

Meeting Minutes – Sewer Commission
Northfield Town Hall
69 Main Street, Northfield MA
May 17, 2023– 4:30 pm - Conference Room First Floor

Commission: Chair – Dan Gray (DG), Tom Walker (TW), Karen Boudreau (KB), Chief Operator - Isaac Golding (IG), Michele Turner (MT) when requested, Tighe&Bond (TB) when requested.

Call to order: 4:35 Present: KB, IG, TW **Absent:** DG **Not Requested:** MT, T&B

Review and Approval of Minutes: yes

Citizen's Concerns: None

Business:

- The entire task list from everyone. Assembling. Details and a list will be provided at next meeting. No vote.
- T&B – Asset Mgmt Project update. **Motion:** kb **2nd:** tw **Vote:** all

Zach requested and has received detailed information regarding bill data and budget amounts. T&B has all of the details thus far to assist with their funding analysis.

On 5/15/2023, KB worked with Michele Turner to draw out a possible Catch-Up Cycle so that several objectives can be met. KB reviewed the details and status to date with the Commission.

Next steps: Draft a scope document that details the reasons for the possible Catch-Up cycles, the possible approaches of moving forward with this task, and then compile a repeated communication plan if this plan is approved.

Vote to continue work and engage the Accountants and Department of Revenue with possible options.

- Billing and usage fees: EDU vs Usage vs Tiered/Block EDU, Budget extra cycle with accounting. No vote.

Being considered and researched. BLOCK EDU, phased-in rate structures, quarterly billing, and billing cycles where expenses match revenues are goals on critical path to support the Asset Management Project, the Consent Order, and the long-term stabilization of infrastructure. All of these items are on the critical path to moving forward.

Block EDU is rate structures based on household size and eventually moving to quarterly billing. Industry best practices manage quarterly billing cycles, rate structures and stable finances with the Block EDU structure. Block EDU and quarterly billing improves the rate payer's ability to budget. There are math models to sunset out the current structures and sunrise in a more equitable rates to usage billing. That staging over time (years) helps all rate payers adjust to billing changes.

The Block EDU task is adjacent to the potential Catch-Up Cycle task. As stated above, part of the Asset Management Project and the Consent order is to prove financial longevity and solvency. The ability to receive grants and possible low interest loans is based on accurate and timely revenues to expenditures. The ability to financially report back to grants and loans needs to be finitely managed. The finding of the current process/timing is a firm blockade to the above critical path tasks.

There are a few possible solutions to solve these issues. All require further exploration.

The Sewer Department cannot implement this type of change without the consent and feedback of the Accounting Firm, the financial software firm, and possibly the Department of Revenue (DOR). Once a final decision is made, a communications plan to the account payers will occur with plenty of lead time.

- T&B - Zoom into 4 meetings per year. Going on the task list and being compared to the budget.
- Easements And Deeds – Article money. More work on this to follow. AMP project is the priority.
- Bylaws Update. **Motion: kb 2nd: tw Vote: all**
The Team received the Bylaw updates for review. After acceptance, the next step is to publish in the Greenfield Recorder. Vote to approve the ByLaws.
- Technical data survey update. No news on this from the interviewing Engineering firm and Congress.
- Open Positions: Removed from Indeed. IG does want to train an additional Maintenance worker right now. No Vote needed.
- Capital projects January – May. Capital projects June – November. Priorities.
- Account demographics and breakout.
Account demographics and breakout will continue in deeper detail to help communicate the Catch-Up cycle situation. No vote needed.
- Accounting firm update and regular budget review. This is going much better than last year. As of 5/15/2023, the year is at 88.5%. The budget expended is 69.37% which includes the \$32,000 for indirect costs.

Operator Report: Isaac

- The grinder is fixed and repair costs covered by the vendor.
- Mark is working on wiring, flow meters, manhole inspections and easement clearing. He has completed his credit classes (TCH's) and has applied for license activation for this year.
- Water Line break - this will begin in the summer as we are awaiting more quotes and available monies from the Enterprise fund.
- ARPA funds- One ARPA (DO work) request needs additional funding due to the aging of electronics. The Commission voted to approve \$3800 from the budget to complete this project.
Motion: kb 2nd: tw Vote: all
- Chlorine equipment is ordered, and the cost is \$5000.00.
- Purchase a sonic flow meter for the plant or large events. – deferred.
- Yearly reports & Mapping.

Billing:

- Abatelements - None
- Questions/Correspondence. - None

Current Project Update / Next Steps: Highland Ave project and ordering, Glenwood Ave.

Items not reasonable anticipated by the Chair:

- **Next Meeting is:** 6/7/2023 4:30 pm **Adjourned:** 5:48 **Motion: kb 2nd: tw Vote: all**

The meeting minute is posted in compliance with Massachusetts Open Meeting Law.

Approved:

Signature *Kevin Bondreant*

Date: *6/7/23*

Kevin Walla
Signature:

6/7/23
Date:

Signature:

Date:

Signature:

Date: