

**BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS MEETING HELD: January 19, 2021**

**LOCATION:** Webinar

**ATTENDANCE:** W. Gelinas, P. Abair, T. O'Brien, B. Fenney, T. Christensen, J. Dunn, F. Vachon, D. Keane, M. McNally, J. Rintoul and B. Taddia

**W. Gelinas** called the meeting to order at 4:03 pm and asked if anyone is recording the meeting other than the webinar: None other than the recorded zoom meeting.

**REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES OF 11/17/2020 MEETING: W. Gelinas entertained a motion to approve the meeting minutes dated November 17, 2020; T. O'Brien made a motion to approve the meeting minutes; P. Abair seconded the motion. The vote was taken and was unanimously affirmative.**

**SUPERINTENDENT REPORT: B. Fenney** updates: Highway/Parks department had 2 retirements on January 8, 2021: Roger Bourget retired after 21 years of service; John Demerski retired after 33 years of service. We currently have 3 open Skilled Worker positions open; interviews were held on 01/14/21; Kyle Frega accepted the position pending pre-employment requirements; Lucas Bodine accepted position and then declined. DPW will pick up Christmas trees through January 29<sup>th</sup>. The DPW completed their reporting for the 2020 Annual Report. Annual statistical report is due in March; this is for all water related items: commercial, industrial, institutional, municipal, residential for the year, back flow connection reports, emergency response plan, treatment of the Town's water supply and unaccounted water. Annual connection reporting must be submitted by February to Springfield Water and Sewer Commission (SWSC) and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP); this is for all new sewer connections and all Inflow & Infiltration (I&I) taken out of our sewer system. **Felix Vachon** will report the I & I data/numbers at the next meeting. Tier 2 Hazardous Material report is due 03/01/21; **T. Christensen** will send report to the Board for their review. DPW will start our FY22 Rates & Fees after FY22 Budget is reviewed and approved by the Board.

**DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT REPORT: T. Christensen:** Planning the paving projects that were not done last year and will complete when weather permits. **Complete Streets:** plan on bike lanes for connection points from the rail trail to the High School to the Town line into Longmeadow; **MS4 Stormwater compliance:** complete dry weather outfall screening; 50 left due at the end of this fiscal year; after we reprioritize and depending on contaminant hits; we look for trouble areas that cause pollution. Due to lack of funding we asked DEP for an extension for Allen St landfill. We will get more funding this year and get a design together and start clearing.

**Board Comments: P Abair:** What are the paving projects, streets? **T. Christensen:** Maple, Dearborn, Gates, Shawmut, Maryland, Denslow, intersection of Shaker connecting to Pease, Woodbridge, Sturbridge and Quarry Hill; these have been bid out and ready to go; we do not have to rebid. **T. Obrien:** Woodbridge and Sturbridge did not hold up; part of the reason is the water flow that occurs underneath; for the underperforming neighborhoods, do you take measures to put a bigger base down or deal with the water? **T. Christensen:** A lot of our streets don't have much of a base; a lot of sub divisions did not get built to spec; if we start milling or cold planing or reclaiming a roadway and run into areas not up to spec we fix it while were there; we added under drainage up on Patience Way; fixing drainage issue in house on Chatham before paving; **D. Keane:** curtain drain was put along the curb line.

**WATER & SEWER ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:** **F. Vachon** updates: Spending lots of time on reporting for DEP, EPA and SWSC. **Water:** Crew is doing minor maintenance work outside of the streets; handling minor emergency calls and meter appointments. **Sewer:** Sewer main jetting and manhole inspections in the easements; looking for problem areas when the weather gets better.

**BUILDING FACILITIES MANAGER REPORT:** **J. Dunn** updates: Getting schools ready for reopening; balancing report for the fresh air intake; Tighe & Bond reviewed our equipment to see if it is working up to design specs and waiting for final reporting; older equipment is performing the way it should.

