

Meeting Minutes – Sewer Commission
Northfield Town Hall
69 Main Street, Northfield MA
May 11, 2022 - 5 pm - Conference Room First Floor

Call to Order: Dan Gray, 5:05 pm.

Dan Gray(DG), Absent

Karen Boudreau(KB), Tom Walker(TW), Isaac Golding(IG), Michelle Turner (MT)

Review and Approval of Minutes: Minutes of 4/13/2022 meeting.

Citizen's Concerns: n/a

Business:

- First meeting after election. Motion by KB to elect Dan Gray as Chair. 2nd by TW. Vote passed unanimously.
- Michelle (MT):
 - Bills Vs Collections. Notifications will be sent out for past due bills.
 - Girard abatement. Motion by TW to rescind, 2nd by KB. Abatement rescinded. Vote passed unanimously.
 - SC forms and documentation. MT has an extra locked file cabinet. While cleaning out other folders, she located some Sewer plant documents. KB to review these documents later next month. The Prickett report speaks to older documents that have gone missing.
 - Preprinted envelopes will help smooth out a process. The cost is \$337.65. The current year budget is tight the team will reassess after 7/1/2022. If purchased, it will have to be a 2023 expense.
 - MT will be at the beginning of every meeting. Summer account reconciliation and internal audit process. Yearly audits going forward. Rate and setting of rates are reported to the Dept of Revenue on Schedule A.
- Data and it's timely importance – We are now getting the Ledger reports every 2 weeks from Erin instead of 4-6 weeks.
- Other data options – ODBC open data base connectivity. I like that Isaac has his spread sheet. I would do the same. We also have the possibility of this wonderful tool called ODBC. We can connect spread sheets as read only into the Finance system and have up to the second budget reporting.
- Our accounting firm is Hill-Town accountants. Our current accountant, Peter Schmidt, is part time, mornings, in the Houston area, 1-hour time zone difference, retiree, many decades in the industry. The accountants had no idea of the ACOP and the first statement was 'Did you increase rates to cover this?'. Immediately found problems with the overage of Professional Services AND the overtime cap of 10k. The Commission questioned/ challenged this low amount during the budget and rate setting process. Going forward, we need to better communicate with any accounting firm to make sure that they are up to date on the status of our enterprise. Another avenue of expertise is the Massachusetts Society of CPA's.

- Interview for new applicant. The last hiring process took over 2 years. We need to hire smartly and lower the timeline. Communicating with Mass Tech Schools to produce 'Ready for work' licensed candidates.
 - TW and KB discussed the definition of Special Municipal employee for Bernard Boudreau to spell Isaac or respond as an in-town emergency call. No motion, no vote. This topic needs further feedback from the Atty Generals office.
- Emails, computers, passwords, backup cycles, & cyber security.
 - Discussion about keeping passwords as passwords. All utilities are cautious for cyber security.
- Business resumption plans. We need one. Will start a draft.
 - Presented by KB. This is a lower priority when compared to the Consent Order tasks. Our plant is very close to trains and that could pose a risk. Some plants have a BRP. T&B does not offer a service in creating these. KB will research BRP's at other plants and present some ideas.
- Timeline summary overview.
 - This was initially covered, and more work needs to happen by KB. No motion, no votes.
- Agendas, minutes, and documentation. Read 4 years of Agenda and minutes to fill in missing pieces. It's important to understand how we got here, but we must move onward. Massive turnover.
- ARPA funds. 2 requests are being worked on. More to follow in subsequent meetings.
- The Bylaws. Turned over to T&B. Have had no response. We will upload to the town website and certify as complete as this point in time.

Operator Report: Nothing critical to report.

Abatelements: 1 rescind.

Billing: See above items from Michele Turner.

Capital Projects:

National Pipeline – Relining project. IG to call them and schedule the start date.

Current Project Update / Next Steps:

Pine and Highland. Dig safe flags are around the site. KB to call Wiggins for invite to next SC meeting.

Birnam rd. TW discussed the need to raise one of the manholes.

Items not reasonably anticipated by the Chair: N/A

Next Meeting is: June 15th, 5 PM First floor, conf room

Adjourned: 6:09 PM

This meeting agenda is being posted in compliance with Massachusetts Open Meeting Law. The agenda may change to reflect unforeseen business.

Approved:

Signature: _____

Date:

Signature: *Theresa Wallen*

Date: *6/16/22*

Signature: *Karen Bordreau*

Date: *6/16/22*

Signature: _____

Date: