

WMAC Meeting Minutes

April 25, 2013

Attendees: David Crosby – Chair; Len Sekuler –Vice Chair; Anne Carney; Chris Pimental; Paul Lauenstein; Sarah Windman

Guests: Eric Hooper – Superintendent – DPW

Minutes were approved as amended with Paul's previously submitted proposed amendments and the following sentence added to the end of item 5 – Eric Hooper stated that the Stoughton alternative for a water connection is not a possibility at this time.

1. David Crosby said that the next item for discussion concerning water rates was proposing an irrigation rate. Len wanted an irrigation rate to be considered only when irrigation meters are actually installed. He felt we should focus on what is in place now. David felt we should discuss an irrigation rate presuming the meters are in place. Paul noted that the committee had voted last November to propose an increase of \$1.64 to each block and the committee should see how that changes revenue. David said that the Selectmen had not voted yet on that proposal. He also said that the Selectmen had asked the committee to come up with alternative rate proposals. Dave stated that the committee needs to meet at least once with the Selectmen in order to give a report. Len suggested that when the committee presents the alternative proposals to the Selectmen members of the WMAC should address how each of the proposals would impact conservation, rates, fairness etc. One question that should be answered is how to incentivize conservation for the lowest block. Another question is how the plan be implemented over five years. The next topic taken up was a discussion on whether the base fee should be raised. There was much discussion but no consensus to raise the base fee – some members felt a small increase to match the rate increases was justified while others wanted to keep the base fee at \$15.00. At this point Eric Hooper arrived at the meeting and said that he was going to submit a proposal to the Selectmen to raise the base fee from \$15.00 to \$20.00 per quarter. The committee voted 5-1-0 for this proposal. It was stated once more that four proposals would be submitted and each plan would have an advocate giving the pros and cons of each. At this point a member of the audience asked that Paul's presentation on the marginal cost of water be shown. Dave Crosby explained that it was not relevant to the present discussion and that was the reason it wasn't on the agenda. Committee members had seen the slide presentation and some felt it was too long (56 slides) and not relevant to the agenda items under discussion. David suggested that Paul could make it available to anyone who wants to see it.
2. Eric stated that daily pumping was down to a projected annual amount of 460 million gallons, which would be the second lowest number recorded. He said that unaccounted for water was high at 15%. He said some of the problem was a meter at the Salvation Army that is not functioning. The Town owns the meter and will have to replace it. He also stated that the department will have to get all readings done on the 1st or 2nd of each month to ensure better accuracy. He believes the final revenue amount for fy2013 will be 2.9M but this includes 200,000 of back payments. He will use 2.7M as the base for projecting next fiscal year's revenue. He predicts we need to generate 400,000 more in fy2014. Eric believes that the quarterly readings are the most accurate and has a goal of making sure the readings for each quarter are done on the first day of the next month. He stated that the water restrictions are in place for May 1st through September 30th on the usual odd and even schedule that has been in place for several years. The Massapoag Ave. and Glendale Rd. projects are moving forward as is the Norwood St. water connection discussion.
3. Eric responded to a question about Farnham Rd. as a source of nitrates by saying that the area is too large to line but that the leaves are taken in and then taken out quickly. He is monitoring wells # 4, 2 and 3 and they are well below the number 5mg/l trigger point for action.

Paul asked if there could be a reserve loan account set up to help residents pay for line repair and Eric said that was possible. When asked about his ideas on a rate structure Eric said he envisioned, in general, a large middle block with much smaller blocks on either side. The middle block would be somewhere around \$8.00, the low end around \$4.00 and high end around \$12.00. These numbers would then be adjusted to reflect winter and summer rates with the winter rates on average 20-25% lower than summer rates. These numbers are not absolute but reflect current thinking. Two items for discussion next month are a rainy day fund and a loan program to help residents pay for line repairs.

Adjournment at 9:58 PM.

Next meeting May 16, 2013

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Carney, Acting Clerk