



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

# Town of Southwick

454 COLLEGE HIGHWAY SOUTHWICK, MA 01077

## Department of Public Works- Water Division

Telephone (413) 569-6772 Fax (413) 569-5001

### Water Commissioners Meeting Minutes

### Southwick Town Hall- Conference Room 2 – Hybrid Meeting

Thursday, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 6:00 pm

Members in Attendance: Edward Johnson, Chairman  
John Cain, Commissioner

Others Present: Randy Brown, DPW Director  
Christie Myette, DPW Office Manager

Absent: Dave Meczywor, Commissioner

Guests: Bill Maguire, 144 Berkshire Ave

The meeting was recorded.

The meeting of the Board of Water Commissioners was called to order at 6:00pm.

Public Comments: NONE

### APPOINTMENT

#### 144 BERKSHIRE AVE ABATEMENT REQUEST

Mr. Bill Maguire was in person at the Water Commissioners Meeting to discuss his abatement request. Mr. Maguire was seeking an abatement due to a high water bill. During the summer he had a leak in his service line and a leak inside his home during the same time. The water leak in the service line was repaired promptly. It was determined that the low pressure or debris in the service line due to the leak could have caused a malfunction of a flapper in a toilet. This internal water leak was resolved about 10 days after the service line without any intervention from the homeowner. An abatement was issued based on the calculated amount of water lost during the leak at the property at the lowest rate tier.

*A **MOTION** was made by John Cain to issue an abatement of \$57.00. This was seconded by Edward Johnson.*

*MOTION PASSED*

*Roll Call Vote:*

*Edward Johnson: Yes*

*John Cain: Yes*

Review of the October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Water Commissioners Meeting Minutes.

*A **MOTION** was made by John Cain to accept the October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Meeting Minutes. This was seconded by Edward Johnson. MOTION PASSED*

*Roll Call Vote:*

*Edward Johnson: Yes*

*John Cain: Yes*

#### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

1. Water bills for the April 1<sup>st</sup> to October 1<sup>st</sup> billing period were due 11/14. Demands will be sent out in the coming weeks to any unpaid customers. A total of 671 bills are outstanding in the amount of \$417,369.82.
2. Grouf's Water Leak Services started a Town-wide leak detection on 11/8 and will continue for another week. A total of 9 locations were flagged for potential leaks so far which will be investigated further. This work is conducted every 3 years per the Water Withdrawal Permit.
3. Jeff Vedovelli continued to perform inspections at backflow devices for those devices that require 2 tests per year.
4. On 10/31, there was a water main break on Granville Road that was repaired by DPW crews with assistance from Crestview Construction. This break occurred shortly after a fire broke out on Maple Street. Fire department will no longer place a pumper truck at the Granville Road Pump Station to pump from the main pressure system into the Granville Road pressure system.

The Water Commissioners discussed the fire on Maple Street also the resulting water break on Granville Road caused by the Fire Department drawing off a hydrant before the pump station was bypassed. The Commissioners requested Randy speak with the Fire Chief again regarding the procedure going forward, training and the possibility of installing a valve that will bypass the pump station during situations when the hydrants on Granville Road must be utilized.

5. Mark Kuenzel of 70 Granville Road contacted DPW on 11/5 to complain about low water pressure. The system was designed for a 35 PSI to 40 PSI pressure in this neighborhood. However, at the other end of Granville Road near College Highway pressures are in the 90 PSI to 95 PSI range. The pressure cannot be increased out of concern for creating too high pressures near College Highway. Mr. Kuenzel thought that pressures were lowered after the 10/31 fire on Maple Street, but in fact it remained the same.

Work Order Summary was provided to the Commissioners.

Twenty-Five Elderly Rate Applications were presented to the Water Commissioners. These applicants met all the necessary requirements.

*A **MOTION** was made by John Cain to accept the Elderly Rate Application for the 25 applicants who meet all necessary requirements. This was seconded by Edward Johnson.*

*MOTION PASSED*

*Roll Call Vote:*

*Edward Johnson: Yes*

*John Cain: Yes*

## OLD BUSINESS

NONE

### MULTIPLE UNIT BILLING

At the last meeting it was discussed that the Select Board acting as the Sewer Commissioners were adopting a Multiple Unit Billing Policy for billing purposes for apartment complexes with more than 10 units. The Sewer Commissioners created a policy, and the Water Commissioners would likely follow suit to keep billing uniform. The policy that the Select Board voted on as Sewer Commissioners was modified slightly to include the following statement: "This policy would not apply to locations which have unaddressed leaks."

Rental units under this policy would be capped at the tier two rate for 10 units or more.

*A **MOTION** was made by John Cain to approve the Water Multi Unit Residential Rate Cap Policy as written. This was seconded by Edward Johnson. MOTION PASSED*

*Roll Call Vote:*

*Edward Johnson: Yes*

*John Cain: Yes*

## NEW BUSINESS

### DEMAND FEES

Demand fees are sent out for any unpaid bills after the initial bill is due. The cost of the process is about \$13.49 per piece. The current demand fee is \$10.00 which makes us short by about \$3.49. The Treasurer, Collector, Clerks Office suggested we look at this fee and raise it to at least cover costs. The Commissioners were given a chart on what other local Cities and Towns charge for demand fees.

*A **MOTION** was made by John Cain to increase the water bill demand fee to \$25.00. This was seconded by Edward Johnson.*

*MOTION PASSED*

*Roll Call Vote:*

*Edward Johnson: Yes*

*John Cain: Yes*

### PFAS LITIGATION

Over the last few years PFAS has been in the news and locally Westfield had an issue with it in their water system. Our testing results for PFAS has been low in our quarterly sampling. The EPA came out with new proposed regulations in March that would lower the federal level of PFAS and DEP will likely respond and lower it to that level or lower. Our current levels of PFAS are 2-4 parts per trillion(pppt) and under EPA formula if the result is under 5ppt then that is acceptable. There are two companies, Dupont and 3M have produced products that contain PFAS and they have set aside funds for a class action lawsuit. Each water system has the chance to participate in this settlement. Randy has reached out to Town Counsel and has yet to get a response. The Commissioners asked Randy to reach out to local cities and towns to see what their thoughts are. This will be an ongoing agenda item.

NEXT MEETING: January 4, 2024

*John Cain made a **MOTION TO ADJOURN** this was seconded by Edward Johnson the meeting was adjourned at 6:36 pm.*

*Roll Call Vote:*

*Edward Johnson: Yes*

*John Cain: Yes*

*MEETING ADJOURNED*

Respectfully Submitted By,

Christie Myette, DPW Office Manager

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Ed Johnson, Chairman

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David Meczywor

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John Cain