



TOWN OF CHARLTON
Minutes of February 10, 2020
Water/Sewer Commission

Submitted by _____

Date _____

Received by _____

Date _____

Present: Dave Cantwell, Paul Gagner, Robert Lemansky, Russ Jennings, Peter Boria, Sue Guerin
Absent: Jenn Vaughan

I. Call to Order

Mr. Lemansky called the meeting to order at 6:30pm

II. Commissioner's Public Forum

III. Consent Agenda/Warrant/Abatements Approvals as Needed

Mr. Jennings motioned to accept the minutes from January 27, 2020 as printed. Seconded by Mr. Gagner. Motion passes unanimously.

**Mr. Jennings motioned to accept the warrants dated February 10, 2020 as printed in the amount of \$53,815.89
Seconded by Mr. Gagner Motion passes unanimously.**

IV. Scheduled Appointments

6:35pm Andrew Golas, Town Administrator.

Mr. Golas came before the commission to introduce himself. Mr. Boria stated that Mr. Golas is also the Chief procurement officer he will be overseeing contracts and agreements and we will need to keep him on top of anything we do. He will also be working with them on the budget.

6:45 Bob Mackie of Beta Group Inc.

Mr. Mackie was there to discuss the scope of work for Buffumville PWS and answer any questions. This scope of work was recently approved by the MA DEP. There was a standard contract that needed to be signed and was submitted to Mr. Golas for his review. Because of time frame of the FY20 grant, it leaves us with 5 months to get the work complete.

Tasks include: Site development, which will take us through the planning board, water main concept, Well driller- will continue his process, Wetland and habitat survey, Topographical survey, and meetings. This work is to be covered by the grant that was renewed through the DEP. BETA was a significant help when preparing back up documentation for the grant submittal.

Mr. Jennings motioned to approve the contract between the Town of Charlton and BETA as printed. Seconded by Mr. Cantwell. Mr. Gagner asked if the fee was going to be included in the motion. Mr. Lemansky added with the fee not to exceed \$126,500.00. Mr. Jennings "amended as such". Mr. Cantwell seconded the amendment. Motion passes unanimously.

7:05pm Bill Pucci – Kid Power Gymnastics 221 Sturbridge Rd.

Mr. Pucci is following up to the last time he was in front of the Commission which was August 2019 where the privilege fee was discussed, as well as the expected usage. Over the past few months pictures of the meter was sent to the WS office showing that he uses less than 200gpd and is looking to close the loop, that the board is happy with the privilege fee that was paid for and, that he can discontinue taking pictures of his meter.

Mr. Boria stated that at the last meeting it was motioned that there is no action to be taken at this time. Mr. Lemansky stated that the WS Dept. sees usage and can see should there be any huge spikes, and if there were to be a change in use in the building that it would come forward. Mr. Pucci stated that we could check on him at any time but did not want to discontinue doing what he has been doing until a discussion was had.

7:10 Matt Abrahams - Abrahams Group-Water Rate Study.

Mr. Boria summarized by saying approximately 16 months ago we went out for proposals for a water rate study to see if it would be cost effective for us to operate the Charlton water infrastructure from the Rte. 169 pump station to the remainder of our town . We hired the Abrahams group and have taken small steps working with the TOS. If we were to go consecutive, what type of cost savings they (TOS) would have so that we could negotiate a lower price for the water and we could afford to go consecutive.

Mr. Abrahams and Mr. Boria went and met with Heather Blakely and Steve Gregoire of Southbridge, talked about their operations and the costs attached. We were able to find a water rate that would make them approx. 5-10% more not operating the system, and just billing us for water. And with that lower rate we could actually afford to operate our own system, fund our budget and take over operations.

Once we understood how their finances work and how it would look different if the TOC were to go consecutive, we discussed how their expenses and revenues would change. They came up with a rate of \$2.50hcf, that was the number that was used to look at the financial viability of Charlton operating the system.

Mr. Abrahams reviewed projected revenues and expenses for the next few years. The revenue showing for Charlton is based on the TOS current water rates. 90K was carried for an outside contractor to operate the system. The TOS or their operator would be responsible for getting water of a certain chlorine residual to the pump station then we are responsible from there.

Mr. Lemansky stated that this is a 24-7 responsibility that requires meeting state standards. This is something that needs to be really looked at. Mr. Boria stated that the water rate study is one component of the information that is needed- showing that it is financially viable. The next step is, besides the financials; are all the other responsibilities worth it? Some time ago, Mr. Boria spoke with the water superintendent from the Town of Paxton as they are a consecutive water supplier. At that time they did not have any major concerns recommending not to do it. **Mr. Jennings asked that Mr. Boria revisit discussions with the Town of Paxton and ask what do they see as negatives for being a consecutive supplier.**

Mr. Lemansky asked if Mr. Abrahams could supply the commission with the backup information/spreadsheets on how he came up with the numbers. Mr. Lemansky stated that a decision was not going to be made tonight. But did ask when discussing financials in the future if it will need to be in executive session. Mr. Boria reached out to the Attorney General's office and they stated that there was nothing to warrant going into executive session. Mr. Boria suggested that if we were to move forward with this, to create a subcommittee, meet with himself and representatives from the TOS.