**Board Comments:** **P. Abair:** Were any specs given to you by the Health dept. before the schools were open re: level of air quality. **J. Dunn:** not so much air quality but volume; they want 6 changes an hour in the rooms; we are achieving this in most of schools. **B. Fenney:** Our preliminary report shows that most and all of our ventilation systems meet today's standards based on the occupant loads within the building; we received our balancing report from an outside contractor last week; Tighe & Bond is reviewing the report and putting it together with our specifications on all of our HVAC units and will share with the school departments; teachers and families are concerned and want to make sure their kids are safe in our school and that our air quality and air exchange meets today's standards and are safe to be occupied; report will go out as soon as it's available.

**P. Abair:** Are you applying same standard to Town Hall and the Library? **B. Fenney:** No, we are just doing this for schools because of the occupancy loads; other Town buildings are closed; Joe took the initiative with extra filter changes, cleaning protocol and custodial log sheets to make sure people are safe.

**W. Gelinis:** Do we have to change the amount of frequency times when changing HVAC filters? **J. Dunn:** In our schools we went from 3 changes a year to 5; trying to keep up with more frequent changes with MERV 8 filters; MERV 13 filters put a lot more wear and tear on our equipment and are 6-8 months out to get them; there are different levels of infiltration; new addition at Meadowbrook has the MERV 13 filters. **B. Fenney:** MERV 13 filters would restrict air flow in some of our equipment; you can't put them in as it will starve or overheat the motor. Per our department head meetings COVID spreads/transmits through droplets from your mouth and or nose; I do not know of any cases where COVID has spread through HVAC units.

**HIGHWAY & UTILITY MANAGER REPORT:** **D. Keane** updates: **Parks:** Clearing brush on rail trail; Xmas tree pick up; service mowers for spring; help Rec Dept. with the skating rink in the center. **Highway:** Completing pothole repairs with hot box; tree work orders; washing and salt neutralizing our sanders and trucks after storms; vehicle and plow repairs. **Water/Sewer:** Mark-outs, meter appointments; manhole inspections out in the easements; sewer jetting **Stormwater:** Outfall inspections; camera work trying to find I & I; mark-out in areas for out fall work; call in dig safes. **Staff:** Roger and John will be greatly missed; they were veterans when I started and it was a sad day to see them go.

**Board Comments:** **W. Gelinis:** After a storm driving through Springfield and East Longmeadow is like night and day. Our Town does a great job clearing our roads. **D. Keane:** It wasn't easy for our crew during COVID; we worked through it and took breaks and made sure they took the rest they need; and do it safely. I believe we did a good job to make sure our roads were safe and clear for our residents.

**FY 2022 Proposed Operational Budget Review:**

**Building: 422**

Salary: \$501,799.53 (+1.58%)

Non-Salary: \$375,597.60 (+0.36%)

**Total: \$877,397.13 (+1.05%)**

**Sewer: 440**

Salary: \$534,569.88 (+0.24%)

Non-Salary: \$1,205,889.32 (+10.49%)

**Total: \$1,740,459.20 (+7.12%)**

**Snow & Ice: 423**

Salary: \$20,297.00 (0.00%)

Non-Salary: \$127,875.00 (0.00%)

**Total: \$148,172.00 (0.00%)**

**Highway: 421**

Salary: \$1,282,195.64 (+1.52%)

Non-Salary: \$462,495.32 (-0.10%)

**Total: \$1,744,690.96 (+1.10%)**

**Water: 450**

Salary: \$589,136.81 (+1.33%)

Non-Salary: \$1,639,525.32 (+3.85%)

**Total: \$2,228,662.13 (+3.17%)**

**Waste Collection: 433**

Salary: \$19,704.00 (+2.20%)

Non Salary: \$68,100.00 (0.00%)

**Total: \$87,804.00 (+0.49%)**

**Stormwater: 490**

Salary: \$148,807.43 (+1.77%)

Non Salary: \$141,672.00 (+1.94%)

**Total: \$290,479.43 (+1.85%)**

**Utilities: 429**

Non Salary: \$1,069,300.00 (-0.23%)

