



Office of the Board of Selectmen
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Andrew M. Jolda, Chairman
Randall V. Becker, Vice Chairman
Mark G. Dowgiewicz, Secretary
Robert J. Miller
Donald D. Bourque

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES
Monday, April 30, 2018**

Webster Town Hall, 2nd Floor, Board of Selectmen's Meeting Room
350 Main Street, Webster, MA 01570

MEETING OPENING: At 6:00 p.m., Chairman Jolda called the meeting to order. The following individuals were present: Chairman Andrew Jolda, Vice Chairman Randall Becker, Selectman Robert Miller, Selectman Donald Bourque, Town Administrator Douglas Willardson, and Executive Secretary Jennifer Cederberg. Selectman Mark Dowgiewicz was absent. The Board stood and took the Pledge of Allegiance.

WATER AND SEWER RATES: Water Superintendent Greg Woods reviewed a PowerPoint presentation with the Board. He reviewed the life history of pipes made out of different materials and what pipes in Webster are primarily made from. He noted that there are 11 miles of pipes nearing the end of their life cycle. He reviewed the Water Department's Capital Improvement Plan which assumes that the useful life of a water pipe in Town is 100 years old and that a 1% per year replacement program would be conservative. He stated this would mean approximately 3,700 ft. or \$740,000/yr. depending on the size and diameter of the pipe. He said pipes would be ranked based on their age, condition, functionality, water quality complaints, etc. The burden to replace pipes is falling more and more on the tax payer as the pot of money being allocated from the Federal Government is small. Mr. Woods reviewed what the Mass DEP suggested annual bill rates are which are based on towns' median family incomes, and that Webster is far below the recommended rate. He stated that a large portion of the Water revenue comes from a small percentage of customers, mostly strip malls, commercial customers, and the local hospital. He recognized that the Board is looking for other sources of funding. He stated that the Town needs to find a way to pay back the Water Treatment Plant and have the funds to move forward with continued Capital Improvement.

Mr. Woods reviewed three different rate increase options for the Board to consider that would meet the increased debt service associated with the treatment plant and provide for additional revenue needed for capital improvements. Mr. Willardson recognized that the Board wants to move toward the option that has the least amount of impact on users and although infrastructure improvements are of a benefit to all users, this is a policy decision.

Sel. Becker stated that the earlier decision to assess a flat rate fee of \$20 per bill for capital improvements plus a 2% increase really impacted low users while high users don't appear to be impacted. He noted that it is the high users who cause more wear and tear to the infrastructure. He asked about the volume of the Town's water

consumption and was told it has been fairly steady from year to year. Sel. Bourque stated that a 14% increase seems high when previous increases have been 0% or 2%. Sel. Becker stated the problem stems from prior years when the Town did not implement increases and now we're forced to have to catch up. Mr. Willardson stated that rate increases can be achieved by doing multiple, large increases or just do it in one large hit. Sel. Miller stated that he is leaning toward the option of a 14% increase as the Town has a lot of projects to accomplish as well as a lot of problems and we need to make sure there are funds to move forward. Mr. Woods reminded the Board that even when the water treatment plant is up and running, there will still be other issues that will need to be addressed. Chm. Jolda commented that an additional \$80/year added onto the base user who has a low bill is a very large impact where a 14% increase is much less. Sel. Becker stated that the presentation showed how much money the Town is going to need moving forward and now the decision needs to decide how to do it. He indicated that the fair way to do it is by instituting a 14% rate increase.

Motion by Sel. Becker, seconded by Sel. Miller, to rescind the earlier vote to add a Capital Improvement Fee of \$20 to each water bill and instead increase the water rate by 14%.

DISCUSSION: Chm. Jolda opened the discussion up to residents in the audience. A resident questioned whether or not the Town will need to be replacing or relining pipes constantly or, if not, will we find ourselves in the same crisis 40 years from now. Sel. Miller stated that the Town will select areas to start on and will move forward based on a priority list that has been developed. Mr. Woods stated that there will be ongoing improvements that will need to be made to the overall system and not just the pipes and that Tighe and Bond have put together a plan for the Town. Mr. Becker stated that we can only plan so far ahead as interest rates cannot be projected.

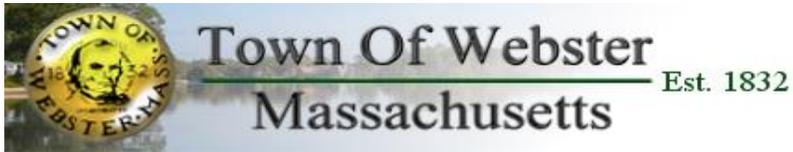
The motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURN: At 6:41 p.m.;

Motion by Sel. Miller, seconded by Sel. Becker, to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Cederberg, Executive Secretary to the Board of Selectmen



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BOARD OF SELECTMEN REGULAR SESSION MEETING
DOCUMENTS AND EXHIBITS: MONDAY, APRIL 30, 2018, 6:00 PM

1. Board of Selectmen's Meeting Agenda: 4/30/18
2. Webster Water Department PowerPoint Presentation: 4/30/18