

Meeting Minutes
Charlton Water and Sewer Commission
Date: December 7, 2015

Location: Selectmen's Meeting Room, Town Hall

Attendees:

<u>Members</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>Present</u>
Paul Gagner	Y	Robert Lemansky	Y
Joseph Spiewak	Y	Gabriel J. Berthiaume	Y
Alex J. MacKenzie	Y		

Mr. Gagner: Welcome everyone to another exciting meeting of the Charlton Water & Sewer Commission. Today is December 7th and it is 6:35 p.m. As usual we will start off with paying some bills.

Mr. Spiewak read the warrants from Carol's report. **Mr. Spiewak: I make a motion to approve the following warrants: Verizon: \$227.68; Osterman Propane LLC: \$864.77; Town of Charlton: case of paper: \$23.11; total: \$1,115.56; Woodard & Curran: cost of Scada and CoMag PC upgrade; services for the period ending 10/2/15: \$314.40; Town of Charlton: cost of gasoline and diesel for the period 9/1/15 – 11/3/15: \$1,586.84; Town of Charlton: postage for quarterly billing on 12/1/15: \$297.31; Peter D. Starkus: repaired or checked readings on meters at 18 properties: \$275.00; GJB Construction Services Inc. d/b/a Slims Sewer Service and Joseph Berthiaume & Sons: pumped and cleaned Vine Street pump station: \$250.00; emergency overtime pump service: \$100.00; total: \$350.00; Jeff D. Helgerson Excavating, Inc.: invoice #8170: work scheduled with Jody St. George: cleaned out 8 lift stations and 2 manhole inverts in the street; and unloaded at the sewer treatment plant; Vactor truck and Operator; 7.5 hours at \$150.00 per hour portal to portal: total: \$1,125.00; Bigelow Electrical Co., Inc.: invoice #G24641; standby generator services: \$772.20; Lefort Electric Inc.: invoice #1329; pump controls changeout and residential permit for 15 Hollywood Drive: \$560.00; RACO Manufacturing & Engineering Co.: invoice #91077: 2 Alarm Agent WRTU realtime indoor enclosures: \$3,390.00; 2 AlarmAgent 120 VAC to 12VDC power supply: \$100.00; 2 Alarm Agent – Standard Service – 3 years: \$1,512.00; total: \$5,002.00; Elliott Construction Services, LLC: invoice #13471; install an invert on J Hammond Road; police detail by others: \$1,000.00; Jennings Custom Homes Co. Inc.: various work on the North Sturbridge Road pump station: \$1,449.00; and Commissioner payroll: December: \$400.00; seconded by Mr. Lemansky. Mr. Lemansky to Steve: That was for the generator on Route 20. Steve: No—the generator in the plant. **Vote: Unanimous. Mr. Spiewak: I make a motion that we approve the minutes of November 9, 2015 as printed; seconded by Mr. Berthiaume. Vote: Unanimous.****

Steve gave his office report. We are waiting on information regarding the water pump service area. I asked them for an estimate and am waiting to hear back. Calls and emails for grinder pump replacements. We have installed 54 grinder pumps to date. We still have 17 at the plant. We have 3 more scheduled. EPA and DEP: They have just now signed a permit write up. I'll keep you posted. The author takes the new regulations and looks at the old regulations and tailors the permit accordingly. Steve continued: Sonic starts are being prepared for installation. (Mr. MacKenzie arrived at 6:47 p.m.) Steve: The RBC covers. We had a meeting on December 2. All parties were present. The plan is to start on Monday morning, the 14th, at 6 a.m. and continue until 3:30 p.m. The first two days will be to assemble and make sure all the parts are going to go together. Wednesday, Thursday, Friday: they will put up 1, 2 and 3; and the following week they will put up 4, 5 and 6; Wednesday, Thursday,