Mr. Lemansky stated that before any decisions are made we need a hard number from Southbridge to close this deal. Based on that, we can apply all the information that was presented this evening.

Mr. Boria asked if he would like him to set up an appointment with the TOS to discuss negotiations on a base rate. Mr. Jennings feels it is important (the base rate), but does not want to reach out to them just yet, and would like more time to go over the information from Mr. Abrahams and put on the next agenda.

V. New Business**Chapter 61A Right of First Refusal – Boucher Rd Lot #9**

This is a 5 acre reduced frontage lot and is looking for a Chapter 61A release. The BOS asks various departments to review and inform them if there is possible need for the town to purchase the property. **Mr. Jennings motions based off our past discussions with the general property locations, that Lot 9 on Boucher Rd as described would not recommend to exercise the right of first refusal to the BOS. Seconded by Mr. Cantwell. Motion passes unanimously.**

Commission Goals – Review Matrix.

As a part of the packet was a copy of the Matrix, which was last updated in May of 2018. It is what we used previously for goals. We can review, check off or add items and re-prioritize.

- Water Master Plan – Still working on PWS in Buffumville

- Exxon Water Line Extension – a lot of this has been done, design is complete, 169 pump station is complete, School loop water main has been installed, next construction season they will work on the private property service connections. This will remain on the list as we have oversight on the private property connections.
- What needs to be done in order to become a PWS – This can be combined with number 1, since we have come quite a way with Buffumville
- Grants- presently there are 4 separate grants – we have coordinated and used 2 of them and have a remainder in one of the smaller grants and the water master plan has been renewed twice.
- Sewer policies and regulations - they have been presented but a final decision hasn't been made as far as rules and regulations on construction standards. Mr. Lemansky requested a copy of the policies be sent to the commissioners.
- Exxon project oversight, School Loop, Rte. 169 Pump Station - that can be removed and included in item 2
- Casella waterline ext. – The only thing left taking place as a part of the project is the well decommissioning which the BOH has direct oversight of. We can keep this on until that is closed out.
- IMA dispute – being that if the retained earnings include the water sales from Southbridge to Millennium. It was decided that the millennium sales are not included as part of our reimbursement number. If there is not disagreement, this item can be removed.
- Sewer Rate Study – an increase was implemented in the fall of 2017, and have not done another one since. Mr. Boria does feel we need to look at our surcharge rates specifically our ammonia surcharge. This item will remain on the list
- W/S billing issues – these have all been squared away and can be removed from the list.
- Sewer issues regarding capacity – ongoing discussion regarding concern that the capacity of the plant has been oversold. Resulting in a moratorium to reserve capacity for those who have paid betterment. This will remain on the list
- Water negotiations with Aquarian Water. We were working with the state agency that got us the grant, we were trying to keep the grant to apply to the Buffumville PWS instead since Aquarian is unable to supply us with water, it could help develop the Buffumville PWS. After a meeting with Office of Economic Development, and because we were not moving fast enough with the development of that source , they needed the funds for another project and welcomed us to reapply.
- Sewer Treatment NPDES permit- there has been no movement with this and is still with the permit writer.

Mr. Boria will update the Matrix

Training - EJ Prescott- Innovations in Clean Drinking Water

Mr. Boria is looking for approval to attend a training being offered by EJ Prescott. When Mr. Boria was hired it was required that he get his MA Water Operator's License. It is required he receive continuing ed. credits. The training offers 5 credits at cost of \$60.00. The training will take place at the MGM Grand Casino in Springfield on March 19, 2020. **Mr. Gagner motions that we send Mr. Boria to the training. Seconded by Mr. Jennings. Motion passes unanimously.**

Vacation Request

Mr. Boria is requesting vacation time from March 12, 2020 to March 16, 2020. A discussion was had with no objection.

2019 - Annual Report

The Annual report is due to the Mary Devlin by March 6, 2020. Included in the packet was a draft copy. Mr. Boria asked the Commission to review and let him know if there are any comments. There is one more meeting before it is due.

VI. Old Business

FY 2021 Budget

Mr. Lemansky and Mr. Boria met with the Finance Director to go over the budget as we were waiting on some final numbers. The only major change is last year the salaries were split between both water and sewer evenly. This year 100% of the salaries will come out of the sewer budget. Mr. Boria reviewed the water budget stating it is pretty much straight forward. Mr. Lemansky requested updated water expense balances.

