



Water/Wastewater Commission

Meeting Minutes

January 18th, 2023

Legislative Building, City Hall Campus
700 Main St, Fitchburg MA 01420

A meeting for the City of Fitchburg Water/Wastewater Commission was held on Wednesday January 18th, 2022 at the Legislative Building, City Hall Campus, 700 Main St. Fitchburg, MA 01420

The meeting commenced at 5:07 PM

Members present: George Seiner, Commission Member
Mark Piermarini, Commission Member
Rick Healey, Chairman
Stephen Bodurtha, Commission Member
Colby O'Brien, Commission Member
Nicholas Erickson, Commissioner of Public Works

Others present: John Deline Jr, Deputy Commissioner Water Division
Mark McNamara, Deputy Commissioner Water Division

Absent: Michael McLaughlin, Commission Member

Item #1

Approval of meeting minutes: Motion to approve minutes from November 16, 2022 meeting was granted by unanimous vote.

Item #2

Public Forum: None

Item #3

Water Division

- Staffing – We still have a total of 8 vacancies, 6 are on the distribution side and 2 are on the treatment side. Negotiations for Local 107 (laborers union) is nearing the end. Pay rates have significantly increased, which will help give us a more competitive edge when attracting new

employees. We will now be comparable with what other cities and towns are paying. We spent a lot of time back and forth meeting weekly over the past couple of weeks.

- Water/Wastewater Rate Study – We will be bringing this forth to the Commission during our March W/WW Meeting and then hopefully bring it right to City Council. We had some preliminary numbers but some things needed to be revised. Meeting was held last week for review by us, but we want to make sure everything is 100%.
- Boulder Dr. Water Main Replacement/upgrade project – Weston & Sampson is working on the engineering for this. We are also looking at fire protection in this area as well as on Main St. just to make sure all the buildings are supplied sufficiently. A lot of extra time has been spent in these areas of concern. Supplies have been an issue as in most instances, its weeks before they come in. Piping has been the most difficult to acquire. This will certainly affect the schedule once project goes out to bid.
- Oak Hill Storage Tank Project – Project is moving along and will start mobilizing in February, with a completion date near the end of July. This project was delayed last year, and we are looking forward to its completion. These are the last of our storage tanks, and once completed they will last up to 100 years with minimal maintenance. All aspects of the tank from controls, to the piping will be replaced so we shouldn't have any issues.
- SCADA Project – Ongoing work in the plants, with the real work beginning in a couple of months. Some materials are expected to be received in March. This is good news, as once project is completed we will be able to run the plants much more efficiently.

Item #4

Wastewater Division

- Staffing – GIS Engineer position has been vacant since last June. The former position holder Ken Dupont is now the Sewer System Manager and has been pulling double duty since. We have since interviewed 3 candidates for this position and will be bringing back two of them for an additional interview. Our Senior Sanitary Engineering Aide is responsible for monitoring of the pretreatment Industrial Program for the City. We will be holding interviews for this position tomorrow, and are hoping we can come out of this with a good candidate as this is a highly important position.
- Water/Wastewater Rate Study – We will be bringing this forth to the Commission during our March W/WW Meeting and then hopefully bring it right to City Council. We had some preliminary numbers but some things needed to be revised. Meeting was held last week for review by us, but we want to make sure everything is 100%.
- West Plant Repurposing Project – This main objective of this project is to build a bio-solids manufacturing facility at the old West Fitchburg Wastewater Treatment Plant. This will accept and process bio-solids from the City and other regional generators. This will create renewable natural gas and a high quality product called cambi soil. We have since completed the evaluation that was presented from Rollstone Renewable Energy. We are moving on with the proposal. If all goes well with permits and DEP etc. construction could begin by the end of this year. This will be a 2 year project.
- Wastewater Treatment/Chemicals – Serious increase in chemical prices last year, which was difficult because it was after our budget. Chemical prices came out in June and budget process was in May. Some of the chemicals went up over 100%. We may reach the limit of our budget before the end of the FY. A lot of this will have to do with the weather, if we get a lot of rain it means we will have to use more chemicals. Meeting scheduled for February 7th with the Merrimack Valley Chemical Consortium. We are all meeting together to see if we can move up the bids before our next budget.

Item #5

Other Business:

- The Water/Wastewater Commission will next meet at 5:00 pm on Wednesday **February 15, 2023** at the Legislative Building, City Hall Campus 700 Main St. Fitchburg, MA.

Meeting adjourned at 5:26 pm