

# DENNIS WATER DISTRICT

## *Board of Water Commissioners*

Minutes of Meeting held

February 25, 2016

A meeting, having been duly posted, was held this date at the Dennis Police Department, 90 Bob Crowell Road, South Dennis and called to order by Paul F. Prue, Chairman at 6:00 PM. Water Commissioner Peter L. McDowell was present with Charles F. Crowell absent. Also in attendance was David Larkowski, Superintendent and Sheryl A McMahon, Treasurer.

### ***Public Comment -***

Ms. McMahon noted that a few customers were misunderstanding the section on the water bill explaining that the bills could be paid online. Under the section it states that there is a 25 cent fee for checks. The fee only applies to online payments. Checks delivered in person or by mail to the District office are not charged a fee. If someone does include an additional 25 cents it is credited to their account. It will be clarified explicitly on the August water bill.

### ***Customer Issues:***

a) Kelley, Joseph (Wroblewski) – 114 & 116 Gages Way, South Dennis 11751 & 11752 – request for abatement of water bill. Ms. McMahon advised the Board that this duplex had frozen pipes that resulted in extensive water damage due to the loss of just under a million gallons of water. The customer decided not to pursue the request following a discussion with Ms. McMahon in which she advised him that there are no provisions in policy that allow the Board to grant such an abatement.

### ***FY 2017 Budget Continued Discussion/Review/Vote***

*Operating & Maintenance – Diesel Fuel, Group Insurance* – Mr. Larkowski advised that, since the last Board meeting, Barnstable County received the bids for diesel fuel which has led him to recommend a reduction of \$7,000 in the line item. Ms. McMahon advised that she was recommending an increase of \$4,000 in the Group Insurance line item. She reported that she attended the Board of Directors meeting for the Cape Cod Municipal Health Group when the rates for FY 2017 were voted. The average increase across all active plans for the District is 9.47% based on participation. She further advised that she is aware of at least one employee who will be enrolling in the District's program during open enrollment which will be effective FY 2017. The Medicare plans for retirees are based on a calendar year so that increase is projected at one-half of the 10% increase, or 5% for FY 2017. On a motion made by Peter L McDowell, and duly seconded the Board ***VOTED (2-0-0) to adopt the revised Operating & Maintenance budget as printed on the revised draft and submitted on February 25, 2016, in the amount of \$3, 187.183.***

*Capital Appropriations – Water Billing, Computer, New Trucks, Construction Equipment* – Mr. Larkowski advised that since the last meeting he has reviewed the state bids for the trucks and backhoe/loader and has reduced the funding requests to \$95,000 and \$85,000 respectively. On a motion made by Peter L McDowell, and duly seconded, the Board ***VOTED (2-0-0) to set the FY 2017 Capital Appropriations \$319,600 exactly for the items as presented and funded on the sheet provided.*** Ms. McMahon advised that at this she was withdrawing the request for purchase of new water billing software and associated programming platforms for the ensuing fiscal year. She did state that it will very likely be requested during the FY 2018 budget cycle.

Ms. McMahon advised the Board that the Budget Summary has changed in accordance with the items most recently voted. The amount to be transferred from Free Cash current balance of nearly \$1.1 million is \$539,708, leaving a balance of slightly more than \$559,000 if all items pass as anticipated at the Annual District Meeting.

*Special Articles to be considered and voted for Annual District Meeting* – Mr. Larkowski reviewed with the Board the decision made at the last meeting on the style and size of a new tank to replace the existing elevated tank in West Dennis. The preliminary estimated cost for the project is \$4,000,000. On a motion made by Peter L McDowell, and duly seconded, the **Board VOTED (2-0-0) to place the following article on the warrant for the Annual District Meeting subject to revisions by District counsel.**

**“To see if the District will vote to transfer and appropriate, take from available funds in the Treasury, borrow or otherwise, a sum of money for the engineering, design and construction costs of a one million gallon composite style water tank in West Dennis including the laying and relaying of new or existing water mains to deliver water to and from the tank, and for the engineering costs, demolition and debris removal of the existing water tank including all other costs incidental and related thereto, or take any action relative thereto:**

**And further that the Board recommend the funding of this authorization as follows:  
\$500,000 from Free Cash,  
\$500,000 from the Maintenance and Power Washing of Water Tanks Appropriation,  
\$1,000,000 from Stabilization Fund and a  
\$2,000,000 Borrowing Authorization**

*Rescind Borrowing Authorization – Article 6, ADM 4/28, 2015* – Ms. McMahon noted that the Board has already voted to place this article on the warrant.

