

# **DENNIS WATER DISTRICT**

## *Board of Water Commissioners*

Minutes of Meeting held

August 24, 2017

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 Commissioners Peter L. McDowell and Alan Tuttle were present. Also in attendance was David Larkowski, Superintendent and Sheryl A McMahon, Treasurer.

*The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.*

### **Public Information:**

Chairman Prue advised that New England Water Works will be holding its annual conference in Brewster in September. As two of the presenters will be Kristen Berger and Michael Ohl from our consulting engineering firm, Chairman Prue said he was planning on attending. Commissioner McDowell requested the conference information.

### **Leak Abatement Request: Flynn, Steven M, 10 Rogers Way, Dennis Port, 01033**

Mr. Larkowski reviewed the application of Steven M Flynn for a Leak Abatement. He explained that the broken pipe was underground and went to one of the duplex units on the property. The owner had it repaired and provided copies of the invoices as well as a picture of the broken pipe. The water bill was for 648,000 gallons compared to the three-year average for the same cycle of 67,000. If granted, the Leak Abatement would provide a credit of \$884.05. The original water bill was \$2,250.77. On a motion made by Alan Tuttle, and duly seconded, the Board **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to grant a credit of \$884.05 to Steven M Flynn, 10 Rogers Way, Dennis Port, 01033 in accordance with the Board's Leak Abatement Policy.**

### **Consider Accepting Gift of Land from Peter J. Nyberg as authorized by Article 8 of the Annual District Meeting held April 25, 2017.**

Mr. McDowell advised the Board that he has spoken with Mr. Nyberg and the conveyance is on hold until he receives a written appraisal of the parcel being gifted.

### **Consider revisions to Personnel Code – Sections on General and Employment**

Ms. McMahon had prepared a draft copy of two sections of the Personnel Code which included proposed revisions. Mr. McDowell had concerns that anything that whatever was appropriate for handling paperwork, filings or anything of that nature would be assigned to the Clerk, anything having to do with financial matters be done by the Treasurer and the Superintendent continue handling outside work and keeping the water flowing and not get into any paperwork or as little as possible. In the General section the current version has the Superintendent responsible for providing employer Identification Cards. Mr. McDowell said it should be the responsibility of the Clerk. Ms. McMahon disagreed. Mr. McDowell suggested that the document have just one title for reference. Mr. McDowell noted that there are references to specific appropriate laws in the document and asked if it would be possible to avoid a lot of the specifics of different types of laws by stating that it is subject to all applicable laws and not list them all. Ms. McMahon said that it would be helpful to anyone responsible for implementing the personnel code to know the reference for those applicable laws. She said that it is a tool and is helpful to have the references. Mr. McDowell asked who is the ADA coordinator identified in the Grievance section. It was agreed that some of this questions might be best addressed in an informal workshop session. Chairman Prue suggested that

we could come to agreement in informal sessions and then vote in a regular meeting to finalize. Mr. McDowell said that he would like to have included that the management notify the Board members when they take vacation time. Mrs. McMahon reported that since she was first asked to notify of her vacations, she has always done so in email prior to a week's vacation. She does take single vacation days from time to time. Mr. Larkowski said that he is just a call away at any time. Mr. McDowell brought up a discussion regarding personnel records. He opined that the Clerk should be responsible. Ms. McMahon disagreed. She stated that the majority of records in a personnel file have to do with payroll and the Treasurer is responsible for payroll. Ms. McMahon stated that the primary roles of the Clerk has been the keeper of record having to do with the Board and the Annual District Meeting. Ms. McMahon explained that in a larger municipality there are separate Human Resource Departments (HR) and a payroll office. When an employee is enrolled in benefits it is handled by HR and a change form is given to payroll. The personnel file is maintained by HR. The District is very small and essentially the Treasurer performs most of the basic functions of an HR department as well as being responsible for payroll, therefore, she stated that it is the Treasurer who is most responsible for the personnel file. Mr. McDowell said that defining the various responsibilities under the personnel code is a matter of policy and therefore the responsibility of the Commissioners. There was a consensus among the Board members to hold workshop sessions to review in an informal manner at the District. Mr. Larkowski suggested that each Board member go through the two sections that have been edited and highlight prior to the workshop.

