

WEST NEWBURY BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS
MEETING JANUARY 10, 2024
10:00 A.M. WATER DEPARTMENT OFFICE

Commissioners present: Bob Janes, Chair, Larry Corcoran and Jack Duggan
Mark Marlowe, Superintendent and Jodi Bertrand, Administrative Assistant
Angus Jennings, Town Manager Rob Phillips, Finance Committee

Meeting called to order at 10:02.

Rick Parker, Select Board 10:10.

Review balances, correspondence and draft minutes from December 13th. Janes moved to approve minutes, unanimous. (Executive session minutes from May 5th and August 17th being held)

Water Rates:- Jack and Rob had discussed the rate study before holidays. Jack reiterated some previous information about conservation rate and how this affects the rest of the water customers. Rob suggested doing a seasonal conservation rate and have multiple tiers. Jack spoke with Donny and Jason and they supplied him with usage/consumption in specific times of the year. Jack saw a spike in summer from Newburyport Water, but this year was not typical seeing we had to use all Newburyport water for a few months during the tank being done. Jack would like to show at every Water Commissioners meeting the usage for the previous month. Jack also does not want to drop the conservation rate from 35k to 30k and cause hardship for families but those using water with no regard to irrigate should be held accountable with a higher rate. Parker wanted to know if a pressure reducing valve can be installed and lower pressure to those who abuse water usage. Rob asked if Tata & Howard had sent back the updated Rate Study from Tata & Howard. Jennings said he went through by line item and it was unclear but further in report could see how they were itemizing operation budget. Jennings thought if we have current numbers from Hilltop Securities showing the actual debt to be incurred that we can give Tata & Howard these figures and they could update the "draft" rate study to show actual figures.

FY25 Budget- Jennings went over the Retirement, Health Insurance and MIIA Property and Casualty, Workmen's Comp. He received news that the Retirement went up 36% which was jaw dropping. This along with the expected mid-February Health and P&C MIIA figures, he will forward all this information when his office figures all the number.

Possible Testing Sites (Dole Place)- Janes asked what was going on with the potential testing site and the Weston and Sampson Study. Duggan would like Jennings to let them know when Weston and Sampson would like to meet.

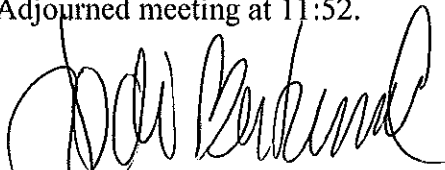
Other Matters:

- Commissioners signed the Recommendation of Award sent from Tata & Howard for the Church and Prospect Street Project. Bertrand will send all the requested copies back to Tata & Howard. After DeFelice Corp signs the contracts Jon Gregory will have the office send them back to us.
- Angus Jennings, Town Manager looked over the proposal from Tata & Howard for Construction

Administration and Resident Project Representation Services and he thought it would be fine for T&H to propose a contract on this proposal. He said it would be up to the Water Commissioners to decide and sign the contract when drafted.

- Jennings passed out a copy of an email sent to Mike Gootée, dated March 21, 2022 in regards to Capital Program. He feels like Tata & Howard might have lost in translation what the Water Department was looking for and the proposed work scope for the water system and Hydraulic plan needed to be broadened to show how the financing of these improvements could affect water rates (if financed by ratepayers) what other funding is available or how a cost share for water capital projects between Water Enterprise Fund, Taxpayer-funded General Fund may look like in terms of cost split.
- Parker wanted to see if before the next meeting the Commissioners would look into changing the ARPA funds that the town gave to the Water Department seeing the bid came in lower he feels some of the ARPA funds could be given back. Jennings told Parker that with the Hilltop Securities meeting coming up and the debt being established to not make any changes and wait to see how things fall into place.
- Janes received a few articles from Elsa Grammar having to do with the Artichoke "river" and Newburyport Water from many years ago. There was a discussion on this and Janes would like to look into this more.

Adjourned meeting at 11:52.



Jodi Bertrand
Administrative Assistant