### ***Superintendent’s Report***

Mr. Larkowski advised the Board on the status of the water permit renewal process. He recalled having met with the Lt. Governor several months ago, the Cape group was finally able to attend a follow up meeting with the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection. Paul Anderson, Superintendent in Brewster and a representative from Massachusetts Water Works along with several other community members of the Barnstable County Water Utilities Association. Mr. Larkowski said that the dialogue was moving the issue forward especially in terms of re-examining the needs forecast that was used in setting the proposed withdrawal limits for Cape Cod. He has no confidence in the state’s needs analysis which projects a reduction in population. He does not believe the District can stay within the limits as proposed. He explained that the five-year window for establishing the average has now been moved twice because of how significantly the pumping changes year-to-year. This year the total cap was 1.16 billion gallons. DEP is projecting the 2030 limit will be a little over 1.2 billion gallons. They are working on a draft for Cape Cod water withdrawal permits based on not exceeding the limit proposed for 2030 so long as there are no other enforcement issues. As has been stated at Board meetings a number of times, there is ample water supply in the Cape’s aquifer. Water usage is actually fairly neutral. The Superintendent identified The Cape has abundant supply of water but we want to be good stewards of the environment. The District has a drought management plan. If conditions in the environment are normal then there is plenty of water available. If there are drought conditions then the District will ask for voluntary or even mandatory watering restrictions.

Mr. Larkowski referred to the SWIMI report that states that amount being taken from the Cape's safe yield is about 19%. There is no problem but, we will remain sensitive to the issue. The parties are still discussing which monitoring wells will be used by each town for their respective drought management plan. Mr. Larkowski is of the opinion that the permits will not be issued until 2017 though he is confident that things are moving the right direction.

### ***Treasurer's Report***

*Policy & Procedures – Meter Replacement Program, Obtaining Re-reads* – Ms. McMahon explained that these two policies and procedures are similar in nature in that they involve a lot of interaction among staff, management and customers. She reviewed the outline of steps that are taken to notify the owners of property of the District's need to gain access to the meter, either to make repairs so that meter readings can be obtained or to replace the meter as part of the on-going meter replacement program. If customers' are non-responsive, then additional notifications are sent and eventually a demand for access is issued that will result in the water service being terminated until such access is provided.

Mr. McDowell expressed his concern that a comprehensive set of procedures are available in the event of an unavoidable and extended absence that represent the duties and responsibilities of the Treasurer and Superintendent.

*February Water Billing* – Ms. McMahon reviewed the water billing and consumption analysis for the water bills issued in February for the July through December water reading cycle. She noted that while most usage groups, those being 10,000 gallons or less, 11,000 gallons to 50,000 gallons and 50,000 gallons to 100,000 gallons were relatively average; the number of accounts that used more than 100,000 gallons was more than 2,000. This is the group that accounts for the above average consumption for this billing cycle. This is the group with irrigation systems, hotels, laundry and restaurants. There are approximately 3,300 accounts identified as having a lawn irrigation system. They have been predominantly identified by collecting the information from field workers or customers who contact the District. Customers who have called concerned about their high usage generally had close to the same usage two years previously.

### ***Minutes of January 20 and January 28, 2016***

On a motion made by Peter L. McDowell, and duly seconded, the Board ***UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to accept the minutes of January 20, 2016, as presented.***

On a motion made by Peter L. McDowell, and duly seconded, the Board ***UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to accept the minutes of January 28, 2016, as presented.***

### ***Adjournment***

On a motion made by Peter L. McDowell, and duly seconded, ***the Board UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to adjourn the meeting at approximately 6:57 PM.***

Respectfully submitted,

Sheryl A McMahon, Clerk