and Friday; then the MTA stations: 4, 5 and 6 days. Still working on the sewer rates; I'll keep it on the to do list. Next, Steve advised that he called Vadar as we were having issues with the software. The town hall called in Ken from Micronet; and he was able to get everything up and running. The bills went out on Tuesday. Steve continued: We had Thursday and Friday off. Steve advised that he has gathered more information in conjunction with rates; compared the usages of the MTA against our flows; and I expect to get some information out to the commission this week so that we can look at where we are supposed to be and where we will go. Mr. Spiewak: Mr. Chair—so far we have looked at expenses and income; compared to where we budget and where the money's coming from; and I will send spreadsheets to Steve so he can send them out to you. Our retained earnings have been trending down in the last three years. They are down about \$114,000.00. It's clear that our income isn't keeping up with our expenses. What has saved us is we have had a significant capital budget put in every year; but we haven't been spending as much. The MTA flows have gone down. They are at about 18%; and were at 27%. Mr. Gagner: Did we come up with any concrete figure that we can be passing around? Mr. Spiewak: That is about a week away. It is looking like we have a deficit of about 10%; but it may go higher. Mr. Gagner: Since it hasn't been raised since 2008, I don't think that is unreasonable. We will be scheduling a public meeting on rates. Steve suggested setting a date after the first of the year. Let's wait until the first week in January. Mr. Lemansky: I suggest that in the very short future, a week to 10 days, that Steve put a meeting together with Jody and I would like to attend, the purpose being to look at the MTA high octane sewerage that they send to us. Currently that is in place; but that needs to be looked at because it is part of our rates. The treatment plant incurs additional costs in chemicals to treat the waste. Mr. Gagner: If we decide to raise the rates across the board, will we figure the MTA rates separately? Steve: The plan I have been working on that and whatever rate we determine, it would be across the board. Mr. Gagner: I think the MTA rates should be done separately. Mr. Lemansky: If our general sewer users' rates go up 10%, without doing the actual analysis on what the MTA sewerage is costing us, we wouldn't be fair to our users without making sure that we do that. Mr. Spiewak: The rates are the rates for everybody; and the MTA surcharges need to be looked at and calculated differently; and changes would be implemented at the same time. Mr. Lemansky: I believe that Jody is checking the industrial users – are they staying within the limits. Steve: Yes. Mr. Gagner: Old Business: the meter reader. Steve: I came across an opportunity of a handheld unit about the size of a cell phone. There are 15 – 20 accounts that don't read for whatever reason they did not read. I have to make arrangements with homeowners to check the meter for a number of reasons. I inquired about cost – about \$525.00. It's an option. Mr. Berthiaume: I thought we had one. Steve: We have the reader and the gun; but we don't always get all of the readings. We use the Sensus radio reader; when it comes back, we can download the information into Vadar. Steve: Peter serviced 18 units and he found a variety of different issues from broken wires; wires not connected; and a meter box missing. The radio read meter that we had, we haven't used in almost two years. We have borrowed one from E.J. Prescott. That unit doesn't handle a 5 or 6 foot cable because it went into the old unit (could not get batteries for it). **Mr. Spiewak: I make a motion that we allow the administrator to buy the new handheld unit for a cost of up to \$700.00; seconded by Mr. Berthiaume. Vote: Mr. MacKenzie: I; Mr. Berthiaume: I; Mr. Spiewak: I; Mr. Gagner: I; Mr. Lemansky abstained.**

7:10 p.m. Chris McClure met with the commission. At the last meeting I attended, we discussed applying for a grant for a water study which was voted by the legislature at the end of last year during the Patrick administration. The Water & Sewer Commission was interested in grant monies and how to get access to that money. I had reached out to State Representative Peter Durant's office and was referred back to the Town Administrator's office. I talked to Robin as to how to gain access to that money – how to apply. I put together a Master Plan. What direction are you going to go relative to the expansion of the water system; and getting water to the Charlton reservoir? It is a starting point.

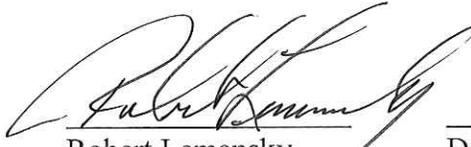
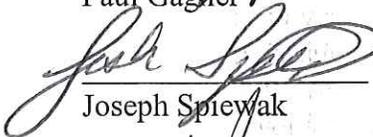
Future expansion? Once that is determined, we can put a package together and go after some of that money, and develop water expansion in Charlton. Mr. Lemansky to Chris: What's available right now is \$30,000.00. As to the \$6,000,000—it will be available for a period of five years as long as we come forward with a comprehensive plan; i.e., the East Charlton reservoir – possibility of connecting with the Oxford system. Servicing was too far out. That opens the door to consider going with Aquarian. The DOT salt shed has done considerable damage in that area. There needs to be some study work done. We were going to be the operators and this was going to be treated as a consecutive water system. Mr. Lemansky to Chris: There was an option in the water agreement with Southbridge. Water from Oxford would be another municipal agreement. You may want to address that. The commission is fully engaged in this. Mr. Gagner inquired whether the town of Oxford had the desire to sell us water. Mr. McClure: Way back when I talked to Oxford, they indicated that they could not answer until they knew what Charlton was looking for with respect to Pioneer Drive beyond Schmidt Equipment. They do have a tank there. Mr. Gagner to Chris: What is the source of Oxford's water? Chris: Gravel. We have the as built from the buildout. Mr. Gagner to Chris: We tested up to Richardson's Corner but not east of there. Across from Abbott Construction, there is a gravel box. There's nothing down Oxbow or Glenmere. Mr. Lemansky to Steve: When Mass Highway was doing drainage work across from Dad's, they were supposed to pressure test the line. Mr. Gagner: Some of the guardrails may have punctured the pipes.

