

WMAC Meeting Minutes, December 18, 2014

Attendees: David Crosby - Chair, Anne Carney, David Hearne, Paul Lauenstein, Rory McGregor – Secretary

Guest: Eric Hooper, Superintendent, Sharon DPW

1. Minutes from the November 20 meeting were approved.
2. The proposed WMAC water rate increase was approved by the Selectmen with modifications. The base rate will increase by \$1, rather than no increase as recommended by the WMAC. There will be no increase in the top block rate, rather than the \$1.50 increase recommended by the WMAC. The top block rate will apply to quarterly use over 24,000 gallons, rather than the current 22,500 gallons, as recommended by the WMAC. Implementation is effective January 1st 2015.
3. Priorities for WMAC to address in 2015 were discussed and ranked in the following order:
 - a) Review Water Master Plan. Add any new projects. Reprioritize remaining projects.
 - b) Define irrigation policy. Investigate the degree to which the top block rate already applies to water used for lawn irrigation, and the degree to which the top block rate affects water used for essential indoor water use by families of various sizes. Implement water meter program for this activity if appropriate.
 - c) Leak detection program, funding and service offerings. Get this on the town warrant.
 - d) Investigate storm water management program to address the new requirements that have been approved by the Commonwealth relating to water withdrawal permits. Eric will present information to WMAC on Sharon's efforts already under way in cooperation with Neponset River Watershed Association.
4. Eric reviewed the budget for FY2106. Total estimate is \$4,183,929, which includes 2 major capital expenditure projects estimated at \$1.65 million – Brook Road water pipe replacement and design for emergency water connection with Norwood. An additional \$200,000 is proposed for a reserve fund. Paul Lauenstein presented a graph showing that total compensation for the Water Department has increased significantly faster than the rate of inflation, despite the radio meter reading system that has reduced the labor required to read the meters since installation was completed in 2010.
5. Eric's update on water system management included the following points:
 - a) Groundwater and surface water levels have recovered from this summer with levels running normal/above normal.
 - b) Revenues for year to date are on target for \$3.4 million, above initial target of \$3.1 million.
 - c) Pumping for November was 28,888,000 gallons for an average of less than 1 million gallons per day, the lowest well pumping for November in at least 20 years. Maximum day was 1.15 million gallons (Thanksgiving Day). Estimated annual pumping is approximately 465-470 million gallons.

d) Unaccounted For Water for the year is approximately 11.75%. However, this number does not include confidently estimated water use (hydrant flushing, construction losses) which should reduce the unaccounted for to below the permit limit of 10%. UAW quantity for the current quarter so far is significantly down from the first quarters of the year.

e) Nitrate concentration at Well #2 and #4 were up slightly, but still well below the 5 mg/l study trigger.

6. Eric is investigating the proposal to have a regional initiative for the Water Smart program coordinated by Neponset River Watershed Association. If we collaborate with other towns, we might be able to reduce the cost of the program, which would provide regular feedback to our users on their water usage, water issues, conservation opportunities, etc.

7. The next meeting will be Thursday Jan 15th at 7:30pm at the Community Center.

Respectfully submitted,

Rory McGregor