



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

June 6, 2019, 2:30 PM

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

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

Absent: Tom Andrade

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

Meeting Minutes

The Commissioners reviewed the draft minutes from the May 23rd meeting and voted unanimously to approve the minutes as written.

1 - Existing Business

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

10 Lakeside Avenue: Mr. Woods explained that the house was purchased in November 2018 and is under renovation. The property only has a sewer connection and since it was a seasonal property is only billed once per year. The homeowner is requesting an abatement since the house is unoccupied and the existing balance did not show up on the MLC at closing. Mr. Woods explained that the property is billed in January and the MLC would not have shown an existing balance at the time of sale. The Commission discussed the abatement request. A motion was made, and seconded, to deny the abatement based on the fact that other season properties get billed once per year regardless of usage. By Roll Call vote: Gabor – aye, Neeser – aye, Duteau – aye.

222 Gore Road: Mr. Woods explained that the Department had identified a high water use at the property when processing the bills. During a scheduled visit, Department staff found a leaking pipe in a crawl space under the building. The property owner was notified by the tenant and the burst pipe was repaired. Since the leaking water did not enter the sewer system, Mr. Woods recommended the sewer portion of the bill be abated



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to the average of the previous three billing cycles. The Commission discussed the abatement request. A motion was made, and seconded, to approve the abatement of the sewer portion of the bill back to the average of the previous three billing cycles. By Roll Call vote: Gabor – aye, Neeser – aye, Duteau – aye.

5 Henry Street: Mr. Woods explained that the homeowner is requesting an abatement of the March 2019 billing cycle. The homeowner stated that a leaking toilet was identified and fixed. Mr. Woods recommended that the abatement be denied because a) the abatement policy states abatements will only be considered for current bills, and b) the water entered the sewer system. The Commission discussed the abatement request. A motion was made, and seconded, to deny the abatement of the sewer portion of the bill for the two reasons stated by Mr. Woods. By Roll Call vote: Gabor – aye, Neeser – aye, Duteau – aye.

B – Water Shut-off Policy Status Report – Mr. Woods stated that there have been approximately one dozen appeal applications received by the Department from property owners with outstanding balances. The Committee discussed the Shut-off Policy and directed Mr. Woods to coordinate with the Town Collector to send out certified letters to the top 20 outstanding accounts within the two weeks. Since earlier delinquent account lists showed property owners with multiple accounts, Mr. Woods was asked to combine those owners with multiple delinquent accounts. Mr. Woods said he would calculate the timeline of notifications, beginning with a June 20th certified letter mailing. The Board requested that letters be sent to tenants of property owner’s that would receive a certified letter.

C - Municipal Water & Sewer Usage – Mr. Gabor stated that he had compared the number of water & sewer accounts to the number of property tax accounts and calculated that 72% of the Town is serviced by the water system and 76% is serviced by the sewer system. Mr. Gabor made a case that municipal water use is being paid for by only portion of the residents (i.e. water / sewer customers) while other municipal utility bills are being paid for by all the residents (i.e. real estate tax payers). Mr. Woods stated that will provide more information on the actual costs of municipal usage at an upcoming meeting. The topic was tabled.

D - Flat Rate for Sewer Only Accounts: Mr. Woods reviewed a graph from the last meeting that showed 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 the



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implication of adjusting the rate, the cost of maintaining the collection system infrastructure and the relative cost for those properties for septic system installation and repair. The Committee also discussed the potential installation of a water meter on residential wells to accurately calculate a sewer bill. Mr. Woods discussed the feasibility, and difficulties, of metering residential well owners. The Board requested that Mr. Woods investigate the monetary costs of installing the meters and generate policy points on how it could be implemented going forward.

E – Review Action Item List: Chairman Gabor read through the current Action Item List and the Board made adjustments to pending and completed tasks.

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. Commissioner Gabor asked for cost breakdown of the Myrtle Avenue project so future projects can be accurately budgeted.

3 – Sewer Dept. Update: Superintendent Burke suggested that Tighe & Bond engineers come to the July 18th meeting to provide an overview of the sewer collection & treatment system, as well as future capital improvement plans being considered. The Board agreed with this suggestion and recommended Mr. Burke coordinate with the project manager.

4 – New Business – no new business

Adjournment

A motion was made, and unanimously approved, to adjourn the meeting at 3:45 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for July 2nd at 2:30 PM in the Irene Martel Meeting Room to review Shut-off Policy Appeal applications.

Respectfully submitted,
Gregory Woods
Water Superintendent

Attachments: Residential water use distribution chart