Ms. Craver joined the meeting at 7:27 p.m. Ms. Craver: You have \$30,000.00 from the water grant. I'll continue to advocate being comprehensive as you go. One of my main concerns is regarding the sewer loop and another 6 miles of infrastructure. The commission needs to go forward with a study regarding becoming a consecutive water supply. Thousands of dollars will be going to Southbridge. I don't know what the total cost will be to continue to build the system in a partial way, and not knowing where you want to go. I think it's premature. I will not contact Aquarian unless our chairman directs me to. When I look at the planning grant, I think about what the commission needs to know and where to go next. Mr. McClure: Review of information on the consecutive water supply. You know how many properties are connected to the water system. The other component: The town of Southbridge was doing a rate study on what the wholesale rate would be. Ms. Craver: I've gone to Community Compact asking for funding. I could talk with them about using that towards Oxford. Then you would have the ability to have Chris do the technical components. That's about \$25,000. I want to avoid--down the road 5 years--saying 'we should have looked at it'... Contamination over on the side of where Casella is – we need a permanent solution. The other area you have no other plans for is the Buffumville area. Mr. Berthiaume to Chris: Do our lines connect to that Oxford section? Chris: No. They only go down to Oxbow Road. Mr. Berthiaume: If we were a consecutive water system, we could live those lines ourselves. Alex to Chris: You can't do secondary treatment anymore? Disinfectant wise--secondary treatment. Chris: There are certain requirements by the MWRA. Ms. Craver: You can be looking at privilege fees and betterment costs. Mr. MacKenzie: If there are viable sources available within a reasonable distance, we should look at those. Ms. Craver: They are going to a watershed base. The \$6,000,000 bond bill. It has been authorized but it has not been actually funded yet. That grant was written in conjunction with Oxford. They are looking for water down in the Buffumville area. Mr. Lemansky to Mr. Spiewak: You had brought up the point. We should look into the study of the consecutive water system with Southbridge. The only thing that matters is that Southbridge did give us a paragraph about the consecutive water supply in the Intermunicipal Agreement. A letter from us to the Southbridge DPW should be drafted saying, 'We're considering doing this. What are you going to charge us for a fee?' Mr. Lemansky: Once we go to consecutive—we will have a meter at the town line. Whatever water goes through that meter, we have to pay for it. If

the water doesn't meet our quality of water requirement, it is our responsibility; and we are going to end up with a huge obligation. We will have to take on a water department which means we have to have employees and vehicles. Ms. Craver: You could use Whitewater. Mr. Lemansky: As long as we pay them. The last thing I want to do is make bills higher than what they already are, particularly if we go to a consecutive water supply--180,000 gallons a day of both 5E and 6W; and then all of the Charlton and Southbridge customers. If we go back to East Charlton, and there are areas over there where it is a known fact that there are wells over there producing in the vicinity of 100 gallons a minute...100,000 gallons a day. In my mind – if we were to find that water source, and keep it under 100,000 gallons a day, that could be the water source to where we could do the school loop, Charlton Center, back down Old Worcester Road to the South Charlton Reservoir if a location was found that was a good source of water. I see this as probably the most economical way for us to put our toes in the water before we jump in. I would be very cautious about doing a consecutive water supply. The question is: What are we going to have to pay? Mr. Gagner: Southbridge will have to tell us what kind of a discount they are going to give us? How much of a discount will we need to keep the customer bills the same? What percentage will we need to work with? We also need to make sure the quality is there. Mr. Lemansky to Mr. Gagner: Weston & Sampson had done an analysis back in 2005 or 2006 with respect to what it would cost us to have our own water supply. I think we could put some of the plans from then together as a Master Plan. Back then it was going to cost us \$126,000 a year to operate the system. Mr. Lemansky: The ultimate goal is we want to have our own supply that we develop.

Mr. Spiewak: Given where the water line runs and not being practical, **I make a motion that we re-vote the betterment for 26B-A-1 from \$44,493.90 to \$0; seconded by Mr. MacKenzie.** Discussion: If the water line went up Route 31...? The water lines are dry. Mr. Berthiaume: If he was to hook up, Southbridge would have to give him permission to connect. Then he would be subject to a privilege fee. **Vote: Mr. Spiewak: I; Mr. MacKenzie: I; Mr. Berthiaume: I. Abstained: Mr. Lemansky and Mr. Gagner.** Motion passes. Mr. Spiewak to Steve: Write a letter to him advising that we are going to have it zeroed out. Steve continued: The Town Administrator sent me a form to transfer it out. I sent it to you for comments. If the comments are ok, I'll send it to her. Mr. Lemansky: What's the purpose of the form? Steve: I don't know. They are asking for cost estimate changes. They asked what the obligations that we had were. They asked what our rates are and also the debt we are carrying, which is \$6,500,000.00; and does the municipality have a master plan? In addition, we borrowed \$1,800,000.00 for the North Main St. Extension.

8:35 p.m. **Mr. Lemansky: I make a motion to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Spiewak. Vote: Unanimous.**

	<u>1/11/16</u>		<u>1/11/16</u>
Paul Gagner	Date	Robert Lemansky	Date
	<u>1/11/16</u>		<u>1/11/16</u>
Joseph Spiewak	Date	Gabriel J. Berthiaume	Date
	<u>11 Jan 16</u>		
Alex J. MacKenzie	Date		