

**Board of Public Works
10/19/23 – Minutes
Conference Room A**

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

Not Present: Lewis L. Lunn (LL)

DPW Staff: Kenneth Kalinowski, PE, Dir. DPW; Paul Brinkman, DPW Business Manager

Also in attendance: Christopher Razzaboni, Transfer Station Operator; Michael Schrader, Hollis Street

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

<https://pepperell.vod.castus.tv/vod/?video=c1a41df9-cd8e-4165-b139-754947d1a342>

Pledge of Allegiance

Acceptance of Meeting Minutes

- September 21, 2023 (Regular)

Jim MacDonald motions to accept the Meeting Minutes for September 21, 2023 as written and amended; 2nd by Pat Harrington. All in Favor (AYE – 4-0-0).

The motion passes unanimously.

Abatements

None

Water / Sewer

PFAS update – Jersey St pilot project

- The pilot is going well, the goal is to have the design and the pilot complete at the same time and ready to go out to bid.
- The Jersey Street Well pilot will bring in three different filter media types, review effectiveness and we should know the best course of treatment after 9-months.
- The staff should meet with Andrew MacLean to discuss cost sharing of the project before Spring Town Meeting.
- A RFQ has been generated for the pipe project connecting Pepperell to Dunstable. We are in the process of reviewing 3 firms that have expressed interest in working with us.
- Elected State representatives in the area are interested in the process and helping us along.

Groton Sewer IMA

- Paul met with Groton and notes that there are a few minor language tweaks that need to be incorporated in the official document.
- Paul will coordinate a meeting next week to discuss the dollar-value of the treatment plant.
- We currently operate Groton's system and bill them under the draft IMA.
- Ken Kalinowski comments that the plan will need to be submitted to the Pepperell and Groton Select Boards for approval.
- The BPW would like to have the attorneys approve and formalize the plan for January 1st.
- Tom Nephew has requested a meeting to discuss in the first week in November.

Misc. updates

- At Spring Town Meeting, \$2.5M was authorized for the Sewer Dewatering Project, but we continue to hold off spending due to market instability.
- Our existing dewatering equipment was installed 20-years ago and this equipment has since been rehabbed and upgraded, but is at the end of its' useful life.
- Plans are to use the existing budget to purchase a used Frac-Tank Trailer, which will hold up to 22,000 gallons and allow us to haul liquid to bigger plants for processing.

DPW

Birch Drive Extension – BPW Recommendation

- Plans were submitted with easement inconsistencies.
- Recommendation from the BPW is not required at this time.
- The Acting Town Planner was uncomfortable with the short timeline to make the Fall Special Town Meeting, and it will not be put forward. Ken expects the Article will be ready to include on the Spring 2024 Town Meeting Warrant.

Fall STM – DPW related warrant articles

The Fall Special Town Meeting will be held November 13, 2023.

- 2 DPW related Articles on the Fall Special Town Meeting Warrant are requests to amend and/or adjust the FY2024 Water Enterprise Fund Budget:
 - ARTICLE 2 - WATER ENTERPRISE FUND BUDGET AMENDMENT, RETAINED EARNINGS APPROPRIATION
To see if the Town will vote to amend the fiscal year 2024 Water Enterprise Fund budget by increasing the retained earnings line item appropriation by \$150,000.00, as a transfer from Water Enterprise Fund retained earnings, certified July 1, 2023, to offset reduced revenues from water user fees, or take any other action relative thereto.
 - ARTICLE 3 - WATER ENTERPRISE FUND BUDGET REDUCTION ADJUSTMENTS
To see if the Town will vote to amend the fiscal year 2024 Water Enterprise Fund budget by reducing certain line items in the budget, or take any other action relative thereto.

