

WAYLAND BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS

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Town Building
41 Cochituate Road
Wayland, MA 01778
February 23, 2023

MEETING MINUTES

Present: C. Lewis (Chair), E. Chiang, S. Greenbaum, G. Uveges. Also present: Carol Martin (Select Board Liaison to the BoPW). Absent: M. Wegerbauer.

DPW Staff in Attendance: Tom Holder (Director), Joe Doucette (Superintendent).

Meeting was conducted in person at the DPW Facility. Meeting opened at 6:30 PM.

Announcements

None.

Public Comment

Lewis noted that he had received a note from Ben Downs, which he read aloud. Mr. Downs said in the note that he had intended to settle the Town Pool bill, but that the Town was late in paying for High School pool use. Mr. Down said that it was his understanding that this latter item would be paid for within the next week or two, at which time he would pay the Pool balance.

PFAS System

Tom Holder gave an update. He said that the water treatment system was running as expected. He said that they had recently replaced the canister filters (which were designed to be replaced periodically). Mr. Holder noted that they were continuing to operate two out of the three existing wells; he said that they had reached out to MassDEP to see if they would approve of blending, to increase output, but that they had not yet received a response.

Mr. Holder said the EPA was likely to announce new proposed PFAS standards within the next month, which would probably be much lower than the current MassDEP threshold of 20 ppt.

There was discussion of private wells for drinking water. Mr. Holder noted that DPW had no jurisdiction over these, but he said that it would be prudent for those who relied on private wells for drinking water to have these sources tested.

MWRA Permanent Connection Article

Uveges gave an update. He said that the Finance Committee (FinCom) had recently discussed and approved the article in question; Members reviewed their comments. Uveges noted that the Select Board (SB) was the co-sponsor of this article.

There was discussion of the Argument Opposed suggesting that further peer review needed to be done to determine whether the Town should pursue an MWRA connection. Some Members objected to the inclusion of this Argument, saying that a more-than-adequate amount of review had already been done. Tom Holder noted that the BoPW and the DPW had spent the last 20 months reviewing this topic, and he further noted that other Towns were waiting in line to contract with MWRA.

There was discussion of the difference between the emergency connection and a permanent connection. Members emphasized the temporary nature of the former and the requirement to reapply every 6 months to maintain it. Tom Holder also noted that a permanent connection required much more infrastructure than the temporary one.

Mr. Holder expressed that the version of the article previously prepared by the BoPW was more accurate than this more recent version, revised by the FinCom. He highlighted the 5-year financial plan, saying that this project was indeed accounted for in the plan, though the article implied otherwise.

Members agreed that, if the current language remained in the article, a BoPW Member should be prepared to stand at Town Meeting and enumerate both the steps already taken to assess the MWRA connection and also the risks for the Town if the connection was not pursued.

Carol Martin said that SB had received finalized language from Town Counsel regarding this Article. She expressed concern that the FinCom's version of the Article included too many references to capital amounts needed to complete an MWRA connection, when the Article itself only requested the Town's permission to proceed with the application. (The money and steps needed to complete the project would have to be approved separately, and likely in stages.) Ms. Martin believed the Article would be presented before the Budget presentation and discussion.

There was discussion of the reasons the SB was co-sponsoring the Article. Ms. Martin emphasized that the Article being proposed was a policy change, and that was the purview of the SB.

Members discussed the best way to get the Article revised to the satisfaction of all involved. Several Members expressed that the new language from Town Counsel should be included in the Article, as it provided a more accurate picture of what they were trying to achieve.

After discussion, it was agreed that Carol Martin would send the BoPW her thoughts, and then Lewis, Uveges, and Tom Holder would meet to write a new draft of the Article. Lewis would then request time on the agenda for the next FinCom meeting in order to discuss their proposed revisions.

Greenbaum made a motion to authorize Lewis, Uveges, and Tom Holder to provide a summary of the BoPW's discussion at this meeting to the FinCom. There was no second.

Uveges made a different motion, to authorize the aforementioned people to propose a new draft of the Warrant Article to the FinCom. Greenbaum seconded, and a vote was taken.

Chiang aye, Lewis aye, Greenbaum aye, Uveges aye. Motion passed (4-0-0).

Included in the packet for discussion: Draft Warrant Article, as prepared by the Finance Committee.

Water System Next Steps

There was discussion of community outreach measures that the DPW and BoPW could do. Tom Holder suggested a public forum on or around 4/10/23, at which representatives from Kleinfelder could make a presentation and respond to questions. Members noted that there was also a Warrant hearing upcoming, but this event would be brief and not allow for that much public comment or interaction.

Members also suggested meeting separately with senior citizen residents of the Town, and possibly with the Schools. Tom Holder said that he would reach out to someone from the Council on Aging (CoA) to get something on their newsletter, and Lewis said he would reach out to someone at the Schools. There was discussion of compiling an informational brochure as well.

Private Well Update

Lewis said he and Greenbaum had met with the Board of Health regarding this issue. The BoH had consulted with Town Counsel regarding the possibility of a moratorium on private wells. Greenbaum noted that Town Counsel had recommended that the BoH first amend their private well regulations to include private irrigation wells (which were not currently bound by those requirements). She noted that the availability of clean water was a public health issue, but that the impact of private wells on that availability might need to be proven. (She emphasized that Town Counsel said any impacts on conservation concerns would not allow the BoH to act.)

Lewis had asked Chiang to prepare a presentation on the relationship between hydrological, groundwater, and water supply wells, which Chiang gave in a PowerPoint.

Chiang began his presentation by reviewing the hydrologic cycle. He said that both the processes of transpiration from trees and ocean, lake, and river evaporation contributed to rain, snow, etc., which in turn seeped into the ground. He emphasized that these combined sources made it difficult to determine how much a single well was impacting a river when it drew from groundwater.

