



Town Of Webster

Massachusetts

Est. 1832

Webster Water Sewer Commission

350 Main Street
Webster, MA 01570
Earl Gabor - Chairman
Tom Andrade - Vice Chairman
Dan Duteau

Marc Becker
Rick LaFond - Town Administrator
Tom Cutler - Water and Sewer Superintendent, Secretary

Webster Water Sewer Commission
Public Hearing Meeting Minutes
Thursday, April 21, 2022
6:00pm

Selectmen's Meeting Room
Webster Town Hall, 350 Main Street, Webster, MA 01570

Attendees: Earl Gabor, Dan Duteau, Tom Andrade, Marc Becker, ~~Rick LaFond~~, and Tom Cutler

- Meeting Called to Order at 6:00 P.M.-Chairman Gabor presented an overview of the water system and Iron and Manganese challenges the Town faced for the past 10 years. Mr. Gabor stated the Town worked closely with MassDEP and our consulting engineer Tighe & Bond to build a new state of the art Iron and Manganese removal facility, ice pigging, uni-directional hydrant flushing, and water main replacements on Nelson, Whitcomb and Lincoln completed last year along with a ARPA funded water main replacement project for Lake Street this year. Chairman Gabor further explained our newest challenge PFAS which is a national issue with plenty of systems over 100 parts per trillion. Webster's peak 3rd quarter of 2021 was 24 parts per trillion at Station #3 which remains offline in standby mode since the site was over the limit. We also have two of the six wells at Station #1 & 2 slightly elevated but well below the 20 part per million maximum contaminant level since the water is comingled. We are actively pursuing temporary and permanent treatment solutions. Drought conditions, weather patterns, and the fact that our largest source remains offline we are forced to implement a mandatory outdoor water use restriction from May 1st thru September 30th which was advertised in the Webster Times today.

Resident Bob Whitelaw stated he was concerned about the water sewer rates and the increase in taxes and the late notice on the water restriction. He stated he is on a fixed income. Mr. Whitelaw also mentioned the Town's communication could be better and he does not visit the website for information and there must be a better way to communicate.

Chairman Gabor agreed with Mr. Whitelaw the Town's website is not easy to navigate and we will work on that in the near future.

- **Open Public Hearing to Discuss** the FY '23 Webster Water and Sewer Rates-A motion was made by Commissioner Duteau and seconded by Commissioner Andrade to open the public hearing at 6:20pm.

Thomas Cutler conducted a presentation of future system improvements and monetary needs for the water and sewer systems. An 8% rate increase for water and a 6% increase for sewer proposed for FY-23 and additionally, a 3% increase proposed annually for both water and sewer to maintain sufficient operating funds however, future increase will be determined once the Tighe & Bond rate study is completed mid-summer. The presentation included the following system improvements over the next 1-5 years:

Water Improvements:

- Project 1 (FY22 & 23) – New main 12 & 16-inch
 - Lake Street (Under contract) ~\$2.37M
- Project 2 (FY23 to 25) – PFAS Treatment
 - Memorial Beach WTP/Bigelow Well ~\$10-15M
 - (Treatment costs are under review and estimated at this time)
- Project 3 – New & upsize main to 12-inch
 - Worcester/Old Worc./Bigelow ~\$2.45M
- Project 4 – Reline & upsize main to 12-inch
 - School Street ~\$1.88M

Sewer Improvements:

- Project 1 (FY22 &23) – Collection System Repairs
 - Phase 1 (Under contract) ~\$1.22M
- Project 2 (FY23) – Aeration Basin Rehab
 - Phase 1 (Evaluation in progress) ~\$1.09M
- Project 3 – Collection System Repairs
 - Phase 2 ~\$1.80M
- Project 4 – Collection System Repairs
 - Phase 3 ~\$2.20M

** For additional information please visit: www.webster-ma.gov/409/FY23-Utility-Rates

Resident Diane Blum Mandile stated she also shared the same concerns of resident Bob Whitelaw and had a few questions in regards to the capital improvements during the presentation. Mr. Cutler explained the water division will require 15-25 million over the next five to ten years with 10-15 million for PFAS alone which was not anticipated. The sewer division will require 5-10 million due to NPDES changes which EPA/DEP require efforts by the Town to enhance treatment to meet permit and replace failed aeration equipment at the wastewater plant. Mr. Cutler further explained the improvements are identified by the Asset Management Plan completed by our Engineering firm Tighe & Bond and the larger project like PFAS will be spread out over a longer period with low interest MassDEP SRF loans. We will also investigate grant opportunities and hope to have more information in August when we apply for the SRF funding and have a better idea of the costs. Ms. Mandile asked if the hearing was recorded. Chairman Gabor stated it was not. Ms. Mandile stated she had concerns that it was not recorded and it should be more transparent. Mr. Cutler stated we are working on improvements and transparency on the water/sewer websites and plan to post the FY 21, 22, and 23-presentation's online.

- **Close Public Hearing-** A motion was made by Commissioner Becker and seconded by Commissioner Andrade to close the public hearing at 6:45pm.
- **Vote to Establish the FY '23 Water and Sewer Rates-** A motion was made by Commissioner Becker, and seconded by Commissioner Andrade, to adjust water rates by 8% and sewer rates by 6% by roll-call vote: Duteau-yea, Gabor-yea, and Becker-yea, Andrade-yea by roll-call vote: Duteau-yea, Gabor-yea, and Becker-yea, Andrade-yea.
- **Adjournment-** A motion was made, and seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 6:56pm by roll-call vote: Duteau-yea, Gabor-yea, and Becker-yea, Andrade-yea.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas W. Cutler
Water & Sewer Superintendent

Attachments:

FY23 Water & Sewer Improvements Presentation

**Link to presentation and FY23 Rates: www.webster-ma.gov/409/FY23-Utility-Rates