**Total Public Works - \$8,186,964.85 (+2.70%)**

**Total Salaries/OPEB - \$3,096,510.29 (+1.30%)**

**Total Operational - \$5,090,454.56 (+3.60%)**

**General Fund Liabilities - \$3,927,364.09 (+0.70%)**

**Board Comments: P. Abair:** Were our current water rates projected by Springfield? How does this align with our estimate to determining rates? **B. Fenney:** SWSC gives us a projection every year with budget calculations; this is what they estimate that we are going to spend; treatment plant for EL projections this year for water and sewer is \$723,303; main interceptor project, the river crossing the CT river is \$67,968; estimated true-up based on this year is \$169,940; total budget line item from SWSC is \$961,211; we need an operational budget to determine rates and fees; hoping to forgo any rate increase to the Town residences this year and will review with the Board after calculations are completed. **P. Abair:** Are any of the vehicles being replaced in the Capital plan? If we replace a vehicle we can remove the 5241 vehicle repair increase? **B. Fenney:** I believe so; do not have capital plan to confirm. **P. Abair:** If we replace a vehicle we can remove the 5241 vehicle repair increase? At a 33% increase we need to start looking at replacing our vehicles if this is an example of not replacing our trucks. **B. Fenney:** yes and no; when ordering a new vehicle, and when the money is bonded and allocated to the division it can take 6 months to a year to get the vehicle on our lot; most of the increase is due to the vehicle maintenance (oil). **D. Keane:** The only truck in the near future that would need to be replaced is dump truck #4 which is under contract now; the only other trucks that would need to be replaced in the future would be truck#'s 49, 12 and 77. **P. Abair:** Is there an evaluation of that contract (solar credits); if our usage is at certain levels is there any chance of getting greater than 20% savings? Is there anything in the contract?; can the Town get more of a savings based on volume? **B. Fenney:** Will review the contract (solar credit) and start a review process. **T. O'Brien:** The all divisions operational budget is a high number; it is outpacing the economy. **B. Fenney:** That includes all divisions; the overall number includes all Springfield water and sewer increase; there are some significant changes to the dept. that you don't see but it is reflected in the budget. **P. Abair:** The increase for SWSC on our operating budgets is sort of out pacing our normal increase; that is a key thing to keep a watch on as we go forward; we have to balance it out with capital projects and impacts on our water and sewer rates; between maintenance costs and reporting costs we need to look into funding programs; go back to what's driving them; and are they required on a yearly basis, can we stretch them out to 2 years. **B. Fenney:** We are looking into adding another Sewer division employee for our National Pollution Discharge and Elimination Systems permit - new regulation. Because of our level of service budget, we did not account for this in the

budget; we are having other employees working double duty. **P. Abair:** We need to start going back to some of these requests; they need to be revised and stretched out. **B. Fenney:** SWSC did do a legal fight in court with the EPA and or DEP and lost; we have to comply with these requests. **T. O'Brien:** I'm not happy with it (budget) but I'm ok with it; there is nothing we can do about SWSC; personally I feel like we have to many vehicles but now is not the time to address with COVID situation; I think we're going to have to tighten our belt moving forward and visit uniforms and Town vehicles. **P. Abair:** We need to get rid of the trucks that are driving our expenses and repair accounts; they have to be addressed to reduce other expenses; were fixing equipment that breaks down every year; we can't maintain a 3-4% increase in the budget to help the Town out overall; how can we run our department run more efficiently and challenge the request or push them out; we have a turnover of people so we are losing experience which lowers productivity. Overall, I think the department does an excellent job overall given what is given; it is only going to get tougher; I would like to look at the water, sewer and stormwater rate structure before approving for the enterprise funds. **B. Fenney:** As of now we don't have enough employees to keep up with our requests; I can't not give anything regarding rates and fees until we have a base line to go with so that will be the next step after we approve the budget. **W. Gelinas:** All board comments make sense; we have looked into the past on trying to trim fat on the vehicles but now is not the time to think of that during COVID; the overall increase of 2.69%; I'm not sure what inflation is this year but it's under 3% which is what I like to see; the SWSC is a big hit - 12% increase is insane; there is a lot of costs that we can't control and that are outside or our purview; all the MS4 permit work is man hours that are being taken from other areas of the Town; it's not where we want it to be but where would we trim is question? If we were to trim the easy one would be vehicles, but we can't do that with COVID environment; now is not the time to address during contractual cycles; a lot of stuff that went up with uniforms and licensing is contractual; not sure how much the board gets involved with negotiations with the Town. **B. Fenney:** When developing the budget the line share of our increases are contractual obligations and salaries for employees and SWSC; any and all the other costs are negligible based on their increase and dollar figure. **W. Gelinas:** Would like to see what is contracted and outside of our control costs in a separate column – yes or no; third party, we have no other choice but to service, or union contract. Good discussion, it is good to hear the critical feedback so we get better. **B. Fenney:** I will revise and send it back out to the Board so we can see what's happening in the budget; keep in mind that the enterprise funds are separate and stand alone and do make an impact based on our rates and fees; the line shares come from SWSC.

