



Water/Wastewater Commission

Meeting Minutes

January 12th, 2022

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 12th, 2022 at the Legislative Building, City Hall Campus, 700 Main St. Fitchburg, MA 01420

The meeting commenced at 5:01 PM

Members present: Nicholas Erickson, Commissioner of Public Works & City Engineer
George Seiner, Commission Member
Mark Piermarini, Commission Member
Rick Healey, Chairman Water/Wastewater Commission
Stephen Bodurtha, Commission Member
Michael McLaughlin, Commission Member

Others present: John Deline, Deputy Commissioner of Water
Jennifer Lambert, Head Clerk Water Division
Nathan Glenny, FATV
Anthony Maressa, Sewer Collection Manager
Mark McNamara, Wastewater Division

Absent: None

Item #1

Approval of meeting minutes: Motion to approve minutes from December 8, 2021 meeting was granted by unanimous vote.

Item #2

Public Forum: None

Item #3

Water Division:

- Oak Hill Water Storage Tank (funding) – John spoke to the Commission about our DEP mandate to replace the Oak Hill Water Storage Tank. This project will be going out to bid in the next few weeks. The original cost estimate of this project was between 1.5 – 1.7 million. Based on the estimate we have now, due to the market and some complexities of the site puts the cost estimate at 2.7 million. We have applied and are on the SRF funding list. Because of Fitchburg’s income levels, there is a good chance that we will get some principal forgiveness in the range of 15 to 17 percent. We also have some funding from other loans that we had some savings on and did not have to borrow. The meter upgrade project has approx...\$430,000 left that we did not use, as well as the SCADA project that came in under bid. Altogether it comes to about \$800,000. Looking for a vote from the Commission tonight to approve the borrowing of 2.7 million. Motion to recommend to City Council the borrowing 2.7 mil to replace the Oak Hill Storage Tank was made by Mark Piermarini and seconded by George Seiner. Motion carries unanimously.
- Staffing – We currently have 4 vacancies on our Distribution side. We have had no luck in advertising these positions. We have 6 treatment plant operators and 1 Chief operator. Our chief operator has just retired as of January 7th. Two of our primary treatment operators are retiring in the month of March this year. We had one applicant (internal) apply for the Chief Operator position in which we will be interviewing. We also had two applicants (internal) apply for the primary operator positions. No applicants from outside the City applied for the primary positions. If these positions are filled within, then we will be down two secondary treatment operators. We have a meeting scheduled next week with the Mayor to discuss these vacancies.

Item #4

Wastewater Division

- Combined Sewer Project – Clarendon St. is basically complete. We will finish touch ups in the spring along with a few catch basins that need to be added. This project is now moving back over to the Water St. area. Contractors will have one crew working on Nashua St. through the winter months as weather permits. This project is approx. 70% complete. South St. will be the next area we will be starting in the spring.
- “Downtown” Combined Sewer Project – This project is in the design phase right now. Borings are complete. We are finishing up some surveys and dye testing. We have had discussions internally on how best to phase this project, such as whether to break it up into pieces and bid out or, bid it out all in one project. The cost of the project is roughly 30 million dollars. If this is bid out in one project we are excluding some of the mid-size contractors.
- West Plant Repurposing Project – We had a meeting today discussing whether or not to do a publicly financed option. This means that once the facility is up and running, the City would take on the debt for that project. The cost of this project is over 50 million, so we will be moving forward with the private financing option which means the bidders will have to finance the project with their own funds.
- East Plant Hazard Communication Plan – This item was a result in a program inspection at the East Plant. This will explain to people that work at the plant what the hazards are. This mostly relates to chemicals and how to store and handle them safely. We have contacted Weston & Sampson and they are in the process of developing a plan for this. Hopefully within the next couple of months we can submit to the state.

- Transition Planning- Anthony Maressa Sewer System Manager informed the Commission of his resignation from the City's Wastewater Division effective January 14th. Superintendent of the Wastewater Treatment Facility Mark McNamara has offered to step in as the Interim Deputy Commissioner of Wastewater Division. DPW Commissioner/City Engineer Nicholas Erickson spoke to the Commission recommending Mark for the job. Mark has over 30 yrs. experience in the supervision of personnel and the business management of environmental and governmental organizations. 16 of those years have been with Wastewater Management. The Wastewater Division will be facing challenges in the near future with 4 vacancies in the operations department, completing the February 2022 Annual Consent Decree along with the upcoming 314 CMR 16.00 CSO Notification law and the March 2022 Industrial Pretreatment Program Annual Report. Mark has been involved with and is familiar with each of these challenges. Looking for a vote tonight from the Commission on the recommendation of Mark McNamara to Interim Deputy Commissioner of the Wastewater Division until the job is filled. Motion made by DPW Commissioner/City Engineer Nicholas Erickson to make the recommendation of appointing Mark McNamara to Interim Deputy Commissioner of the Wastewater Division to the Mayor. Motion seconded by George Seiner. Motion carries unanimously.

Item #5

Other Business:

- The Water/Wastewater Commission will next meet at 5:00 pm. on February 9, 2022 at the Legislative Building, City Hall Campus 700 Main St. Fitchburg MA, 01420.

Meeting adjourned at 5:22 pm