

## Board of Public Works 08/17/23 – Minutes Conference Room A

DPW Board Members: Thomas A Nephew, Chair (TN); John Patrick Harrington, Vice-Chair (PH); Jose Mercado (JM), Lewis L. Lunn (LL), James T MacDonald (JTM)

Not in Attendance: Paul Brinkman, DPW Business Manager

DPW Staff: Kenneth Kalinowski, PE, Dir. DPW

Also in attendance: Andrew MacLean, Town Administrator

### Call to Order

Chair, Tom Nephew, calls the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m., announcing that it is being broadcast and recorded. The Video on Demand recording can be viewed at <https://pepperell.vod.castus.tv/vod/?video=7427d5ae-5c6b-488d-b1d9-2990f7299619>

### Acceptance of Meeting Minutes

Ken Kalinowski notes that the June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 Regular meeting minutes also include the minutes from the BPW Rate Hearing. Board members have had an opportunity to review the Minutes, and note that Donna did a great job capturing the meetings.

- June 22, 2023 (Regular / BPW Rate Hearing)  
Pat Harrington motions that the minutes for the June BPW meeting be accepted as written. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jim MacDonald. All in Favor (AYE – 5-0-0). **The motion passes unanimously.**
- July 20, 2023 (Regular)  
Pat Harrington motions to adopt and approve the Minutes for the month of July as written, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Lewis Lunn. All in Favor (AYE – 5-0-0). **The motion passes unanimously.**

### Abatements

None

### Water / Sewer

PFAS Update with Andrew MacLean, Town Administrator

- Ken welcomes Town Administrator, Andrew MacLean, who is joining the meeting to provide an executive summary relative to the Pepperell, Dunstable and Groton Tri-Party Solutions to address PFAS in the water and PFAS water issues at Groton High School.
- Andrew makes a quick clarification that “other” PFAS issues in the community are not directly the responsibility of the BPW at this point in time. Andrew then pivots to provide the most recent Tri-Community PFAS update, and begins by referencing PFAS as the “Water Quality Solution”.
- Pepperell had proposed forming a three-community plan in conjunction with Dunstable and Groton to ascertain a solution to the Groton-Dunstable High School PFAS concerns. This plan would allow the three communities to come together to provide a regional benefit, share costs, along with operators and licensing, etc. Unfortunately, while Groton had been hesitant to commit to the regional plan, this week the Groton Select Board voted to opt out of the regional plan, in favor of the Groton-Dunstable only solution.
- This past spring, we applied for \$1-Million of federal grant funds that are congressionally designated for spending toward this project.
  - Senator Markey’s office notified us that the grant application is moving forward and will be included in the package for consideration this fall. If the grant is not contingent on Groton being a part of the three-community plan, we can expect \$1M to arrive for this project sometime this fall.
  - Ken adds that the pilot testing contractor has made time for this in his schedule. The equipment, contractor, and our crews are there preparing for proper sampling. The contractor is expected back next week to begin the pilot.

- Ken reiterates that Dunstable has expressed unwavering commitment to continue to work with us in a regional two-town solution. They will provide access to their water system, which we will operate and manage the clean water. This will allow us to shelve the Nashua Road Well, which has been physically disabled to prevent this water source from being inadvertently allowed back into the system. Ken also notes that we continue moving forward on the treatment of the Jersey Street Well. The pilot testing is underway, as is the regional solution with Dunstable.
- Andrew affirms that Pepperell intends to provide clean water for our customers. Pepperell will build this plant regardless of this agreement. The size of the plant that is being designed, and/or the pilot testing, is not contingent on the regional agreement. We intend to build the same plant regardless, and the plant will be large enough with a capacity to meet our production needs.
- Andrew concludes, although this is a bit of a setback, we can find a solution that works for everyone. We need to continue working on shared services with towns like Dunstable, and he adds that we have similar agreements with Groton on a number of other things, including wastewater. Andrew wants to continue building on and fostering the already established positive relationships. Although Groton intends to manage water quality in a different way, they still intend on working with us on the wastewater side.
- Paul, Ken and Andrew plan to meet next week to discuss financing issues as we're closer to understanding what we will need to move forward. This will require a Town Meeting vote, a ballot vote (as a debt exclusion), or both; we could also put it on the water rates in a different way.
- Andrew will circle back with the board in the September timeframe.

Andrew MacLean leaves the meeting at this time.

#### Delinquent Account / Public Assistance Update

- We have been actively reaching out to Community Teamwork, Inc. with regards to financial assistance that may be available to Pepperell Water customers that also receive fuel assistance. This week we received a payment of \$11,067.02 from Community Teamwork, Inc. Ken explains that we provided a list of accounts that were in arrears to Community Teamwork, Inc., which resulted in payments received for 42 accounts. These 42 accounts were partially paid or paid in full, and are no longer in arrears.

#### Misc. Updates

- Things are going well with water and sewer. Billing just went out.
- There may be a small water leak on Heald Street that needs to be repaired before paving can be done.
- PFAS levels are steady.
- More necessary updates have been made at the wastewater treatment plant, Pezz has been doing a great job.

