. There was discussion about the cleanup. Mr. Kenney let the Board know that he is already looking into putting this in a future budget.

Mr. Kenney discussed the Lead Service Line Inventory kick off was last week. Information has been sent to Tighe & Bond. They are currently working on this and we hope to have this completed by the October 2024 deadline.

Mr. Woodsmall discussed the open operation position. It has been open for quite some time, however, there has been an informal offer and it is in the final stages of that process. Also, one of the head operators has given his notice.

Mr. Woodsmall has submitted the Water and Sewer budget to the Town Manager for his review. It will be finalized in the next couple of weeks. There can be a full presentation of this during the March meeting. One of the highlights is that there will be no rate increase in water or sewer fees for the upcoming fiscal year.

3. 84 Wachusett Street, Denied Sewer Permit SP-2023-31 Appeal Hearing at the Board of Selectmen's meeting February 5th

There was discussion about the upcoming Board of Selectmen's meeting. Mr. Johnson spoke about their recommendation to the Board of Selectmen. They had about an hour discussion last meeting. They agree with the Water & Sewer Superintendent that the designed called for hooking up a sewage ejection system to a force main,

which we didn't think was against industry standards, but it doesn't exist in the Town of Holden. In addition, it was asked to prove they are unable to put a septic on the property. Nothing was presented to the Board prior to the meeting or at the meeting. Mr. Andrus said he did research on this type of connection this week. Mr. Woodsmall stated there was only one town he found that allowed this and they now regret it. Everyone spoken to said you do not want to allow this. This type of issue right here is why you have an advisory board of professionals to help guide the Selectmen. There is a perfectly valid alternative, which is to extend low pressure sewer three hundred feet up the road. The solution presented is not the only option, it is just the cheapest option. There is a strong argument since this is not the only viable option. There was also discussion of who would attend the meeting.

4. Iron and Manganese – Jefferson Area Updates

Mr. Kenney discussed the financial feasibility study is an alternative analysis for Spring Street Well Treatment Facility. This is comparing the long term costs of installing a water filtration facility versus purchasing that same amount of water that Spring Street could provide, from the City of Worcester. It goes through the next twenty five to fifty years and includes the increase in costs of purchasing the water from Worcester versus building the facility and paying the debt service. Other factors are the full cost of a town employee's salary and benefits. It also discusses the different types of filtration systems and the difference in cost. The analyses doesn't include a full PFAS Treatment facility, but it does include an area to build out for a PFAS Treatment facility which could be added at a later date. If a new facility is built, then the town would not be dependent on the City of Worcester. It would also leave the City of Worcester as a backup if anything happens. The price of water from the City of Worcester will be increasing. Also, if they have issues with the quality of water, they will be required to treat it, which will increase the cost of water.

5. ECC site Update

Mr. Woodsmall received a brief overview of what the Phase I is looking like from the LSP. The LSP was surprised by the readings from the monitoring wells. The VOC's, volatile organic compound, that were introduced into the water have either naturally attenuated or the plume has moved past the ground water wells and moved elsewhere. The levels were not where he expected them to be. He's still waiting on the hazardous building material updated. Overall, it seemed very positive.

6. City of Worcester – DCR Sewer Rate Court Case Update

Mr. Woodsmall said they are waiting for the state to put in their arguments. Our arguments are due middle of March. After that we wait for DCR's response and then wait for the Appeals Court date to schedule more arguments.

7. Other Business

Mr. Andrus stated that our sewer regulations are outdated. Then proposed for the entire board or a subcommittee to review the regulations and propose some changes. There was also discussion about water regulations being updated as well. Mr. Woodsmall said the staff would redraft for review. Mr. Johnson asked if there were any objections to Mr. Andrus' proposal. No objections.

8. Discuss Next Meeting Date

The next meeting was set for March 7, 2024 @ 6PM at the Holden Public Works Facility, 18 Industrial Road.

9. Adjourn

On a motion by Mr. Dempski to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Andrus, it was unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 7:17 PM.

Documents Presented:

- A. Alternatives Analysis for the Spring Street Well Treatment Facility

Minutes taken and submitted by: Heather Van Hazinga

Minutes approved by: WSAB on 4/4/2024