

BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS MEETING HELD: March 30, 2021

LOCATION: Zoom Webinar

ATTENDANCE: W. Gelinas, P. Abair, T. O'Brien, B. Fenney, T. Christensen, F. Vachon, M. Schrader and B. Taddia

Absent from meeting: J. Dunn, D. Keane

W. Gelinas called the meeting to order at 4:06 pm and asked if anyone is recording the meeting other than the webinar: None other than the recorded zoom meeting.

REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES OF 01/26/2021 MEETING: W. Gelinas entertained a motion to approve the meeting minutes dated January 26, 2021; 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: All DPW positions have been filled. New Skilled Workers as of February 22nd: Kyle Fraga and Todd Bourcier; as of March 29th: John Colon Rosario. We received a few resignations which will be announced in the next meeting. We will be hiring 2 seasonal summer employees this year. **FY22 Capital Plan:** Currently under review; the Board will be contacted with any updates on approved projects. **Annual Statistical Reports:** Completed March 17, 2021. Report reflects all water used for commercial, industrial, municipal, residential for the year, backflow connections, and updated Emergency Response Plan.

FY22 Proposed Rates & Fees: B. Fenney reviewed the proposed details with the board:

Water & Sewer rate comparison

Water Rates: recommend no increase: remain at \$3.60 per 100 CF

Sewer Rates: recommend no increase: remain at \$3.70 per 100 CF

Stormwater Rates: no change

Water Services Fees: no change

Sanitary Sewer Services Fees: no change

Stormwater Services Fees: no change

Other Services Fees: no change

Life Cycle Maintenance Fees: no change

Transfer Station Rules & Regulations: no rate changes (added items to be sold)

Board Comments: **P. Abair:** Why is Longmeadow sewer rate so low? **F. Vachon:** Longmeadow does not have the amount of infrastructure that we have so they can afford to keep their rates lower; EL has 17 pump stations to maintain and is costly. **P. Abair:** Extremely high "water" reserves; and if water reserve is higher would like to know the reason why; would like to see the terms of each project on the debt and interest spreadsheet.

B. Fenney: Additional capital projects are not included in the anticipated ending balance for FY22 because projects have not been confirmed; the higher reserve will allow us to purchase rather than bond monies.

T. Christensen: No change to the Stormwater rate structure; many parcels (land code 900's) were reviewed due to resident/business owners calling regarding the rate; exempt parcels are not exempt through utilities; we reviewed each parcel based on what was fair and what we thought the intent of the Stormwater bylaw; parcels that had a land use code that was not indicative of the actual use of the site was changed; some exempt parcels having a large amount of impervious area were bumped up to impervious rate structure based on what other parcels are being charged. **P. Abair:** Were there any changes to the 962V classification; are all cemeteries in the same land use code; cemeteries have a few driveways through it overall; if all cemeteries are in the same land use code with nothing else in it we can assign them a 0 fee;

T. Christensen: The V designation stands for vacant; we interpret parcels through impervious coverage; we can't change the land use code to a specific fee because it will incorporate other parcels; yes they have the same land use code but they don't have the same land usage;

each parcel was manually changed depending on what the land is used for; all cemeteries have impervious surface area; all cemeteries have a flat fee: \$25.00; vacant industrial codes are charged the same as vacant residential **W. Gelinas:** Cemeteries are unique; this may open the door to other entities that are nonprofit with limited funding; a review of the cemeteries fees may be prudent; inclined to leave it as is, \$25.00 is not completely unreasonable; cemeteries have some civic responsibilities to the community; there are impervious surfaces in the cemeteries; we could make an exception to the cemeteries that have no impervious surfaces but that is not the case. **T. O'Brien:** I think it's good the way it is **P. Abair:** change the limitation of residents purchasing truckloads of items (wood chips, compost, and loam) from 1 to 2 times per week for this year; why limit revenue. **B. Fenney:** The Board has the option to table the stormwater cemetery fee discussion or move forward with approving the FY22 Rates & Fees.

The Board agreed to change the number of times a resident can purchase items (wood chips, compost and loam) at the Transfer Station:

W. Gelinas entertained a motion to change the limitation of residents to purchase items at Transfer Station from 1 to 2 times per week; P. Abair made a motion for the change; T. O'Brien seconded the motion, there being no further discussion; the vote was taken and was unanimously affirmative.

The Board decided to move forward with approving the FY22 Proposed Rates & Fees with the addition noted above to the Transfer Station:

REVIEW/APPROVE Draft FY22 Rates & Fees: W. Gelinas entertained a motion to approve and accept the FY22 Proposed Rates & Fees; T. O'Brien made a motion to approve the meeting minutes; P. Abair seconded the motion. The vote was taken and was unanimously affirmative.

OTHER BUSINESSES: Tighe & Bond Michael Schrader, Rates & Fees Analyst: Mike presented the Water Enterprise Financial Model. The primary use is it to help develop rates for our next budget by projecting usage and then calculate revenue; then calibrate by checking back with committed revenue; this is a fully informed data driven transparent decision making process for the Board. The model was modified to include 3 different rate structures. The tier rate concept would shift the cost to higher water users and take the pressure off the lower water users. This is a long term financial plan that gives us insight to what's to come. The model allows us the ability to project and change the way we pay for debt and see the cost savings for future fiscal years; and manage reserved monies for unanticipated expenditures.

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

W. Gelinas entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:45 pm; 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.