Mr. Boria reviewed the sewer budget. Mr. Lemansky commented on line item 8 (Administrator salary) and feels there is too much redundancy at the plant and the position is no longer needed.

Mr. Boria is looking for direction from the commission with what they want to do with the salary line item and wants to make sure everyone is on the same page.

Mr. Jennings stated that last year at this time it was discussed and the position was needed because of the Casella loop. Mr. Gagner asked Mr. Boria if he feels the extra help is needed. Mr. Boria stated that with most of the construction projects completed he does feel that the office is overstaffed. Mr. Boria stated that when his position was created it was never anticipated that both positions would be kept.

If this is the route the commission wants to go, Mr. Boria asked for a motion to be made. **Mr. Lemansky stated that the motion be for FY21 that we do away and do not fund the Sewer Administrator. Mr. Cantwell "I make a motion as to such". Seconded by Mr. Jennings. 3 votes in favor with Mr. Gagner opposed.**

Mr. Boria will update the budget with what was voted.

Mr. Lemansky asked if we had updated balances of our stabilization accounts. Mr. Boria stated that he spoke with the Finance Director and the money has not been transferred yet. Mr. Lemansky would like a document from the treasurer listing our accounts, their balances and to make sure that interest follows when the money does get transferred.

Stevens Park Rd Pump Station

As the commission is aware, repairs are needed at the Stevens Park Rd Pump Station. We did not receive the grant that we applied for. Mr. Boria asked DC Engineering and McClure Engineering to design drainage upgrades. At this time we still have 10K in our sewer engineering expense line. As part of the packet were 2 proposals to consider. DC Engineering has a proposal for \$4,200, and McClure has a proposal for \$16,500. This would be for a design to fix the problem, and use it to go out to bid for someone to complete the work. Mr. Boria wanted to disclose to the commission that he has used DC Engineering for one of his businesses. **Mr. Cantwell motioned to hire DC Engineering to do the site plan for drainage improvements for the sewer pump station at Stevens Park Rd in the amount of \$4200.00. Seconded by Mr. Gagner. Mr. Cantwell and Mr. Gagner in favor and both Mr. Lemansky and Mr. Jennings abstain.**

Mr. Boria stated that 2 is not a majority (with 4 present) and recommended waiting until the next meeting. Mr. Cantwell withdrew his motion and Mr. Gagner withdrew his second.

Water Line Construction Update.

Bay Path Pump Stations The pump station is schedule to be delivered on February 13th. Once the pump station is set, Albanese will begin making the necessary connections to activate the pump station. Anticipated activation is in the beginning of April.

Overlook Pump Station - The pump station is scheduled to be delivered on February 11th. Once the pump station is set, Albanese will begin making the necessary connections to activate the pump station. Anticipated activation is in the beginning of April

Casella Water Line Extension – The subcontractor has been in the area decommissioning the private wells of the residents that have connected to the water line. Jim Philbrook (BOH) has been overseeing the decommissioning process.

Other Business (unknown at the time of posting)

Mr. Lemansky discussed an issue that happened on September 30, 2019 at the Casella loop. The project was at the point of putting asphalt down. The Tighe and Bond inspector was there and TOC inspector was there. There was a backlog of asphalt trucks (7) loaded with asphalt and the spreader broke down. They determined they couldn't fix it. Palmer Paving brought in another spreader which took 3 1/2 hours while the hot asphalt sat. The Highway Superintendent was notified and they dealt with it. They used the asphalt which later was the stuff that needed to come back up. None of this information was documented. Mr. Gagner stated that from his experience he didn't feel that 3 1/2 hours is a big deal. That the top may cool but when mixed with the rest, the internal temperature doesn't change much. Mr. Lemansky stated he feels they needed to know about it.

Next Meeting – February 24, 2020 to be held in the Senior Center.

Mr. Cantwell made the motion to adjourn at 9:02 pm Seconded by Mr. Jennings. Motion passes unanimously.

Submitted by:
Sue Guerin
Administrative Assistant

Accepted by:

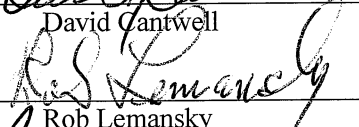


Paul Gagner

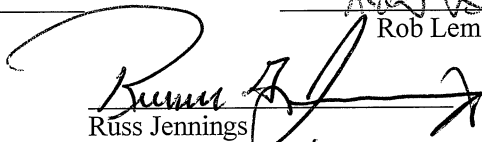


David Cantwell

Jenn H. Vaughan



Rob Lemansky



Russ Jennings

Minutes were approved and signed on 2/24/2020