**OTHER BUSINESSES: Billings Hill Cemetery Stormwater Fee: Jim Rintoul:** Sent a letter to Town manager explaining our position with having a cemetery pay a stormwater fee; we have limited funds and can't pay anymore; all our conventional graves are sold; for the last 22 years Jim McKnight used to work for your board; I have worked to build up the treasury so we would have enough money to maintain the property; I feel that it is improper and immoral to charge a nonprofit cemetery to pay the fee; with billing expenses I don't think you can send a \$7.50 bill to our cemetery, have us send you money and process the whole thing without costing the Town money.

**Board Comments: W. Gelinas:** Bruce, how many cemeteries do we have in Town; how are they zoned; and does it make sense to zone them residential **P. Abair:** I reviewed the Stormwater land use codes 962V; First Congregational church was included on the list with the cemeteries; should we be taxing any exempt property aligned with the property taxes? Maybe we should look at cemeteries by themselves; whether it's a church or non-profit organization they are able to pay water and sewer bill but a cemetery? I tend to agree with Jim. **B. Fenney:** I don't think this is the proper venue to start talking about all of our stormwater fees and codes; we are here to discuss Billing's cemetery; if and when we start our rates and fees we can discuss restructuring our entire rate fees. **P. Abair:** Why don't we forgive the fee for all cemeteries; it wouldn't be fair to forgive one and not the others; would we want to make a motion to exempt all cemeteries. **T. O'Brien:** I understand and am sensitive to that; what is the lowest you could bill them?; everyone has responsible by virtue of having real estate in the Town; if you give forgiveness, you are opening up a can of worms and every nonprofit in Town is

opened up to forgiveness; we need to find the balance, what is the correct thing to do. **M. McNally:** Suggestion to table the issue and bring it to Town Council; the treatment of all similarly situated entities is key; a quick request to our law firm might help us make a decision that makes sense for everyone. **W. Gelinas:** Mr. Rintoul, we will table the discussion until the next meeting and at that time we will have a chance to talk to Town council and get an answer for you.

**Billings Hill Cemetery Stormwater Fee: W. Gelinas entertained a motion to table the issue with paying the stormwater fee until it is concurred with Town Council: T. O'Brien made a motion to table the issue; P. Abair seconded the motion. The vote was taken and was unanimously affirmative.**

**National Grid Street Light LED: T. Christensen:** Meeting with National Grid at the end of the week and will have and update for the next meeting.

**SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING:** **B. Fenney** will send an email invite for the next meeting on Tuesday, January 26, 2021 and will have it posted to the Town website.

**W. Gelinas entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:31pm; P. Abair made a motion to adjourn the meeting; T. O'Brien seconded the motion, there being no further discussion; the vote was taken and was unanimously affirmative.**