### **DPW**

#### Project Updates

- Paving:
  - Next Tuesday we are starting with the Riverside subdivision paving project (Deerfield/Merrimac/Suncook), milling should take 3 days
  - The paving contractor will head over to do milling on Heald & Maple Street.
  - Contractor will move to do milling at the Cemetery.
  - Contractor will remove milling machine which will give the DPW crews time to check castings and make any necessary adjustments needed.
  - Paving should begin the 2<sup>nd</sup> week in September.
  - Contractor reduced asphalt costs from a previously escalated rate.
- Cemetery:
  - The Cemetery preparation work is being done. Derek Flanders has some great ideas, is moving forward, and making an impact. Before the end of the year, Ken expects we'll see the old section of roads will be paved, fencing will be updated, work will be done to correct the drainage issue

*around the building, and it's unsure if we will be able to prepare the road base for the new section. Because this is not a public way, Chapter 90 asphalt rates are unavailable for this project, and will need to be negotiated with contractors.*

- o There is a sufficient supply of cemetery lots available for this year.*
- o The new tractor should arrive next week. This is part of the Cemetery Expansion Project approved at Town Meeting.*
- New trash cans were ordered for downtown.*
- Railroad Square and the pedestrian crossings on Hollis Street update:*
  - o Waiting for the contracts.*
  - o Should be done this year.*
- Rotary update:*
  - o Project may be pushed to 2024, the radius curbing supply has been limited.*
  - o Need to work with Grant awarding authorities on an extension.*
- Lowell Road update:*
  - o Neuco is working on servicing the gas mains on Lowell Road.*

#### Environmental Resiliency of Infrastructure (Discussion)

- As a community, we've been identifying town infrastructures that may need attention (including pumping stations, wells, etc.).*
- A hazard mitigation plan is required when applying for a number of grant opportunities.*
- New FEMA flood plain maps show the wastewater treatment plant is out of the flood plain, sections of Lomar Park are in tough shape.*
- There is an ox bow on the river that could impact Lomar Park. We tried to get a grant for it and were informed that the grant program is not for funding projects of that magnitude. The numbers to remedy that would cost in the millions.*
- Tom notes that Ludlow VT had heavy rains wipe out the town twice in less than ten years. TN wants to know if there is something we should be doing to be proactive and protect ourselves, our facility is about 400-feet from the river and who mitigates the hazard mitigation plans.*
- Ken explains that we are aware of the need for infrastructure resiliency, and the Main Street dam is probably the biggest potential threat, followed by the large dam located upstream in Clinton. The Main Street dam is under the control of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) because of the power generation plant. Hazard mitigation plans are in place to minimize damage and loss of life events.*
- If the Nashua River floods and approaches the wastewater treatment plant, the plan is essentially to do nothing. If the water comes up it will flood the aeration chambers and our clarifiers which will temporarily disrupt the flow of sewage thru the plant, and potentially discharge to the river, similar to almost every other wastewater plant located along a water course. When the flood water recedes, the plant will resume. Ken is not concerned about similar structural damage occurring here, as seen in Ludlow.*
- Tom Nephew would like to revisit this topic periodically to ensure we are staying ahead of things.*

#### Staffing Updates

- Valerie Brock, Compliance Analyst is working out great and has been a great help to Paul.*
- Jerry Enwright resigned from the Highway Department.*
- Ken extended an offer to fill a vacancy in the Highway Department, and has another candidate he's interested in as well.*
- Bob Wasylak moved from the Transfer Station and is back working with the Highway Department. There is a 30-day waiting period to fill the vacancy in the Transfer Station.*
- Chris Razzaboni has been the Acting Transfer Station Operator and has expressed interest in moving to that position permanently.*
- Mark Bergeron has moved up from the Highway/Transfer Station Floater position to the Transfer Station Monitor position, Mark has expressed an interest in moving to that position permanently.*
- Jerry was going to be moving to the "Floater" position, now we will be looking to fill that position as well.*

- *Finding qualified licensed candidates has been challenging.*

*Pat Harrington was up at the Transfer Station and is pleased with the changes that he's seen.*

*Ken notes that we've had to purchase 2 new construction debris dumpsters at the Transfer Station, and hadn't budgeted for the approximate \$10K, per dumpster. We will be able to use some of the Recycling Grant funds for a portion of the cost, and may need to go to Fall Town Meeting to get an appropriation from Free Cash/Retained Earnings for the balance*

*We are exploring switching from tags to bags at the Transfer Station. We have a meeting scheduled with Waste Zero to discuss the options and costs.*

*TN states that he regularly brings 4 barrels up, he buys a sheet of tags, rips the sheet in half, throws 4 of them in the dumpster and empties his barrels. Tom would like to know how changing from tags to bags will affect customers like him. Ken explains that there's been demand to bring the kitchen-size purple bags back, and switching from tags to bags for the larger size would free time of the TS staff spent looking for window stickers and bag tag compliance.*

*Members also briefly discuss potentially installing an automated gate at the Transfer Station, such as a RFID reader, to make permit compliance and annual renewals easier.*

### **Review, Approve and Sign Any Documents Requiring Board Signatures**

#### July Commitments

*June Commitments were signed by the Board.*

### **Commissioners Comments**

- *PH has noticed the mower out on River Road/Elm Street.*

### **Next Meeting Dates**

- *September 21, 2023 – Regular BPW Meeting*

### **Any other matters that may arise which the chair could not reasonably anticipate**

*None*

### **Adjournment**

*Pat Harrington motions to adjourn the meeting of the Board of Public Works, Lewis Lunn seconds the motion.*

***The motion passes unanimously.***

*The meeting adjourned at 6:36 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,  
Donna Lane-McPartlan  
DPW Program Administrator, Highway Division