### **Superintendent's Report**

Mr. Larkowski provided a report on the progress of water tank, the pedestal crew is complete. They have left the site. The new crew to erect the steel tank have mobilized. There is a lot of steel on site and cranes and they are preparing to build the tank on the ground. Previous crew worked seven days for two months. The new crew will work eight day on six days off. The new crew has requested to work on Sundays. Mr. Larkowski said that he will allow it if it is the quieter type of work. They are prepared to finish this section on the ground and raise it to the top around the first of October. The tank will be contained when it is painted on the ground. Tank competition including all painting is anticipated by the end of the October.

The Superintendent advised that Verizon is going on the old tank and should be operational by the first of September which will help the wireless service in the area. They will be on the old tank until the new one is complete in the spring. They will not be out of service to make the switch.

Mr. Larkowski reported that the pumping for the summer season is about average. It was a little lower earlier in the year but, August has been closer to average. Last year we were right at the maximum allowed. The District's withdrawal permit has technically expired but, the Code of Massachusetts Regulations require us to continue under the old permit conditions. He expects that the permit will be renewed at very close to the current permitted limit.

The Superintendent began a discussion on maintenance of the distribution system. When he began with the District it was only 40 years old, now 32 years later, there are parts of the system that are no in excess of seventy years and are starting to need maintenance and upgrading. A lot of valves are not shutting down which causes a major issue when making repairs as large areas and many customers have to go without water. He knows of at least six areas that cannot be shut down and need to be addressed. He is working on developing a strategy to address this work. He said that a valve re placement program will be costly but is very important. To replace valves in intersections requires line stops of valve insertions. Line stops will minimize the service interruptions but increases the costs. He estimated one job for Cranberry Lane in Dennis Port to be about \$25,000. Mr. Larkowski said that his strategy would be to replace them as they are discovered. He said that it isn't just valves but there are hydrants failures as well. It is the age of the infrastructure and he would like to lay out for the Board the condition of the system and what the probable costs will be for the District to undertake the work for itself. There was a brief discussion regarding the retirement of debt. Ms. McMahon will provide the complete outstanding debt schedule to the Board.

New hire Devin Sullivan has joined the District las week as a laborer on service crew. Has some plumbing experience and outside maintenance. He resides in Mashpee.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Ms. McMahon reported that the billing for August was approximately \$100,000 less than last year. In three weeks the District has collected \$716,000 in revenue and it is posted. Most of that are checks received and processed in-house by scanning and deposits are done electronically. The collection rates is about 99%. Demands are issued at 90 days past due and more than \$150 due. There are about 150 to 230 certified demand letters sent. About 40 actual work orders are issued and probably half are paid. In the most recent Demand cycle only about six were actually shut off. Most of these are due to abandoned properties or properties in probate. Bills that are deemed uncollectable are committed to the tax office as a water lien. Those are done in November. Last year was only about \$16,000. When paid, the Town turns over the collected water liens to the District. The District charges 7% simple interest on outstanding water bills. Mr. Tuttle asked what percentage pay electronically. It is best if they go on to the District's website to pay because it requires a unique identification number to be used that goes with the account number which prevents misapplied payments.

Ms. McMahon reported that the books are closed for the end of the most recent fiscal year and anticipates that Free Cash will be approximately \$1,500,000. Ms. McMahon received permission from the Department of Revenue to close the Wastewater Studies appropriation of approximately \$123,000 as of June 30, 2017 and will role in to Free Cash. Ms. McMahon is recommending that the Board consider appropriating from that surplus the one-half million dollars necessary to complete the new water tank project and eliminate the need for any borrowing.

The Treasurer reported that the programmer for water software has passed away. I will be spending time researching new programming. She said that Paul Fernandes was a gentlemen and professional and great to work with over the years. She noted that he had also served as a selectman in his hometown of Randolph. She advised that it may require another platform and it will need to work with our GIS platform and third-party bill presentment. Bill presentment will make the bills available electronically for customers to see, print and pay.

Mr. Larkowski reported on the process for auctioning of surplus truck. He has decided to use Auction International which has been used by Dennis DPW. By around first of September the truck will be available for viewing on line for two weeks and people can place their bids. The bidding can be observed on-line at any time. He is going to email anyone who had previously contacted him regarding the auction so they are aware of the link to participate in the bidding. There is a fee for conducting the auction. The highest bidder will pay a 7% fee to auction company.

### **Minutes of July 27, 2017**

On a motion made by Peter L. McDowell, duly seconded, the Board VOTED 2-0-1 (PFP) to accept the minutes of July 27, 2017.

### **Adjournment:**

On a motion made by Peter L McDowell, in duly seconded, the Board ***UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to adjourn the meeting at approximately 7:02 PM.***

Respectfully submitted,

Sheryl A McMahon, Clerk