Transfer Station bag/tag – updates

- Purple bags are back and available for purchase in 2 sizes (15 & 33 gallon).
 - Board members revisit the discussion to impose an additional increase to the cost for bag tags (up to 39-gallon bags).
 - Increasing the cost of bag tags provides an incentive for customers to purchase purple bags, which are more cost effective than bag tags.
 - Transfer Station revenue must cover the price per ton of disposal.
 - Paul Brinkman provided staffing coverage at the Transfer Station on Saturday, October 7, 2023. Paul witnessed multiple opportunities where revenue could have been potentially lost as some customers were seen to be disposing of bags without bag tags visibly affixed. The bag tags are small and much harder to see.
 - Customers using purple bags for trash disposal make it easier for Transfer Station staff to monitor compliance that the household trash being disposed of has been paid for accordingly.
 - Mike Schrader notes that non-compliance at the Groton Transfer Station has essentially been eliminated with the implementation of their “orange bag” use exclusively (no tags).
 - Tom notes that properly designed incentives may encourage rule-following customers to “self-enforce” or “police” Transfer Station rules.
 - Ken reminds that customers abusing Transfer Station privileges could lose those privileges. The Board could vote to revoke privileges of known offenders.

- Ken explains that establishing a new Town Ordinance to fine customers caught violating Transfer Station rules/regulations is quite a lengthy process, requires Town Meeting votes, and could be difficult to enforce.
- Joe Mercado would like to establish a timeline when customers should expect that bag tags will no longer be available.
 - At that time only trash being disposed of in purple bags will be accepted.
 - Moving from bag tags to use of purple bags exclusively is what's best for the town in order to continue to provide affordable Transfer Station services to residents.
 - Tom proposes holding off on this to monitor the impact of the financial incentives put in place for customers to opt for using purple bags.
- Tom recommends a comprehensive communication plan that explains changes happening at the Transfer Station, why the changes are taking place, and penalties that will be strictly enforced for non-compliance. Transfer Station signage will need to be updated and posted reflecting these rules and enforcement/penalties.

Pat Harrington motions to raise the price of Transfer Station bag tags to \$20.00 per sheet, effective immediately; 2nd by Jim MacDonald. All in Favor (AYE – 4-0-0).

The motion passes unanimously.

Misc. updates

- In Fitchburg, the RFID gate access to the Fitchburg/Westminster trash facility is operated by a full time staff member using a hand-held RFID reader - it is not a fully automated process. The Westminster side of the facility is currently exploring options to replace existing gates and software and Pepperell will monitor this.
- Tighe & Bond, our Stormwater consultant, will make a presentation to the Board of Public Works in November as a condition of the MS4 Asset Management Grant.
- Railroad Square, Hollis Street and Rotary project update:
 - Contractor has a DIGSAFE.
 - Contractor will be surveying and doing a layout from the plans.
 - Signboards have been posted in the square
 - The project order is to start at Railroad Square, then Hollis Street (at the school), and the Rotary portion may be postponed until next year, pending weather and curbing availability.
- The Cemetery Expansion project layout and upgrades are nearly complete.
- The Oak Hill culvert is complete, the highway crew will place 4-inches of dense binder to get through the winter.
- Winter preparations are underway in the Highway Division.
- The DPW has a couple of employees on extended leave, staff continues to be shifted to cover where necessary.
 - Pat Harrington inquires if we have considered modifying hours at the Transfer Station to cover to Highway needs when shorthanded. Mike explains how the existing plan in place has been effective, to shift DPW staff around to cover where needed without negatively impacting Transfer Station hours of operation.
- The Highway Division Heavy Equipment Operator/Laborer 1 position is still vacant, this is the floating position working with the Highway Department and the Transfer Station.
- An offer is being prepared to fill the GIS Analyst position.
- The Transfer Station staff has done a great job validating annual window permit compliance.

Review, Approve and Sign any Documents Requiring Board Signatures

September Commitments

September Commitments were signed by the Board.

Next meeting dates

- November 13, 2023 – Fall STM
- November 16, 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; 2nd by Jim MacDonald All in Favor (AYE – 4-0-0).

The motion passes unanimously.

Meeting is adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

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