Chiang reviewed the two main types of aquifer, confined and unconfined. He also reviewed all basic well drilling equipment, and the main steps of the drilling process. He said that most wells were drilled using either a 2-inch or 4-inch pipe.

He went on to review a sketch of an auger hole, which showed various relative water levels at each stage of pumping. He also reviewed the permeability coefficient and soil types. He then showed a diagram of a gravel packed well. He said that municipal wells in the area were an average of 60-90' deep, but that private irrigation wells might be much deeper.

Chiang then reviewed a system using multiple wells, as well as a diagram of a collector well. He said that he had designed one such well for Wayland, but that it had never been built. He then reviewed the process of artificial recharge by pumping water into the ground. (He noted that this was not being done in the area, but that it was a possibility.) He also discussed the BoH requirements regarding the minimum distances between septic systems and wells. Chiang reviewed average groundwater usage in the US, noting that Massachusetts' use was relatively low.

Chiang concluded by saying that it was unlikely that private wells were significantly impacting groundwater, due to the fact that they did not have the capacity to pump very much water.

Included in the packet for discussion: presentation on wells, as prepared by Edward Chiang.

BoPW Areas of Focus for 2023 & 2024 , Including South 20 Landfill

Lewis opened up discussion of what areas of focus the BoPW might pursue over the next year or two. He identified the use of the South 20 landfill as a topic of interest. Uveges also noted the issue with the Transfer Station operating at a deficit; Tom Holder said that this issue would be brought before the BoPW soon.

Greenbaum said she would like to see the DPW close out all of its outstanding conservation projects, in part to create a good example to the community. (These were projects that had orders of conditions issued by the Conservation Commission and were completed, but had yet to receive certificates of compliance from ConCom.)

Tom Holder said that he would like to review and possibly propose revisions to Chapter 193 of the bylaws, regarding stormwater jurisdiction. He also wanted to review water rates and guidelines.

There was discussion of the vegetation around the South 20 landfill. Tom Holder said that they had written a letter to MassDEP to get this vegetation cleared, which was a necessary conditioning step for the landfill cap. After this step, the Town could seek approval for whatever measures they needed for any projects (paving, etc.).

Operating Budget FY 2024

Members reviewed the draft Operating Budget that Tom Holder had prepared, which reflected changes requested by the FinCom. Mr. Holder noted that the FinCom had assigned a level service budget for each department, with no increases above 4.5%. He said that the original proposed budget had a higher increase than this in the Parks Department, and that had been reduced by approximately \$26,000.

Mr. Holder also noted that Snow & Ice Removal budget was increasing, though not by as much as they originally proposed.

There was discussion of Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) increases. Uveges was concerned about how these were classified and how they were affecting the budget overall. There were also concerns about how these might affect setting the water rates. Tom Holder said that he believed the amounts were correct, but he said that he would double-check; he said he would also find out from the Finance Director how these COLAs would affect the Salary line in 2024.

There was discussion of the anticipated American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds of \$1,000,000. Tom Holder said that the FinCom had expressed that Retained Earnings should not be used for Capital projects. There was discussion of what Retained Earnings could be used for. Members agreed that they would consult a Member of the FinCom for input on this issue.

Mr. Holder addressed contingencies. He said that they used to build contingencies into each budget line, but that this was artificially impacting rates, so then they started using a separate line for contingencies (of about \$200,000). Mr. Holder noted that Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) had not yet been added into the budget.

There was discussion of the Abrahams Group, who was contracting with the Town. Mr. Holder said that they planned to consult with them throughout the rate-setting process.

There was discussion of the Transfer Station. Uveges again had concerns that COLAs had not been sufficiently accounted for. Mr. Holder said that they had been advised to keep the minimal increases that they had.

There was discussion of Tipping Fees. Tom Holder emphasized that the Town was paying a lot for disposal services. Uveges pointed out that the budget forecasted an increase of approximately 5% in revenue, but that this seemed unlikely unless rates for sticker sales increased. Lewis asked for a precise accounting of sticker sales and prices.

Included in the packet for discussion: draft Operating Budget for FY 24, as prepared by Tom Holder.

Project Report

Members reviewed the project report. Tom Holder highlighted that the company contracted to provide the end points for remote meter reading was having trouble delivering them. He said that DPW was pushing them, as this was the only remaining delay in the project.

Included in the packet for discussion: Project Report, as prepared by Tom Holder.

Weston Day Care Center

Wegerbauer was not present to provide an update, so this item was tabled.

Review and Approve Meeting Minutes

Members reviewed the draft Minutes for 1/4/23 and 1/12/23. Greenbaum suggested a revision to clarify the last name of a public commenter. She also suggested a change in verbiage from “complained” to “commented,” regarding a different public commenter. These edits were made.

Uveges made a motion to approve the minutes of 1/4/23 and 1/12/23, as amended. Greenbaum seconded, and a vote was taken.

Chiang aye, Lewis aye, Greenbaum aye, Uveges aye. Motion passed (4-0-0).

Included in the packet for discussion: draft Minutes for meetings dated 1/4/23 and 1/12/23.

Board Members 'Reports, Concerns and Updates

The next regular BoPW meetings were set for 3/21/23, 4/18/23, 5/16/23, and 6/20/23.

Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair 48 Hours Prior to Posting, if any

None.

Adjourn

Uveges made a motion to adjourn. Greenbaum second, and a vote was taken.

Chiang aye, Lewis aye, Greenbaum aye, Uveges aye. Motion passed (4-0-0).

BoPW meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin Callahan
Minutes Taker