

January 16, 2020
Conference Room
Wastewater Treatment Facility

Present:

DPW Board Members Tom Nephew, Pat Harrington, George Clark, Paul Brinkman; Water & Sewer Supt Joe Jordan; and DPW Director Ken Kalinowski. Absent: Lewis Lunn.

Call to Order:

Chairman Tom Nephew called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. and announced it was not being recorded or broadcast.

*Paul Brinkman made a motion to remove the Executive Session from this agenda. Pat Harrington seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously.***

Approval of Minutes:

There were no meeting minutes presented for approval.

Abatements:

There were no abatement requests.

Water / Sewer updates:

Joe Jordan updated the Board on the progress with the WWTF project, noting that we were utilizing the new conference room. It was noted that, due to space restrictions and cost implications, a decision was made to eschew the installation of CCTV infrastructure in this conference room, and to continue to utilize Town Hall facilities for public meetings. The project was close to the ‘punch list’ stage with all of the major construction being substantially complete. Regarding the Bemis Well treatment facility, the contractor is taking advantage of the relatively mild weather and continues forming and pouring the concrete tanks and foundations. A spring 2021 completion date is anticipated and appears achievable at this point.

DPW updates:

Ken informed the Board that the Highway Division would be terminating the services of a Heavy Equipment Operator/Truck Driver relative to performance issues. This would occur during the 6 month probation period. The remainder of the crew was aware of the potential of having to complete the remainder of this winter season shorthanded.

Ken gave an overview of the draft FY21 DPW budgets that were in the Commissioners packets. It was emphasized that these were in draft form, and that the Town Administrator and Town Accountant were utilizing an entirely new format and process this year. Ken noted that the Enterprise Fund (EF) templates had been provided only a day earlier and that there were significant

formatting issues in how these had been assembled. While the majority of the DPW budgets and their respective line items had not changed significantly from prior years, there were still adjustments that needed to be made to the 'salary & wages' items for several EF budgets in order to accurately account for pending contractual wage obligations, inter-departmental split salaries, General Fund indirect costs, etc...

Ken stated that a key piece of the Towns' overall FY21 budget was the Town Administrators commitment to include a 'real' capital plan. Prior efforts were essentially comprised of seeing how much free cash the town had available and determining what, if any, capital expenditures could and should be made with some level of funding. The current plan is to establish *and budget* an annual amount for capital. The current FY21 budget had \$100k earmarked for the Highway Dept. to replace a backhoe and an excavator. The costs for the lease program used for the acquisition of the front end loader in FY20 would also be funded from this appropriation. This program would also start to put the Highway Dept. more on par with the Enterprise Funds equipment-wise, as the EF budgets already had 'small capital' budgets within their annual operating budgets that could be used for procuring equipment. It was noted that the Water Dept. intended to replace their backhoe with a wheeled excavator, as the staff felt that it would best meet the needs of the Dept. now and provide flexibility moving forward. Joe and Ken listed the many benefits and operational efficiencies this piece equipment would provide, and how it would complement the other pieces of heavy equipment employed throughout the DPW.

Tom Nephew raised the issue of a Facebook posting that questioned the Water Dept's choice of equipment, and further assumed that it had already been purchased. Joe and Ken stated that they were aware of this posting and proceeded to highlight all of the factual errors it contained, including the fact that it had not been purchased (only demo' d) and that it would be funded from the Water capital item and would not necessitate a rate increase in order to pay for it. Joe and Ken also felt that it was neither good policy nor generally productive in general to engage and participate in free form social media rants, as they tended to be driven by emotion instead of facts and that they usually die down as quickly as they flare up. Ken said he preferred to handle communications through traditional and controlled channels such as phone calls, emails, website postings and public meetings. Tom felt that the bad PR needed to be addressed, and Ken suggested that the matter be scheduled for a public Board meeting. Paul posed the possibility of posting a 'form' on the DPW website(s) that explained the need to replace a piece of equipment and document the proposed equipment replacement. Tom asked that the DPW equipment discussion be added to the next agenda.

Review / Approve / Sign Documents:

The Board signed the December Commitments.

Next Meeting Date:

February 20, 2020.

Commissioners Comments:

Tom inquired about participating in the “Fix a Leak Week”, and Joe said he would look into this.

When notified that the Town was looking for volunteers for the Capital Planning Committee, Tom and Paul stated that their schedules would not accommodate this, but George Clark expressed some interest.

There was no update available for the Groton IMA as the Board was still awaiting information from the Groton Sewer Commission.

Adjournment:

*Pat Harrington made a motion to adjourn. George Clark seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously.***

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kenneth Kalinowski

DPW Director