



Town Of Webster Massachusetts

Est. 1832

Webster Water Sewer Commission

350 Main Street
Webster, MA 01570

Earl Gabor - Chairman
Rick Neeser - Vice Chairman
Dan Duteau - Secretary
Tom Andrade

Doug Willardson - Town Administrator
Gregory Woods - Water Superintendent
William Burke - Sewer Superintendent

Meeting Minutes

May 23, 2019, 2:30 PM

Webster Town Hall, Irene Martel Meeting Room
350 Main Street, Webster, MA 01570

Attendees: Earl Gabor, Rick Neeser, Dan Duteau, Tom Andrade, and Greg Woods.
Absent: Bill Burke and Doug Willardson

Chairman Gabor called the meeting to order at 2:30 PM.

Meeting Minutes

The Commissioners reviewed the draft minutes from the May 9th meeting and voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

1 - Existing Business

A – Abatement Requests: Mr. Woods stated that there were two abatement requests for the Commission to review.

16 Pine Tree Lane: Mr. Woods explained that the Department had notified the resident of their high water bill and during the site visit had identified a leaking meter. The meter body was leaking in a manner that the meter was recording the amount of water flowing to the ground. Mr. Woods recommended that the sewer portion of the elevated bill be abated to the average usage of the last three quarters. The Commission discussed the abatement request. A motion was made, and seconded, to approve the abatement of the sewer portion of the bill to the average water usage. By Roll Call vote: Gabor – aye, Neeser – aye, Duteau – aye, Andrade – aye.

10 Lakeview Road: Mr. Woods stated that this property is only connected to the sewer system and that the homeowner is requesting the bill be abated because the property is under construction. Mr. Woods stated that this property is a seasonal home and as such, is only billed the flat sewer rate once per year. Commissioner Gabor asked if the sewer had been disconnected at the street or if it was just not used. Mr. Woods said



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he would have to do some research to see if a disconnect permit was submitted to the Sewer Department. The abatement request was tabled pending additional information.

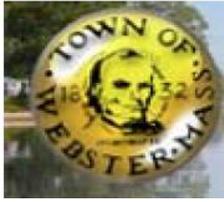
B – Flat Rate for Sewer Only Accounts: The Board had previously inquired about the flat rate for accounts with only sewer connections. Mr. Woods provided a graph showing the distribution curve of water usage for residential water accounts. The analysis showed the median quarterly usage of 1,150 cubic feet and an average quarterly usage of 1,351 cubic feet. If the flat rate was based on these two usages, the Sewer Department’s revenue would decrease by ~\$90,000 and ~\$69,000 respectively. The Board discussed various alternatives to this structure, including the potential for an entire rate re-structuring. The Board requested that Mr. Woods collect rate survey proposals from qualified firms. The topic was tabled for further discussion.

C – Municipal Water and Sewer Charges: Commissioner Gabor stated that he would like to investigate the amount of revenue that the Departments waive for municipal use. Mr. Woods stated that he has not had the opportunity to calculate the charges to each municipal account but would likely have that information available in several weeks. The topic was tabled pending additional information.

D – Water Meter Replacement Policy: Mr. Woods said that a resident contacted the Department stating that the water meter at her home was analyzed and found to contain lead. She stated that she would like to purchase a newer, lead-free water meter but asked if there was a refund available. Mr. Woods explained that in 2012 the regulation for the amount of lead in drinking water products, such as valves & meters, was reduced and new items are stamped “no lead”. The regulation, however, did not require municipalities to remove existing infrastructure that was made prior to the regulation. A motion was made, and seconded, to deny the refund of any water meters purchased prior to the 2012 regulation. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

2 – Water Dept. Update: Superintendent Woods provided an update on the status of the Myrtle Avenue relining project. He stated that the mains are in the process of being relined and that he anticipates the project being completed in three or four weeks. Mr. Woods also provided an update on the treatment plant, stating that the contractor is revising their schedule on a weekly basis to expedite the completion of the project.

Mr. Woods informed the Board that approximately 400 delinquent account letters were mailed on May 20th. The amount of revenue associated with these delinquent accounts was ~\$560,000. Mr. Woods provided a chart showing the timeline of billing and collections within the fiscal



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year. The Board discussed the relative timing of the notification letters and certified mail Shut-Off Notices, and how these deadlines fall with respect to the fiscal year and turn on/off dates. He also provided a copy of the Application for Water/Sewer Appeal for those customers with delinquent accounts that have a potential hardship repaying the amounts. The Board discussed potential options regarding hardships and payment periods. The Board requested that the Town departments tell customers to make payments on their delinquent account and complete the Appeal form. The Board agreed that appeals to the certified mailing will be within 10 days of the certification date, otherwise the account will be shut-off if the balance is not paid. Appeals to the certified letter will be reviewed and those approved will have a 90-day period to pay the outstanding balance. The Board made a motion, which was seconded, to engage the Town Administrator and Town Accountant on the collections process. The topic was tabled pending further information.

3 – Sewer Dept. Update: Passed over.

4 – New Business

A – Summer Meeting Schedule: The Board discussed modifying the summer meeting schedule. Commissioner Andrade stated that he would not be available to attend the next meeting in two weeks. The Board decided to continue to meet twice per month for the month of June.

Adjournment

A motion was made, and unanimously approved, to adjourn the meeting at 4:15 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for June 6th at 2:30 PM in the Irene Martel Meeting Room.

Respectfully submitted,
Gregory Woods
Water Superintendent

Attachments: Residential water use distribution chart
Billing & Collections Gantt chart
Water/Sewer Appeal Form